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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on canonical literary and political texts that thematize Euro-American diplomacy from the turn of the 20th century up to the Versailles Treaty at the end of the First World War. It situates these texts as responses to their geopolitical moment, and the transformations of the "new diplomacy" into a modern discipline supposedly characterized by democratic transparency, bureaucratic centralization, and the institutions of liberal international consensus. My central argument is that these texts outline an alternative understanding of diplomacy that departs from its officially mandated form as an emanation of *raison d'etat*, by turning instead to reconfigure diplomacy and its subjects in terms of ethics, publics, and economics.

This argument extends John Marx's claim that fiction can pose experiments in democratizing expertise in the project of administration, by considering how memoir, ethnography, and political pamphlets also draw on these resources of fiction. In addition, it contributes to critical perspectives on how literary fiction engages with assumptions about the binary opposition between the state and the individual (the subject for instance, of the volume *Contemporary Literature and the State* edited by Matthew Hart and Jim Hansen).

In Chapter One, I read *The Education of Henry Adams* alongside Adams's Tahitian Memoirs and his letters from the Pacific as responses to the formulas of significant action and civic character encoded in Euro-American imperial public discourse. Chapter Two connects the delegation of subjective agency in Henry James's *The Ambassadors* to the novel's political edges, in large part, through an analysis of its peculiar management of scenes of privacy and publicness. Finally, Chapter Three

considers the language of John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, particularly the movement between its seemingly paradoxical insistence on both occulted agency and black letter literalism, through Keynes's attention to the mediating work of conventions - across genres, customs, and value.

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Introduction

This dissertation turns to the fictions of diplomacy in the early twentieth century to consider how and why the idioms, problems, and practices of diplomacy were incorporated into literary works in this specific moment. It tracks this alongside the turn towards institutionalism in public international law, and the administration of the imperial conscience as part of the function of governmentality. Diplomacy in this moment is often (and often appropriately) seen as a technique of imperial administration performed by agents who embody the reason of the state, and who function as boosters of the expanding empire of Euro-American international law. My contention is that the literary treatment of diplomacy in this moment – as a structure of political relations, a particular mode of conduct, or a field of technical or professional know-how – does not function as simply "a record of existing administrative protocols". Instead, these fictions of diplomacy constitute experiments which stage the modern subject as split between two registers of political agency and perspective: the subject as the citizen in its relation to formal state apparatuses; and as the subject of self-fashioning within the horizons of lived ordinariness. Trans-national political life is narrated within the textures of ordinary social circulations. Concerned with the conduct of political relations with distant others, the literary turn to diplomacy has the effect of making visible how the state is precipitated extra-territorially through processes of mediation and delegation that are materialized by embodied agents.

In observing that the twentieth century novel is engaged in interdisciplinary debate about governance, John Marx traces the idea to its appearance in imperial fiction at the turn of the century. He notes that:

> Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century fiction finds itself thoroughly embroiled in the process of managing the unstable hierarchical arrangements that challenge postcolonial governments. It discovers how to to think about governance in part by recollecting early twentieth century novelistic efforts to imagine a world after empire. Novels now and then offer more than critique and more than a record of existing administrative protocol. They also conduct literary experiments. Fiction models solutions to the administrative dilemmas posed by a world far more thoroughly professionalized and bureaucratized than Mill's liberalism could have imagined.[1]

This dissertation expands on this by considering its objects as experiments in imagining the complicity between the genres of individual *Bildung* and the promise of national self-determination proffered to the non-West. What makes these works particularly interesting as experiments is that they track the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of practices like tact and discretion – central to definitions of diplomacy in modern diplomatic guidebooks.

As parallel terms for the savvy management of information (discretion) and social relations (tact), these refer to practices of self-disciplining that take the form of ethical work. The public/private distinction that organizes the spaces internal to modern liberal societies, is also what discretion seeks to both coordinate and manipulate across diplomatic borders. If discretion means being discerning, it also comes out of Christian spirituality where as Foucault reminds us "*discretio* no longer focuses on the value of things, it focuses on the subject himself, on the subject insofar as

[1] John Marx, *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel 1890-2011*, 46.

he is inhabited by another principle, by a foreign principle that is at the same time a source of illusion."[2] In this form, the lack of discretion in human nature is corrected by the discrimination of the conscience, resulting in the condition of perpetual confession/obedience to the will of an other as the basis of modern subjectivity.

At the same time, tact is a matter of haptic and sensory orientation in the management of physical and social proximities, and also (like taste for Kant) the determination of a subjective judgment that issues in a universal claim of assent that grounds a *sensus communis*. While discretion can be regarded as shoring up the boundaries of privacy, tact functions as the social "touch" that conjugates an aesthetic and sensory community. These practices can be seen in the fictions of diplomacy as connected to subject formation, in the experience of the self as an intimate interiority realized through social practice and put in relation to norms provided by social consensus. For Louis Althusser, ideology operates across the zones of the private and the public, and its elementary effect is our interpellation as free and ethical subjects: capacities experienced as so intrinsic to our experience of ourselves such as to constitute a "primary obviousness". Judith Butler explains that for Althusser, "the efficacy of ideology consists in part in the formation of conscience, where the notion of conscience is understood to place restrictions on what is speakable or, more generally, representable."[3] In this way, the self-regulating conscience underpins the elementary ideological effect that constitutes our formation as subjects.

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[2] Foucault and Davidson, *On the Government of the Living*. This is as opposed to the *diakrisis* of the Stoics.

[3] Butler, "Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All," 13.

This insight also finds its way into recent scholarship on the postcolonial novel and human rights that examines how the subject of international human rights law is produced as both normatively specified and de-corporealized. This line of scholarship exposes how certain fictions of the human are encoded both in and alongside human rights rhetoric. Elizabeth Anker contends out that the image of the person at work in human rights law is the violated subject, through which "dual prescriptions of human dignity and bodily integrity are ironically made legible and socially persuasive by the specter of bodies that are not successfully unified or self-enclosed through reasoned self-determination but instead are invaded, broken, sullied, and disintegrated."[4] Joseph Slaughter argues that the subject of the Bildungsroman and human rights law are mutually composed through the narrative logic of the abstract development of the human personality as an "ethics of subject formation".[5] Focusing on "the moral creature capable of bearing rights and duties – projected by both law and literature", he demonstrates how this subject emerges from literary and legal categories of personhood. Both Anker and Slaughter confront international law as the system that legitimates the continuation of imperial exploitation through the lure of liberal tutelage, and as the means for new claims for justice to be eventually articulated and made legible.

My project shifts attention from the post-45 subject of human rights constituted within international law and the Enlightenment cultivation of empathy that Lynn Hunt associates with the technology of the novel, to subjects produced in the rival scene of

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[4] Anker, *Fictions of Dignity*, 33.

[5]. Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.*

diplomacy – as the point where conscience and administrative governmentality meet up in the early twentieth century. In this, I am guided by recent work in political science by James Der Derian and others that attend to diplomacy as a practice, and specifically Ian Hurd's framing of "the practice of diplomacy as the *via media* in the mutual constitution of international law and foreign policy – the "law-in-use" meaning of international legal rules arises from how it is invoked in the diplomacy of states."[6] I do so in order to think about how the everyday relations between imperial states and agents are imagined at the frontiers of the expanding regime of international law, and how this seems to offer a sense of expatriate agency outside or beyond citizenship. According to Gramsci:

> It is necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, original and historically concrete combinations. A particular ideology, for instance, born in a highly developed country, is disseminated in less developed countries, impinging on the local interplay of combinations. (Religion, for example, has always been a source of such national and international ideological-political combinations, and so too have the other international organizations – Freemasonry, Rotarianism, the Jews, career diplomacy.[7]

If these ideological/organizational pivots of international and local relations result in the production of new historical combinations, it is perhaps surprising that little attention has been given to this role of career diplomacy. One international relations scholar noted

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[6] Constantinou and Derian, *Sustainable Diplomacies*. Ian Hurd, "International Law and the Politics of Diplomacy," 32.

[7] Gramsci and Hobsbawm, *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 206.

recently that "very little seems to be known about the standard operational procedures and everyday routines of diplomacy."[8] By looking at how the forms of relations and idioms of diplomacy are constituted in fiction, I am not seeking to assemble alternative accounts of everyday practice in an occluded or arcane field, but to understand why, in this particular historical configuration, diplomacy becomes a renewed locus of scholarly as well as fictional speculation.

The textual objects in each chapter center on how considerations of international diplomacy become embedded in the geographies of ordinariness, along with the corollary notion that the habits, modes of attention, and ways of life, in modernity, potentially take on a specifically political charge in trans-national encounters. Postcolonial critics demonstrate how assumptions about cultural and civilizational tutelage structure the colonial relation, particularly across the domains of religion, literature, and politics, as well as how local negotiations with colonial power were improvised in the textures of everyday relations through mimesis, sly civility, and other forms of recuperation.[9] These processes can be understood to anticipate the formation and rise of cultural diplomacy – a term properly manifesting in the Cold War and the role of publics in foreign affairs, but the practices and assumptions of which could arguably be seen to extend from British colonial education policy in India. My work draws on previous scholarship that show how strategies of power can be excavated from the archives of everyday life under empire, to disclose how relations between colonized and

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[8] Neumann, *At Home with the Diplomats*, 3.

[9] For an interesting, recent attempt at conceptualizing a non-Western genealogy of modern diplomacy, see Datta-Ray, Deep K., "The Making of Modern Indian Diplomacy: A Critique of Eurocentrism."

colonizer were negotiated in ordinary, private spaces, and particularly those spaces experienced as interior to the reflective subject.[10]

Political historians have demonstrated how the criteria of "civilization" was deployed to explain exclusions in a system claiming to be universal, as well as providing a mandate for imperial expansion in terms of the civilizing mission. This criteria also held out the lure of self-determination in exchange for acceding to a period of imperial tutelage that promises to end with political maturity in the form of liberal government. In this context, diplomacy functions as the disciplinary formation that furnishes the knowledge and practices of administering the mutual expansion of liberal empire and international law. International law supplies the procedural forms and institutions of justice, as well as arrogating to itself the "legal conscience of the world". At the same time, imperial beneficence assumes the task of bearing "the white man's burden", as the satisfaction of the conscience which conveniently also legislates extra-territorial expansion.

My claim is that while certain canonical literary texts in the early 20th century reflect on diplomacy as an instrument for legitimating imperial relations within the terms of liberal consent and tutelage, this is also the basis on which they complicate the narrative of self-constitution encoded in the genre of the Bildungsroman. The textual objects that this dissertation surveys might be read as responses to the imperial romance. In the imperial romance, the hero is conventionally redeemed through the colonial adventure, and thereby eventually integrated into society once revealed as the proper inheritor of liberty and justice, for instance, upon assuming the role of protecting and

[10] Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*.

instructing the natives. The fictions of diplomacy that I examine attend to the optic of the routine and unheroic rather than the monumental, particularly in the narrative backdrop of world historical events. In them, attention to diplomacy as a practice brings to view modes of agency situated in practices of delegation and mediated consciousness that are characterized by political and ambiguity, rather than the fictions of coherent and bounded autonomy.

1. Informal Diplomacy, Imperial Pedagogy

While diplomacy – as the extra-territorial delegation of state authority – is a necessary relation for the everyday management of the reaches of empire in a structural and geographic sense, it is also a practice particular to liberal internationalism of constituting the civilized state through the legibility of its capacity for dialogue and consent. In this latter sense of modern diplomacy in a disciplinary mode, states are constituted as bounded units of intention and conscience analogous to individuals, capable of eliciting consent, being punished, or being rehabilitated. This is a convenient fiction that allows the actions and motivations of nations (as the expression of collective human will) to be thought about in the distinct terms - to borrow a crude schematization of the discipline of international relations – of *self-interest* for international relations "realists", *international society* for the English school after Hedley Bull, and *how ideas constitute social reality* for constructivists. It underpins the lure of self-determination held out to the colonial world, and the view of treaties as agreements between states, that bind in an analogous way to contracts once they have been ratified by the general will. Participation in an international system is understood on the template of social processes – whether this is viewed as tending towards anarchy, world order, or interpretive

contestation – that are largely accessible through social scientific accounts of motivations and behaviors.

Considering the structure of mediation between the abstract state and its embodied agents in diplomacy directs attention to the relationship between international politics, and ethics in the broad sense of procedures of self-regulation. Specifically, the framework of diplomacy allows us to observe a couple of points here. First, citizenship and diplomacy offer inverse accounts of the political efficacy of persons. In liberal democratic states, citizenship offers a theory of the legitimation of government as the elected representative of the people, while diplomacy is a doctrine of the devolution of sovereign authority to persons as representatives abroad. Citizenship is conceived through the fiction of the social contract, as the exchange of the individual's consent to be governed, for the state securing that individual's inviolability, thereby converting their original theoretical sovereignty, into a practical but limited form. While our contemporary use of "diplomacy" frequently makes it synonymous with "foreign policy", it might be distinguished as properly referring to the means conscripted to those ends. As such, it refers to a repertoire of social techniques of interpretation and mediation, that allow for instructions and authority to be mediated by being embodied abroad.

Moreover, diplomacy is premised on the "tactful" regulation of proximities and distances: of interpreting instructions at a geographic remove from the instructing state; and of recognizing how physical presence and intimate proximity are conducive to delicate affairs of state. In the dual sense of "tact" – as referring to social adroitness under pressure, as well as touch – diplomacy operates through the training of the sensory apparatus for hapticity and proprioception that underpin subjectivity. The

problem of how tact and tactility are corporeally embodied and performed intersects in Adams's memoir and James's novel with the moral legitimacy of imperial hegemony, and the sense of self-determination as something other than a cultural property deriving from national belonging. Both *The Education of Henry Adams* and Henry James's *The Ambassadors* are concerned with self-formation specifically in terms of a renegotiation of intimacy and publicity.

Both texts give an account of diplomacy as the embodiment of a structural relation, where the fleshiness of its encounters obtrudes upon the easy transposition of personality, ideas, and moral being, from individuals to states. Across these texts there is the attempt to see how the ethical disciplining of bodily comportment, at the level of the material body and of perception, is a response to the problem of international justice. For instance, in James's *The Ambassadors*, lived expatriate experience constitutes an experiment in self-transformation that overwrites without entirely replacing the original delegation of authority from Mrs. Newsome. Nevertheless, the everyday lives of agents in an integrated commons of international law and diplomacy becomes continuous with the pedagogical enterprise of civilization, to the extent that each seeks to telegraph the legitimacy of the imperial project.

If their focus on diplomacy betrays their complicity in the imperial perspective, they are also attentive to the various registers of the "disciplines" of diplomacy: firstly, the professionalizing field concerned with training official agents of states tasked with legitimating imperial relations; secondly, the disciplining of bodies and material practice within imperial modernity; and finally, the production of the subject of cosmopolitan feeling as an ethical subject preoccupied in self-surveillance. In the first sense, they consider dimensions of the "new diplomacy", whether as a turn to standing

conferences; the modern professionalization and reform of the foreign service beginning in the later nineteenth century in Europe and the early twentieth century in the United States; or the impact of the accessible technologies of communications and mass travel on diplomatic practice.

The reform of diplomacy from an often poorly-remunerated avocation available to aristocrats and political patrons, into a modern profession, involving a prescribed form of standardized training, and increasingly meritocratic criteria for career advancement, was belated compared to other professions. In the "Notes and Comments" section of an 1899 issue of the *North American Review*, one Leon Mead urges reform of the consular and diplomatic service, asking: "Why should not the United States establish a National School of Diplomacy? Would not trained diplomats be better qualified than untrained ones to undertake the duties requiring tact and special knowledge?" He grounds the historical propriety of this assertion in the recent American acquisition of empire as "the mighty issues growing out of the Spanish-American war will give us a voice in international councils."[11] In this regard, *The Education of Henry Adams* pivots between the old and new diplomacy, ostensibly to review the kinds of education necessary to prepare for the "family work of empire," but, more purposefully engaging with the anachronistic possibility of diplomacy as an amateur pursuit, and a training in a style of life that is conspicuously obsolescent to the reason of the state.

To put it differently, these texts turn on the relation between official and informal forms of diplomacy. Diplomacy in the narrow sense has to do with the

[11] Leon Mead, "The New Diplomacy."

delegation of authority from the state to its representatives in the conduct of negotiations abroad. This relation of materially situated persons mediating the authority of the abstract state is tied to questions about social delegation more generally – of consciousness, the conscience, instincts, the body and its tact – and their relation to politics and justice beyond the nation. The personal qualities of the good ambassador are a favorite topic of the classic manuals on diplomacy, which list attributes like discretion, curiosity, and the ability to improvise. Sir Ern Satow's influential *Guide* in 1917 defines diplomacy itself as "the application of tact and intelligence in conducting the affairs of states".[12] In contrast, the textual objects that this dissertation gathers are not concerned with identifying the effective ambassador.

By attending to diplomacy as a concept, an institution, and a set of practices or routines, they ask different questions about the place of ethical and bodily life in the context of rapid international institutionalism: For Adams, what kinds of instincts are "fit" for imperial diplomacy? For James, what place for impressions, tact, and ethics, in transactions between the United States and the European "Great World"? For Keynes, what are the affective and economic/structural premises for a non-retributive form of international justice? These texts consider how diplomacy might be enacted in informal ways as the improvisation of forms of agency that are ambiguously both for the nation, and rubbing up against the claims and solidarities of citizenship. For these writers, one problem is whether it is possible to ground the legitimacy of international politics in an account of lived experience.

[12] Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*.

2. Fictions of Diplomacy: Beyond Citizenship

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the mediation of Euro-American geopolitical relations with the world by delegates, members of legations, agents, and foreign consul, became charged with the imperative of justifying new imperialism and the expanding "empire of law". During this period that the frequency of the word "diplomacy" in Anglophone print sustains its most dramatic modern period of ascent, with a steady rise from 1892 to a dramatic peak in 1918, more than doubling its frequency.[13] Prior to 1918, word frequency for "diplomacy" peaks in 1902 for American English (coinciding with the high-point of American imperialism at the end of the Spanish-American and Phillipines-American Wars, and in 1906 for British English (at the end of the Tangier Crisis, and leading up to the Triple Entente). The proliferation of "diplomacy" is particularly pronounced in Anglophone fiction, where there is a sharp increase from 1888-1902, after which it plateaus until dropping off after 1919. This overlap with the historical period of new imperialism and the institutionalization of international law underpins the temporal frame of this dissertation.

My project attends to this moment of the rise of "diplomacy" in the literary imagination as a specific technical practice, as distinct from its adjectival ("diplomatic") or noun ("diplomat") forms, which have distinct if related trajectories. It would appear that "diplomacy" in literary use has a distinct temporality and duration, that does not simply follow in the wake of world-historical events and the proliferation of non-fictional reports, but is in a sense a register of anticipatory political affects. Comparing the period

[13] These trends are generally replicated for both British English and American English print, with minor differences: for instance, between 1934-1937, there is a brief and sharp increase in word frequency for British English print, while this remains fairly stable in American English.

1890-1920 across the different graphs demonstrates that the prolific rise of diplomacy in fiction precedes its more general frequency and is sustained longer, while across both fiction and general use, there is a steep decline after 1919 (the year of the Paris Peace Conference). From this, I conjecture that "diplomacy" – across its various meanings of a professional field of knowledge concerning international relations, and the exercise of social tact – has a certain conceptual resonance and density in this moment. It functions as a privileged term for making sense of the global proximities enacted across this moment by technological innovation and institutional reform, and more importantly, of how the concerns and problems of international politics run through the capillaries of everyday social relations.

In this light, I examine how diplomacy as a prolific term and concept comes to occupy a set of canonical literary texts in terms of three related problems. The textual objects of this dissertation are concerned with rethinking, firstly, the place of citizenship and transparent government in politics (Adams and Keynes, and the rival declarations of "open diplomacy" by Lenin and Wilson); secondly, the justice and legitimacy of imperialism often imputed to an instinct or collective conscience (Adams and James, as well as E.H. Carr, and turn of the century international legal institutionalism); and finally, self-determination as a matter of moral discipline. On this last point, I read Henry Adams's *The Education of Henry Adams* and Henry James's *The Ambassadors* as concerned with the experience of how foreign affairs organize public sentiments, and how this registers in the ordinary and ongoing practices of self-constitution. For Foucault, the modern subject is normatively produced as self-constituting. In this perspective, the experience that both Adams and James narrate, where the self is both the kind of being that is disciplined through the institutions and discourses that ultimately undergird state

power, and the kind of being that can constitute itself in ethical self-relation. Adams looks to the moral life of the instincts and political affects to consider how historical self-writing might serve as a form of ethical preparation. The protagonist of James's *The Ambassadors* seeks self-determination within trans-national modernity, not by retreating into the interiority of consciousness, but through exposure to foreign sensations that ends in deontological self-authorship. In both cases, self-determination as realized through forms of neo-Kantian moral self-fashioning by rejecting moral consequentialism, and intentionally refiguring the relation of the expatriate subject of cosmopolitan feeling to the state and the world.

For the sake of clarify, this is not a project in colonial discourse-analysis. By looking at the word frequency of "diplomacy" in fiction in the first decades of the twentieth century, the task is not to demonstrate ultimately that the tropes of diplomacy were used to legitimate new imperialism. Instead, this frequency indexes how the structures of mediation between the state and its agents is dispersed across the grain of intimate and non-official life as a template of experience for ordinary social relations, as well as ethics (as self-relation), under imperialism. This frequency also speaks to how liberal democratic citizenship is experienced as an inadequate account of public life, insofar as the state preserves a domain of "official secrets" (that subsequently brings about political promises of "open diplomacy"). There is also growing public cynicism about the legitimacy of empire, charged by accounts of unconscionable violence under new imperialism in the early twentieth century. This dissertation looks at how certain texts constitute the intimate experience of the self (as conscience, or the capacity for moral agency, or self-reflection) specifically in its relation to the imperial state as a

matter of diplomacy, that is, in ways that extend beyond the normative prescriptions of jurisdictionally bounded citizenship in liberal democratic states.

A question that keeps emerging in the interwar period and that structures the early field of international relations, is whether morality should guide the actions of states in international intercourse, and if so, how it can do so taking into account how states exert power.[14] Here, diplomacy as the delegation of state authority to its agents, accrues a kind of conceptual efficiency by positing the abstract state as a coherent substance with intentionality and a conscience. The central question considered in a 1919 article by John Mecklin in the *International Journal of Ethics* on "The International Conscience" considers how a nation's foreign policy can organize the sentiments of its people, so as to orient this public towards international issues, beyond strict national interest, as the basis for a securing international peace.[15] He argues that "the problem of international peace is a moral problem" that requires democratic consent rather than coercion, and to "subordinate leagues and armaments as well as the entire disciplinary effect of domestic institutions and the national way of life to the organisation of a body

[14] In the interwar period, Reinhold Niebuhr argued that the appeal to reason and conscience as the basis for justice and peace in collective and international affairs was too optimistic. Reviewing the period from 1919-1939, E.H. Carr considered the fiction of state morality as a necessary one, insofar as it actually influences the conduct of individual state agents.

[15] Mecklin, "The International Conscience." At the time, John Mecklin was a Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, involved in locally supporting the strike of steel mill workers, and whose interest in "social ethics" led him to take up a position as Professor of Sociology at Dartmouth later that year. His autobiography *My Quest for Freedom* poses certain core questions that he was concerned with at the time as the attempt to understand freedom after rejecting "the negative laissez-faire freedom of our capitalist society": "Are there moral responsibilities that go along with freedom and if so what? How is the individual phase of freedom related to the corporate and institutional? Can the individual sense of responsibility be effective without institutional sanction?": Mecklin, *My Quest for Freedom*, 217.

of sentiments that will give peace a substantial moral basis."[16] In the aftermath of the First World War, Mecklin critiques American foreign policy for its relative isolationism, suggesting the British Commonwealth as the anticipatory model of an international federation of free peoples that "have in the British Commonwealth of nations an anticipation of a "possible federation of free peoples that will one day assure world peace." He goes on to state that:

> the disciplinary effect of America's unreal and sentimental role in international affairs is registered in our national life. Because we have missed the splendid moral discipline the English have gained from shouldering the world's problems … while England has won for herself moral emancipation by policing the world and protecting our trade."[17]

Where American idealism is too bloodless and aloof, Mecklin contends that despite the occasional British pursuit of "selfish Realpolitik", the "strange mixture of realism and idealism, jingoism and justice that characterises English life", is a symptom that emerges from how the sentiments of the British public are "organized on international issues, not solely in terms of selfish national interests". This is the basis for what Mecklin calls the "international conscience", which he defines as "simply a body of sentiments and ideas shared by all people that will assure a peaceful solution of international differences", in asserting that "hence the problem of of international peace is a moral problem."

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[16] Mecklin, "The International Conscience," 288.

[17] Mecklin, 292.

The diplomatic life in the moment of its modern professionalization is simultaneously the subject of a nostalgic reaction, with contrasting pieces in the *North American Review* at the turn of the century, on the memoirs of a diplomatic wife (recalling Lady Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*), and proposals for the reform of diplomatic training asserting that it would be unimaginable what advantage women would derive from such education other than to prepare them in anticipation of diplomatic husbands.[18] The reform of diplomacy from an often poorly-remunerated avocation available to aristocrats and political patrons into a modern profession was belated compared to other professions. It involved a prescribed form of standardized training and increasingly meritocratic criteria for career advancement. Mead in the article cited above urged reform of the consular and diplomatic service asking: "Why should not the United States establish a National School of Diplomacy? Would not trained diplomats be better qualified than untrained ones to undertake the duties requiring tact and special knowledge?" He grounds the historical propriety of this assertion in the recent American acquisition of empire, as "the mighty issues growing out of the Spanish-American war will give us a voice in international councils."[19] The "new diplomacy" signaled the rise of standing conferences; the modern

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[18] Considering in passing whether women should be admitted however, the author opines that "how such a course could practically benefit women is not obvious, unless indeed those thus enrolled expected to marry diplomats. In that case, it is conceivable that knowledge of how to proceed in a delicate international negotiation might enable a woman, with an official husband, to assist him by refreshing his memory as to historical precedents and other erudite matters concerning which he might become rusty… But it fairly may be questioned whether even the most hopelessly advanced woman expects to see the day when members of her sex will serve as ambassadors at the Court of St. James or at Paris or St. Petersburg." Leon Mead, "The New Diplomacy."

[19] Leon Mead.

professionalization and reform of the foreign service beginning in the later nineteenth century in Europe and the early twentieth century in the United States; and the impact of the accessible technologies of communications and mass travel on diplomatic practice. In this regard, *The Education of Henry Adams* is the exemplary text that pivots between old and new diplomacy.

In contrast to the abstracting of the conscience to the provenance of international organizations, I contend that Adams and James each make a case for diplomacy as a process of self-elaboration, in which moral and political self-determination is glimpsed not as freedom from external influence, but in the process of corporeally and socially mediating political intentions and social relations. In *The Education of Henry Adams*, the recording of diplomatic history as *hypomnemata* (intimate self-writing) takes the form of the materialization of quotidian memory as a set of notes, such that political life is disclosed as familial and habitual. In this account, ethical agency is posited by the training of the instincts and of perception as an attunement to how the intimate everyday and state politics converge, such that the self can be fashioned as a conspicuous obstruction to state reason. In James's *The Ambassadors*, Strether assumes self-authorship by taking on the role of interpreting his instructions from Mrs. Newsome, of the new sensations, situations, and character types he encounters abroad, and, most clearly in the conclusion, of his own actions in retrospect by articulating his guiding principle as a universalizable maxim). Drawing on the resemblance that Christine Korsgaard identifies between Plato's and Kant's models of ethical self-constitution, I suggest that as Plato is cited by Adams, Kant is taken up by

James in *The Ambassadors*.[20] For Adams, the question is how an account of everyday experience – whether in terms of the instincts, education or self-fashioning – can provide the basis for the practice of a coherent world-political agency in the wake of the American century. In James's novel, it is a matter of how consciousness and the opportunities for self-fashioning are constituted within chains of delegated social authority. Reading these texts, I argue that the emergence of diplomacy as a problem that calls for literary consideration speaks to the need for what Jahan Ramazani describes (in a different context) as "models of cross-national imaginative citizenship, that are mobile, ambivalent, and multifaceted."[21]

3. Self-fashioning and International Justice

While diplomacy – as the extra-territorial delegation of state authority – is a necessary relation for the everyday management of the reaches of empire in a structural and geographic sense, it is in a narrow sense also a kind of practice particular to liberal internationalism of constituting the civilized state through the legibility of its capacity for dialogue and consent. In this latter sense of diplomacy in a disciplinary mode, states are constituted as bounded units of intention and conscience analogous to individuals, capable of eliciting consent, being punished, or being rehabilitated. This is a convenient fiction that allows the actions and motivations of nations (as the expression of collective human will) to be thought about in the distinct terms - to borrow a crude schematization of the discipline of international relations – of *self-interest* for international relations "realists", *international society* for the English school after Hedley Bull, and *how ideas*

[20] Korsgaard, "Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant."

[21] Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, 48.

constitute social reality for constructivists. It underpins the lure of self-determination held out to the colonial world, and the view of treaties as agreements between states, that bind in an analogous way to contracts once they have been ratified by the general will. Participation in an international system is understood on the template of social processes – whether this is viewed as tending towards anarchy, world order, or interpretive contestation – that are largely accessible through social scientific accounts of motivations and behaviors.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the legitimacy of imperialism as a world system was the subject of renewed skepticism. According to Antoinette Burton, anti-state challenges of colonial subjects in the 1850's "threw the very presumption of empire's political legitimacy into doubt, revealing the defensive positions imperial policy makers were forced to adopt as they sought to routinize imperial political order on the ground and to carry on with government as usual."[22] After the Franco-Prussian War, diplomacy between the imperial powers was increasingly characterized by international coordination in extraterritorial imperial projects. These included the Berlin Conference of 1885, the Boxer Protocol in 1901, the Triple Entente between Britain, France, and Russia, in 1907, leading up to the First World War. The Berlin Conference regulated competition between the European powers in the "Scramble for Africa" by recognizing territorial claims on the basis of "effective occupation", while the Boxer Protocol proclaimed extraterritoriality for foreign interests in China. The latter can be seen as part of a global wave of anti-colonial uprisings and their brutal quelling around the turn of the century, that include the Philippine-American War, and the Herero Wars in Africa. The defeat of

[22] Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire*.

the anti-imperial peasant based movement known as the Boxers, who had occupied the Legation quarter of Peking in 1900, was coordinated by the Eight-Nation Alliance, comprising the European Concert, together with the United States and Japan.

Anxiety over the conscience of empire can be traced across the international proliferation of treaties, court decisions, contracts of expropriation, investigative reports, and textbooks of international law, as well as in literary work. For instance, Patrick Brantlinger considers that "all of these popular romance formulas – imperial Gothic, Wellsian science fiction, invasion fantasies, spy stories – betray anxieties characteristic of late Victorian and Edwardian imperialism both as an ideology and as a phase of political development."[23] The role of diplomacy and international law in maintaining the liberal legitimacy of Euro-American imperialism has been treated by a number of historians.[24] Extraterritorial intervention in the service of economic and political imperatives, whether opening export markets, extracting resources, or protecting interests overseas, had to be legitimated both as a matter of moral justice and of procedural fairness, even in the staging of fictional trials. The problem of the administration of the conscience in the imperial context is the subject of many literary scenes of trials and official inquiries. Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1899-1900) opens with the court of inquiry into the S.S. Patna, tasked with maintaining the reputation of the imperial civilizing mission (since Marlow repeatedly describes Jim as "one of us"), in the face of the abandonment of the ship by its

[23] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 236.

[24] For example, see Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902*.

officers.[25] In the 1913 draft of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, Aziz actually assaults Adela, and the determination of justice occurs in the melodrama of the courtroom trial, staging the discovery of the truth as the function of justice. By the published version in 1924, Forster troubles this Manichaean picture of justice and retribution. The revised scene shows up the difficulty of communal justice in the divide that organizes Anglo-Indian colonial society, where the racial and gendered dimensions of the scandal are quickly conscripted for political convenience by steering mass sentiment towards competing agendas, both pro- and anti- British rule.[26]

Advocates of imperial expansion supported their views by reference to theories of social evolution, the extension of the burden for the civilizing mission across the Atlantic, and through the speciation of desirable and undesirable historical forms of empire. Published serially in *McClure's Magazine* in 1900-1901, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* popularized the term "the Great Game" to refer to the European political system organized around the conflict between Russia and Britain for control of Central Asia. From the later-nineteenth century, there is a growing tendency to impute the qualities of interior individual life to collective peoples, nations, and international organizations (such as the "legal conscience of the world") and to found the moral mandate for expansion in "the instinct of empire". The logic of the synecdoche assumes a correlation

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[25] Based on the case of the abandonment of the S.S. Jeddah near Socotra in 1880, Jim takes the fall for this dereliction of duty, only to be eventually redeemed through his retreat to a late Romantic mode of imperial conquest (modeled after Sir James Brooke, the "White Rajah of Sarawak").

[26] It is notable that Forster took particular care to revise this scene for publication, such that Aziz's culpability is ambiguous at best, and the trial is resolved not by the issue of a decision, but by Adela retracting her accusation against Aziz.

between the part and the whole, that is, the body of the state aggregating the forms of individual bodies imaged on the cover of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. While "instinct" borrows from the prestige of the social sciences, psychiatry, and biology to code certain tendencies as essential or "natural", "conscience" refers to the maturation of sensibilities cultivated under civilization that take the form of a faculty for moral self-reflection. The transposition to collectives of these faculties associated with the interiority of the subject are intended to produce certain political efficacies by offering a shorthand legitimation of an imperial world-view or the moral claim of international law. Even E.H. Carr devotes a chapter of his classic interwar work (now seen as an important turning point to "realism" in international relations), to considering the "morality" of states, which he regards as a necessary fiction insofar as it produces noticeable effects on the behaviors of individual state agents in executing foreign policy.

In the modern version, the faculties that characterize the intimate core of the subject (of imagination, conscience, and self-knowledge) are the qualities projected onto the state, to underpin the assumption of liberal states as coherent actors in the international sphere, available in particular ways for the analysis of modern international law and international relations. The preamble to the *Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes 1907*, for instance, asserts that the signatory states are "desirous of extending the empire of law and of strengthening the appreciation of international justice". The phrase, "the appreciation of international justice", is striking not only because it plays on various senses of "appreciation": as comprehension, as gratitude, and as a rise in stock; implying that international justice is something that bears interest, insofar as it comes to be more broadly understood and the subject of goodwill. Positing "appreciation" instead of enforceability or adherence suggests that the universal

communicability of international justice is also tied to aesthetic discrimination. (We could perhaps understand this through Kant's assertion that aesthetic judgment is formed subjectively as a claim for universal assent, while justice prescribes the measure of consequences, which relate to the moral consensus of a community.)

In codifying international law as binding on sovereign nations, the Convention preamble attributes commonalities of feelings and aspirations of its contracting states – "desirous", "solidarity", and "animated by the sincere desire". The expedience of state personification supports the conceit of the civilized nations in world parliament, capable of engaging in moral and rational reflection. It operates to elide the messy relations that obtain between the national publics that legitimate government within liberal democracies, and the state-appointed diplomats and consular officers who are involved in interpreting, negotiating, and executing foreign affairs in contexts marked by both geographic and contextual distance from the development of national policy. Insofar as the "empire of law" is to bind the actions of sovereign states, it requires their voluntary agreement to certain limits on their conduct and those of their representatives, in exchange for recognition and participation in the society of civilized nations. This is apparent from the 1907 preamble also acknowledging that the parties agree, amongst other things, in "recognizing the solidarity uniting the members of the civilized nations".

The conviction that "it is expedient to record in an International Agreement the principles of equity and right on which are based the security of States and the welfare peoples", explicitly links two different principles animating international law at this moment. Firstly, there is the security state with its emphasis on managing social risk and the welfare of populations. Secondly, there are "the principles of equity and right"

– which refer to the discretion exercised originally by the conscience of ecclesiastical chancellors to ameliorate the application of the law, and later enumerated in the mnemonic form of equitable maxims. Under the aegis of the conscience, imperial expansion could be rationalized as necessary for spreading civilization, reforming natives, and making treaties of expropriation as evidence of consensual exchange. And in the event that this faculty is pricked or outraged, conscience seeks to enact retribution and restore justice. Kipling's 1899 adjuration for the United States to join in taking up the "White Man's Burden" as a sign of its political maturity, infers a sense of intra-imperial moral and gender scrutiny.

Elite liberal commitment to cosmopolitanism was frequently congruent with support for imperial expansion, as Uday Singh Mehta and Jennifer Pitts point out, in the context of the British empire.[27] Koskenniemi tracks to the last third of the nineteenth century, the "moment when the consciousness of European elites had formed around a cosmopolitan world-view, expressed in cultural and political commitment to what the lawyers called "*ésprit d'internationalité*" and projected in such institutional forms as the first professional journals (the *Revue de droit international et de legislation comparée* in 1869, the *Revue générale de droit international public* in 1894."[28] In the United States, at "the first ever meeting of the American Political Science Association in 1904, "Colonial Administration" was designated as one of the five fundamental branches of Politics."[29] Recent historical scholarship on the origins of international relations as a discipline point

[27] Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*; Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*.

[28] Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 3–4.

[29] Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 52.

out its development from discourses of "racial science", colonial administration, and the discipline of geopolitics. Geopolitics was influential from the late nineteenth century until it was delegitimized by its association with Fascism after the Second World War, and disavowed together with the influence of German *machtpolitik* on IR Realism.[30]

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the public of international relations and foreign policy coalesced around academic and professional attention to imperial relations and racial development, including issues like education, assimilation, civil service, colonial administration, eugenics, and comparative religion and culture. The precursor to its rebadging as *Foreign Affairs* (1922-), was the The *Journal of Race Development* (1911-1919), one of the first journals of international relations. Blakeslee's introduction to its first issue situated its mandate in a gap in academic and professional discourse: "it is hardly too much to say that up to the present there has been no widespread and serious effort to understand the world wide race problem and to determine the attitude which those who are advanced should maintain towards those who are backward." At various points, Blakeslee links American interest in these questions to its acquisition of foreign interests in the Phillippines, Cuba, as well as "our efforts to develop the Negro" and its anticipation of further expansion. He continues: "The United States has as fundamental an interest in the races of a less developed civilization as have the powers of Europe … In foreign affairs, the most important questions to-day according to a recent statement of our own chief magistrate, center about

[30] Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*. Also see John Marx, *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel 1890-2011*.

the Pacific Ocean."[31] These disciplinary formations can be seen to have contributed to the organization of nations based on their order of civilization, as codified under the Mandate System of the League of Nations (and continued in certain ways under the United Nations Trusteeship system) seeming self-evident, in the context of rebadging race science as international relations. According to Anghie: "The Mandate System established novel forms of control by creating in effect, new sciences of social and economic development that precluded the articulation or promotion of alternative systems of society or political economy within the mandate territories.[32]

4 Outline of Chapters

As Woodrow Wilson promoted a vision of global governance that embedded imperial relations of tutelage, he both held out and resiled from the promises of national self-determination and transparent diplomacy contained in the Fourteen Points. The British diplomat and husband of Vita Sackville-West, Harold Nicholson, was critical of the turn to transparency in the "new diplomacy", considering that unwarranted exposure would hamper the professional conduct of different stages of negotiation. The relationship between public information and diplomacy, can be seen to transform in different moments of the twentieth century, along with the political place of the private citizen in the bureaucratic-information state. To trace some of these regimes, we might consider the trans-Atlantic legislative fortification of "official state secrets" around the turn of the century; cultural diplomacy during the Cold War; and our contemporary culture of continuous political leaks. The debates concerning transparency in diplomacy

[31] Blakeslee, "Introduction," 2.

[32] Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, 182.

around 1919, I argue in the final chapter on Keynes, point to a concern with the agency of international public opinion. In *Economic Consequences*, there is an attempt to constitute the absent public that it addresses in apostrophe as an indefinite community of moral and political agency; one that is constituted through dependency on others, particularly of how the experience of ordinary life in imperial centers is produced by complex transnational economic interdependencies

The argument that Keynes presents against the terms of the Peace Treaty is that the punitive reparations imposed on Germany were both in excess of the terms of the armistice, and too excessive to be sustained without provoking European inflation and widespread hardship. Expressed in more general terms in 1932, his argument is that "debtors are only honourable in countries where creditors are reasonable. If creditors stand on the letter of the law, debtors can usually show them how little the law avails. Internationally, contract has nothing to support it except the self-respect and self-interest of the debtor." Concessions from the black letter obligation are necessary in order to accord with reason – both in international diplomacy, and in foreign creditor-debtor relations – so as to maintain the compliance of the obliged party in recognizing the international system. Keynes points out that the legitimacy of international law is simultaneously constituted in mutual relations of continuing self-interest, and dependent on an internalization of a system of values attaching to its ethical self-regard. Insofar as the terms of the Peace Treaty appear unnecessarily punitive, they risk being departed from and thereby rendered ineffective, merely promoting the structural alienation of Germany as an imperial power from an already unstable European political order. Keynes's appeal to the ameliorating effect of the conscience on the law proper, is principally a pragmatic consideration about maintaining the structure of legitimacy that

assures how nation-states interact, and that this is experienced – whether by civilians or formal state agents – as a sense of moral obligation that extends both to an international community, and as a relation to the self.[33]

Adams and James trouble the career of the Bildungsroman, by demonstrating that the maturation of the free individual accommodated to social citizenship is incommensurate with the form of justice in the international scene. They contest the fictional projection of conscience and consciousness incrementally from persons to states, to international organizations, and to the world, which grounds the legitimacy of a global order ultimately in the form of liberal consent. They can be read as excising the glib trope of the "comity of nations" in international society. In different ways, they dwell on diplomacy as the mediation of state authority, and as bound up in practices of interpretation, that involve how intentions come to be effected at a distance in the material particulars of a foreign context. For Henry Adams, the failure of the project of *Bildung* marks the turning point from the possibility of good faith in liberal internationalism, as ethical relations to the self become routinely co-opted by political ends. He lays bare the benevolent rule implicit in the trope of the "instinct" of empire,

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[33] In *Essays in Biography*, Keynes distinguished moral questions as belonging to either speculative ethics ("one's relation to oneself and to the ultimate"), or practical ethics, including economics and politics ("one's attitude towards the outside world and the intermediate"). John Maynard Keynes, *Essays In Biography*.
Leaving aside Keynes's underscoring of the distinction between the investigation of practical means and speculative ends, the formulation resembles Foucault's late formulations of ethics as "a practice of relation to self" that develops a "critical ontology of ourselves". See for example, Michel Foucault, "— Foucault, Michel. 'What Is Enlightenment?' In The Foucault Reader, by P. Rabinow, 32-50. Pantheon Books, 1984."
Both derive from Kant the conception of ethics as self-regulation, although where Kant situates this governing faculty in universal reason, Foucault stresses the aesthetic dimensions of a primordial self-constitution, and Keynes (following G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903)) in something like moral intuition.

while seeking to occupy a position of critical resistance to this, by fashioning a position of detached observation and elaborating the self as conspicuously useless to the immediacy of public life. (Reading Adams against himself, we might suggest that were he to suspend his relatively typical millennial anxieties about crowds and masses, they would afford a model of spontaneous precipitation into the *gestalt* of mobile political collectivities, in which he would find "uniformity in multiciplicity" (or to borrow Foucault's description of modern power, as "both intentional and non-subjective").[34]

My reading of diplomacy in Adams focus on its account of the rise of international arbitral tribunals, his deliberate examination of the rhetorical "instinct" of benevolent imperialism, and its ambivalent relation to the genres of *Bildung* and normative subjectification. I demonstrate how Adams produces an account of diplomatic history that shifts the focus from monumental events to accidental and intimate details. (Arguably, this is what led Louis Zukofsky to remark admiringly in an early essay that "Henry Adams dearly loved to show the facts bottom up".[35]) In the same essay where Pound claims that "If we are a nation, we must have a national mind", he reckons the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as marked by "the division between the temper, thickness, richness of the mental life of Henry Adams, and Henry James, and that of say U.S. Grant, McKinley, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover."[36] Both Adams and Pound evince a nostalgic pedagogy for an era before this segregation

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[34] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*.

[35] Louis Zukofsky, *Prepositions+: The Collected Critical Essays*, 2:93. 93 ; "Letter from George Santayana to Ezra Pound" in John McCormick, *George Santayana: A Biography*, 405. 405.

[36] Ezra Pound, "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument."

of the contemplative life from political action. Pound prescribes the Jefferson-Adams letters as writings that "ought to be in American curricula". This preoccupation for Adams can be traced in his earlier work - from the pseudonymous political novel, *Democracy: An American Novel* (1880), to "Buddha and Brahma", a poem he composed while travelling in the Pacific Ocean and addressed to John Hay, later Secretary of State during the high-point of American imperialism. In this light, *The Education* is a study in the private citizen obtaining a kind of paradoxical political efficacy, not through maturation into deliberative coherence and individual autonomy, but in elaborating practices of submission to a multiplicity of environmental forces and endemic conditions that shape modern life.[37] Here, scenes of diplomacy concern the relinquishing of the self as coherent, the source of heroic agency, or even as an intelligible unit of intentionality, as the necessary condition for effective modern political participation. It is framed in terms of the *hypomnemata* of antiquity, in the specific sense described by Foucault, of personal notes constituting "a material memory" which "must not be taken for intimate diaries", since "their objective is not to bring the *arcana conscientiae* to light."[38]

The treatment of diplomacy as a dynamic dispersed across everyday life is most explicit in Henry James's *The Ambassadors*, where the logics of delegated authority and consciousness that structure the narrative, take shape in the context of the attempt

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[37] Taylor, "The 'Phantasmodesty' of Henry Adams." performs a helpful re-routing of the critical scholarship on Adams, from the presupposition of Adams as "behind" the artifice of textual self-effacements, in order to attend to "the rationale for the impersonal, evacuated form of *The Education*" as predicated on an all-encompassing materialist determination in which persons and history are reduced to "forces".

[38] Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics."

by the protagonist, Strether, to accommodate the ambivalent registers of expatriate (and specifically, diplomatic) life that are sensed in a bodily way. The rhythms of professional and leisurely sociality are conflated in diplomacy, as for Strether, leading to conflicting obligations that he undertakes in representing Mrs. Newsome, Chad, and Madame de Vionnet. His mission to Paris calls on developing new modes of attention that allow for both his "wonderful impressions" in Europe, and the practices of interpretation at the heart of the practices of diplomacy: observing and dilating on details in order to extrapolate secret motives and the credibility of interlocutors, exercising tact in cross-cultural interactions, and even in interpreting the instructions that arrive by telegraph and their effect on the scope of his mission. The peculiar sensations that attend Strether's experience of the transnational rearrangement of the zones of intimacy, privacy, and publicity – whether in the awkwardness of his initial encounter with Miss Gostrey, or his different experiences of the European theater – are located in the body, beyond or before the cognitive apprehension of cultural dislocation. We experience Strether's self-consciousness as transformed in its proximity to "the Great World" – in which, presumably, the "Great Game" of European diplomacy is played, with its Metternichean intrigues.

In this sense, the novel foregrounds how the minutiae of sensations, bodily comportment, the regulation of proximities, and categories of thought, are subject to transformation by external stimuli. Strether's experience of new possibilities in expatriation and in Little Bilham's interstitial existence, are catalyzed by his detachment from the familiarities of cultural citizenship. Strether's assumption of the creative risks of interpretation and translation, that are central to the work of embassy, that is, to establish approximations between different languages and spheres of value that allow

for negotiation (monetary, aesthetic, moral, sentimental, the accumulation of impressions, the value of a collection as more than the sum of its parts). It suggests that the diplomatic activities of interpreting and translation and making equivalences, are more broadly constitutive of everyday modern life. In a general sense, James's novel points to how the structures of social relations and delegated responsibility, implicit in modern professional work, not only operate in disciplining our capacity for self-regulation, but are central to our experience of ourselves as modern self-regulating subjects within chains of delegated authority and consciousness.

Strether takes up the exposure to precarity that he paradoxically understands as necessary for self-determining life. Notably, he reflects in the concluding scene on the maxim guiding him actions in the whole affair, in terms of "being seen not to have got anything out of it". This obligation converges with the self-imposed duty of the Roman envoys sent to King Ptolemy to deliver any gifts to the public treasure, which Valerius Maximus records and attributes to their decision that "no reward ought to be derived by the individual from public service". The Roman envoy C. Fabricius Luscinus who refused gifts offered by the Epirot king Pyrrhus in 280 B.C. is, said to be "the classical model of incorruptibility."[39] In refusing Miss Gostrey's "generous offer of care", Strether deliberately disgorges any advantage that would appear to obtain from his public life as an ambassador of sorts. James enacts a peculiar series of reversals here: Strether turns from Mrs. Newsome's ambassador, to acting on behalf of Madame de Vionnet in presenting her case before the former; Strether's capacity for self-

[39] Gillett, "Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533 by Andrew Gillett," 100.

determination appears to be premised on exposure to his own non-sovereignty (returning to certain dispossession and ostracizing); and his self-authorship in the formulation of a maxim that allows his actions to cohere, is couched in terms of an *esprit de corps* that stretches to Roman antiquity. Here, James rejects the *telos* of mature self-determination as a reconciliation with the social world, for Strether's avowal of his responsibility to return, also implies a return to social abandonment and financial dispossession. Notably, it is not that Strether commits a betrayal in *fact*, since the letter of his mission is complied with once Chad is restored to Woollett, but is a betrayal of the spirit which originates in a concatenation of material practices spanning the minutiae of sensory perception, to his creative exercise of exegetical and social interpretation in elaborating his mission and instructions. By doing so, Strether demonstrates the potential reversibility of any mediation that undergirds his role as ambassador, yet still remains discreet to the end about the "official secrets" of Woollett, such as its notoriously mysterious ordinary article of manufacture.

Both *The Ambassadors* and *The Education* rout the problem of the conscience of empire through the modulations of shame that accompany the self-consciousness of inadequacy, and foreground the relation to the self as a specific problem constituted in and through writing. They proceed to investigate the scope and basis for practices of diplomacy to activate certain possibilities for self-transformation (for James's protagonist, it is a question of the conditions for and prospects of creative self-fashioning in his autumnal years; for Adams it is a matter of holding the experience of insufficiency alongside a passive surrender). James calls attention to how structures of diplomacy register in expatriate experience, and mundane social relations, thereby making diplomacy ordinary by treating it as a dispersed set of disciplines and practices

across the field of social and subjective experience. In contrast, Adams figures the intimate and instinctual life of imperial diplomacy in its official and evental mode, on the same plane as ordinary affects, playing out inter-subjectively, and in the corporeal and sensory registers, rather than being the outcome of subjective cognition and intention. For Adams, this shuttling takes the form of the paradox of achieving political effectivity on the condition of submission rather than heroic action. Similarly, Keynes displaces heroic agency as the driver of political history in this moment, concluding that "the near destiny of Europe is no longer in the hands of any man. The events of the coming year will not be shaped by the deliberate acts of statesmen, but by hidden currents, flowing continually beneath the surface of political history, of which no one can predict the outcome. In one way only can we influence these hidden currents, -- by setting in motion those forces of instruction and imagination which change *opinion*."

Each of these textual objects engage in the experiment of writing as the basis for modes of ethical self-elaboration. For James, Strether's self-authoring of the maxim retrospectively recasts his narrative agency; Adams engages in the training of the perceptions to attend to the optic of the environmental rather than the evental; and Keynes apostrophizes the conscience of an incipient international public opinion, not as an essence that can be possessed in advance, but as the effect it has in consolidating the legitimacy of an international system of creditor and debtor states. The circulation of texts also bears on these issues. In the carefully managed process of editing and circulation of *The Education*, Adams attempts to elicit the intimacy of the coterie by insisting on the tactility of personal transmission and limited circulation, even/especially in matters that pertain to international politics. This "tactful" ploy of narrating matters of international politics in the order of an intimate or familial affair is

underscored by modes of circulation that assume the particular form of the diplomatic address: the discreetly folded note that simultaneously keeps out and attracts prying eyes. The strategic initial publication of *The Ambassadors* in serialized form is an atypical endeavor for the *North American Review* (which had not previously included serialized fiction), and whose concerns especially around the turn of the century was centered on international political affairs. *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* was a bestseller on its publication in 1919 and translated into twelve languages within six months, at the end-point of the extraordinary rise in frequency of the Anglophone use of "diplomacy". Keynes had just resigned from the British legation to the Peace Conference, in order to engage in "enlarging and instructing men's hearts and minds" by writing this tract, which opines that "the solidarity of man is not a fiction."

Chapter One: Ethics

Henry Adams and The Education of Imperial Character

This Chapter is in three parts. Part 1 situates *The Education of Henry Adams* as a response to the historical context of U.S. imperialism and its legitimating idioms that propose various institutional responses for managing the nation's increasing dependence on global markets. Specifically, I draw out the allusive critique of imperial character-formation that the text enacts, firstly in the narrative demurral from the models propose by Kipling and Roosevelt, and secondly, in figuring a commitments to anachronism and immature modes of complaint as simultaneously an aesthetic and a political style. An influential body of critical readings interpret the indirectness of Adams's protests against Hay's politics in the text as ultimately indicative of its complicity in U.S. imperialism. Part 2 revises these readings to contend that the stylistic ambivalence and reticences in the text enacts a critique of imperial formulations of value, civilization, and character-building, focusing on an extended passage in the text concerning "the value of archipelagoes" in which Adams references his travels in the South Seas. Part 3 develops this treatment of textual ambivalence to think about duplicitous form in *The Education*, specifically its adaptation of both the genres of the autobiographical Bildungsroman and of diplomatic history, and mimicry of the popular discourse of the pedagogy of the will. I consider how the text intervenes in both the model of self-emergence linked to national-emergence offered in the Bildungsroman, and the formulas of significant action assumed in diplomatic history.

John Carlos Rowe and Yunte Huang make a compelling case for thinking about imperialism in reading *The Education*, especially noting its narrative evasions and stylistic ambivalences in the later chapters concerning U.S. diplomacy after the Spanish-

American War.[1] Rowe builds on Richard Drinnon's suggestive naming of Adams within a genealogy of American imperialism, and underscores his close friendship with John Hay. Hay, as Secretary of State under both McKinley and Roosevelt in what Drinnon dubs the "new empire of 1900," is the primary architect of an "Anglo Saxon alliance" coordinating British and U.S. imperial power through the Open Door policy.[2] Rowe claims that the rhetorical circumlocutions and conspicuous narrative gaps of the last third of *The Education*, and its staging of a retreat from public life, are symptoms of Adams's complicity with Hay's diplomacy in the transition of U.S. imperialism from geographic to market expansion. For Rowe, "Adams's theorizing is performed in all good faith as the intellectual complement to the imaginative work of the new foreign policy represented by Hay."[3] In a suggestive response to these textual "strategies of rhetorical suppression and containment," Huang reads Adams's Pacific travel writings alongside *The Education* to problematize its tropes of belatedness and boredom, and its apparently dismissive valuation of orality and of Pacific archipelagos.

While drawing on their conjunction of themes and texts, I substantially revise these readings of Adams's engagement with imperialism in *The Education* in this chapter. I push against the tendency to account for the stylized registers of immature complaint, expressive reticence, and calculated ambivalence in Adams as simply compliance with imperialism. Rather, I make a case for reading the registers of political muting or wavering in *The Education* as a citation of the duplicitous speech of

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[1] Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S Imperialism*; Huang, *Transpacific Imaginations*.

[2] Drinnon, *Facing West*.

[3] Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S Imperialism*, 181.

diplomacy, conspicuously leaning on tactics of textual mimicry, equivocal hesitation, and straddling the public/private distinction. Subsequently, I show how this leads the *The Education* to pose a set of challenges to imperial assumptions about aesthetic self-formation, the progress of civilization, and significant action.

As a self-described "stable-companion to statesmen," Adams offers an intimate view of the conduct of American diplomacy in *The Education*.[4] He describes the disruptive social and political transition from the 18th century settler colonial influences of Adams's privileged childhood in Quincy and Boston, to the rise of U.S. imperialism around the turn of the twentieth century. The autobiographical narrative framed in the third person occasionally figures its protagonist Henry as a manikin, which the author's preface suggests facetiously, forms a model from which a scheme of useful education might be deduced to bridge the two milieus. Each chapter proceeds chronologically to more or less map the life of Henry Adams onto the historical emergence of the United States as a global power. A conspicuous gap of twenty years divides the diegesis, omitting among other biographical details, the entirety of Adams's married life and the suicide of his wife, Marian Hooper Adams, and his Pacific travels. There is a narrative parallel in his early role as the unofficial personal secretary to his father, Lincoln's appointment as Minister to Engand during the U.S. Civil War, and in his later seat at the London table of his close friend, John Hay at the time that Hay was McKinley's Ambassador to England following the Spanish-American War.

From the early Legation under Minister Adams, Henry retrospectively pieces together an account of diplomatic events from the personal letters and biographies of

[4] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 391.

Palmerstone and Gladstone, in a failed attempt to account for the rationality of the state in modern diplomacy. Instead, the diplomatic history unfolds as a series of misunderstandings, accidents, and delays, in which Henry discovers that each of these distinguished agents of state all proceeded on entirely mistaken assumptions. Henry's "education in diplomacy" from the Civil War episode amounts to a disillusionment with *raison d'état* – that is, the justification of the expediency of state actors as directed towards the rational pursuit of its preservation and expansion – which Paul Bové has persuasively described as part of the text's broader concern with the belatedness of intellectual concepts as responses to the present.[5]

The narrative is structured around historical events leading up to two significant developments in diplomacy. The first is the Alabama Claims, which establishes the accountability of sovereign nations in international arbitration. Following the Civil War, the U.S. successfully brought the Alabama Claims against Britain, alleging that Britain had abandoned its neutrality by selling warships to the Confederates. While Lord Russell initially refused arbitration of the claims in 1865, asserting that the British government were the "sole custodians of their own honor," the case was eventually settled by the British agreeing to pay substantial monetary damages.[6] The case stood for the proposition that sovereign nations could be held accountable to international tribunals, propelling the codification and development of international law, eventually leading to the Hague Convention of 1899, and setting up the Permanent Court of

[5] Bové, "Giving Thought to America."

[6] Hyde, *International Law*, 20.

Arbitration.[7] The second is Hay's Open Door policy and Euro-American coordination in trade liberalization, developed in his role as Secretary of State under McKinley and Roosevelt consecutively. These appear to link up as a triumphalist arc of the global expansion of U.S. influence. But as I argue in Part 3, *The Education* frames this trajectory in order to call it into question, by adapting the conventions of the Bildungsroman.

While Adams privately discussed various aspects of foreign policy at length with Hay, in *The Education*, Henry distances himself from Hay's politics claiming that "he had nothing to do with Hay's politics at home or abroad, and never affected agreement with his views or his methods, nor did Hay care whether his friends agreed or disagreed … all they tried to save was the personal relation."[8] Rowe interprets this as an attempt to mask Adams's residual complicity in the politics of U.S. imperialism, pointing out that on Hay's Open Door diplomacy, Henry considered it nevertheless a matter of "artistic skill" in *The Education*. On reviewing his personal copy, Williams James pressed Adams on the same point in his otherwise gracious letter:

> There is a hodge-podge of world-fact, private fact, philosophy, irony, (with the word "education" stirred in too much for my appreciation!) which gives a unique cachet to the thing, and gives a very pleasant *gesamt-eindruck* of H.A.'s Self. A great deal of the later diplomatic history is dealt with so much by hint and implication, that to an ignoramus like W.J. it reads obscurely. Above all I should

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[7] The Alabama Claims directly led to the establishment of the first international organizations promoting international law in 1873: the *Institut de Droit International* and the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations. Janis, *America and the Law of Nations 1776-1939*, 131–43. Sloss, Ramsey, and Dodge, *International Law in the U.S. Supreme Court*, 174, 308.

[8] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 440.

like to understand more precisely just what Hay's significance really was. You speak of the perfection of his work but it is all esoteric.[9]

William, a vocal opponent of U.S. imperialism, objects to the vague treatment of diplomatic history at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, and specifically complains about Adams's "esoteric" treatment of Hay's significance.

Henry's praise of the "artistic skill" in Hay's diplomacy wryly displaces the moral-political assessment for a technical one, where the text might otherwise have simply omitted evaluative criteria. On my reading, aesthetic judgement is transposed here not as a substitute for political critique, but turns attention to a shifting of the criteria for assessment in a conspicuous way. Referring to Hay earlier, the narrator considers the difficulty of salvaging a friendship when a friend enters political office, since the capacity for aesthetic deliberation is attenuated for this friend. Now in acclaiming the "artistic skill" of Hay's diplomacy, the text invokes this capacity as a practice of risking the attachment to one's formal coherence in the attempt to breach an ideological impasse. In the concluding chapters, Hay oddly displaces Henry as the surrogate protagonist, concluding with the year of Hay's death. Divisive political disagreements between friends are indeed metaleptically transposed onto narrative form here, where they aren't satisfactorily reconciled as such, but require the disjunctive narrative intercession of Henry's disinheritance from the role of protagonist, and the interposing of Hay as the proper successor to the grand historical arc of "the family work of … true empire-building."[10]

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[9] Monteiro, "Henry Adams and William James."

[10] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 437.

Adams's biographers agree that his political and moral views pivoted decisively around the turn of the century. Ernest Samuels notes that Adams's developing anti-imperialist views pitted him against Republican friends in Washington, including Brooks, Hay, Roosevelt, and his former student, Henry Cabot Lodge.[11] According to J.C. Levenson: "on international politics, Adams in the 1890s expressed views that were an unstable mixture of passion and reflection … on public policy, his changes of view were explicit, and the shift of his philosophical assumptions was conscious"[12] In a 1901 letter to his brother, Brooks, Adams declared his conversion to "anti-imperialism, and very strongly to anti-militarism" – the same year that he privately published *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*.[13] In contrast to the portrait of retreat into self-imposed political "silence" that the later chapters of *The Education* presents, scholars have noted that Adams was politically active behind the scenes, especially during the years narrated in the chapter titled "Silence (1894-1898), and particularly in his support of Cuban independence.[14] When the U.S. military government assumed control of Cuba after the Spanish-

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[11] Adams arranged for the "Editor's Preface" to the first commercial print of *The Education* to be signed by Lodge, which Samuels shows to have been written in fact by Adams – somewhat odd as a choice, given Adams's increasingly veiled contempt for Lodge whom he blamed for hastening Hay's demise. Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 1964, 559–60.

[12] Levenson, "The Etiology of Israel Adams," 586–87.

[13] "Letter dated February 8, 1901 to Brooks Adams" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1899-1905)*, 5:194.

[14] For instance, Adams anonymously drafted the lengthy *Senate Committee Report on Cuban Independence* (1896), and supported the Cuban resistance by hosting their representatives at his home in Washington.
The report was introduced by Senator Cameron (but which was ultimately rejected). Richard A. Samuelson goes so far as to describe this Senate Report "one of the lesser-known classics of American diplomacy." "Recognition of Cuban Independence."

American War, Adams's expressed his opinion in personal correspondence that, "as for Cuba, we have taken a foolish responsibility, and a discredited *rôle*, and there again the anxiety is great."[15] Which leads us to the question of why Adams elaborately stages Henry's expressive reticence and eventual recusal from public life in *The Education*.

These stylistic affectations in the text link up to alternate practices of resistance that mediate between different frameworks of value, ways of telling history, and of determining what counts as "worthwhile" action. Various lost political causes are conjugated in the narrative course of *The Education*, from Adams's eighteenth-century principles, to free silver as monetary policy, to his turn to anti-imperialism in the McKinley/Roosevelt era. Taking the claims of *The Education* as a record of failure in good faith, Adams's record of these lost causes constitutes the perspective of historical witnessing as a way of affiliating between possibilities that seem to be truncated under the advance of the real subsumption of social relations.

Adams courts the charge of hegemonic complicity by virtue of the disengagement or studied detachment of his protagonist. For instance, as I describe in Part 2, instead of policing the world (as Roosevelt sought), the characteristic gesture in *The Education* is the shrug and refusal to "shoulder loads" – to counter the nervous compulsion for ordering not with anything as heroic as renunciation, but with neurasthenic lassitude that at most leans into self-critical awareness of becoming complicit. In her account of "recessive action," "reticent assertion," and "uncounted experience," Anne Lise Francois takes up the forms of minimal or unpotentialized agency that counter the modern ideologies of improvement and self-actualization

[15] Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 1989, 329.

embedded in *Bildung*.[16] Whereas in the works that Francois examines "the labor of self-concealment and self-presentation" is ameliorated, in *The Education*, this labor is flaunted and thematized in the narrative dialogue between Adams as narrator and subject of autobiography. Much of the "action" in the text displaces the historical event to a background detail, and dilates the negligible or reticent actions of its protagonist.

1. Instituting Civic Discipline: McKinley, Roosevelt, Kipling

Considering U.S. foreign policy at the turn of the century, *The Education* troubles its rampant triumphalism, with the narrator ominously proclaiming that "the climax of empire could be seen approaching, year after year, as though Scylla were a President or McKinley a Consul."[17] McKinley, a vacillating advocate of imperial benevolence, oversaw the annexation of the Philippines, is correlated in this peculiar figurative sequence both to Scylla and a Consul. At first, this seems to affirm Adams's isolationism, in indicating an opposition to U.S. expansion based on fears about the national costs of extraterritorial expansion and the murky constitutional waters in dealing with the problem of incorporating racialized bodies disqualified for citizenship.[18] But key aspects of this passage complicate this reading. First, the reference to "Scylla" evokes McKinley as a predatory menace "seen approaching" that must be avoided by all around him. In particular, the imagery of Scylla within a narrow channel references McKinley's plans for an inter-oceanic canal through Nicaragua (which were

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[16] Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience*.

[17] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 441.

[18] See Eric T. Love and Christopher Lasch on racism and isolationism in Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man"; Love, *Race over Empire*.

eventually replaced by Roosevelt's pursuit of the Panama Canal), a proposal which sought to connect the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, allowing for greater integration of the West Coast and the Pacific Islands to the world economy.[19] The excessive chiasmatic structure folding the American present into Roman antiquity references the discourse of "*translatio imperii*" as establishing a line of succession from the Roman to the American empire. However, the passage mocks this triumphalist account by characterizing McKinley as an imperial President who posing a danger to passing ships, and an atavistic reversion to be carefully navigated as an inter-oceanic threat.[20]

At the Pan-Am World's Exposition in Buffalo, New York in September 1901, President McKinley assured his audience that international arbitration would prove the means for settling differences in the context of advocating reciprocal trade treaties with other nations to open export markets. After invoking the railroad and telegraph, he declared: "God and men have linked the nations together. No nation can longer be indifferent to any other. And as we are brought more and more in touch with each other, the less occasion is there for misunderstandings, and the stronger the disposition, when we have differences, to adjust them in court of arbitration, which is the noblest form for the settlement of international disputes."[21] This rousing testament to arbitral courts in international commerce is bold, since the earliest of such modern arbitral bodies appears to be the London Chamber of Arbitration founded in 1892, then less

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[19] Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea*, 136, 142.

[20] After all, the line is not "as though McKinley were Scylla."

[21] McKinley and Pan-American Exposition, *The Last Speech of President McKinley, Delivered at the Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, September 5th, 1901*.

than a decade old.[22] McKinley anticipates the institutional mechanisms that would be required having just overseen a dramatic period of U.S. imperial expansion in the Pacific and the Caribbean following the Spanish-American War. In *The Education*, Henry complains that "President McKinley's diplomatic court had become the largest in the world, and the diplomatic relations required far more work than ever before, while the staff of the Department was little more efficient, and the friction in the Senate had become coagulated."[23] Henry's earlier concerns about the relative diplomatic stature of the U.S. are tranformed into anxiety over the complexity of U.S. imperial diplomacy and the pressures this exerts on domestic political mechanisms.

The inevitability of global interdependence was evoked by subsequent presidents along with their diplomatic proposals for managing the shift in American foreign policy towards rapid market engagement. Where McKinley proposed to refer international differences to the relatively new modern commercial arbitral bodies, Woodrow Wilson envisages the state itself actively intervening to promote the commercial interests of its manufacturers and financiers towards the maximal utilization of the globe. In a lecture at Columbia University in 1907, Wilson declared that,

> Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed must be battered down … Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of

[22] RT. Hon, Michael Kerr, "London Court of International Arbitration 1892-1992."
[23] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 467.

> unwilling nations be outraged in the process. Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused. Peace itself becomes a matter of conference and international combinations.[24]

On this view, the role of the state is to safeguard the exploitative concessions obtained from "unwilling nations", and to secure the world as a market by all expedient means including colonial expansion and diplomatic conference.

In a similar tone, Roosevelt declared to Congress in 1902 that, "more and more, the increasing interdependence and complexity of international political and economic relations render it incumbent on all civilized and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world."[25] Here, Roosevelt conceives global policing as the responsibility of the civilized, as those best able to respond to global complexity. Two years later, in response to the Venezuela Crisis, Roosevelt asserted the readiness of the U.S. to exercise its "international police power" to intervene by military force in the case of vulnerable or unstable states in the region to pre-empt occupation by Europe.[26] His successor, Taft's "dollar diplomacy" links Roosevelt's interventionist policing especially in Central America and Asia, with the view that expanding overseas financial investments would cultivate global stability (in an updated version of the *doux-commerce* thesis).

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[24] 1907 Lecture at Columbia University by Woodrow Wilson. Cited in Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 72.

[25] Theodore Roosevelt, "Annual Message to the Congress of the U.S.A. (December 2 1902)" as cited in Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt*, 127.

[26] Theodore Roosevelt, "1904 State of the Union Address."

Across these statements by U.S. political leaders, we see various institutional mechanisms being prescribed to regulate the political and social instabilities brought about by the interdependence of global economies at the turn of the century, whether in the form of McKinley's courts of arbitration, Roosevelt's policing of the world, Taft's foreign investment markets, or Wilson's conference and combinations. Casper Sylvest observes of Victorian political thought that in the period before the First World War there was a perceptible shift in early liberal internationalism, from moral arguments (that "stress the need for a new international consciousness that … is seen to ensure progress, order and, continuity internationally") to institutional arguments (where "a lack of moral progress must be substituted with institutional mechanisms").[27] In this context of pervasive international institutionalism, the emphasis of U.S. foreign policy at the turn of the century moved away from territorial expropriation in the European model, towards trade liberalization of key export markets primarily to absorb the rapid increase in post-bellum industrial production. G. John Ikenberry points out that in American foreign policy, "the liberal emphasis of trade … is a far cry from starry-eyed idealism … showing up as early as the 1890's as part of the rationale for the American Open Door policy."[28] The key architect of the Open Door policy was John Hay, Secretary of State under both McKinley and Roosevelt, now credited for shrewdly steering the expansion of American influence. Hay's diplomatic notes promulgated among the six imperial powers the multilateral recognition of mutual market access

[27] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880-1930*, 266, 268.

[28] G. John Ikenberry, "Why Export Democracy?: The 'Hidden Grand Strategy' of American Foreign Policy'."

with respect to their "spheres of influence," thereby forestalling the territorial and administrative partition of China.[29] The Open Door policy, led by a coalition of politicians, commercial interests, and intellectuals, "became the strategy of American foreign policy for the next half-century," according to Williams.[30]

Despite their temperamental differences, Adams and Roosevelt shared a strain of late-nineteenth century antipathy towards the attenuating effects of industrial capital on civic life. Against the picture of American empire as primarily motivated by economic expansion, Hofstadter underscores Roosevelt's scornful dismissal of "the hesitancy of big business to launch upon a martial adventure at a time when prosperity was returning." Roosevelt justifies military adventure firstly as being in the interests of humanity, and secondly, for "the benefit done to our people by giving them something to think of which isn't material gain, and especially the benefit done our military force by trying both the Army and Navy in actual practice."[31] He looks to the production of a virile populace of capable imperial adventurers and administrators. As Amy Kaplan argues in her insightful study of the popular historical novel of the 1890's, Roosevelt's advocacy of robust corporeal rejuvenation sought to substitute the physical

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[29] Discounted in recent years as a futile and naïve gesture in a world of harsh reality, the Open Door Policy was in fact a brilliant strategic stroke, which led to the gradual extension of American economic and political power throughout the world." Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 45. "
More recently, Bruce Cumings characterized the open door as a "master stroke … because it expressed concretely and metaphorically and American way of looking at the world, a *weltanschauung*, instantly relegating the old world imperialism to a place in and of the past." Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea*, 139.

[30] Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 45.

[31] Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 276–77.

embodiment of American masculinity for the geographic disembodiment of American nationalism in extending beyond contiguous territory.[32] His designation of war as simply the opportunity to try military drills in "actual practice" – not the end of training, but simply a component of civic development that moves beyond financial self-interest. Aspects of this are shared by avowed pacifists such as H.G. Wells and William James, who admitted the need for a substitute to the martial virtues of honor, disinterestedness, and service, but who instead propose that these civic feelings can be instilled outside the context of war.[33]

Kipling infamously adjured Roosevelt to take up the "White Man's Burden," as a moral obligation to extend civilization through imperialism, characterized as a disagreeable but necessary duty to be assumed heroically as a matter of white racial superiority. In *The Education*, Henry makes the company of Kipling while returning from the South Seas via Europe, on board the Teutonic ("an ocean steamer of the new type"), by virtue of their mutual friend, Henry James. Kipling, who is "on his wedding trip to America, dashed over the passenger his exuberant fountain of gaiety and wit – as though playing a garden hose on a thirsty and faded begonia."[34] On disembarking, Kipling set for married life in Vermont, while Henry returned to Washington and the company of the Hays. The streamlined traversal of the Atlantic underpins a new alignment of British and American imperial interests, but Henry also feels "the old conundrum repeat itself" – a temperamental breach with Kipling's Englishness (as he

[32] Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire."
[33] James, "The Moral Equivalent of War."
[34] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 392.

had earlier felt with Swinburne and Stevenson). This apparently trivial episode of meeting Kipling ends with a vague note of disappointment, and in the next part, I show how Adams engages with Kipling's rhetoric on the burden of civilizing.

2. The Value of Archipelagos

The Education cites Roosevelt and Kipling jointly, if indirectly, in a subsequent passage that refers in passing to Adams's South Seas travels, and that concerns the imperial geopolitical reorganizations that followed the Spanish-American war. Accordingly, this passage is worth considering at length:

> He could feel only the sense of satisfaction at seeing the triumph of all his family, since the breed existed, at last realized under his own eyes … For the first time in his life, he felt a sense of possible purpose working itself out in history… as he sat at Hay's table, listening to any member of the British Cabinet, for all were alike now, discuss the Philippines as a question of balance of power in the East, he could see that the family work of a hundred and fifty years at once fell into the grand perspective of true empire-building, which Hay's work set off with artistic skill … this personal triumph left him a little cold towards the other diplomatic results of the war. He knew that Porto Rico must be taken, but he would have been glad to escape the Philippines. Apart from too intimate an acquaintance with the value of islands in the South Seas, he knew the West Indies well enough to be assured that whatever the American people might think or say about it, they would sooner or later have to police those islands, not against Europe, but for Europe, and America too. Education on the outskirts of civilized life teaches not very much, but it taught this; and one felt no call to

shoulder the load of archipelagos in the antipodes when one was trying painfully to pluck up courage to face the labor of shouldering archipelagos at home."[35]

The passage reveals a shifting ambivalence between Adams's effusive acclamations of Hay's diplomacy, and his guarded political disagreement. Its heady evocation of historical *telos* and hyperbolic sense of grand familial self-importance is abruptly punctured as Adams is left "a little cold towards the other diplomatic results," that is, of the Spanish-American War which Hay famously described elsewhere as "a splendid little war".

The "family work of true empire-building" refers in its modifiers to the classical notion of *imperium*, which it appropriates as family legacy, possibly set against Jefferson's moral mandate for foreign intervention in envisaging an "empire of liberty." Hannah Arendt's distinction between "true empire building Roman-style" and modern imperialism "which grew out of colonialism" is instructive here.[36] Reading Arendt, Karuna Mantena explains this as the difference between "aggregative or incorporative structures where legitimacy was framed by a necessary fusion of the domains of *ius* (law/justice) and *imperium* (rule/sovereignty)" which would "terminate in the foundation of a new body politic," and a policy that "consciously refused any path of incorporation or assimilation for its non-European subject population" and "severed any grounds for political and moral connections between rulers and ruled."[37] The short-lived historical purpose that flickers for Henry in this scene is extinguished in the

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[35] Henry Adams, 437. 437

[36] "Preface to Part II" in Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

[37] Karuna Mantena, "Genealogies of Catastrophe."

difference. The fungibility of British cabinet members visiting Hay's table is a conspicuous reversal of earlier descriptions of Minister Adams' legation, whose political and social ostracism in London had been keenly felt by Henry. It is also his "personal triumph" here in witnessing Anglo-American relations conducted on the basis of diplomatic parity (in contrast to Jay's Treaty), although there is some self-satire in setting this against the larger, unfolding diplomatic consequences that puncture this triumph.

On the face of it, Adams couches his position in the fairly conventional terms of isolationism, urging withdrawal from distant international entanglements because they would impose an unnecessary burden for the United States. Indeed, Adams's apparently glib dismissal of the value of the South Seas, and the "outskirts of civilized life" suggests a familiar Orientalist condescension, that as Yunte Huang observes, is complicit with producing the Pacific as an object of the speculative Euro-American imagination.[38] More forcefully, Rowe in what he describes as an "anti-formal close reading" argues that this passage demonstrates Adams's eventual commitment to an Anglo-American global order characterized by exploitative trade liberalization and informal empire.[39] But in claiming this text as a document that participates in the cultural history of American imperialism, my sense is that Rowe too readily abandons attention to matters of form within his stated goal of using "the text to gain access to a wider historical and cultural field of debate and inquiry." While Rowe rightly cautions against lapsing into an empty celebration of literary ambiguity, I think it is necessary to

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[38] Huang, *Transpacific Imaginations*.

[39] Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S Imperialism*, 16.

push back against the suggestion that ambiguity is necessarily empty, or that literary ambiguation functions to evade a critical politics.

Instead, these moments of ambiguity in *The Education* can be read as instances of what Neil Hertz elsewhere describes as "the pathos of uncertain agency," as a thematization of agency-in-question, and of intention which is not self-evident.[40] This uncertainty of agency is played out in various forms: in the author's preface which frames the biographical subject Henry as a "manikin" and "object of study"; in his (false) attribution of the editor's preface to Henry Cabot Lodge; and the substitution of Hay as protagonist. It is not quite accurate to characterize this as moral ambivalence, but rather a condition that Isabelle Stengers ascribes in a different context to a condition of the art of diplomacy, as "a culture of hesitation, the capacity of the protagonists not to confuse belonging and identity, that is, not to take as a betrayal or a manifestation of weakness the acceptance of a proposition that implies a modification of their habitual formulation of who they are."[41] In *The Education*, this hesitation in the work of self-reformulation is taken up precisely by reappropriating the charges of betrayal and the manifestation of weakness familiarly levelled to diplomats (and other rootless cosmopolitans).

This passage also focalizes what Eve Sedgwick designates as periperformatives – that is, the grammar of utterances that in contrast to J.L. Austin's illocutionary performatives do not make things happen, but instead "disinterpellates" the speaker

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[40] Neil Hertz, "Poor Hetty." This is in the context of reading the equivocal criminal act that is repeated in Eliot's novels.

[41] Stengers, "Isabelle Stengers 'Including Nonhumans in Political Theory: Opening Pandora's Box?'" 28

from the context of the presumed consensus that gives a performative act its illocutionary force, and consequently betrays it as the provisionality of a consensus. An example that Sedgwick gives of this is "I wish I had dared you," where the the speaker's inaction directs attention to the broader spatial field in which the conditions for the performative dare are secured, such as common assumptions held by its addressee and witnesses. The periperformative aspects of this passage from *The Education* cluster around the illocutionary force of imperial diplomacy that declares war and makes treaties.

The subjunctive past tense evokes the impossible desire for a retrospective freedom, that takes form in the present as a failure of both moral obligation and moral courage: "he would have been glad to escape the Philippines," "one felt no call to shoulder the load," "trying painfully to pluck up courage". In each instance, Henry functions as the compulsory witness to the scene of diplomacy (much like that of the marriage ceremony), and registers his disinterpellation from the very actions that he is spectator to, especially in his excessive insistence on spatial proximity ("at last realized under his own eyes"). Anna Poletti suggestively points out that what is at stake in seeking out the formal possibility of periperformative life-writing might be a critique of "the terms under which an "I" is constituted, considered trustworthy, and can speak."[42] Indeed, we should note here Henry's hapless evaporation of concrete agency in the sequence of emotional constriction ("he could feel only the sense of satisfaction at seeing"), the abstraction of the sensible ("he felt a sense of possible purpose working"), the perspective of flattened temporality ("the family work of a hundred and fifty years

[42] Anna Poletti, "Periperformative Life Writing: Queer Collages," 367.

at once fell into the grand perspective of true empire-building"), and the conspicuous passive ("left him a little cold").

Here, we might also think about Sedgwick's association of the periperformative with camp and "the cathartic fascination with ventriloquist forms of relation."[43] The citational punch of this passage connects implicitly Kipling's language of imperial benevolence (loads, shouldering) with Roosevelt's dream of imperialism as policing, in order to deflate the heroic, vigorous, dutiful, and altruistic national character that they each arrogate to Anglo-American civilization.[44] Where both Roosevelt and Kipling envisage imperialism as a moral obligation and the opportunity through this work for developing masculine character, Adams prefers shirking this labor. *The Education* assumes in a quite perverse way the reversal of these valorized character traits term for term – unheroism, lassitude, disobliging and cavilling, and self-interestedness – which betrays both this national character and the imperial project it seeks to justify. Where the performativity of moral courage is called upon to shoulder the burden of policing the West Indies and the Philippines, Adams undercuts it by ventriloquizing this in the distinctly plaintive voice of a shirker with a constitutional aversion to work.

In this passage, this notion of the moulding effects of work on the national character is taken up, to suggest that the labor of regulating in the imperial self-interest remakes a people to its detriment into an imperial police. The labor to be shouldered here is, in the first instance, the frenetic activity and cost of administering colonial possessions, but Adams also suggests that taking up the police work of surveillance on

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[43] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Cavafy, Proust and the Queer Little Gods," 66.

[44] Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire."

behalf of imperial piety effects a sclerosis of the capacity for democracy in the American people. The usual isolationist grounds against American empire centers on some combination of economic cost, xenophobia and the spectre of miscegenation, and restricting the influence of Europe – which Adams mimics but with a displaced effect. In *The Education*, archipelagic entanglements are opposed because the arrogation of the role of policing islands ultimately turns out, in the curiously precise terms of the test, to be "not against Europe, but for Europe, and America too." That is, imperial work here assumes the form of an activity that is not simply a matter of patrolling continental boundaries "against Europe" as Roosevelt proposes, but "for" combined Euro-American interests in the vein of extra-territorial management that is ultimately hypocritically self-interested.

The peculiar introjection of Adams's South Seas experience in assessing Caribbean-U.S. affairs, and his apparently dismissive valuation of Pacific islands has attracted particular criticism. Yunte Huang sees it as symptomatic of a late nineteenth-century American projection of the Pacific as an ahistorical site that offers a primitive reprieve from the frenzied activity of Western modernity, but that is consigned to perpetual immaturity. Lyons traces Adams's "aristocratic anti-conquest sentiments" in his letters which he describes as "written to influential policy makers (such as his close friend John Hay) on Island politics which ultimately defend Island sovereignty only to the degree that the Islands appear to be poor economic investments."[45]

This is an unfair assessment. To Elizabeth Cameron in February 1900, he writes, "I had looked with terror at the Samoan Treaty, to which nothing could have reconciled me in

[45] Lyons, *American Pacificism*, 132, 162.

principle, and which violated every profession of both our parties and all our administrations; but that arrangement, being agreeable to the Germans, passed without an opposing vote."[46] While he had earlier bristled at the intrusion of native political affairs into his travels, here he protests the Treaties of Cession imposed on various Samoan chiefs by Germany, Britain, and the United States, and that Hay signed in the Tripartite Convention of 1899.

Against these readings, I argue that the analogy that Adams draws between distant archipelagos recasts their value, by emphasizing how distinct ways of life are bound up in their geological particularity, rather than their value *to* the United States. By transcribing archipelagos in the antipodes onto archipelagos at home, Adams actively constellates alternative familial genealogies, and registers the press of adoptive intimacies in excess ("too intimate") of the sense of "acquaintance" as a casual and fleeting relation.[47] His peculiar extension of familial intimacy is foregrounded by reading *The Education*, not only alongside the two foregoing *Memoirs*, but as companion pieces in a tripartite series. In this vein, "the value of islands in the South Seas" assumes a different coding, and outlines a quite different argument against imperialism by inviting senses of value beyond the economic calculus.

The "acquaintance" Adams refers to in the passage functions both an admission of the relative slightness of his understanding of the South Seas, and his adoption by

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[46] "Letter to Elizabeth Cameron (February 1900)" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1899-1905)*, 5:91.

[47] As an aside, his letters and biographical evidence suggests that the adoption delighted him, and he treated it as a serious obligation in succeeding years, a point would have been familiar to many recipients of the privately circulated edition of *The Education*.

Arii Taimai that I consider in the final section of this chapter. These sentiments are made explicit in the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, for instance where Adams observes the untranslability of a certain concept ("Arii" glossed as kingship) which he claims requires the radical suspension of the entire European notion of government. "Every one who has tried to tell the story of Tahiti has had to struggle with this idea of kingship, and none has yet made it intelligible to Europeans. I shall not try, because the idea was so far from distinct in the islanders themselves that until one has dismissed from one's mind the notion of government such as Europeans conceived it, one must always misunderstand the South Seas.[48] While the valuation of archipelagoes draws from Romantic and colonial figurations of the tropics as lethargic and ahistorical, Adams also hijacks these tropes to question the speculative economics of imperial undertakings.

The ambivalence of "value" in this passage, is consistent with how other terms (like "education" and "civilization") are deployed both here and throughout, to broker the double bind of Adams's attachment to and straying from the freight of Enlightenment modernity. "Value" comes under particular scrutiny in the chapter titled "Chicago (1893)", in which Adams reviews the economic troubles that begin in that year and the charged political debates over the issue of free silver. On returning from the South Seas, Adams observed the devastation of the economic depression in the impoverishment on the streets, banking panic, the financial ruin of his friend Clarence King as a result of investments in failed mining and railroad ventures, and the alarming prospect of his own bankruptcy. While "most people dismissed it as an emotion – a

[48] Adams and Ta'ima'i, *Tahiti*; Adams, *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa, Last Queen of Tahiti*.

panic – that meant nothing," Adams suggests that the banking crisis points to a "mechanical force" that needs explanation in terms of being endemic to the capitalistic system, rather than simply reflecting an exceptional crisis of public sentiment.[49]

The victory of this capitalistic system is laid out in the sharply divided terrain of the debate over fixing the monetary basis, where unlimited coinage of silver would have led to an inflationary tendency to the general benefit of farmers and debtors, while the opposing interests of railroads and creditors were aligned with gold. Declaring himself for silver, Adams explains that "to him the interest was political; he thought it probably his last chance of standing up for his eighteenth-century principles, strict construction, limited powers, George Washington, John Adams, and the rest."[50] Moving between different senses of "interest" in the larger passage, Adams here counterintuitively claims "politics" as the autonomous sphere for the determination of value, resistant to both individual self-interest and conformity to majority rule. Politics appears as the projection and claiming of an alternative (and in this case, antiquated) way of life that is capable of aligning against economic self-interest. It comprises reading practices, relations of government, and a dramatis personae of political characters, as well as visceral sentiment and aesthetic sense. In contrast, economics is described as pertaining to the accumulation of wealth in the individual and national interest, while morality is deemed in this instance "a private and costly luxury" that invariably follows the interests of "masses of men."

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[49] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 412.

[50] Henry Adams, 409.

This fidelity to anachronism manifests as a self-forming practice in *The Education*, as the narrator observes of Henry that "he had said it was hopeless twenty years before, but he had kept on, in the same old attitude, by habit and taste, until he found himself altogether alone … he had become little better than a crank."[51] Describing of a set of dispositions that over time accrete into a type of obdurately marginal subject, Henry's persistence in isolation is not just set against the constative, but beside it in the mode of an imposition on the political present. This subject is simultaneously of and anterior to the political present, and this straddling of contexts is a textual motif in *The Education*. Although conceding that Adams's "sense of belatedness" might be "a deliberately acculturated mental state … [performed as] his staged protest against industrialism," Huang judges that insofar as it leads Adams to identify with his hosts in Tahiti, this is a performance that does not "originate in his real position in the world" and as such is better explained as a touristic boredom arising from moral insufficiency. [52] I offer an alternative reading of Adams's "sense of belatedness." Instead of a deliberate staging of a spectacle for political resistance, the affect of historical displacement sets up unexpected allegiances and sympathies that intrude on the disciplinary conscription of the subject into imperial modernity.

In *The Education*, Adams betrays the demand for allegiance to the given present and historical triumphalism, by taking up unproductive relations to the past, through nostalgia, anachronism, obsolescence and even antiquarianism. This staging of non-belonging within the present and recusal from being timely gets enacted in *The*

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[51] Henry Adams, 418.

[52] Huang, *Transpacific Imaginations*, 29–31.

Education as a procedure that is continuous with his skepticism of the mandate to civilize in Kipling, Roosevelt, and others. Hofstadter points to the stark contrast between Adams who "made a sort of career in bitter detachment," with Roosevelt who cultivated an aggressive masculinity, which he claims when "projected into public affairs, easily became transformed into the imperial impulse").[53] On this, Norman Podhoretz prefers Roosevelt's robust action-orientation and civic invigoration to Adams's treasonous self-diagnosis of "moral dyspepsia", which he decries as fashioned through a "nihilism, refined into a prose of subtly poisonous elegance and density."[54] The terms Podhoretz employs to criticize *The Education* suggest an intriguing alliance between its literary style and *ethos*, but runs quickly into the ground of a predictable and pervasive character psychology in describing Adams as ironic, neurasthenic, facetious, nostalgic, melancholic, etc.

It seems necessary to depart from the preponderance of psychologistic readings of *The Education* that examine Adams's conscience by regarding it as the confession of a given autobiographical subject. In the author's preface, Adams cites but also criticizes Rousseau's "monument to the ego", and shifts from education accidentally stumbled upon in the first half, to various registers of self-suppression in the latter. In setting the presumed intimacy of memoir against the detached objectivity of the third-person narrative, the self is staged in mock-memoir form where it is split to enact the self-stylization of Henry by Adams as narrator, in a series of metamorphoses from begonia,

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[53] Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 268, 273.

[54] Podhoretz, "Henry Adams: The 'Powerless' Intellectual in America," 12. Galling for Podhoretz, is that according to him Adams's "pose" of the alienated intellectual gets taken up by 'William Phillips, the editor of *Partisan Review*, in 1941 as "a symbol of our entire culture."'

to futilitarian crank, to his "posthumous life" – the last appearing in the late chapter "Silence" which reconstitutes Adams's political sidelining into a kind of cavilling spectatorship. Instead of character psychology, I have been describing the set of moves that the text performs as responses to its political moment, in recruiting practices of ambivalence, mimicry, duplicity, anachronism, truancy, and minor modes of complaint.

We have now considered how *The Education* phrases its opposition to the managerial techniques of modern government and specifically, the civic qualities it calls on to police imperial archipelagoes, as a response to Kipling on racial-imperial benevolence and Roosevelt on martial citizenship. Drawing on Anne-Lise Francois, I characterized *The Education* as working in the register of the deliberate depletion or recusal of the will, as a political style and a form of self-work, enacted through its repertoire of exercises such as mental excursions across disciplines and geographies, caviling about shouldering loads, reticence, and duplicitous speech. I connected this mandate of truancy from the activity of imperial policing to the form of *The Education* itself, with its adjustment of narrative focus from the fact of world-historical consequence to the privately lived detail. In the next part, I turn to consider how the text engages with the genres of the Bildungsroman and diplomatic history.

3. Duplicity and the Bildungsroman

Where the concept of *Bildung* proposes that the development of individual human personality ends with maturity as accommodation within an existing social order, *The Education* reworks the conventions of confessional memoir and diplomatic history, by theatricalizing memoir in order to deliberately suspend the confessional mode. The text is neither accounted for straightforwardly as a confessional memoir that brings Henry's conscience to light, nor a diplomatic history of American foreign

relations – two genres that have long organized critical expectations in approaching *The Education*. Instead, *The Education* presents an account of the encounter with the self as anachronistic as a response to twentieth-century social and political transformations. In the series of failed or truncated scenes of education it narrates, there is a refrain of stepping aside – not quite as an evacuation of the political present, but as a way of critically inhabiting alternative historical configurations alongside the present.

Up to this point, I have examined the textual ambivalences that characterize *The Education* in a general way, and it is useful to also reflect more explicitly on this, in order to think about the formal practices that accompany the text's overt thematizing of diplomacy. The doubleness harbored in the form of the folded diploma is the etymological stem of "diplomacy", where the fold and seal originally shielded the note from prying eyes and unauthorized alteration. In his detailed etymological tracing of "diplomacy," Costas Constantinou considers how theorists of diplomacy from Harold Nicholson to more recent figures have sought to suppress the history of its semantic errancy, for example, the obsolete sense of diplomacy as the monastic authentication of handwriting, as a concern with duplicity (which shares with diplomacy a philological link in the doubled fold).[55] From this, he considers duplicitous speech as an art of diplomacy – a theme which is, if treated at all, introduced with some embarrassment by modern manuals of diplomacy and diplomacy studies and reframed in terms of the necessity of discretion. In characterizing the textual ambivalences in *The Education* as enactments of duplicity, I underscore this doubleness of the fold that is founded on the bifurcation of its address and publics, and the implication of deception. But I draw on

[55] Constantinou, *On the Way to Diplomacy*.

duplicity here as formally distinct from the stark incongruity between appearance and fact that founds hypocrity or the outright lie.

In the first place, duplicity requires distinguishing between divergent interpretive publics and addressing both in a common form, linking them in the capaciousness of ambivalence. As the doubling of address or publics to which the ambivalence is calculated to play differently, in duplicity there is a structural possibility of a joint deception. Confronted with duplicity, the interpretive task for the reader is not always best characterized in terms of the paranoid decoding of the hidden meaning as the real one. Instead, it could also be the invitation to provisionally inhabit dual contexts of address – not just to characterize the different kinds of work it performs in each case, but to see in the duplicitous form the latency of these contexts to be linked through difference. Of course, there is an extensive history of diplomacy pursued through duplicity, through which discrepant contexts of reception and meaning were taken advantage of in order to extend imperial interests – not least, in the imposition of Lockean possessive individualism in contracts and treaties to expropriate native lands from indigenous occupants. But attention to the duplicitous form of diplomacy in the sense I draw on here bids us to think about how concepts transform across languages and cultural practices in different language versions of a treaty, as well as the linguistic and cultural resources they draw on to approximate something they assume to be mutual.

Stylistic ambivalence in *The Education* often appears just as this invitation to hold distinct contexts together, whether to mediate divergent interests, or to perpetrate what is always a potentially reciprocal deception. Duplicity is also evident in the calculated doubling of publics in Adams's initial circulation of a hundred privately printed copies

to "the persons interested" from 1906 (including Roosevelt and the Tahitian family who adopted him), and its posthumous commercial publication by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1918 in a version anticipated by Adams with an editorial preface that he wrote but deceptively attributes to Henry Cabot Lodge. The copies in this private circulation were sent to both Roosevelt and his Tahitian family, as well as institutional libraries. This invites readings of the text attuned to its discreet address by reconstructing the closed intimacy of the coterie, as well as the detachment of its eventual public address. In this regard, I push back against the ubiquitous scholarly tendency to regard *The Education* in the mode of Bildungsroman or as autobiographical confession – genres which it clearly cites but also theatrically overturns.

The Bildungsroman supplies a narrative model of self-development, in which there is a tacit assurance that the tutelary stage of acculturation ends in autonomy. This also furnishes the ideological basis for European imperialism by imposing a normative model of the development of the subject and of the nation.[56] Extrapolated into a universal model of human development, Marc Redfield shows that this aesthetic became complicit with the rationale for imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, in which the presumed immaturity of the non-West was cited in favor of imperial intervention until they could be prepared for freedom. For Moretti, the Bildungsroman generally encapsulates the symbolic form of modernity, by inculcating in the "free individual" the internalization of social norms as "consent." Drawing on this, Joseph Slaughter argues (*contra* Dilthey) that "the idealist Bildungsroman is not a

[56] Moretti and Sbragia, *The Way of the World*; Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation*.

generic homage to the centered subject or the autonomous human personality; rather, it is the novelistic symptom of a social anxiety about the perpetual vassalage of the human personality."[57] Through this, he shows that the narrative grammars of the Bildungsroman and human rights law correlate in the tension between their emancipatory promise, and their function as social technologies for the production of normative citizen-subjects.

Along with Slaughter, Pheng Cheah, and Jed Esty consider how subsequent adaptations of the Bildungsroman turn in different ways to critique the ideological baggage of this form, and specifically the normative picture of individual and national development that it assumes. In this vein, I contend that the repetitive disruption of the tropes of historical progression in *The Education* troubles the models of self and national development undergirding the moral and political legitimacy of imperial expansion. Specifically, I contend that *The Education* enacts at the level of form, the critique of imperial subject-formation that Henry directs against Roosevelt in terms of the production of a people as an imperial police, and against Kipling's racial burden of civilizing, that I outlined in the previous Part.

The narrative is bookended by Henry's birth and Hay's death, and tracks the emergence of the instititions of modern international law the Alabama Claims to the Open Door policy, as responses to the evaporation of *raison d'etat* as a convincing framework for the conduct of international diplomacy. Aesthetic education, private interiority, and the experience of a coherent self – all aspects of the Bildungsroman that assure the teleological development of private to public, and self to nation – come apart

[57] Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.*, 103.

for the protagonist, in the wake of global transformation. Bakhtin considered that the final form of the novel of emergence to be realized most fully in Rabelais and Goethe, where "it is no longer man's own private affair" but "he emerges along with the world and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself."[58] *The Education* clearly evokes this form in thematizing Henry's life from childhood, alongside world-historical transformation. However, as the narrative progresses, the narrative voice recruits a repertoire of minor modes of complaint, duplicitous speech, and fidelity to anachronism. Instead of a triumphalist telos, Adams inverts distinct conventions and tropes of the Bildungsroman to figure Henry in the vertiginous experience of his insufficiency in tracking the historical emergence of the world, stuck with inherited conceptual habits that increasingly lag in relation to national-historical time, and conspicuously abstaining from the kind of mature public life that the genre's conventions anticipate.

Through its form, *The Education* also plays out the increasing strain on the conventions of legibility as the narrative tracks the epistemological gap growing between the private self and the public world. In her reading, Nancy Bentley observes that "liberalism's structuring distinctions – the private and the public, the personal and the historical – give way, leaving world fact and private fact on the same plane."[59] Similarly, Louis Zukofsky had observed that "Henry Adams dearly loved to show the facts bottom up," by which he suggested that the method of a kind of documentary

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[58] Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism," 23.
[59] Nancy Bentley, *Nancy Bentley*, *Frantic Panoramas: American Literature and Mass Culture 1870-1920*, 251.

collage functions in Adams as comedic counter-history, in which the subordination of the biographical to the world historical fact is inverted.[60]

In its dilatory style and tropes of stalled progress, we might compare *The Education* to the modernist novels that Esty examines and connects to figures of youthful suspension as symptoms of uneven development. But the failed progress in *The Education* takes the different form of being always already anachronistic to one's moment in what it identifies as a "posthumous existence." This is not, as in Esty, the untimeliness of being stalled in adolescence that registers how the promise of emancipation with maturity is frequently withheld. Rather, Adams stages the condition of stillborn emergence through the botching of formal and subjective coherence in the the retrospective attempt to narrate Henry's life as development, such as the conspicuous chronological gap of twenty years, Hay's installment as substitute protagonist, and the haphazard scenes of "education" that are variously truncated.

The narrative lingers on Henry's overwhelming "sense of belatedness" – a sense that is also consistently evoked in Adams's South Seas letters that I discuss later. In Adams, this sense of belatedness becomes the occasion to produce a reversal and doubling of identifications, and courts the charge of betrayal inhering in diplomacy as the risk of over-identification with the host/other. On the subject of the Boxer Rebellion, Adams wrote to Hay in 1900 that, "as one who belongs wholly to the past, and whose traditional sympathies are with all the forces that resist concentration, and love what used to be called liberty but has now become anarchy, or resistance to civilization, I

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[60] Zukofsky, "Henry Adams, Part III: A Criticism in Autobiography." In a letter to Lorine Niedecker, he compares *The Education* to "my Bottom", that is, Louis Zukofsky, *Bottom: On Shakespeare*.

who am a worm – and trodden upon at that – am quite Chinese, Asiatic, Boer, and Anarchist…"[61] Adams's fanciful serial identifications with the supposedly uncivilized and his sympathy with their political oppression, stem from a fidelity to anachronism. Here, nostalgia takes the quasi-political mode of an affective allegiance opposed to industrial modernity. He embroiders a politics of unexpected affiliation between all the forces that appear to oppose "civilization", in a sequence that unites the figure of the worm as the destitution of bare life (*zoê*), to the Anarchist as its political form (*bios*). "Civilization" is treated as synonymous with the forces of "concentration" – a term that Adams elaborates on in *The Education* as encompassing the concentration of wealth in the form of combinations and trusts, of influence in the form of party politics, of mechanical force in the form of the dynamo, and of blocs in international diplomacy. Where *Bildung* projects liberty as being achieved through the civilizing effects of an aesthetic education, Adams here opposes civilization to "liberty" and "anarchy" (as different names for the disaggregation of concentration).

The word "Education" in the title points to the German Idealist project of *Bildung*, which as we have seen, is conceived as a bourgeois and imperial program of aesthetic cultivation and self-education, directed towards the abstract and universal development and maturation of human personality. This title and the author's preface of *The Education* seems to loosely cite Jules Payot's widely circulated and translated *Éducation de la Volonté* (1895). The author's preface to *The Education* asserts that the object of the volume is to "fit young men, in Universities or elsewhere, to be men of the

[61] Henry Adams, "Letter to John Hay dated 26 June 1900" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1899-1905)*, 5:128–29. at 128-129

world," resembling the address of Payot's manual to young middle-class European men engaging in intellectual work. According to Payot, the aversion to effort and the mental excursions of the dilettante reflect the mind in its ungoverned, natural state of fundamental laziness, and can be countered by the ordering of the self towards regulated activity. Against this natural state, Payot sets out "the conquest of the self" which is accomplished by incrementally struggling against sensuality, laziness, and vague sentimentality. This involves uniting "into a firmly organized system certain volitions and certain series of actions," through a careful regime of purposeful meditation and regular productive work. By way of contrast, Payot produces illustrations of the incapacity for "regulated persistent labor" among "uncivilized races," from "the redskins … preferring to be exterminated rather than attempt any regular labor" to the inability of the Arabs to "keep up the continued effort of organizing and administrating" the vast empire they had conquered.[62]

Whereas Payot sets out exercises to conquer and fortify the will against weakness in order to contribute to the "vital forces of the nation," *The Education* can be understood as posing a rejoinder to Payot by assuming dilletantism as an intellectual style, and the dispersal of the will as a political one. In its pointed departures from Payot as well as Roosevelt, *The Education of Henry Adams* moves across the registers of griping, shrugging, and grumbling, in which there is simultaneously a muting of the adversarial relation, and a refractory relation to the satisfaction of their protest, that leads to the compulsion to dilate and repeat while refusing to definitively specify their ends. Sara Ahmed cites Payot in particular, in pointing to the significance of the clinical and

[62] Payot, *The Education of the Will: The Theory and Practise of Self-Culture*, 4–10.

pedagogical discourse of the weakness of the will around the turn of the century, which constituted the will as a limited, internal resource.[63] Whereas Ahmed recuperates registers of dramatic expressivity (e.g. brashness, shrillness) as the political styles of excessive willfulness, *The Education* might be understood as working from the other end of the affective spectrum, with the muffling and demurral of the will.

Narrating the nation's emergence into a leading role in influencing the transformation of global institutions and diplomatic arrangements at the turn of the century, Adams murmurs in the text his dissent to McKinley's benevolence, Kipling's racial obligation, Roosevelt's policing, and Hay's politics. Aesthetic education, private interiority, and the experience of a coherent self – all aspects of the Bildungsroman that assure the teleological development of private to public, and self to nation – come apart for the protagonist, in the wake of global transformation. The text is bookended by Henry's birth and Hay's death, and tracks the emergence of the institutions of modern international law from the Alabama Claims to the Open Door policy, as responses to the evaporation of *raison d'etat* as a convincing framework for the conduct of international diplomacy. While Henry is described as a "manikin" to be fitted to the twentieth century in the author's preface, by the final chapters, the role of protagonist is displaced onto the figure of Hay. The "artistic skill" of Hay's diplomacy correlates to the formal innovation in *The Education* in substituting Henry for Hay, as the protagonist inheriting the "family-work of empire," since it gives the formal effect of restoring the trajectory of the Bildungsroman – aesthetic education as preparation for maturation into public life. In his off-handed abdication of Henry from the role of protagonist, Adams enacts his

[63] Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*.

dissatisfaction with the various models of plotting the self in the world and the models of significant action, that are offered by both the novel of emergence and the advocates of imperial character.

The preceding Parts considered ambivalence and indirection of language in *The Education* as functioning in excess of political quietism or moral equivocation. The staging of duplicity at the level of the phrase links up to the duplicity of narrative genre (autobiography and diplomatic history) to refuse the confession of a given self and the inherited formulas of significant action. William James registers both of these aspects in his thinly veiled complaint to Adams that *The Education* is a "hodge-podge of world fact, private fact". The text destabilizes the connection between self- and national-emergence that the Bildungsroman conventionally imagines. It produces a critique of both the character-forming effects of imperialism that Kipling and Roosevelt cite to legitimate U.S. expansion (in terms of racial duty, the instinct of benevolence, and martial values), as well as Payot's "education of the will" in the service of efficient imperial administration.

These observations develop my larger argument that in addition to its narrative concern with imperial diplomacy, the text also enacts a "recessive diplomacy" in affiliating between Adams's commitments to lost political causes and anachronistic scenes. This is accomplished in *The Education* by shuttling across discrepant criteria for valuation, duplicitously hijacking the discourses and genres that it references and mimics, abstaining from the demand for disciplinary coherence and mature politics, and staging the demurral of the will against its disciplining. In the next and final part, I turn to Adams's travel writings in Tahiti, to sketch out this affiliative work, since it is necessarily elusive, in its duplicity and reticence.

4 Mediations in the South Seas

It seems to me useful to delineate the traces of a recessive diplomacy that appears in Adams's concern with the materiality of different modes of mediation across various media (travel letters, printed volumes, photos, and voice), in terms of how they stage unlikely conjunctions between friends at home and abroad. In particular, I revise Rowe's account of the peculiar reticence in these texts concerning the reproductive image. Attending to different modes of going-between in (and across) *The Education*, I read this as a work of "travels/memoirs" alongside Adams's volumes of Tahitian *Memoirs*.

In his April 1982 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians, the New Left scholar of American diplomacy William Appleman Williams remarked that, "Adams was a superb oral historian long before that activity became popular and professionalized, and he provided some of the most revealing information we have about late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century domestic and foreign policy."[64] Williams made this comment in the context of turning attention to the rest of Adams's *oeuvre* as a historian such as the Tahiti volumes. Among other things these earlier texts bring into view the terms of his experiments in oral history, which are taken up in particular ways in *The Education*. This chapter considers mediation in the South Seas travel-writing of Henry Adams – across books, photos, and voice – as various modes of going-between in establishing seriality and contact, that complicate the political and ethical textures of *The Education*. This register of diplomacy as mediation supplements my reading in the previous chapter of the duplicitous arts of diplomacy,

[64] Williams, "Thoughts on Rereading Henry Adams," 11.

specifically in the sense of a doubling of address. Drawing on Williams's bold assessment as an opening, I characterize *The Education* as an auto-ethnography of American diplomacy.

On his way home through Paris from the South Seas, Adams assembled a collection of 30 volumes on Tahiti in English, French and German, and began work on *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa* (1893) (hereafter *Memoirs I*). Corresponding with Marau and her brother, Tati Salmon, and assisted by their visits, Adams put them in conversation with the compiled monographs. The composition of this work included consultation drafts sent between Adams and Marau, which permitted continuing collaboration, clarification and editorial approval. Writing to Marau Taaroa in 1892 requesting further information to complete *Memoirs I,* Adams entertains with her the idea of amusing a popular audience in Europe and America with a *risqué* taste for "local color," or at least affects this in order to persuade her to deliver unvarnished literal translations for scholarly accuracy.[65] On printing, *Memoirs I* includes a number of pictorial sketches of European views from historical visits to Tahiti interspersed throughout the 109 printed pages of the bound volume.[66] The opening illustration depicts the approach on the

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[65] Henry Adams "Letter to Marau Taaroa dated 1892" in Adams et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams (1893-1899).*: "If we can only make a lively story of it, so that our ancestors will be amusing, the more, the better. But to be amusing, the men, and especially the women, must be real Tahitians with no European trimmings. Nowadays in Europe and America, we are getting to like our flavors pretty strong. We want the whole local color… The memoirs must be risques to be amusing; so make Tati, I supplicate, translate all the legends for me literally, so that I can select what suits our time. I see no reason why you should tell the story merely to suit the *jeune personne* of a French pension."

[66] "W.W. Rockhill" was the career diplomat and orientalist William Woodville Rockhill and a close correspondent of Adams, who was McKinley's special envoy following the end of the Boxer Rebellion, responsible for the draft memorandum concerning the Open Door policy that John Hay adopted, and was later appointed Minister to China by Roosevelt.

beach in "Le Capitaine Wallis est attaqué dans LE DAUPHIN par les Otahitiens", in which Tahitian vessels approach from all sides with Wallis's ship bearing the Union Jack and another flag, with the Union Jack repeated in the top left. The narrative voice is ascribed to Marau, who references the story of Captain Wallis, only to assert reticently "…but I, who have lived in Tahiti all my life and know the tale by heart, shall not repeat it." The final leafs of the volume consist of a set of printed ethnological illustrations of native men, women and chiefs from New Zealand, "L'isle de St Christine", and Easter Island.

Almost a decade later Adams printed *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* (1901) (hereafter *Memoirs II*), which omits such illustrations of native types and characters. The text of *Memoirs II* intimates that it constitutes an attempt to remedy the absence of the native perspective in the history of contact by reconstructing and recording the oral history of Tahiti as told by Arii Taimai and translated by members of the Tati-Salmon family. In a striking passage about Samuel Johnson keeping company with a young native from Raiatea named Omai who had been taken by Cook to England in 1775, the narrator tartly remarks that "one would like to have Omai's impressions of Johnson's manners, but Omai had no Boswell, and left no memoirs."[67] Implicitly assuming the role of Arii Taimai's Boswell, Adams sets out to abdicate the perspective of the West. The book begins with a topographic map from Cook's survey reproduced at the top of the first page,[68] followed by a narrative tracing of island geology in the gestalt of a fish, and a

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[67] Adams, *Tahiti*.

[68] It replicates the map "The Island of Otaheite According to the Survey Taken by Cap. Cook Corrected by His Later Astronomical Observations" published by Thomas Chapman, Fleet Street 1769

flurry of place names that disorient the reader since Adams's phonetic transcriptions differ from those on the map. Throughout the text itself, Adams selectively quotes from the journals of explorers and missionaries, with his commentary that deriding their hypocrisy in claiming to civilize while destabilizing the local political equilibrium and introducing epidemics that depopulated the islands.[69]

By 1963, a scholar of the Pacific Islands wrote of *Memoirs II* that "perhaps no other work has influenced the writing of Tahitian history more than this early attempt at ethnohistorical writing by the great American historian" and laments that "in fact, so eagerly have historians seized on what appears to be "authentic indigenous material" that they have acquired the habit of correcting the great mass of voyage literature to fit the picture created by this work."[70] Other scholars have seen Adams's method in the *Memoirs* as anticipating later developments in modern ethnography, such as ventriloquizing his informant's voices in conversation with European history, identifying with alternative perspectives and systems of value, engaging in an extensive process of consultation especially on accurate translations, and submitting drafts to his subjects for review.[71] For example, Ronald E. Martin describes it as "an anomalous little book that had a very slight readership at the time, but that anticipated by eighty or so

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[69] For instance, see Narrative of the Mission at Otaheite, and other islands in the South Seas; commenced by the London Missionary Society in the Year 1797; with a map, and a geographical description of the islands. London Missionary Society: London 1818 (which includes the same map that Memoirs II reproduces).

[70] Niel Gunson, "Shorter Communication: A Note on the Difficulties of Ethnohistorical Writing, with Special Reference to Tahiti.," 416.

[71] See for instance, Martin, *The Languages of Difference*. Ernest Samuels also notes that this has become the standard reference on Tahitian history.

years the evolving canons of ethnographic method", and which "in spite of its negligible contemporaneous influence was a landmark in method and point of view."[72]

By looking at the continuities between the textual strategies in the *Memoirs* and the *Education*, the latter work comes into view as a continuation of the work of "autoethnography," this time taking American diplomacy as its field. Mary Louise Pratt defines autoethnographic representations as "representations that the so-defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations" and involving "a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conquerer … merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding."[73] In characterizing *The Education* as a kind of autoethnography, I develop the argument that the text constitutes a self-representation of American diplomacy, that, while collaborating with the dominant idioms of metropolitan U.S. imperial culture also infiltrates it with other voices, allegiances, and perspectives in dialogical engagement.

The abrupt transitions between the voices of Arii Taimai translated by younger family members, Adams as editorial collaborator, and quotations from the various historical accounts Adams consulted, are often performed in the narrative as a kind of merging. Instead of sustaining the fiction of transparent access to Arii Taimai's voice, this is fused in the text to Adams's editorial voice in a way that muddies the attribution of distinct perspectives. Martin's generous reading of its proto-ethnographic

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[72] Martin, 32, 66.

[73] Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone."

experimentalism ultimately concludes that it is "an unappealing, difficult-to-follow, ambivalently voiced text".[74] Arii Taimai's voice eventually assumes possession of the oral narrative in the final chapter, which serves as an anchoring of the preceding oral histories to the living present: "at this point, in Feburary 1846, begins my own story of how I interposed, as chiefess to bring about peace, and the submission of the islanders to French rule. I repeat it in my own words which are more lifelike than any that an editor could use."[75] Yunte Huang criticizes as Procrustean the textual adaptation of oral narratives into monologic written history, which he considers, remains insensitive to the particularities of oral tradition – in contrast to Robert Louis Stevenson's lively engagement with orality of Pacific languages. In contrast, Daniel L. Manheim suggestively reads in the surrender of the privilege of voice by Adams to Arii Taimai something that "implies a pledge of allegiance that is expressed by his acknowledgment and imitation of her species of meaningful action" and that "means refusing the formulas for significant action furnished by the European colonials and mercenaries."[76]

On circulating the review copies *of The Education* in 1907, Adams invited a different set of native informants such as Roosevelt and Henry James to review and comment, just as he had with the Tahitian *Memoirs*. Across these volumes, there is also an authorial impersonation of an alternate self. Adams assumes the *nom de plume* of "Tauraatua I Amo" in *Memoirs II*, being the Tahitian name that Adams was bestowed pm his ceremonial adoption by Arii Taimai. (More than a decade after his South Seas

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[74] Martin, *The Languages of Difference*, 66–90.

[75] Adams, *Tahiti*, 181.

[76] Manheim, ""The Voice of Arii Taimai: Henry Adams and the Challenge of Empire," 210, 231.

travels, Adams still continued to flaunt his adopted Tahitian name in personal correspondence). On the title page, this name follows the enumeration of Arii Taimai's landed titles, suggesting both that "Tauraatua I Amo" is her vassal or emissary, and that it is a co-authorial credit that assumes an insider perspective within the ethnographic field, and dispenses with the claim to objectivity.) Where the *Memoirs* shifts between Adams in the editorial voice of the historian and in ventriloquizing the subjects of memoir, this technique gets self-directed in *The Education* in the literary staging of the Henry in the autobiographical third person as a manikin for being fitted for instruction.

Moreover, the *Memoirs* and *The Education* each reference the genres of travel-writing and self-writing, appropriating various conventions ambivalently and with reflexive irony. Across his biography of Adams, Samuels makes a case for treating a number of different volumes that Adams privately printed and circulated from the *Memoirs* as "Travels". He notes that "the original *Memoirs of Marau* were a kind of offshoot of the extended philosophic "Travels" Adams had once proposed to Hay" and that Adams "even spoke of them as his Tahitian "Travels," and in the 1901 edition added the half-title: "Travels – Tahiti."[77] He observes that "beneath the title *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* there appeared the simple legend "Travels/France" and that this "subtitle carried its freight of irony also for these were travels in a very special sense."[78] Finally, he refers to *The Education* as conceived in the form of "Travels", since it declares

[77] Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 1989, 109.

[78] Samuels, 259.

itself to be a sequel and companion to *Chartres*, and details Henry's lifetime of moving across the Atlantic.

Reading the Tahitian *Memoirs* and *The Education* as a series brings out key resemblances. Firstly, they assemble an oral history of close friends and family (biological and ceremonially adopted) from an intimate narrative perspective organized around a participant-observer. Secondly, as noted above, the method of compilation involved circulating review drafts for comment by interested parties. Thirdly, they present dynastic political families as anachronistic artefacts to modern sensibilities, by also performing acts of diplomacy on their behalf. The Tahitian histories narrate oral histories to support the claim of a French pension, with Adams impersonating the memoir form in order to relate "family stories" both as a record of a vanishing way of life, and as a diplomatic claim. The acts of diplomacy in *The Education*, as I propose in the previous chapter, involve the practice of affiliating between hopeless historical scenes or causes as a spectator, keeping faith with alternative ways of life that are increasingly foreclosed under global capital.

In correspondence and prefatory material, Adams maintained that these volumes were calculated to serve an underlying purpose, which as Pierre Lagayette suggests, converts the volumes into a mere instrumental object of exchange where "epistemology became, in the end, the instrument of a local coterie" functioning within a "broad scheme of intellectual and sentimental barter."[79] In a letter sending a review copy of *The Education* to Henry James, Adams explains that its actual function was to stave off biographers after the grave, suggesting that James follow suit. Nevertheless, the

[79] Pierre Lagayette, "Travel as Episteme," 227.

authorial preface mock-seriously addresses the object of the volume in terms of an attempt to discuss "what part of education has, in his personal experience, turned out to be useful, and what not" in order to "fit young men, in Universities or elsewhere, to be men of the world, equipped for any emergency." To a written request for a copy of *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, Adams responded in 1905: "You shall have the volume if you want it, but it was not made to be read. It was made only for my brother Tati to offer the French Government as basis for a family pension. At least for that it was printed."[80] Here, the printing of *Memoirs II* is characterized as solely an adopted familial obligation to present oral memoirs as historical evidence in pressing for an administrative allowance, which seems to misrepresent many aspects of the text. Rather than reading this correspondence and prefatory material as indicating the real or exclusive textual purpose that Adams intends, what I underscore here is that Adams consistently intervenes in the context of reception with a staging of textual duplicity in posing a "real" function bound to its material circulation that supervenes its content.

In travel letters Adams admitted to being especially affected by this ceremonial act of adoption. Writing to Elizabeth Cameron, he describes that "the speech was, I believe, the proper, traditional and formal act of investiture, and conferred on me. To give it to me was a sort of adoption … The whole thing was done simply, but quite royally, with a certain condescension as well as kindness of manner. For once, my repose of manner was disturbed beyond concealment."[81] Adams's affiliative relation to

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[80] "Letter to Margaret Chandler dated 27 January 1905" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1899-1905)*, 5:630.

[81] Henry Adams, "Letter to Elizabeth Cameron" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1886-1892)*, 3:452.

Arii Taimai is ceremonially transformed into a "sort of" filiative one – the latter being, to quote Said "the closed and tightly knit family structure that secures generational hierarchical relationships to one another."[82] Significant for Adams, this matriarchal filiation binds him to a familial and social order that diverges sharply from the one he belongs to in Boston and Washington, despite also being rigidly hierarchical.

The impact of adoptive intimacy assumes textual form in the *Memoirs* as a recording of the "family stories" of the Teva clan handed down orally across generations. Reading them, Christine Holbo makes the insightful point that "the very sense of the mutability of family and state, intimate feeling and political action, allowed the realm of the family to become, for the historian, the "institution" par excellent: the one thing that, universal to all human societies and yet different to each, united "history in its only unbroken and unbreakable sequence."[83] Across the *Memoirs* and *The Education*, "family" names for Adams the social institution that brokers the relation of intimate feeling to politics, despite its culturally specific instantiations. While narrated in substantially different ways, these volumes each foreground the filial organization of history by reproducing the closed structure and finite membership of the exclusive family, but interrupts this with the affiliative relation of adoption.

Memoirs II sets out a partial and subjective perspective inherent to the genre of memoir, while still claiming for its orally recounted family stories the effect of evidentiary testimony to unsettle and modify the written historical record of Tahitian

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[82] Edward Said, "Introduction: Secular Criticism."

[83] Christine Holbo, "The Home-Making of Americans: The Invention of Everyday Life in American Literary Realism and Social Science, 1866-1911," 149.

encounter. The complicated family genealogy that it traces serves to ground a claim to inherit title and property rights, and also purports to dialogically incorporate the perspectives previously occluded in recorded history. The work of compiling the data for the *Memoirs* turned into a collaborative family project, depending particularly on the intermediary voices assumed by Marau as translator for her mother, and by Adams in creatively going-between his distinct allegiances as a professional political historian and as a Tahitian son obligated by filial duty to edit the memoirs of his adoptive grandmother.

The intermediary voice of the *Memoirs* as a dialogic re-scripting of written history turns into the dialogue staged between Adams as narrator and Henry as subject in *The Education*. There is also a resemblance in the way that *The Education* moves between the "private fact" of memoir and the "world fact" of diplomatic history, as a textual hodge-podge that flirts with inconsistent genre conventions. The anticipation of insight that these genres script are systematically staged and disappointed in the narrative, from self-formation in the Bildungsroman, to the confessional self in autobiography, to the encounter with the (exotic) other in travel-writing, and to the disclosure of significant action in diplomatic history.

In travel letters, Adams insisted on distinguishing this formal and traditional ceremony that Arii Taimai presides over from the exchange of names with Ori that Robert Louis Stevenson memorialized in "Song of Rahero." On its face, this appears to be a fussy distinction that Adams uses to claim as a competitive tourist the privilege of primitive authenticity. On traditional friendships with strangers in Tahiti, later scholarship distinguishes between the "the classical *taio* or friendship relationship fostered by the Tahitians in which names were exchanged and obligations of

brotherhood were honoured" and "a more serious contract entered into by Tahitians, particularly by chiefs, which appeared to be identical with the rites of marriage." As an observer, Adams seems attuned to these subtleties of form and value associated with traditional friendships with strangers in Tahiti; and as a participant, he commits to the alien sensibilities of his hosts and their systems of social regard and significance. Elizabeth C. Childs gives a rich account of the transactions of material gifts, social obligations, intimate letters, information, and influence, between Adams and his adoptive Tahitian family, drawing a complex picture of native agency and rationality in the "romantic repackaging" of their culture in order to manage Adams as a diplomatic and financial contact. She points out that Adams hosted Tati Salmon's visit to Washington in 1892 and introduced Tati at a dinner to Roosevelt, who apparently found him "a polished gentleman of easy manners, with an interesting undertone of queer barbarism."[84]

Adams continued to write letters prolifically while travelling in the South Seas, and these occasionally take the form of imperial nostalgia, as well as the essentialism of a kind of salvage anthropology in seeking to recuperate a "vanishing culture" – in seeking out cannibals and "old gold women". Renato Rosaldo describes letters home as "the exemplary genre for nostalgic discourse" and argues that "imperial nostalgia" is complicit in the civilizing mission by functioning to absolve guilt as well as to conceal the fundamental relations of inequality which secure the conditions of possibility for the ethnographic encounter. [85] But by listening to "the affective register of European

[84] Elizabeth C. Childs, *Vanishing Paradise: Art and Exoticism in Colonial Tahiti*, 230.
[85] Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia."

investment in friendship" (to quote Vanessa Smith work in her work on the model of Pacific friendship as *taio*), I consider her intriguing claim that "better friends make better cultural observers" in relation to Adams's letters from Tahiti, and the *Memoirs*.[86]

When Hay shared with Henry James some of travel letters Adams wrote from the South Seas, James remarked on the power of self-revelation "hitherto unsuspected in H.A." but qualified his interest by saying that he wanted "more account of the look of things – places – people."[87] Adams's reticence in capturing the figurative image in his travel-writing appears to extend from his fear of the literal image in travel photography. Adams travelled with the legendary Kodak box camera, the first roll film camera marketed by George Eastman only two years earlier which made portable amateur photography possible and removed the need for personal developing facilities.[88] Despite taking and developing a number of travel photographs, Adams constantly warns in the enclosing letters that they "take the life, color and movement out of everything".

In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron he admits to "photo-phobia" in the Pacific, explaining that "I hate photographs abstractly, because they have given me more ideas perversely and immoveably wrong, than I ever should get by imagination. They are almost as bad as an ordinary book of travels." Rowe insinuates that Adams's aversion to photography has to do with his "hatred of facts" and preference for "his beloved

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[86] Smith, *Intimate Strangers*, 293–94.

[87] Levenson, *The Mind and Art of Henry Adams*, 211.

[88] Retailing for $25 and the whole instrument containing the paper film roll was returned to a Kodak factory for processing for $10, producing 100 round images with a diameter of 65 mm.

imagination" functioning as ideological obfuscation. "Would the 'photograph' simply reveal what Twain insisted the Kodak did for King Leopold's Belgian Congo: expose the 'facts behind the story of ideology?'" – Rowe asks rhetorically.[89] But the analogy that Adams draws between the photograph and the ordinary book of travels takes aim precisely at the immediacy and literality of the descriptive image insofar as it pretends to unmediated access to a distant reality. For Adams, the image freezes what is necessarily a complex and dynamic historical reality into the hermeneutic template of a single temporal instance and spatial perspective, which then circulates as a travesty of the thing it indexes. The travel photograph at once suggests intimacy through the fiction of reproducing for each viewer the perspective of the photographer, yet the passing around of photographs sent home, and even more so in the circulation of commercial print photographs, came to be increasingly addressed to a promiscuous audience.[90]

The omission of the South Seas travels in *The Education* partakes in this aversion of the travel-image. In a letter to Hay refusing Hay's request that he produce a literary work on the South Seas, Adams playfully suggests a collaboration on "a volume or two of Travels" with one caveat. "Of course I should not touch the South Seas; I could not without betraying myself … My notion of Travels is a sort of ragbag of everything: scenery, psychology, history, literature, poetry, art; anything in short, that is worth throwing in; and I want to grill a few literary and political gentlemen to serve with

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[89] Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S Imperialism*, 193. 193

[90] For example, the commercial photographs by George Spitz of Polynesian scenes were circulated, and several formed the basis for paintings by La Farge.

champagne.[91] Adams's scheme as described there appears to have been realized eventually in *The Education* – even in abstaining from the South Seas in this book of "Travels" through an explicit omission in its otherwise studiously chronological narrative.[92]

He admits in travel letters of the lure of narrating his travels through the genres of exaggerated bourgeois sentiment (opera, romance), only to conspicuously refrain on the basis that it would result in comedy and constitute a self-betrayal. Early on in his travels, Adams wrote to Hay that, "I want to make an opera of the plot, with Samoan music, ballet and scenery; but I fear it would be *bouffe*. To travesty Polynesia is fatally easy … worth a hundred thousand dollars to Gilbert and Sullivan but I would rather see them drowned than let them have it."[93] Later, he gossips to Elizabeth Stevenson about a family feud that he discovers Marau involved in, remarking: "There is my Polynesian romance all made; and it is not Pierre Loti, *par example*! One could make pure Balzac of it, with red-hot Chili pepper added; but the story is too well-known, and the family too respectable to maltreat in such a way."[94] Chary of the late Romantic

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[91] Henry Adams, "Letter to John Hay dated January 9, 1892" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1886-1892)*, 3:589–99.589–599.

[92] Samuels makes a case for treating two other earlier volumes as "Travels. The first is *Memoirs I* since Adams even spoke of them as his "Tahitian "Travels," and in the 1901 edition added the half-title: "Travels – Tahiti."[92] "The second is *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904) since is subtitled "Travels/France" which Samuels notes "carries its freight of irony also for these were travels in a very special sense."

[93] Henry Adams, "Letter to John Hay dated 20 January 1891" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1886-1892)*, 3:395.

[94] "Letter to Elizabeth Stevenson dated 8 March 1891" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, 3:426.

exoticism of Loti's travel autobiography in its treatment of Tahiti, Adams reaches instead for Balzac's novel of manners as a model with its realism of social complexity, and then demurs out of consideration for the family. Instead of imperialist silencing or dismissiveness towards the worth of archipelagoes, Adams's reticence about his Pacific travels in *The Education* appears to result from his self-consciousness about the compulsions of genre in distorting his experience of the South Seas, and out of respectful consideration for his hosts.

Adams's self-described "photo-phobia" can be connected to his observation of feeling disgust while participating in the custom of gift exchange in the Samoa, as he observes how his gift of a moment ago is obliged to be alienated in a series of transactions among strangers that render it uncomfortably impersonal. In her book on eighteenth-century Pacific friendships with strangers, Vanessa Smith demonstrates how European accounts of contact describe contradictions implicit within the culture of intimacy specific to the Pacific of *taio* in which "an exchange of alienable property is predicated on an 'unalienable' bond forged through a ceremony at once arbitrary … and unique."[95] Huang interprets this instance of disgust at foreign customs as revealing Adams's cultural inflexibility when confronted with otherness. I revise Huang's reading by observing that Adams's recording of his own disgust is peculiar in two ways. First, rather than a moral-cognitive assessment, he notes it as of a visceral reaction that has caught him by surprise. Secondly, this feeling responds to the promiscuous fate of his gift retrospectively rebounding onto him through a reversal of the chain of contact, to link him to indiscriminate future others. The scholarship on the psychology of disgust

[95] Smith, *Intimate Strangers*, 101.

describes it as operating through the transfer of contagion by sympathetic magic (contact or resemblance) and is ultimately a concern with patrolling the self-other boundary.[96] In this case, it does not emerge as a straightforward refusal of cultural contamination, but ties into Adams's preoccupation with circumscribing stranger promiscuity. This appears in his personal correspondence including the travel writings as an insistence that the affiliative work in the transfer of the gift, or book, or voice is realized in the restricted or closed intimacy of filiation whether in the form of a coterie or adoptive family.

Conjecturally, this also explains the fastidious arrangements that Adams made for the original private printing and restrictive circulation of the *Memoirs* and *The Education* in the limited filiation of a coterie during his lifetime, as opposed to what he seems to view as the vulgar address of a commercial education .[97] But if this can be attributed to a neurotic aversion on his part to mass culture, it cannot be straightforwardly explained away as an undemocratic foreclosure of the literary public. Rather, he enacts a coy reticence in seeking to evoke a vanishing dimension of the personal relation while also anticipating how this eventually leaks into public circulation, by sending a few copies to libraries. Viewed as a series of privately printed

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[96] On disgust and the transfer by two principles of sympathetic magic described by Tylor and Mauss – by contact and by representation, see Rozin, Millman, and Nemeroff, "Operation of the Laws of Sympathetic Magic in Disgust and Other Domains."

[97] Explaining to a Professor Cook why he resists the popularizing democracy of commercially available print: "You see, therefore, why I should be not merely indifferent but positively repellent of a popular following. It means to me a crowd of summer-tourists, vulgarizing every thought known to artists. In act, it is the Ober-Ammergau Passion-play as now run for Cook's tourists.": Henry Adams, "Letter to Albert Stanburrough Cook, Professor of English at Yale University dated 6 August 1910" in Adams and Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Letters of Henry Adams (1892-1918)*, 6:356–57.

and circulated travels/memoirs, the volumes appear in their affiliative function, bringing into conjunction discrepant political dynasties, archipelagoes, and allegiances, through alternatively imagined iterations of the self. Discreetly juxtaposing the different figures and voices of Arii Taimai and John Hay in intimate contact within the same "republic of canvas" in his letters and across these volumes, Adams assumes the function of a peculiar go-between or emissary, whose characteristic gesture is of reticent assertion.[98]

[98] Samuels relates how when an enterprising young editor, Ferris Greenslet of Houghton Mifflin in Boston, initially contacted Adams to publish a commercial edition of *The Education*, he declined, fulminating "I only printed a hundred copies of that book for my friends. I don't know how you got hold of it!" Samuels, *Henry Adams*, 1989, 339.

Chapter Two: Publics

Proving the Note of 'Europe': Assembling Privacy and Publicness in Henry James' *The Ambassadors*

In a short story titled "Pandora" that fictionalized the regular Washington salon of Henry and Marian Adams with its cast of diplomats, Henry James observed that it "left out, on the whole, more people than it took in". The small circuit of Adams's intimacy conducted through letters and bound volumes lends shape to his diplomacy, but "tact" and "discretion" in *The Education* are too frequently synonymous with social exclusions and the limited perspective of the patrician. In this chapter I read Henry James's *The Ambassadors* as an experiment in the optic of diplomacy, both in the etymological senses of the double and the fold. The novel begins with Strether fixing the terms of his initial encounter with the "note" of "Europe", which suggests at the outset, the folded diplomatic note of a foreign power, with a nod to the commitment to discretion. As the narrative progresses, Strether Lambert shifts from his original mission to return Mrs. Newsome's son Chad from Europe, and the commission he later accepts from Madame the Vionnet, to make representations on her behalf for Chad to stay. This chapter builds the case for reading this novel through the political charges of embassy, specifically by taking up textual references to empire, and attending to the details of the novel's publication history and its titular reference to Holbein's painting of "The Ambassadors, 1533".

Scholarship concerning the ambivalent views on empire in late James have predominantly focused on *The Golden Bowl*.[1] Stuart Burrows notes that:

> As has been well-documented in recent studies by Margery Sabin and Thomas Galt Peyser, James, though he loathed the Spanish-American war and hated the idea of "US remote colonies run by bosses" (Skrupshelis 47), was fascinated by the spectacle of an emerging American imperialism, describing it as "a drama of great interest". The drama was particularly close to home in the summer of 1898, for John Hay -- U.S. ambassador to Great Britain and an important participant in the debate over American expansion -- had set up headquarters at the rented summer estate of Senator Donald Cameron, Surrenden Dering in Kent -- just seventeen miles from Lamb House. James visited Hay at least twice that summer, and, according to Bernard Richards, used Surrenden Dering as the model for Fawns, Adam Verver's country estate in The Golden Bowl.[2]

The Ambassadors, which was written a year before and published in the same year, peculiarly attracts little consideration to the geopolitical resonance that its title points to, perhaps because of misdirection by James's thematizations of the "man of imagination", moral consciousness, and the retreat to sensibility in its New York Preface.[3] It would

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[1] Notable pieces here include Freedman, *Professions of Taste*; Peyser, *Utopia and Cosmopolis*; Sabin, "Henry James's American Dream in The Golden Bowl."

[2] Burrows, "The Golden Fruit," 96.

[3] James, *The Art of the Novel*, 307–26. Written for the 1909 multi-volume New York edition of James's fiction, and first published in book form (with an introduction by R.P Blackmur) 1934 by Charles Scribner's Sons (New York).
Characteristically, a recent review in *The New York Times* portrayed the conditions of productions of *The Ambassadors* as one in which, "James, writing near the end of 30 peaceful

appear that if James was at all concerned with international politics in *The Ambassadors*, his views were close to Norman Angell's, whose 1909 pamphlet *Europe's Optical Illusion* argued that market interdependence in Europe had proceeded to such an extent that war between European states would be economically futile.[4]

In *The Golden Bowl*, Maggie Verver, in response to being haunted by lurid associations at Fawns after discovering the hidden romantic past between Prince Amerigo and Charlotte, "justified her private motive and reconsecrated her diplomacy".[5] Maggie pursues this by the production of the effect of being "good", "of not asking either of them to give up anyone or anything for her sake", and "frankly, a sharpness of point in it that she enjoyed; it gave an accent to the truth she wished to illustrate." Here, diplomacy begins with the cultivation of moral standing in the eyes of the other, and suspending the subordination of the interests of others at the outset. It also involves a pleasure in the rhetorical approach to truth, aimed at the revaluation of one's own position.[6] Where Maggie's diplomacy consists of techniques pursued in advance of her own private motives, diplomacy in *The Ambassadors* is a defining social condition of characters caught up within chains of social delegation across continents.

European years, could ignore the continent's distant rumblings in favor of a prolonged susurrus of sensibility." Mallon, "Book Review - Foreign Bodies - By Cynthia Ozick."

[4] Angell, *Europe's Optical Illusion*.

[5] James, *The Golden Bowl*. The term "diplomacy" appears in the text also to describe the relations between Charlotte and Maggie ("a new note of diplomacy, almost of anxiety … of intensity of observance, in the matter of appeal and response") and between Maggie and Amerigo ("the polished, possibly almost too polished, surface his manner to his wife wore for an admiring world; and that surely was entitled to scarce more than the praise of negative diplomacy.")

[6] In this case, it is "the truth that the surface of her recent life" was choking out the "flowers of earnest endeavor."

This chapter argues that the supposedly "inward" turn towards sensibility in *The Ambassadors*, is not a simple evasion of external, geopolitical conflict, but the ethical fold of the subject's relation to itself, that is, as Deleuze explains, "interior" only insofar as it folds the exterior.[7] There is a striking analogue here to the obstrusive anamorphosis of the skull in the foreground of Holbein's painting that folds the symbolic space and archaeological perspective of the *vanitas*, onto the visual plane of the commemorative dual portrait, with the effect of a mutual representational distortion. In a similar way, James folds the *vanitas* theme (as Strether's injunction to Little Bilham to "live all you can") within the scene of Gloriani's garden party, in which the figures of the "Great World" are assembled. This novelistic rendering of the anamorphic mode refuses any clear binary between public and private, individual and species, political events and archaeological timescales, interior and exterior. Instead, these are folded into each other as perspectives that deform each other when transposed on the same picture plane.

On the overlap between conscience and consciousness, and public and private conscience in The Ambassadors, Joshua Held insightfully observes that, "the eventual folding of both facets into one term contributes to the understanding by James's era that conscience included both private and community-oriented aspects. James reflects this parallel in the shared ethical reverberations of individual conscience when Strether happens on Chad and Madame de Vionnet during their tryst in the French

[7] There is an extensive and substantial critical literature on the novel's ethical work, including Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*; Pippin, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life*; Flaherty, "Henry James at the Ethical Turn."

countryside."8 In particular, Held points to the fusing of the third person narrative voice, with the first person point of view in the textual focalization through Strether, arguing that the novel's conclusion plays out Strether's "recourse to casuistry and conscience … reveal his priority of private conscience and the self."[9] Strether's renunciation of Maria Gostrey's "promise of care" announces his ethical self-possession as achieved through a rigidly principled self-abnegation. However, Strether depends on Gostrey as an interlocutor even in this scene to bear witness to his ethical significance (the ethical relation to the self, through an other). Strether's rejection of Gostrey enacts his apprehension of the impossibility of mutual recognition within the Hegelian drama, and so achieves a more provisional self-certainty in the willfully assumed experience of his abandonment from the guarantees of social, familial, and financial security.

But, this is also Strether's return to Woollett as Mrs. Newsome's disgraced envoy. The novel grafts the tropes of betrayal latent in international diplomacy onto a familial-commercial transaction: of the threat of ambassadors "turning native", becoming infected with mixed loyalties, or developing personal attachments that override professional duty. James accents the centrality of ambassadors in the assembly of imperial war loot, of colonial occupation under the mandate of liberal internationalism, and of nascent industrial monopolies in interdependent international markets, and finally, in the construction and circulation of "value" generally. Remnants of French imperial loot are museumized in Madame de Vionnet's parlor. The novel anticipates, by describing Woollett as "almost an industrial colony", a global circuit of

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[8] Held, "Conscience and Consciousness in *The Ambassadors*," 43.

[9] Held, 42.

specialized production, and later suggests its incipient market monopoly ("if its only properly looked after"). This architecture of the "American century," premised on the Great Powers sharing access to foreign export markets without overt territorial occupation, which as the preceding chapter noted found its original design in Hay's Open Door policy.

My argument here, in part, is that James participates in imagining and recording the *fin de siècle* appearance of incipient, incomplete, liminal, affective, and flickering forms of transnational publicness and international publics in *The Ambassadors*. Strether is attentive both to the accompanying reorientations of the experiences of privacy and publicness, and the threat of the "refeudalization" of the public sphere which Habermas perceived in the rise of modern advertising and the privatization of media, as distorting the ideal of the bourgeois public.[10] Before the debate between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey concerning whether the public is a mere "phantom" and the stakes of representative democracy, James in this novel anticipates the incipient formation of international publics, and the forms of affectivity that provisionally magnetize coalescing and shifting forms of queer collectivity. At the same time, this chapter argues that James is committed to the moral arguments within early internationalism that as Sylvest points out, "stress the need for a new international consciousness that … is seen to ensure progress, order and, continuity internationally".[11]

In undertaking this inquiry, I begin with the ambassadors in James's title, and

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[10] On the analysis of the business of advertising, commodity display, and the culture of publicity in *The Ambassadors*, see Wicke, *Advertising Fictions*; Salmon, *Henry James and the Culture of Publicity*; Brown, "Now Advertising."

[11] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880-1930*, 266, 268.

their place in a novel apparently preoccupied with the slow processes of imaginative deliberation and sensible accumulation of impressions. I argue that "ambassadors" (instead of delegates, agents, emissaries, or go-betweens) in the title, names not only the mediated form of social consciousness produced through constant delegations and deferrals, but calls attention to its literal freight of statecraft. The international theme in James has been the subject of frequent treatment. Priscilla Roberts recently argues that whereas James's earlier novels on the international theme concerned Americans as innocents, late James figured Europeans as the victims of Americans, owing to his perception of the disproportionate rise of American industrial wealth and international power.[12] In this chapter, I make a case for examining the geopolitical preoccupations of *The Ambassadors* as extending outside the comparative registering of international influence, to the project of imagining a European public sphere. While there is an aspect of conservative nostalgia in imagining this public with Strether as "the great world" of political conflict softened by the touch of feminine conversation, it is also a perception at the uncertain threshold of a *poeisis* in which the world is to be remade through creative realignments of overlapping zones of publicness, intimacy, and privacy.

In building this argument, I particularly consider the central scene of the party at Gloriani's garden that triggers Strether's speech to little Bilham, attending to the kind of "great world" and the form of publicness Strether projects onto this space, both as a universe of social referents and in geopolitical terms. This form of a publicness (as partaking in without congealing into the features of a "public") or publicity (as an instrumentalization of the public address) can be distinguished from both the literary

[12] Roberts, "The Geopolitics of Literature."

public in which Woollett's Review participates, and the public presumed to be addressed by Chad Newsome's "art of advertising". While these are all modes of publicity whose address are pregnantly supra-national, only the version of the public as the "great world" is instantiated as a space of publicness within which Strether circulates, carefully speculating with little Bilham on its constituents, its modes of attention, its social logics, its significance, and its exclusions. As if to underscore the centrality of the scene, it is also significantly the only part of the novel where figures of national ambassadors are suggestively literalized – for the most part, in the backdrop tied to the atmospherics of a European collective public of shared sociality (if not culture) – that might bind such diverse and far-flung peoples as "Turks", "Poles" and "even a Portuguee".

The strange constellations of publicness, intimacy, and privacy in the novel are consecutively explored in certain other scenes, focusing on how such configurations illustrate a different rendition of quasi-publicness. In each case, the schematically ambassadorial role is to mediate the delegated representation of privatized, familial, or personal "business" within Strether's momentary impressions of international quasi-publics as they coruscate into view. Sometimes they appear with a blinding effect, to deflect attention from the secret transactions of political talk and personal treachery. But in any case, Strether "finally *sees*" – takes cognizance of their potentiality in introducing alternative forms of sociality and circulation that bring into view – alternatives to the deceptive transparency and flatness of American democracy.

This understanding of American democracy as realized through the exceptional conflation of private and public life is what Alexis de Toqueville had earlier noted, concerning the incursion and expansion of the role of public judgment into private

affairs, judging that: "There is a kind of ignorance that stems from extreme publicity. In despotic states men do not know how to act, because they are told nothing; in democratic nations, they often act erratically, because nothing is supposed to be left unspoken."[13] In contrast, James's somewhat generous portrayal of this American achievement in the exemplary severity of Mrs. Newsome's moral code produces also Strether's absolute conviction in being able to "rest on her word" (playing with the dual senses of relying on, and being laid to rest). However, in order for these matters to come into view, it is first necessary to investigate in the next section, the scrambled and overlapping experiences of privacy and publicity in Europe that produce such a noticeable impact on Strether.

1. Exposed Privacy and Discrete Publicness

Privacy and publicity do not designate particular striations of space in *The Ambassadors*, so much as the impact on Strether of "being put in relation" within certain affective configurations, that are specifically paradoxical in the play of discretion and exposure through which they become experienced. Madame de Vionnet's accommodations on the first floor of an ancient Parisian mansion on the Rue de Bellechasse, are accessible from "an old clean court" which is in turn described as "large and open, full of revelations, for our friend, of the habit of privacy, the peace of intervals, the dignity of distances and approaches."[14] The public exposure of the architecture of

[13] "Gravity of Americans" in Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 708.

[14] James, *The Ambassadors*, 122. First published in an abridged, serial form 1903 by *The North American Review*, and in book form in 1903 by Methuen & Co. (London) and Harper & Brothers (New York). James revised the text for the standard New York Edition of his works, which the 1986 Penguin edition is based on, but switches around parts I and II of Book Eleventh in the Harper edition that was followed in the New York Edition. Citations refer to the Penguin edition.

the court (with its aristocratic associations) reveals the habit of privacy (and no doubt, political discretion), as a successful staging of both publicity and privacy in orderly play.

The first set of narrative moments that bear consideration here configure "privacy" as a luxury and escape, effected somewhat paradoxically through exposure. The first is the moment when Strether looks onto the figure of little Bilham on the balcony of Chad's apartment on the third floor of the Boulevard Malesherbes, from across the street:

> The balcony, the distinguished front, testified suddenly, for Strether's fancy, to something that was up and up; they placed the whole case materially, and as by an admirable image, on a level that he found himself at the end of another moment rejoicing to think he might reach. The young man looked at him still, he looked at the young man; and the issue, by a rapid process, was that this knowledge of a perched privacy appeared to him the last of luxuries. To him too the perched privacy was open, and he saw it now but in one light—that of the only domicile, the only fireside, in the great ironic city, on which he had the shadow of a claim.[15]

In this case, the exposure of the balcony to being viewed from the street, its "perched privacy" is the condition of its inclusive extension to Strether, a promise of domicile which in its elevation and distinction, both "placed the whole case materially" and appears "as by an admirable image". This abrupt transformation of the material case to mere surface, is connected to his paradoxical sense of the balcony's exposure as a

[15] James, 51.

"perched privacy", paradoxically, in its openness available to his visual claiming. The balcony promises an exposed interior ("the last of luxuries") as a kind of anchor and vantage from which to survey the impersonal superficiality of "the great ironic city".

In a connected manner, when Chad visits Strether at his hotel the morning after the latter's first meeting with Madame de Vionnet, he proposes "an adjournment to what he called greater privacy" (instead of Strether's habitual taking of coffee "in the public room" of the hotel), so that "when after a few steps and a turn into the Boulevard they had, for their greater privacy, sat down among twenty others, our friend saw in his companion's move a fear of the advent of Waymarsh."[16] Here, privacy obviously involves incorporation within the contingent anonymity afforded by the foreign crowd or city, as a retreat from the enclosed potentiality for familiarity within the seemingly unlively "public room" of the hotel, with its almost unrecognizable mutation of the Habermasian coffee-house. However, in both cases, it is notable that privacy is achieved only by entering into limited exposure, and that it is a matter of privacy from – expressed specifically as a negative freedom – the city and Waymarsh. From these observations, it appears that James describes a peculiar form of privacy, whose quiddity is not a withdrawal from circulation into the clearly demarcated scenes of domestic interiority, but a putting into anonymous relation what partakes in certain configurations of affective intimacy – a perched opening, an atmosphere of the closet – obtaining in the potentiality for an inchoate publicness.

In numerous instances, the word "private" occurs in the novel in passing as an indication of an undisclosed thought, intention, or reaction, although even these

[16] James, *The Ambassadors*, 118.

instances can register both degrees of privacy, and problematize who gets to define it. For instance, in response to Waymarsh's early question "Have you come out on purpose?" – the form of which inquires as to Strether's specific coming out on a purpose, as well as the presence of his general intentionality ("on purpose"), and to Waymarsh's prodding "Too private to mention?", Strether responds: "No, not too private – for *you*. Only rather complicated."[17] The distinction is not only to draw Waymarsh within a certain proximate confidence, but a response that draws attention to who gets to define privacy. Strether implies that Waymarsh would not consider the matter "too private", as it turns out that he has a stake in defining the zone of privacy, insomuch as Strether later admits paradoxically that even if his trip is "just for" Mrs. Newsome, "it is for both of you" and that "why its such a matter as that even if I positively wanted I shouldn't be able to keep it from you." Bracketing for a moment, the convoluted looping of the chain of causation that Strether undertakes, what serves to frustrate Waymarsh's inquiry in seeking to determine Strether's predominant or motivating purpose, is not an assertion of privacy, but of Strether's perspective of radical dependence on a multiplicity of social relations and sufficient and overlapping causes.

In place of Waymarsh's reductive model of causation and abolition of privacy, Strether values forms of exposed and partial privacy precisely because they point to the unrealized latency of communicative and relational (even affiliative) possibilities, defeated or deferred by the historical situation. Spying on Mamie who thinks she is alone on the quasi-privacy of another balcony, Strether observes something ambiguous

[17] James, *The Ambassadors*, 15.

about her. This appears in a passage of free indirect discourse: "It had been at the most, this mystery, an obsession agreeable; and it had just now fallen into its place as at the touch of a spring. It had represented the possibility between them of some communication baffled by accident and delay – the possibility even of some relation as yet unacknowledged."[18] In a recent article, Daniel Gunn argued that free indirect discourse in this novel often has an ironic inflection, pointing to the limitations posed by conventional language and the narrator's mediating presence.[19] With this in mind, the possibility of a relation between Strether and Mamie that is "as yet unacknowledged" is one that remains tenuous despite its narrative evocation.

Strether's obsession over the mystery and his cognition of a muted or occulted affiliative possibility, takes the form describes by recent queer historiography of the problematic dynamic between affective disaffiliation, and intense longing for historical communion. It is through "queer disaffiliation" that Christopher Nealon considers the magnetizing of various forms of proto-public communities, around the pre-Stonewall narratives and genres he names as historical "foundlings".[20] In the initial encounters of the narrative with little Bilham, Gostrey, and Mamie, these minor characters are figured as foundlings through Strether's consciousness, consisting in their potential for relationality because they are detached from the normative regimes of familial incorporation (each of whom Strether initially "adopts" in an avuncular manner

[18] James, *The Ambassadors*, 224.
[19] Gunn, "Reading Strether."
[20] Nealon, *Foundlings*.

resonant of the "funny uncle" eccentric to the daddy-mommy-me triangle).[21]

Nearing the conclusion, during the reception for Mrs. Pocock arranged by her brother Chad, Strether comes to learn the "lesson of a certain moral ease" from little Bilham, which is "the example of his being just the obscure and acute little Bilham he was":

> It worked so for him, Strether seemed to see; and our friend had at private hours a wan smile over the fact that he himself, after so many more years, was still in search of something that would work. However, as we have said, it worked just now for them equally to have found a corner a little apart. What particularly kept it apart was the circumstance that the music in the salon was admirable, with two or three such singers as it was a privilege to hear in private.[22]

The lesson is precisely little Bilham's sense of accommodation to his own smallness as an artist and bohemian personage, articulated by Strether as a "moral ease" – not in the formation of an accumulated capacity or coherence for moral decision-making routinely enacted. Instead, this passage demonstrates that it is little Bilham's ease with his obscurity, acuity, and smallness – the very conditions demarcating his status as a "minor character" – that is cast as "moral". In turn, this reconfigures moral work as simply, even easily, a matter of identifying what contingently works ("just now for them") in the enjoyment of intimate confidence by constituting provisional modes of

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[21] Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of this Oedipal triangle in Freudian psychoanalysis argues that the family is not an autonomous microcosm, but is by its nature eccentric, by noting that "there is always an uncle from America; a brother who went bad" – coincidentally the plot elements of James's *The Ambassadors*. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 97.

[22] James, *The Ambassadors*, 231

privacy ("to have found a corner a little apart"), within a scene of public exposure and potential scrutiny. Nevertheless, Strether "was still in search of something that would work" – that is, of figuring out an angle of complementarity between his limited range of influence and publicity, and of his perspective of minority within close proximity to the disjunctive scale of the great world and its personages.

Concordantly, Strether enjoys publicity, much like privacy, within fine gradations of anonymous exposure, small intimacy, and even "the comfort of indiscretion", rather than the assumption of an undifferentiated and indifferent publicity that he assumes by having his name on the "green cover" of the Review which he edits in order to preserve Mrs. Newsome's discretion.[23] His experience of dining in London with Gostrey before attending a show is not a moment of romantic intimacy, but the consciousness – startling to Strether – of the prospect of being in an inchoate affective relation. "It came over him that never before--no, literally never--had a lady dined with him at a public place before going to the play. The publicity of the place was just, in the matter, for Strether, the rare strange thing; it affected him almost as the achievement of privacy might have affected a man of a different experience."[24]

The dinner with Gostrey affects Strether in an unproportionally intense way. With its legible staging of libidinal potentiality in the exposure of publicity, this is what comprises a "rare strange thing." Elsewhere, we are given character background in broad-strokes indicating that Strether married early without prolonged courtship, and then goes into mourning for the early death of his wife and son. While he often escorted

[23] James, *The Ambassadors*, 90.

[24] James, *The Ambassadors*, 26.

Mrs. Newsome in Woollett to the opera, the experience of public dining with Maria induces the rare thrill of the mere possibility of staging carnal intimacies for public exposure. In the course of theorizing "carnality" as "the socially built space between flesh and environment" distinguishable from the juridical and political maneuvers of "corporeality," Elizabeth Povinelli points to the unruliness of the flesh, and how "the flesh is not merely an effect of a liberal biopolitics."[25] In Maria's company, Strether magnetizes the potential for public speculation, and thereby, the pleasures of exhibitionism in experiencing the glances of anonymous others – real and imagined – under the cover of heteronormative privilege. This is explicitly tied to Strether's "business" in the following passage:

> It came over him in especial--though the monition had, as happened, already sounded, fitfully gleamed, in other forms--that the business he had come out on hadn't yet been so brought home to him as by the sight of the people about him… It was an evening, it was a world of types, and this was a connexion above all in which the figures and faces in the stalls were interchangeable with those on the stage. He felt as if the play itself penetrated him with the naked elbow of his neighbour, a great stripped handsome red-haired lady who conversed with a gentleman on her other side in stray dissyllables…[26]

Contrasting his impression of the sexual bifurcation of only two types, men and women, that are available in Woollett, Massachusetts, what is presented to Strether both by the "sight of the people about him" and the diegesis of the play itself, is a

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[25] Povinelli, *The Empire of Love*, 7.

[26] James, *The Ambassadors*, 26.

multiplicity of referents that constitute "a world of types". In this early moment, Strether makes the mistake of trying to correlate the types within the play's diegesis (bad woman in yellow frock makes weak "young man in perpetual evening dress" do "dreadful things") with the situation he anticipates to encounter himself with respect to Chad being seduced by Madame de Vionnet. (The irony of this unreflexive apprehension, of course, is that the plot more accurately represents the dynamics of Mrs. Newsome's control over him).

Strether's experience of the play penetrating him with the naked elbow of his neighbor – redolent with the suggestiveness of fisting-as-*écriture* that Eve Sedgwick alerts us to in her reading of a passage in James's *Notebooks* – is an experience both of the violation of the boundaries of diegesis, and of his bodily autonomy in a promiscuous public. Diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds blur into the multiplicity offered by a "world of types".[27] This incident is also a premonition of Strether's becoming insubstantial, that is, what Maud Ellmann points to by describing the novel as a reverse Bildungsroman, insofar as "James shows how Strether unbecomes the relatively solid citizen he was" as "selfhood is unraveled in the novel, and reconstructed in a looser, more absorbent fabric" such that "his coming out involves an opening to otherness, rather than a bid for sexual identity."[28] His voyeurism in a clearly demarcated public, not particularly to do with shared spectatorship but mere proximity, spurs the process of his becoming insubstantial or being recast as absorbent

[27] Sedgwick, "The Beast in the Closet, James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic," 208 fn 33.
[28] Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism*, 60–61.

and penetrable, while at the same time, which the play seems both to have appropriated and invested his neighbour's elbow with a perverse agency.

Strether has often been regarded by critics as passionless, asexual, and effete. Leslie Fielder describes him as "surely the most maidenly of James's men," being the embodiment of "all the delicacy and moral tact ordinarily represented by the Fair Maiden."[29] Opposing this tendency, Eric Haralson reads hints of homosexual romance in the novel in an attempt to correct the desexualization of Strether in the critical literature, to see him as "an exemplar of male abnormality" that challenges turn of the century norms of compulsory heteronormativity and masculine performance.[30] In this vein, we can see Strether opening up to a diffuse sexual publicity – not formalized into courtship or marriage – but "the rare strange thing" of being seen in the exposure of potential intimacies staged in public. While Haralson's insistence on Strether's embodied libidinality is useful, what reads as non-normative in the novel is not simply an awkward, repressed homosexuality. Instead, I argue that it is the promiscuity of prospective stranger intimacies circulating publicly as the experience of a sensation or thrill that precedes subjective possession or naming. It is in this mode of mediating relationality that Strether attempts to keep faith with in the end, by maintaining the transitory forms of the relations (as ambassadors and consuls) that he occupies alongside Maria – that is, by absenting himself from the nest-like accommodations of heteronormative privilege and its lures of security from sexual shame.

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[29] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 293.

[30] Eric Haralson, HJ and Queer Modernity (2003) pp 102-133

2. International Obligations and the Note of Europe

What Strether discerns in the "note of Europe" at the opening of the novel is not only a touristic impression or a cabled message, but a specific public claim on his responsibility and allegiance addressed by a supranational community imaginatively invested with collective consciousness and agency. Indeed, this anticipates versions of European economic and civic unification, which we see in the next chapter is propounded by Keynes after the First World War, and which more recently, Etienne Balibar reconceives as a template for inclusive citizenship and global democracy.[31]

Here, Waymarsh's face or countenance is described as threatening to present itself as the first note of 'Europe.' The American lawyer's impression of Europe as distinctly undemocratic and arcane is underscored here: "The Catholic Church, for Waymarsh – that was to say the enemy, the monster of bulging eyes and far-reaching quivering groping tentacles—was exactly society, exactly the multiplication of shibboleths, exactly the discrimination of types and tones, exactly the wicked old Rows of Chester, rank with feudalism; exactly in short Europe."[32]

At this point, it is helpful to evoke the historical backdrop of the failure of diplomatic attempts in the 1860's onwards to establish uniform international standards of value (of which France and the United States were key advocates) in order to accommodate the growing significance of transnational transactions and international monetary cooperation. Martin Geyer describes these diplomatic attempts in the context of international standardization in the latter 19th century, in which "international

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[31] Balibar, *We, the People of Europe?*

[32] James, *The Ambassadors*, 21.

coinage" was discussed as creating a "universal language" providing for the unimpeded transnational circulation of commodities, capital, and labor.[33] In the absence of any "world currency", first the British sovereign and then an informal international gold standard was accepted by most of the "civilized nations", before the nationalization of currencies at the beginning of the First World War). Alongside these attempts were Euro-American conferences concerning the standardization of measures of value across national lines.[34] Where such transactions was figured as the real and natural state of affairs, delineations of national boundaries were correspondingly viewed as a necessary fiction and abstraction, to be overcome – like Catholic discriminations, for Waymarsh – through negotiated terms of convertibility in order to approach a "universal state".

In his pioneering explication of the opening paragraphs of the novel, Ian Watt's suggests that the "note of Europe" refers to something like a formal letter of introduction (pointing to Strether's "equally ceremonious sense that due decorums must also be attended to" in advance of his reacquaintance with another old friend, "Europe" personified). The relevant passage of the novel reads:

> The principle I have just mentioned as operating had been, with the most newly disembarked of the two men, wholly instinctive – the fruit of a sharp sense that, delightful as it would be to find himself looking, after so much separation, into his comrade's face, his business would be a trifle bungled should he simply

[33] Geyer, "One Language for the World: The Metric System, International Coinage, Gold Standard, and the Rise of Internationalism, 1850-1900," 92.
[34] For some accounts of this, see Russell, *Open Standards and the Digital Age*; Gorman, *International Cooperation in the Early Twentieth Century*.

> arrange for this countenance to present itself to the nearing steamer as the first 'note' of Europe. Mixed with everything was the apprehension, already, on Strether's part, that it would, at best, throughout, prove the note of Europe in quite a sufficient degree.[35]

Watt suggests that the verb "prove" in the phrase "prove the note of Europe" could alternatively mean to "turn out (to be)" – the intransitive verb making this sense unlikely in the syntax – or "to test" such that "Waymarsh is indeed suited to the role of being the sourly acid test of the siren songs of Europe".[36] What remains perhaps unsatisfactorily explained in Watt's reading is why the synecdochic "face" or "countenance" of Waymarsh would be presentable as the first "note" of Europe, in the conspicuous absence of any explicit or implied authorization from Europe for this "famous American lawyer" to act as its ambassador; and why this "face" or "countenance" of a character distinguished by his resolute refusal to understand Europe, would introduce itself as its formal introduction. Further, the precise form of these words ("that it would, at best, throughout, prove the note of Europe in quite a sufficient degree") raises certain problems that are glossed over too quickly.

While apparently echoing the reference to Waymarsh's countenance as "itself" within the preceding sentence the typically Jamesian syntactic accumulation of ambiguous referents seems especially pointed in this last sentence of the opening paragraph. The first problem is that the phrase "note of Europe" is repeated in successive sentences but with a sense of self-conscious inconsistency in the relation

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[35] James, *The Ambassadors*, 1.

[36] Watt, "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors," 265–66.

posited to Waymarsh's face, marked by the initial parenthetical marking off of the word "note". In the first instance, Waymarsh's face is that which Strether might arrange to have "present itself as the first note of Europe." Note here the blurring of subjective agency here in that Waymarsh's face functions as the subject of the sentence (presenting itself), and object of the sentence (of arrangement by Strether, and of self-presentation) within the clause. Moreover, by acceding to the determination to fix "it" as a reference to Waymarsh's countenance, a paradox emerges in Watts' reading of these lines: in the first sentence, Waymarsh's face is described as being presentable as the note; in the next line, this same face is apparently conscripted by the indefinite referent ("it") as that which in Strether's apprehension, would prove the note. Waymarsh's countenance is described as that which would "prove the note of Europe" (even though the prior sentence has just established this face as presentable as "the first note of Europe"). In short, why would Waymarsh's face function both as Strether's primary impression of Europe, and simultaneously, prove (as in, "test") Europe "in quite a sufficient degree"?

In the first instance, "note" is presented in inverted commas, which are absent in the second. At first glance, "note" functions in either case to indicate an evocative sensory quality that would color the rest of Strether's travels (like a tone, or whiff or a taste) – consistent with the simile in the next paragraph: "a qualified draught of Europe". "Note" might also be taken in its primary sense to refer to an abbreviated record or communication, like an informal message, or a metaphorization of the literal trans-Atlantic telegraphs that feature in much of the novel's plot, importing the sense of control at a distance, and absent influence, figured by the character of Mrs. Newsome. In any case, "notes" are the material form of rendering sensory, imaginative, and cognitive data both transmissible and made capable of circulating in a way that lays

claim to attention (even if it is ignored). (Even the note as a personal record is intended to mediate my present self and my future self.) When the apparent immediacy of the individual's experience of a sensory quality is detected as a note or mixing of notes, it becomes an object of apperception (both an object that can be perceived, and assimilable into past experience) and communicable. These understandings of "note" resonate with readings which have pointed to the preoccupation in late James' both with technological networks of communication (Mark Goble, Richard Menke, Laura Otis) and of mediated subjectivity within the social fabric and representational logics of modernity (Maud Ellmann, Julie Rivkin).[37] Within the context of the novel's title, another kind of note suggests itself –the letter of introduction constitutes a specialized genre in the formalities of diplomatic protocol associated with the presentation of "letters of credence" by the head of a mission to the head of state of the host nation, as a guarantee of identity and authorization.

There are axiological dimensions pointed to by another sense shared by "note" and "draught" as a banknote or bank draught. This raises questions about the forms of binding authority, obligation, and recognition underwriting the transformation of the textual object as bearer of universal exchange value. A related matter is how publicity – as the measure of public identity, and consequently, what defines an individual's location within the public – travels across distances. Strether is concerned that Gostrey does not recognize his name, because she has not encountered the "green cover" of Woollett's Review on which it is borne, and which constitutes his only claim to public

[37] Goble, *Beautiful Circuits*; Menke, *Telegraphic Realism*; Otis, *Networking*; Rivkin, *False Positions*.

identity defining both his character and credit. (In this, Strether happens to anticipate Hannah Arendt's position half a century later, that one's valuable personhood is constituted only through access to publicness – everything else is abject).[38] There are parallels between Strether's name on the green cover, and the prominence of Waymarsh's face and countenance "as the note", which is striking its unusual syntax for its resonance with the representation of a sovereign on legal tender. In each case, what is at stake are representations of identity circulating publicly as the guarantor of authority and value.

If Waymarsh's face can be arranged "as the first 'note' of Europe", he is the guarantor of Europe as a quantifiable value, and he also becomes the universal exchange value through which all social commerce, interactions, and traffic must be converted. In Strether's case, his authority in Europe emanates from Mrs. Newsome who has appointed him as her delegate. Strether name on the green cover serves to ratify the cultural value to which Mrs. Newsome aspires to ameliorate the vulgar article of industrial manufacture at Woollett, as Gostrey points out, and not as he initially imagines, as the guarantor of his own identity. In short, where Strether originally considers the green cover as Mrs. Newsome's accommodation for the recognition of his identity in public circulation, Gostrey demonstrates that it is actually Mrs. Newsome who uses the (limited) cultural capital associated with Strether's name to put the green cover in circulation (at least, within certain publics. Strether's assumption is that public circulation ascribes the value of publicness and potential recognizability to his name by association, which Gostrey inverts by insisting that it is in fact Strether's name which

[38] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

defines the limited public of Woollett's Review (which Strether describes as being unpopular and widely disregarded, while being simultaneously disappointed that Gostrey has not previously encountered a copy).

Indeed, to "prove the note" refers to the evidentiary requirement, as the condition for receiving payment, to establish legal entitlement by tracing the succession of ownership from the issuer of the note. The promissory note in the form of paper money, is issued by the state promising to pay its bearer the value specified on its face (frequently, in gold coin), which in the character of "legal tender" and "universal equivalent", are designed to short-circuit the evidentiary complication of "proofing". That public recognition is bound to quantifiable value is brought home by Strether's focus on Waymarsh's face and countenance in the second paragraph, which mimics the representation of the sovereign on legal tender as guarantor of its value. The ascription of the promissory note to a continent in James' phrase suggests a consistency to "Europe" as a socioeconomic (and consequently, a cultural and geographic) unit with its own currency and enclosed system for circulating value. Waymarsh (as the "famous American lawyer") proofs the "first note of Europe" – the initial issue of its currency – anxious firstly over how any conception of value might be legitimated in the absence of a sovereign authority (whose promise is printed in currency as a promise specific value), and over the foreign convertibility of (moral, cultural, and financial) value. Waymarsh's proofing and presentation of the note to Strether would invoke a mistrust of the legitimacy of European (financial and cultural) values as the basis for universal convertibility, which Strether sidesteps by converting the note into that of the experience of sensuous immediacy.

3. The "Great World"

Strether is much occupied with his glimpses of "the great world" in Gloriani's garden, as a rarefied space for social insiders closed off from public visibility. Inclusion and exclusion are important to defining the contours of this distinctly European cosmopolitan world of cultivated conversation and populated by elite Turks, Poles, and possibly even 'a Portuguee', in 'the "great world", the world of ambassadors and duchesses' – such as are invited to Gloriani's party on a Sunday afternoon.[39] In the garden, Strether is conscious of "the high party-walls, on the other side of which grave *hôtels* stood off for privacy, spoke of survival, transmission, association, a strong indifferent persistent order", and while being adjourned to the "open air, but the open air was in such conditions all a chamber of state".[40] There is something nostalgic in James's evocation of the closing off of the "chamber of state" from democratic transparency, and in the emphasis on transmission through inheritance or association – that is, forms of intimacy or social connection that contrast with the "stranger sociality" of bourgeois publics.

Earlier, in a notebook entry of 1887, James had designated "the mania for publicity" as "one of the most striking signs of our times" and being particularly characteristic of American democracy and the concomitant loss of "manners".[41] He refers to "the queer incident of Miss McC.'s writing to the *New York World* that

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[39] James, *The Ambassadors*, 101.

[40] James, *The Ambassadors*, 99.

[41] Note dated November, 17 1887 in James, *The Notebooks of Henry James*, 82.

inconceivable letter about the Venetian society whose hospitability she had just been enjoying – and the strange *typicality* of the whole thing" before observing that,

> One sketches one's age but imperfectly if one doesn't touch on that particular matter: the invasion, the impudence and shamelessness, of the newspaper and the interviewer, the devouring publicity of life, the extinction of all sense between public and private. It is the highest expression of the note of 'familiarity,' the sinking of *manners*, in so many ways, which the democratization of the world brings with it … which struck me <as> a very illustrative piece of contemporary life.[42]

Reacting to the collapse of the lines between public and private, James has Strether recuperating a European "great world" of privacy and tradition, nostalgically maintained by the high party-walls. The Parisian garden overwhelms Strether with "the sense of a great convent, a convent of missions … he had the sense of names in the air, of ghosts at the windows, of signs and tokens, a whole range of expression, all about him, too thick for prompt discrimination."[43] It is a scene of politics conducted via the intrigue of semi-private even furtive forms of sociality, figuring a European "chamber of state" apart from and setting the agenda for the world behind closed walls, transacted by the unelected representatives of nations (the great artists, ambassadors, even duchesses). James has Strether yearning for inclusion within this world, as he wonders whether the Duchess and Gloriani were of the great world, and if so, whether

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[42] Note dated November, 17/1887 in James, 82. Italics and brackets in original. The incident referred to forms the inspiration for James, Henry, *The Reverberator*.

[43] James, *The Ambassadors*, 99.

he too is included by his social proximity to them. Here, James tracks the nostalgia for a non-transparent politics transacted by a cultural elite claiming human expertise. For instance, Gloriani's smile discloses "a deep human expertness", in which great artists and/as ambassadors make contributions to political conversation – a space both anterior to and bracketed from the public sphere of democracy.[44]

Yet this is also a conception of a trans-national, cosmopolitan "public", comprising a motley assortment of ambassadors, women, and artists, which is fundamentally inclusive across citizenship, gender, and social rank "within limits". This public is reflexively constituted, and its exclusions are not specified in advance, but are enacted through some occult criteria:

> Oh they're every one—all sorts and sizes; of course I mean within limits, though limits down perhaps rather more than limits up … But there are not in any way many bores; it has always been so; he has some secret. It's extraordinary. And you don't find it out. He's the same to every one. He doesn't ask questions.'
>
> "Ah doesn't he?" Strether laughed.
>
> Bilham met it with all his candour. "How then should I be here?[45]

Being sufficiently capacious to the bohemian little Bilham, they appear to have few formal, *a priori* conditions for participation, nor is access dictated by hierarchy. Nevertheless, it is clear that the *de facto* criteria are very efficiently carried out in some secret manner. At the turn of the century, however, this model of publicity seems a nostalgic throwback to the emergent aesthetic public spheres in the salons of the 17th-

[44] James, *The Ambassadors*, 100.

[45] James, *The Ambassadors*, 101.

and 18th-century conducted in domestic spaces.[46] In response to Bilham's observation that "It puts us all back—into the last century," "I'm afraid," Strether said, amused, "that it puts me rather forward: oh ever so far!"[47] Their ensuing banter elucidates that this makes Strether in his sense of belatedness, "a specimen of the rococo." To Strether's worry that being out of fashion, he will fail to please the ladies, little Bilham counters with the observation that "we all here … adore the rococo." This verbal slippage from "the ladies" to the inclusive "we all" recalls Eve Sedgwick's reading of little Bilham as one of James's figures of the queer, bohemian bachelor.[48]

A distinction is that where the bourgeois and print publics were constitutive of national opinion and state legitimacy, Gloriani's garden emphatically cultivates the participation of "international" dimensions of Turks, Poles and Portuguees, and *femme du monde*, in constituting an international community of opinion on art and politics. Here, the novel comprehends an expanded sense of Europe beyond than the novel's sequence of Chester, London and France, as a synecdoche for Europe. Fear threatens to overwhelm Strether as he encounters the "types tremendously alien, alien to Woollett –

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[46] According to Lawrence Klein, "what people in the eighteenth century most often meant by 'public' was sociable as opposed to solitary (which was 'private')" and "generally in the eighteenth century, the distinction between the private and the public did not correspond the distinction between home and not-home." Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century," 104–5.
Deborah Heller points out that "first, it is a mistake to posit a strict mapping of the public/private distinction onto the exterior and interior, respectively, of domestic spaces." Heller, "Bluestocking Salons and the Public Sphere."

[47] James, *The Ambassadors*, 101.

[48] Sedgwick, "The Beast in the Closet, James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic," 194.

that he had already begun to take in."[49] Strether's anxiety about his marginality in Gloriani's party partly reflects his concern with the unfamiliarity of the kinds of cosmopolitan subjects, and the delineations of social and political life apparently assumed in European international diplomacy.

Strether and little Bilham are conscious of being at the party's conversational margins, with little Bilham speaking of Gloriani:

> "Well," his companion returned, "he's wonderfully kind to us."
>
> "To us Americans you mean?"
>
> "Oh no—he doesn't know anything about that. That's half the battle here—that you can never hear politics. We don't talk them. I mean to poor young wretches of all sorts. And yet it's always as charming as this; it's as if, by something in the air, our squalor didn't show.[50]

There is a distinct ambiguity in this instance between whether at Gloriani's parties politics are a matter not discussed at all, or whether they are a topic from which Americans are excluded, or whether they are conducted indirectly in a register that eludes the perception and participation of the Americans ("you can never hear politics. We don't talk them").

The effort to clarify the referential object of Gloriani's kindness ("us") discloses a shuttling of identification with collectivity ("we") between the class of "Americans", and the "great world". Little Bilham occupies both the position of the "we" who refuses to talk politics to the third person "poor young wretches of all sorts" – which might be

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[49] James, *The Ambassadors*, 99-100.

[50] James, *The Ambassadors*, 101.

glossed as non-European nation-states, to whom political discourse is not directed. There are a couple of observations to be made here. First, in this sphere, kindness to Americans is, (or we might extrapolate more generally, distinctions on the basis of nationality are), immediately coded by little Bilham as "politics". Second, politics is not a singular subject, field of discourse, or matter that one talks *about* (the preposition is notably elided) but a pronoun, and in this case, treated as a plural pronoun ("them") rather than a singular or collective pronoun ("it") corresponding in its atypical syntax to the plural "politics". In this manner, the multiple (nationally differentiated) identity of "politics" is emphasized. Third, the atypical syntax makes the absence of prepositional directionality ("of", "to", "about") felt, as well as sharpening the contrast between the collective first and third person pronouns in the abbreviated "We don't talk them". It seems to share something of Carl Schmitt's later conception of the friend/enemy (us/them) distinction as that proper to the political sphere, and the basis for political community, giving rise in its historical outlines to "*ius publicum Europeaem*" or European public law since the 18th century.[51] Accordingly, it is implicit that within this sphere, talking politics does occur but is obscured, that it is potentially censored or at least coded to be unavailable to non-Europeans (including Americans and newer nation states – "poor young wretches of all sorts" – without further distinction), and that it is plural (which I conjecture, here, means being nationally differentiated).

It is significant that little Bilham considers that "you never hear politics" as "half the battle here", equating perceptual absence with a polemological metaphor that infers an important or onerous step in achieving some end. While the passage seems to

[51] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*.

register a complaint coming from little Bilham that talk of politics is censored from members of the young nation-states not belonging to Europe or the Old World, an alternative seems equally plausible. Reading little Bilham's statement as prescriptive – he appears to instruct Strether that the important step is to learn to be like Gloriani, to abstain from knowing or making national distinctions, and to seem never to hear or talk politics. This resembles the form of a dissimulation recommended in the classic diplomatic manuals (from Wicquefort, to de Callières, to Nicholson) to preserve the appearance of disinterest between multiple parties, so as to not to unnecessarily close off dialogue. In the first reading, "our squalor" refers to the dirty politics endemic to this public, made invisible and even perpetually charming by some quality of its indigenous element. In the second reading, little Bilham censures the (presumably American) inability to refrain from smearing sociality with overt political talk, but whose "squalor" concerns *faux pas*, which are genially treated "as if" they didn't show the character of the speaker, and the ambient charm maintained. The repetition of the figure of perceptual absence ("never hear" and "didn't show") is complicated by the deliberate avoidance of attribution to an unambiguous causal subject in each instance, and further, by the undercurrent of dissembling or simulation that attends both moments. It would be a stretch to take the claim at face value that Gloriani lacks the requisite knowledge to distinguish Americans or his treatment of them, and the "as if" relies on the momentary suspension of disbelief.

Whether the important step is to overcome the reticence to talk politics, to read how it is encoded within the apparently non-political, or to tactfully feign indifference or neutrality, the "battle" is certainly of a character familiar to the vocations of the ambassador (and considered at some length in the various manuals), as well as the

practice of interpreting.[52] That this should be a "battle" for little Bilham the small artist and "among Thackeray's progeny in the exploration of bourgeois bachelors in bohemia", suggests that he is a character framed by political discourse, despite the dearth of such consideration in the critical literature.[53] Furthermore, it suggests that both he (and James) are concerned with the dynamic play of privacy and publicity; discretion and disclosure; presence and absence; silence, circumspection and proclamation – patterning the portrayal of European diplomatic sociality that is thrust into a spatial form in Gloriani's garden.

Strether's "crisis in an unprecedented hour of leisure" occurs on his entry into this incipient transnational public, arising from being overwhelmed by "types tremendously alien, alien to Woollett" and the flood of impressions, and anxious concerning his own localized status as Mrs. Newsome's ambassador in the cosmopolitan "great world" and his insubstantial passivity amid the flux of erudite social transactions. The topic of the "*femme du monde*" is repeatedly broached in the conversation with little Bilham, which the narrator informs us, "was a category our friend had a feeling for; a light, romantic and mysterious, on the feminine element, in which he enjoyed for a little watching it." It is worth noting here that Strether's pleasure in voyeurism is as an empathetic "feeling for" the "feminine element." This resonates with the "double consciousness" he is described as possessing in the novel's opening, as maintaining a paradoxical movement between "curiosity in his indifference" and "detachment in his zeal." This can be viewed as an approach towards an object of

[52] See JJ Jusserand's historical review

[53] Sedgwick at 193 "The Beast in the Closet"

attention that retains the qualities of both curiosity and detachment, by seeking neither to completely possess, nor to dispose of, its objectivity.[54]

Finally, in the garden party scence, "most of" Strether's admiring gaze is explicitly reserved in the rest of the passage for that "sleek" male tiger, the great sculptor, Gloriani (whose position as the gravitational object of devotion is replaced by Chad in the ensuing conversation between Strether and little Bilham). Strether is initially relieved on first meeting Chad in Paris to find terms to describe his transformed, improved physiognomy, as that of "a man of the world". It is a world of "*cher confrere*" and "*gros bonnets* of many kinds", in which social conflict and aggression, are made "light, romantic and mysterious", that is, softened by feminine sociality, such that fast and fierce diplomacy is made diplomatic (in the sense of being delicate and discreet).[55] Strether senses in the figures of the Duchess and Gloriani walking together a sense of predatory ambition and exotic disarray, identifying "something in the great world covertly tigerish, which came to him across the lawn and in the charming air as a waft from the jungle", leading him to wonder whether his proximate relation to them is sufficient to include him within it. A few things should be considered here. First, the great world possesses dimensions of covert competition (both predatory and sexual), "a waft from the jungle" that belies the civilized veneer of "the lawn" and "the charming air". It is the conduct of politics as war by other means, in which the repressed Hobbesian "state of nature" as a "war of all against all" reappears to reveal the reality of fierce aggression underlying all social relations under the superficial veneer of

[54] James, *The Ambassadors*, 2.

[55] James, *The Ambassadors*, 100.

civility. Strether's desire to participate in this world voyeuristically and passively goes against its fundamental grain, so that even if he is included by relative proximity, he remains peripheral to its constitutive history of conflict, and the varieties of action legible within its frame.

This is the distinction between Strether as Mrs. Newsome's ambassador, and the European ambassadors present at the party; returning her son Chad to Woollett ("almost an industrial colony") is an action that registers (historically at least) only in the scope of a localized, familial frame, not on the seemingly grand stage of world history in its imperial conception. Second, the allusion to tigers in jungles extends the metaphorical referents that make sense within this great world specifically beyond the West, allowing for the most significant of French global colonial holdings (in North Africa and Indochina) to momentarily flicker into the novel's geographic coordinates, introduced by the collusion between the celebrity of the art-world, and the imperial, appraising gaze of the "duchesse" with the "bold high look, the range of expensive reference".[56]

4. The Empire of Things

The impression of this expanded geography and the relations of imperial extraction earlier pricks Strether's consciousness when he first encounters Gostrey's living quarters – with its contribution to the 'empire of "things"' observed in France, in contrast to the industrial manufacture of Woollett.[57] The phrase suggests that the assortment of general things, including Gostrey's, constitute an "empire" of reference

[56] James, The Ambassadors, 109.

[57] James, The Ambassadors, 62.

(something more variegated, improvisional, and less unified than a "world" or "universe"), but also imports the geopolitical horizon of their basis in imperial expropriation. It also points to the assembly of objects in a pre-capitalist order (that is, what Marx calls "primitive accumulation" – ivory, brocade, piratical booty – which precedes and anticipates capitalist accumulation proper, and which Saskia Sassen points out is necessary for the incorporation or transition of pre-capitalist economies into capitalist production).[58] The longer passage conveys Strether's sense of Gostrey's lusty but disorganized covetousness:

> Her compact and crowded little chambers, almost dusky, as they at first struck him, with accumulations, represented a supreme general adjustment to opportunities and conditions. Wherever he looked he saw an old ivory or an old brocade, and he scarce knew where to sit for fear of a misappliance. The life of the occupant struck him of a sudden as more charged with possession even than Chad's or than Miss Barrace's; wide as his glimpse had lately become of the empire of "things," what was before him still enlarged it; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life had indeed thus their temple. It was the innermost nook of the shrine—as brown as a pirate's cave.[59]

The objects "represented a supreme general adjustment to opportunities" in that they both are constituted by Gostrey's resourceful adaptability to changed conditions, and are invested as the resources for her potential adjustment to a projected general futurity (resembling hoarding).

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[58] Sassen, "Globalizations."

[59] James, The Ambassadors, 62.

In this context, it is significant that Strether "scarce knew where to sit for fear of a misappliance" (a play on "misalliance"), in which he perceives a life "more charged with possession" – "charged" in its plain meaning as filled with, but also denoting assignment with a responsibility, and alternatively, a demand indicating the obligation to pay. "Possession" (not the plural noun denoting objects, but in the conspicuous singular) speaks to a state of control or having, or alternatively of being taken over (by a spirit or an idea for instance). The suggestion is that Gostrey's life is, like Strether's, not her own. Whereas Strether has "a life only for other people" as Mrs. Newsome's representative, he realizes contingent sense of freedom (qualified as "the memory of the illusion") by recognizing his self as relational, mediated, and dispossessed (of always "being in relation with" or "put in relation to").[60] Gostrey's life is possessed by the state of possession, open to repossession insofar as its responsibility and obligation to materiality are at risk of being "misapplied" – that is, James suggests, both wrongly used by Strether in the end, and being directed wrongly as a means to an end.

Describing Woollett to Gostrey as "almost an industrial colony", Strether implicitly positions himself as its ambassador, and Mrs. Newsome as sovereign.[61] The phrase "an industrial colony" suggests that it consists of a group of people living together in pursuit of a shared enterprise (like an artist colony), that exists within or in relation to a larger body (the wider world). Oddly, given the description of its booming trade and industry, the qualifying adverb "almost" suggests that Woollett stands in an anticipatory relation to becoming an industrial colony. While the description also seems

[60] James, *The Ambassadors*, 137.

[61] James, *The Ambassadors*, 31.

to reference the historical relations between the Old and New Worlds, the chronology is reversed: the industrial New England, is within reach of attaining the status of industrial colony. This points to the alternative sense of "colony", as an area occupied and controlled by another state, as part of its empire). Indeed, Woollett's incipient monopoly (*almost* a monopoly) in the manufacture and trade of the mysterious article of everyday domestic use, has it participating within "the empire of things", albeit in its fledgling minority and the absence of a historical aura. (The original reference in the novel to "the empire of things" is to the cluttered assembly of objects of historical and aesthetic patina collected in Gostrey's apartment, which seems relatively vulgar to Strether, compared to the inherited furnishings in Madame de Vionnet's villa.)

The notion of collection is present in the central scene in Gloriani's garden as well, where Little Bilham laughingly refutes Strether's expression of feeling of being outdated (and socially unfashionable), by describing him as specifically rococo (and as such, a welcome addition to the collections maintained by those in attendance). The Parisian collections of things and persons, Timothy Mitchell explains, is historically entangled with specifically imperial modes of displaying, perceiving, and understanding the world in the 19th century age of exhibitions, and the proliferation of museums and exhibits.[62] This metaphor is further extended in James' New York Preface to *The Ambassadors* where he describes Strether as "the man of imagination encaged and provided for."[63] *The Ambassadors* is concerned with the juncture between auratic objects circulating within Parisian collections, and the dissemination of words and ideas in the

[62] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*.

[63] James, *The Art of the Novel*.

"art of advertising" on behalf of the article of mass-reproduction and distribution – in terms of anticipating a new world order constituted by the global circulation of commodities and persons. Insofar as Strether is an ambassador, it is not merely that he is a delegate or mediating agent, but implies that Woollett (as the center of an incipient monopoly in the trade of a certain domestic article) constitutes a kind of state within a new empire constituted by global capital. Mitchell tracks the transfer of imperial modes of display and perception from the ethnographic exhibit to the supermarket shelf, to every part of life, and it is helpful here to consider how imperial publics are formed through the training of attention.

If Strether's sense of self is obscured by acting on behalf of Mrs. Newsome, it is apparently restored and allowed for in acting for Madame de Vionnet – as the latter recognizes: "Of course, as I've said, you're acting, in your wonderful way, for yourself; and what's for yourself is no more my business—though I may reach out unholy hands so clumsily to touch it—than if it were something in Timbuctoo." As part of the "scramble for Africa", Timbuktu – a center of Islamic and Sufi scholarship in the 14th to 16th centuries – was annexed in 1894 by French soldiers and subsequently made part of the colonial subdivision renamed Senegambia and Niger in 1902. Madame de Vionnet's acknowledgment that there is something sanctified in Strether's acting for himself in helping her, is also implicitly an indication of her ambivalence concerning French imperialism. This is in contrast to James's own support for British colonialism and ambivalence on American empire, and the record of his long friendships with both Field Marshal Lord Wolseley (whom he called "an excellent specimen of the *cultivated*

British soldier") and U.S. Secretary of State, John Hay.[64] In relation to the latter, Stuart Burrows notes that:

> This notion of the writer as an adjunct to the state department surfaces again in a 1904 letter to the now Secretary of State Hay, in which James, just after completing *The Golden Bowl*, proclaims: "I think indeed I ought to become the special ward, pupil, pensioner [. . .] of the Department of State, & that...[65]

Such proximity between literature and state diplomacy was hardly new, and there is a long history of literary appointments as diplomats, often as an honorary position, but also functioning in a manner that loosely anticipates what we now refer to as "public diplomacy".

In the context of the novel's title, it would be remiss to discount also the sense of the world that emerges through the management of geopolitical relations, and specifically in the sense of what we now call "public diplomacy", that is, the pursuit of political goals by affecting foreign public opinion – often borrowing from the technical repertoires of art and advertising. Nicholas Cull notes that while "the term public diplomacy – the conduct of foreign policy by engagement with a foreign public – is relatively new, acquiring this meaning only in 1965. The activity is, in contrast, as old as statecraft." In particular, "from the start, Americans have understood the value of technology in projecting their national image and influence overseas" citing the examples of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, as "the young republic's first

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[64] Letter to Wiliam James as cited by Alan G. James "The Field Marshal…" in *The Henry James Review* 18:1 (Winter) 1997, 43-65; Monteiro, *Henry James and John Hay*.
[65] Burrows, "The Golden Fruit."

public diplomats" in their roles concurrently as "accomplished scientists".[66] Notably, the novelist William Dean Howells – whose overheard remark in Paris reported to James by a mutual friend forms the "germ" of Strether's speech to Little Bilham and the central inspiration of *The Ambassadors* – had been appointed as the American Consul to Venice in 1861, where he had few duties but the experience gave rise to two travelogues, *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*.

5. Literal Ambassadors

Ambassadors number among the "*gros bonnets*" that typically grace Gloriani's parties, and consequently are included within "Chad's strange communities", forming the backdrop against which Strether's role as one of the titular ambassadors ask to be considered.[67] The ambassadors that number in this great world are suspected by Strether to be characterized by feats of linguistic and social facility, such as the man in the frock coat whose "French had quickly turned to equal English" diverting Madame de Vionnet's away "with a trick of three words; a trick played with a social art of which Strether, looking after them as the four, whose backs were now all turned, moved off, felt himself no master." In spite of this, it is precisely as his mother's ambassador, that Strether becomes inserted within Chad's social networks, such that anticipating the deployment of Chad's sister, Sarah Pocock as his replacement in representing Mrs. Newsome's interests in Europe, Strether defamiliarizes her by bracketing Chad's primary relation of kinship to her. '"But when you presently meet her, all the same you'll be meeting your mother's representative—just as I shall. I feel like the outgoing

[66] Cull, "The Long Road to Public Diplomacy 2.0," 125–26.
[67] James, *The Ambassadors*, 109.

ambassador," said Strether, "doing honour to his appointed successor."'[68] Having been cut off from Mrs. Newsome's regular cables with instructions, Strether is recalled for "the inevitable deviation (from too fond an original vision) that the exquisite treachery even of the straightest execution may ever be trusted to inflict". The quoted language originates in James's Preface concerning the experience of rereading *The Ambassadors* and detecting therein "these disguised and repaired losses" between the original plan and execution, but it resonates with the novel's theme of Strether's deviation from his original mission, and of his apparent treason in acting to protect Madame de Vionnet. Describing Madame de Vionnet's readiness to meet Sarah Pocock, Chad half-jokingly quips: '"In the way of general amiability, hospitality and welcome. She's under arms," Chad laughed again; "she's prepared."' The traditional functions of the ambassador as involving the militarization of social conversation and graces, in advancing state goals, are perhaps emphasized by the exaggerated national styles of diplomacy and character, but formally coordinated in the space of Gloriana's party.[69]

It is in this capacity as the outgoing ambassador, that for Strether "to be right" requires distinguishing between his permissible acquisition of "rich impressions" and the obligation formulated as his "only logic" – "Not out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself"– in his explanation to Gostrey of refusing her offer "of exquisite service, of lightened care".[70] To the extent that this renunciation appears ethical, it is

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[68] James, *The Ambassadors*, 180.

[69] 'Strether wondered, desiring justice. "They seem—all the women—very harmonious."' James, *The Ambassadors*, 101.

[70] James, *The Ambassadors*, 318.

not because Strether resists either desire or the temptations of comfort: James forecloses these readings by having Strether consider that "what stood about him there in her offer … might well have tempted" (but implicitly, and importantly, did not).[71] Instead, this moment for Strether concerns the articulation of his guiding logic throughout "the whole affair" as one of non-acquisition of "anything for myself" that would make him "wrong" – that is, acting in unambiguous transgression of one of the fundamental duties of his assumed vocation. In contrast, his departure from his original instructions are not a matter of a breach going to the heart of the ambassadorial relation.

Concerning the relations between America and 'Europe' in particular, Gostrey occupies a different role of social mediation, which she describes in a variety of modest terms from the beginning. To quote a relevant but lengthy passage:

> I'm a general guide—to 'Europe,' don't you know? I wait for people—l put them through. I pick them up—I set them down. I'm a sort of superior 'courier-maid.' I'm a companion at large. I take people, as I've told you, about. I never sought it—it has come to me. It has been my fate, and one's fate one accepts. It's a dreadful thing to have to say, in so wicked a world, but I verily believe that, such as you see me, there's nothing I don't know. I know all the shops and the prices—but I know worse things still. I bear on my back the huge load of our national consciousness, or, in other words—for it comes to that—of our nation itself. Of what is our nation composed but of the men and women individually on my shoulders? I don't do it, you know, for any particular advantage. I don't

[71] James, *The Ambassadors*, 317.

do it, for instance—some people do, you know—for money."[72]

Aspects of Gostrey's strange role participate in a different arena of foreign affairs: the consular corps, distinguished from the diplomatic corps, concerned with the fostering and protection of the interests of citizens abroad.

That her burden is of an encompassing knowledge (not merely of markets and values), speaks to her worldly exposure and expertise. These qualify Gostrey for her function as the "*ficelle*-character," who exists in the narrative only to elicit information as Strether's confidante – as "an enrolled, a direct, aid to lucidity" according to James in the New York Preface, and the "reader's friend" whose sole purpose is as a narrative device to allow information to be overheard rather than directly addressed to the reader. However, in this aside to "some people", Gostrey presents herself in contrast to the rise the well-remunerated and increasingly professionalized American consular corps in the late-nineteenth century.[73] Unlike them, her role is disclosed as an involuntary calling of "fate", not performed for material advantage. This should confirm her as a disinterested and experienced guide, but we only ever have her word to rely on within the novel. In a sense, Gostrey is no other than James himself (in drag as his "*ficelle*") as an unofficial adjunct to the State Department. In assuming narrative mastery by pulling the puppet strings as "fate," James thereby envisages his authorial

[72] James, *The Ambassadors*, 8.

[73] On the key role that consuls played in the nineteenth-century global economy, see Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783-1914*.

responsibility as carrying the weight of the "huge load of our national consciousness" and "our nation itself". [74]

Gostrey's exposure to and consequent knowledge of "so wicked a world" is eclipsed by knowledge of "worse things still" in the form of this load. Europe is parenthesized as an abstraction to which Gostrey claims expertise and which can be instantiated for Americans abroad as an indefinite spatial and temporal experience in which persons are picked up, set down, put through, and taken about. The remainder of the passage makes a correspondence between the individually differentiable persons (carried on her shoulders) and the national consciousness syllogistically conflated with "our nation" (carried on her back). Suggesting that the nation is "composed" of these individuals draws on a visual arrangement of parts to whole, but registers a spatial and metaphysical dissociation between the compositional parts of sexually specifiable individuals, and the composition of a "national consciousness." This resembles the depiction of the sovereign's disproportionately large head on the cover of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, only inverted such that it is the embodied individuals rising to her shoulders, with the trailing residue of collective consciousness accumulating at her back.

Gostrey's treatment of individual nationals and the nations, mediated by "national consciousness", refers to and extends the mid-nineteenth century attempts to define distinct characteristics of culture, language, history, folklore, ethnicity, or ways of life that might be posited as the basis for shared national identity, giving rise to a nation

[74] For an insightful analysis of James's *ficelles* through a counter-reading the New York Prefaces, see Sara Blair, "In the House of Fiction: Henry James and the Engendering of Literary Mastery."

recognizable under the European international law.[75] The load of the national consciousness is carried out, Gostrey suggests, somewhere between her shoulders and back – as a collective weight. The claim that the nation is composed extra-territorially in 'Europe' by its nationals abroad relies on the implicit and counter-intuitive premise that (American) national consciousness is only experienced and formed abroad, and the explicit premise that national consciousness and nation are synonyms. James's sly suggestion is that the nation is forged through its tourists and nationals abroad (and its readers of expatriate novels), unofficially guided to self-consciousness through 'Europe'.

6. Reputation and Reparation

The imagined community of the nation is famously described by Benedict Anderson as taking shape through the routine circulations of print capitalism, and at this point, it is pertinent to zoom in on Strether's review. Strether describes it as a review which he edits for Mrs. Newsome as "an expensive review, devoted to serious questions and inquiries, economic, social, sanitary, humanitary", and elsewhere –

> The green covers at home comprised, by the law of their purpose, no tribute to letters; it was of a mere rich kernel of economics, politics, ethics that, glazed and,

[75] For example by European international law jurists like Pasquale Mancini (who prepared the legislative unification of Italy in the Italian Civil Code of 1865, as foreign minister was responsible for launching Italian imperialism in 1881. This encoded his (at the time) influential theory of international law that every foreigner is judged by the laws of that foreigner's own country, and J. Bluntschli, the notable Swiss jurist who attempted to define the features of a "people" in his *Theory of the State* (1875).

as Mrs. Newsome maintained rather against his view, pre-eminently pleasant to touch, they formed the specious shell.[76]

The purpose of the green covers is to hide Mrs. Newsome's connection by bearing Strether's name, and her bankrolling of the review, which intentionally goes "in for the unpopular side of things". Nevertheless, it is "no tribute to letters", despite seriously treating matters of social scientific and humanistic learning, but in fact "her tribute to the ideal".

At the same time, the attractive "green cover" of the review that Strether foregrounds resembles the greenback, even as a literal response correcting Gostrey's inquiry about its "political color". Critics have suggested that the transformation of material wealth into cultural capital in Mrs. Newsome's financing of the review, perhaps operates to distract from the questionable sources of her wealth and the nature of her late husband's business. Accordingly, the covers appear to be a "specious shell" in the sense that they are misleading in their dressing up of "the mere rich kernel" as an attempt to approximate value on the order of knowledge with financial value. But here, James introduces more incommensurate forms of value into play. There is the high price of the review both despite and as a causal factor in its unpopularity (that is, conspicuously freed from the dictation of the market), the value of sensory "pleasantness," the cost of production covered by Mrs. Newsome, the "mere" but also 'rich' kernel of knowledge it assembles that is also perhaps paradoxically a "specious shell."

The paratactic syntax provides for an ambivalence here on whether Mrs.

[76] James, The Ambassadors, 47.

Newsome holds the opinion that the covers are "pre-eminently pleasant to touch", or "maintains" as in financially supports their formation as "the specious shell", and accordingly leaves unclear whether Strether opposes their tactility or function. While Strether's editorial decisions appear relatively free from Mrs. Newsome's interference as to content, there is a suggestion that she dictates its material form in terms of the tactile, sumptuous pleasure of the covers.

In one sense, the covers serve as "the specious shell" in that their appeal to the senses papers over the lack of a public– as Strether says, "we are only ever sweetly ignored." Nevertheless, the review is also his claim to a vague curiosity by the world outside Woollett:

> His name on the green cover, where he had put it for Mrs. Newsome, expressed him doubtless just enough to make the world— the world as distinguished, both for more and for less, from Woollett—ask who he was … He was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover, whereas it should have been, for anything like glory, that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether.

Even so, Strether is disappointed that Gostrey has never heard of it. Woollett is described by Strether as "almost an industrial colony" hooked into the global circuits of capital as a node of an incipient monopoly in specialized manufacture.

Strether's absolute remove from the business at Woollett is the condition for his position as editor of the Review. Her backing of the review allows Mrs. Newsome "to expiate her sins," apparently through this public contribution to knowledge and culture. In his reading, Richard Salmon notes that, "here, James images the relationship between cultural and economic production in its most damning form: culture is a product which gains its autonomy only by denying itself the very principle of utility

upon which it is secretly dependent."[77] The wealth of human and social knowledge functions as both the essence of and ambiguously also the misleading cover for the review. The review is a means for converting private wealth into a public gift or homage, and also transforming an end that is concrete (letters) into one that is abstract (the ideal).

The value of the review for Mrs. Newsome is that its value is not determined in terms of market penetration or capacity for value production. It is something that takes its specific value outside the market for commodity exchange, and takes its form outside of private ownership. Accordingly, it is "serious" and "expensive" despite having no public. When Strether confides that Mrs. Newsome provides "*all* the money" for the review, "it evoked somehow a vision of gold that held for a little Miss Gostrey's eyes, and she looked as if she heard the bright dollars shoveled in."[78] The conspicuous expenditure of wealth captivates Gostrey's attention across continents, and this suggests that it is the function of the review – as an immolation of surplus value that compels attention to her extravagance beyond Woollett.

In the preface to the New York Edition, James gives away the moral of the story as it confronts Strether, in the simple terms of a process of vision:

> Would there yet perhaps be time for reparation?—reparation, that is, for the injury done his character; for the affront, he is quite ready to say, so stupidly put upon it and in which he has even himself had so clumsy a hand? The answer to which is that he now at all events *sees*; so that the business of my tale and the

[77] Salmon, *Henry James and the Culture of Publicity*, 154.
[78] James, *The Ambassadors*, 34-35.

> march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision.[79]

This process of vision might be clarified by reference to the origins of the novel's title in the famous example of anamorphosis in Holbein the Younger's "The Ambassadors". In this painting, the portrait and the image in the foreground are inversely distorted by shifts in the viewer's perspective, such that the whole painting is never accessible as a unified immediacy without a deliberate superimposition of the reconstructed memory of the other part of the image. The problem is that you cannot see the main portrait without distorting the *vanitas* figure of the skull in the foreground, and you cannot see the skull without distorting the rest of the portrait. The process of vision then is not a progressive realization of a transparent reality, but a vacillation between perspectives that admits to its corresponding distorted aspects firstly, that their distortion is constitutive of its vision; and secondly, the possibility of becoming coherent only through the distortion of the primary foci.

Accordingly, sensing that one's subjective apprehension of the world is constituted through injury or distortion – not despite it, offers the possibility of vision as reparative, but on the paradoxical condition of deliberately incurring a distortion to a substantial part of what one sees. As Adeline Tintner has shown, it is likely that James' choice of title was inspired by Holbein the Younger's dual portrait of the same name, which had been acquired for public exhibition by the National Gallery in London in 1890.[80] Just before James's novel, the biographical subjects of the dual portrait had been

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[79] James, *The Art of the Novel*.

[80] Tintner, *Henry James and the Lust of the Eyes*.

identified by Mary Hervey's book as Jean de Dinteville (French Ambassador to Henry VIII's court in England in 1533) and Georges De Selve (the Bishop of Lavaur and a diplomat).[81] These are representatives of "the 'great world', the world of ambassadors and duchesses" which Strether encounters in Gloriani's garden. Perhaps, the novel suggests, the crisis for Strether is not the reminder of human mortality, but the inverted problem of not having had his own life including the pursuit of material pleasures and sensual impressions.

While Strether acknowledges in his outburst to little Bilham that freedom is an illusion and that consciousness is as jelly formed in a mold, he also makes the case that it is better to have the memory of that illusion than to be without it. Little Bilham takes Strether to mean by this that the memory of having lived in the belief as if one were free in the absence of a critical self-consciousness, becomes a comparative consolation in old age. Accordingly, little Bilham offers the rebuttal that he wouldn't mind being as Strether is in his maturity. However, we should note that the convivial relation between Strether and little Bilham is characterized by and persists in spite of blockages to understanding and communication. As Strether recounts, "I don't half understand him; but our modus vivendi isn't spoiled even by that." Strether's counter-intuitive point is not that "the memory of the illusion of freedom" promises a deluded comfort, but that it is the recollection of the practice of an illusory ideal that is the condition of possibility for the reparation of character in old age.

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[81] Hervey, *Holbein's "Ambassadors."*

A passage from James letter dated March, 21 1914 responding to the "melancholy outpouring" of his friend Henry Adams which appears to have been prompted by James's autobiography, *Notes of a Son and Brother*:

> Of course we are lone survivors, of course the past that was our lives is at the bottom of an abyss.—if the abyss has any bottom; of course, too, there's no use talking unless one particularly wants to. But the purpose, almost, of my printed divagations was to show you that one can, strange to say, still want to.—or at least behave as if one did ... . I still find my consciousness interesting.—under cultivation of the interest. Cultivate it with me, dear Henry.—that's what I hoped to make you do.
>
> ___Why mine yields an interest I don't know that I can tell you, but I don't challenge or quarrel with it.—I encourage it with a ghastly grin. You see I still, in the presence of life (or of what you deny to be such,) have reactions.—as many as possible .... It's, I suppose because I am that queer monster, the artist, an obstinate finality, an inexhaustible sensibility. Hence the reactions—appearances, memories, many things, go on playing upon it with consequences that I note and "enjoy" (grim word) noting. It all takes doing.—and l do. I believe I shall do yet again.—it is still an act of life.[82]

Where Adams narrated consciousness as the defoliation of a sense of self, emphasizing its warping under the strain of his historical moment, under the sign of an ambiguous reformulation of diplomacy, James's affirms the continuing possibility of cultivating interest, in a creative *poeisis* that furnishes the artist's "inexhaustible sensibility" with a

[82] James, *Henry James*, 173–74.

universe to engage with and react to. His extension of an invitation to Adams to resume "talking", proceeds by inviting him to cultivate an interest in consciousness, "to show you that one can, strange to say, still want to—or at least behave as if one did". The possibility of reparations in late life made for the injury done to character, resonates with Strether's "process of vision" in *The Ambassadors* of recuperating the memory of the illusion of freedom, is here cast in the similar terms of dissimulating desire ("at least behave as if one did"). In either case, one takes the illusion or pretence as the interrupted, or damaged, form of relationality – which beckons with the mysterious potential for communication – under a different regime of exposed privacy and discreet publicness.

In this other sense of affirming a world, not as the orthographic projection of/onto a great world of universal convertibility, the narrative meets James's own description of remembering on no other occasion, finding "a livelier interest" in taking "stock in this fashion, of suggested wealth": in the smallness, acuteness and obscurity that little Bilham is admirably accommodated to, or the slow disclosure of baffled forms of relationality that Mamie hints at, or the social and moral generosity of Gostrey (possibly sanctioned by the cluttered bricolage of her collection, in its undignified relative vulgarity). This minor world, like the anamorphosis in the Holbein, threatens to overturn the convertibility of perspectives, the fungibility of values within harmonized measures, and political opacity of the great world. It does so not in an insistence on the virtues of particularity over universality, but in their composition as lived modes of background distortion that set the atmosphere for the main stage, that conjugate James's worlds of potential relationality.

It is notable that *The Ambassadors* was the first novel to be serialized in the *North American Review*, a literary and cultural periodical that around the turn of the century had an emphasis on articles presenting perspectives on a cluster of topics concerning imperialism, U.S. foreign policy towards China and the Philippines, and diplomacy. In this light, another minor detail of the Holbein painting comes to the fore: the broken lute string signifying the failure of diplomacy, and hinting within the main scene of international discord.[83] This reverberates with Strether's impression of the tigerish conviviality and the aggressive sociality transacted within the great world, but also on a different register, with James's exhortation in his statement of queer monstrosity, to do life – as James exhorted Adams – with a ghastly grin.

[83] North, *The Ambassador's Secret*.

Chapter Three: Economics

Conventions of Reading and Value in

John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*

1. Hidden Currents

On May 17, 1919, William C. Bullitt resigned as Chief of the Current Intelligence Section for Woodrow Wilson's delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference, and soon after, began sessions of analysis with Freud. Subsequently, he collaborated with Freud on an analysis of Woodrow Wilson's "moral collapse" at the Conference. The book was essentially complete by 1932, but due to various considerations was not published until 1966, only to be buried by scathing reviews as well as the coordinated refutation and censure of the Freud estate.[1] In brief, Bullitt and Freud argue that Wilson's failure in directing the Versailles Treaty was a result of his sense of divine rightness and identification as a Christ figure, which they analyze as an Oedipal formation developing from a passive relation to his father. Bullitt and Freud's analysis proceeded from the facts that they could ascertain about Wilson, including Bullitt's personal experience, and written accounts – including John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. James Strachey had loaned his copy to Freud while undergoing analysis after the First World War, and conversely, Keynes told James in June 1925 that he was in the process of reading the whole of Freud's works.

Indeed, the sense of Wilson's diplomacy suffering from his Christ-complex is prefigured by Keynes's description of Wilson as a Presbyterian minister imperceptive of to his surroundings, and also the concluding assertion that the course of events is determined by hidden currents. But despite these similarities, there is a significant different between their critiques of Wilson's character. Where Bullitt and Freud's psychological portrait explain Wilson's moral collapse as a matter of unconscious desires and identifications, Keynes figures Wilson's failure in terms of the misled reader – the Presbyterian minister bamboozled by Jesuitical exegesis, Macbeth being led into

[1] For an account of its critical reception, and the evidence of extensive collaboration between Freud and Bullitt on the Wilson book over several years, and Freud's own use of the manuscript for instructional purposes in the early 1930's, see Paul Roazen, "Oedipus at Versailles"; Campbell, "To Bury Freud on Wilson."

moral confusion by the Weird Sisters, and Don Quixote's drama of misreading and self-transformation.

Keynes famously resigned as the Treasury's advisor to Lloyd George's delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in disgust at the negotiations over the draft Treaty of Versailles, which appeared to him as the imposition by the victors of a Carthaginian Peace that would lead to future conflict. *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* was published later that year arguing that the obligations sought against Germany would both be impossible to fulfil in practice, and would nevertheless, in the attempt lead to an economic disaster across Europe. Describing the failure of the Council of Four at the Peace Conference, to have due regard to the post-war economic problems of Europe, Keynes observed that "reparation was their main excursion into the economic field, and they settled it as a problem of theology, of politics, or electoral chicane, from every point of view except that of the economic future of the States whose destiny they were handling."[2] It was an immediate success which was translated into several languages, and had a substantial influence on public opinion of the Peace. Part of its appeal lay in the psychological portraits that Keynes drew of the Council of Four, purportedly from his insight working with them behind closed doors – especially Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, and Clemenceau – which contentiously showed Wilson as a blind zealot inexperienced in negotiation, led astray by the machinations of Lloyd George and Clemenceau to agree to a Peace that only superficially adhered to the earlier statement of principles laid out in his Fourteen Points.

[2] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 226–27.

This chapter examines why the critique of diplomacy at the Paris Conference in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* is couched in terms of specific practices of literary reading and misreading, as well as Keynes's attentiveness to the material life of words, and interest in melodrama. I show that Keynes contemplates approaches to reading treaties and narrating diplomacy, that develops a view of historical agency as overdetermined – especially during periods of social and economic instability – by a combination of shared atmospheres, unconscious motivations, and public affects, rather than "the deliberate acts of statesmen." In doing so, this chapter intervenes in three main lines of scholarly conversation. Firstly, it recalibrates Martin Harries' account of the work of Keynes's supernatural citation especially of *Macbeth* in the *Economic Consequences*, by reading these citations as part of a broader set of claims about conventions (of reading, of value, and of diplomatic agreement) that the text develops. I reassess the psychological portraits in the *Economic Consequences*, especially of Wilson and Lloyd George, in light of the reading practices that the text attempts to induce, in order to explain the text's apparently contradictory narrative treatment of, and condemnation against acting out, "foreign policy as cheap melodrama." Towards this end, I situate specific passages Keynes's writings on the Treaty, alongside debates in late-Victorian performances of *Macbeth*.

Secondly, I take the *Economic Consequences* as a case in developing our understanding the mutual influence of Keynes and Bloomsbury, taking this group identification to refer to a style or attitude adopted by an oppositional section of the upper-class – as Raymond Williams has suggested. For Williams, precisely in their diverse output and stances, Bloomsbury was unified by their shared assumption of the centrality of the free, civilized individual, in which social conscience served in part as

reassurance that their sympathies and imagination were not simply delimited by class allegiance.[3] As hinted above, the *Economic Consequences* depends on the discourse of social conscience both as narrative perspective, and the appeal of its moral and economic argument. But in the final passages of this text, Keynes asserts that events in the immediate future will not be determined by the "deliberate acts of statesmen," abut instead by subterranean and impersonal forces ("the hidden currents, flowing continually beneath the surface of political history") as the real propeller of human history. By doing so, this chapter also contributes to the turn by economic and intellectual historians to tracing the development of Keynes's views on international politics and imperialism, such as in the recent work of Manu Goswami and Donald Markwell, as well as how the international politics and aesthetic styles of Bloomsbury connect in work by critics like Christine Froula, Jane Goldman, and Sonita Sarker.[4]

Finally, my focus on the treatment of conventions in *Economic Consequences*, closes in on the often quoted attribution by Keynes to Lenin of the imperative "debauch the currency." I consider this phrase as an adaptation of the cryptic command to "deface the coin" which Diogenes the Cynic, in exile already for defacing coins, is said to have eventually enacted as the perversion of the coin of custom. Keynes's return to the scene and sense of defacing the value of literal currency warns that state actions in devaluing currency through domestic inflation risk overturning not just the conventions surrounding the money-form as universal equivalent, but the entire social and political

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[3] Williams, "The Bloomsbury Fraction."

[4] Goswami, "Crisis Economics"; Markwell, *John Maynard Keynes and International Relations*; Froula, "War, Peace, and Internationalism"; Jane Goldman, "Cast Study: Bloomsbury's Pacifist Aesthetics: Woolf, Keynes, Rodker"; Sonita Sarkar, "Bloomsbury and Empire."

basis. The sudden evaporation of a stable basis for exchange value disrupts the authority of historical experience as a reliable guide for future expectations, exacerbates both the arbitrariness and inequality of the distribution of wealth, and induces the wealthy to profligate spending thereby fueling class resentments.

2 Bloomsbury internationalism

Literary scholarship on Keynes's work sees it as operating both conceptually and stylistically within the circuits of influence in literary modernism in general, and of Bloomsbury in particular. For Raymond Williams, despite their divergent output and broadly shared pacifist and anti-imperial politics, the group have in common the naturalization of free individuals as "a 'civilized' norm." He writes that "in the very power of their demonstration of a private sensibility that has to be protected and extended by forms of public concern, they fashioned the effective forms of the contemporary ideological dissociation between 'public' and 'private' life."[5] In Keynes's *The General Theory*, we can see this take the explicit form of a biopolitical project, where the proper concern of the state becomes the management of the life of populations through economic interventions such as national spending towards establishing the practical preconditions for free individuals to practice moral good. But I consider how Keynes's earlier work in *Economic Consequences* offers a different picture of political and private agency, in which the private character of statesmen track the tragic course of diplomacy, while public events are observed as being driven by hidden currents that overwrite the rational and deliberate actions of individuals.

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[5] Raymond Williams, "Bloomsbury as Social and Cultural Group" in Derek Crabtree and A.P. Thirlwall (Eds.), *Keynes and the Bloomsbury Group* London: The McMillan Press Ltd 1980 at 66.

Bloomsbury was generally characterized by pacifism (or at least conscientious objection), and left-liberal progressive politics, although their views on imperialism often shifted substantially over the first two decades of the twentieth century. In part, this reflected changing Edwardian attitudes on British empire after the Boer War. Lytton Strachey worked for ten years revising his early 1901 long essay defending Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, against Burke's speeches for impeachment and Macaulay's characterization of Hastings as a ruthless imperialist, by maintaining that Hastings acted as necessary to secure colonial peace and order.[6] This view contrasts with his later blistering appraisal of the career of General Gordon in *Eminent Victorians* (1918) as having "all ended very happily – in a glorious slaughter of 20,000 Arabs, a vast addition to the British Empire, and a step in the Peerage for Sir Evelyn Baring."[7] Lytton's statement of conscientious objection included the assertion of his conviction "that the whole system by which it is sought to settle international disputes by force is profoundly evil."

Even an "anti-imperialist fanatic" – as Leonard Woolf was described in the 1920's – started at the turn of the century as a colonial administrator in Ceylon, which he recounts in his autobiography.[8] By the early 1920's Leonard wrote *Economic Imperialism* (1920) and *Empire and Commerce in* Africa and also became editor of the *International Review*. This was a short-lived monthly periodical which included a substantial section

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[6] Rosenbaum, "Lytton Strachey and the Prose of Empire."

[7] *Eminent Victorians*.

[8] Beatrice Webb in 1926 describing Leonard Woolf as detailed in Victoria Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf: A Biography*.

on the publication and analysis of international documents of significance. According to Peter Wilson, "the object was explicitly Wilsonian: to contribute to the new spirit of openness symbolized by the principle of 'open covenants openly arrived at' (thereby furthering popular education and trust in international relations)."[9]

While Lytton and Leonard turned sharply towards anti-imperialism, this trajectory is not apparent in the case of Keynes, who started his career in the India Office. His first book *Indian Currency and Finance* argued that high inflation was a necessary evil in India to keep exchange rates low enough order to attract British foreign investment. According to Robert Skidelsky, Keynes believed that, "all things being considered, it was better to have Englishmen running the world than foreigners" and his "imperial confidence survived the Boer War."[10] Even in 1932, John Strachey criticized Keynes for failing to see imperialism as a continuing cause of war.

Markwell proposes that Keynes's views on imperialism might best be described as Burkean in distinguishing between two kinds of imperialism: as jingoistic supremacy and as the spirit of liberty.[11] As evidence, he points to an unpublished early essay in 1904 where Keynes sets out Burke's views of empire and concludes that "there is in truth, very little to criticize' and endorsed 'the duties… of nations to their neighbours'[12] Keynes rejects the development of the Empire into a trading bloc as an obstruction to world peace, and in the *Economic Consequences*, is careful to distinguish his proposal of a

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[9] Wilson, "Leonard Woolf."

[10] Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, 91.

[11] Markwell, *John Maynard Keynes and International Relations*, 19–20.

[12] Cited in Markwell, 19 fn 127.

free trade union from "the former German dream of *Mitteleuropa* insofar as "everyone had the opportunity of belonging."[13] Here Keynes assumes the *doux commerce* thesis of Montesquieu and Smith – that commerce leads to gentle manners conducive to peace, as a result of mutual utility and self-interest softening the passions.

The notion of the duties of nation to their neighbors also appears in the *Economic Consequences* in Keynes's argument against a Treaty motivated by vengeance against Germany. Against the extraction of vengeance against Germany, the *Economic Consequences* asserts, "even though the result disappoint us, must we not base our actions on better expectations, and believe that the prosperity and happiness of one country promotes that of others, that the solidarity of man is not a fiction, and that nations can still afford to treat other nations as fellow-creatures?" Echoed in this is Moore's argument against egoism and utilitarianism since he holds moral good to be not a private possession but "good absolutely", such as when he considers that, "the good of it can in no possible sense be private or belong to me; any more than a thing can exist privately or for one person only."[14]

In his memoir, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, Mulk Raj Anand paints a more sympathetic picture of Keynes in pointed contrast to T.S. Eliot, in relating subsequent dinner conversations in the 1920's on Indian art. Discussing the poetry of Iqbal, Eliot had caused Anand to squirm with his remark that "in many ways, I wish that the Indians would tone down their politics and renew their culture." In contrast to Eliot who expresses the desire to confine Indians to the realm of ancient culture rather than

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[13] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 282–83.
[14] Moore, *Principia Ethica*.

contemporary politics, Anand describes the following conversation with Keynes about Kathakali with the Indian dancer Uday Shankar:

> 'I hear it is more theater than dance.' Ventured Maynard Keynes, his underlip dropping innocently to indicate humility behind his question.
>
> 'Han,' said Uday Shankar.
>
> 'Theater of terror,' I added.
>
> 'Oh, so you anticipated our long war,' said Keynes
>
> 'Our greatest epic *Mahabharata* is about a war of two thousand five hundred years ago,' I said.
>
> John Maynard Keynes smiled and said: 'Humanity will never learn! But we may have catharsis in art.'[15]

The glib transposition of "theater" from its dramaturgical to military sense also signals the attempt to think about the relation of art to historical experience. The exchange shows among other things a repeated concern with the political function of art: whether to anticipate, to attempt to instruct, or to provide catharsis.

The theatricalization of the Peace negotiations manifests in the character portraits of the *Economic Consequences* – to analyze, explain, and persuade – by exposing the interior privacy of character to public scrutiny. Taking up queer style as an *ethos*, Dominic Janes considers the influence of Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* and the broader culture of queer Bloomsbury on Keynes's "camp sensibility" in these portraits.[16] Janes argues that Strachey's biographies "queered" leading Victorian figures

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[15] Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*.

[16] Janes, "Eminent Victorians, Bloomsbury Queerness."

by linking their private and public lives, and that this influence is evident in Keynes, who in the *Economic Consequences*, "depicts the peculiar mannerisms, styles and obsessions of those men, acts, in a similar fashion, to undermine the reader's assumptions concerning their personal probity."[17] This queer linking of private and public life complicates Williams's general characterization of Bloomsbury as focused on the cultivation of the private individual, and the public conditions necessary to secure this. However, where Janes concludes that Keynes exposes the personal incompetence of the Council of Four in order to disavow their public credibility, I argue that the queer style of the text emerges from its picture of human and historical agency as environmentally dispersed and submerged, rather than concentrated in liberal individuality.

3 Living Literalism

The distinct stylistic tension in the *Economic Consequences* between its figurative, occult passages, and its denotative, black letter reading of the treaty agreement and quantification of reparations, is often glossed over and deserves further consideration. I claim that rather than simply moving between the aesthetic lure of the descriptive to persuading through quantitative calculation, Keynes meditates in this text on the work of conventions - of those of reading, of genre, and of value. Reflecting on the 1920's in hindsight, Keynes would later characterize the affinity of the Bloomsbury group for those parts of G.E. Moore's moral philosophy having to do with friendship and aesthetic experience, while carelessly dismissing those parts endorsing the presumptive

[17] Janes, 22.

goodness of convention.[18] While situating Keynes within Bloomsbury is necessary, the risk is that the "aesthetic" aspects of the *Economic Consequences* get treated as distinct from its "economic" substance, rather than as signal parts of the argument, thereby ignoring Keynes's attentiveness to what he terms "the living word."

In a 1920 review of Bernard M. Baruch's book on the reparation and economic sections of the Treaty, Keynes refutes the argument that the parts of the Treaty that are objectionable can be ignored since they would be impossible anyway. Baruch was a Wall Street financier turned reparations advisor to Wilson, who had commissioned Wilson's legal counsel at the Peace Conference, and then junior diplomat, John Foster Dulles to ghostwrite the book as a response to the success of the *Economic Consequences*. Keynes concludes his review with the following lines that bear quoting in full:

> Where is it then that Mr. Baruch's conception of the relations of men and nations fails us and dismays us? Because he counts too low the significance of words which he believes will be empty and of professions which are disingenuous. It is dangerous to treat the living word as dead - words live not less than acts and sometimes longer. The war it may almost be said was fought for words. Our victory raised the prestige of words and the terms we promised enthroned them. But it was as though with the expiring breath of Germany the curse which had destroyed her was inhaled by those who stood over her. The realism which taught that words were the tools of emperors not their masters has won after all and the spirit which invaded Belgium triumphed in Paris. Mr. Baruch comforts himself that the parts of the treaty which he hates not less than I do are empty

[18] Keynes, My Earlier Beliefs

because they are impossible and harmless because they can never happen. But they have wounded the public faith of Europe. [19]

Baruch's discounting of the significance of words and diplomacy is problematic for Keynes where it regards them as insignificant because they do not concern the realm of possibility. Where the Treaty terms are detached from the realm of possibility, Keynes suggests that they are not harmless as Baruch contends, but affect the public faith in the legitimacy and efficacy of the European diplomatic system, and eventually in Europe itself as a community with a historically specific arrangement of social classes.

It is well-known that Bloomsbury aesthetics posed a reaction to Victorian materialist realism but only from within this social order, for instance Clive Bell's championing of post-impressionism, and Virginia Woolf's literary focus on processes of consciousness.[20] Jennifer Wicke shows that Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* was an instance of "market modernism," insofar as it forms the aesthetic complement to Keynes's figuring of the volatility and chaos of the market system in his economic theory.[21] In his later articulation of a theoretical system in *The General Theory*, Keynes overturns classical liberal assumptions of a system that moves inevitably towards equilibrium.

In contrast, Keynes's opposition to realism as a philosophy of language has received scant attention. To the "realism" that sees words as the dead container of referents fixed by sovereign rule, Keynes counters the perspective of the word as and imbued with flesh, life, volatile agency, prestige, and faith. Realism refers here to a view

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[19] John Maynard Keynes, "America at the Paris Conference," 93.

[20] For instance, Steve Ellis makes the case for characterizing Woolf as post-Victorian.

[21] Wicke, "'Mrs. Dalloway' Goes to Market."

of language as merely a re-presentation of the existing material world, rather than as Keynes seems to suggest, as materially vital, agential, and productive. (The sense of a "realist" school in international relations appears to only be established with the turn against interwar idealism in the publication of E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Year Crisis* in 1939 and Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* in 1948.) Realism in the sense used here conceives language as an instrument of the sovereign to dictate terms of subjection (in the Rape of Belgium as in the Paris Conference). Instead, Keynes argues for an optic that apprehends the "living word" as possessing mastery over the sovereign. The obvious meaning here is in the form of international agreements, treaties, and diplomatic promises binding on states, and underlying the entire European diplomatic system for which the war was fought. Keynes seems to reference here the German Chancellor's dismissal of the Treaty of London (1839) that had guaranteed Belgium's neutrality as a "*un chiffon de papier*" (a scrap of paper).[22] This meaning is reinforced by Keynes's reference to the "public faith of Europe" – as the credit that the public gives to the significance of words encoded in treaties and conventions. To the extent that Keynes argues that the appropriate regard for words underpins the public credibility and prestige of the European diplomatic system, this seems relatively uncontroversial.

But it is worth noting here Keynes's citation of the magical at this point in evoking the agency of words – the curse that is transferred from Germany's last breath to the Allies referencing witch of Germanic folklore in the style of the Brothers Grimm. In this case, the danger in treating words as empty or dead is to be unknowingly

[22] Dunlop and F.A. Voight, *Memoirs Of Prince Von Bulow - The World War And Germany's Collapse 1909-1919*.

afflicted with the spirit of the enemy – a kind of martial, dictatorial spirit that violates the general will of Europe. The agential life of words persists in a way that resembles and even exceeds those of actions, imbued with what Keynes describes above as prestige. If "prestige" turns on the etymological sense of an illusion or dazzling glamor, it also denotes credit or confidence. Here, Keynes underscores that empty words are not simply an unreal illusion that can be harmlessly dismissed "because they can never happen," but possess a real, material agency even by wounding public confidence in the legal and political conventions that bind Europe. Notably, the opening pages of the *Economic Consequences* already points to the Allied Powers as "being so deeply and inextricably intertwined with their victims by hidden psychic and economic bonds."[23] These passages turn our attention to forms of environmental causality, which prove difficult to account for since they manifest as ghostly and dispersed in public affects, rather than being concretely situated in subjective intentionality.

The atmosphere of unreality is limned in the early pages of the *Economic Consequences*, as Keynes describes the Paris Conference (again worth quoting at length):

> There, at the nerve center of the European system, his British preoccupations must largely fall away and he must be haunted by other and more dreadful specters. Paris was a nightmare and every one there was morbid. A sense of impending catastrophe overhung the frivolous scene; the futility and smallness of man before the great events confronting him; the mingled significance and unreality of the decisions; levity, blindness, insolence, confused cries from without, – all the elements of ancient tragedy were there. Seated indeed among

[23] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 5.

> the theatrical trappings of the French Saloons of State, one could wonder if the extraordinary visages of Wilson and of Clemenceau with their fixed hue and unchanging characterization, were really faces at all and not the tragi-comic masks of some strange drama or puppet show.
>
> The proceedings of Paris all had this air of extraordinary importance and unimportance at the same time. The decisions seemed charged with consequences to the future of human society; yet the air whispered that the word was not flesh, that it was futile, insignificant, of no effect, dissociated from events; and one felt most strongly the impression, described by Tolstoy in *War and Peace* or by Hardy in *The Dynasts*, of events marching on to their fated conclusion unaffected by the cerebrations of Statesmen in Council. (5-6) "

Eleanor Cook shows how T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* draws on such passages of the *Economic Consequences*, particularly in its phrasing of the atmosphere of nightmare and desiccation in anticipation of European collapse. In part, she claims a suggestive link to Keynes through Eliot's banking work at Lloyd's in settling German pre-War debts.[24]

This contrast of frivolity and spectacle dissociated from human consequences is also the theme of William Orpen's commemorative paints of the Paris Conference and the signing of the treaty in Versailles. But where Orpen criticizes the disconnect of statesmen from wartime suffering, Keynes frames the scene as tragic Oedipal drama – via Tolstoy and Hardy – foreordained and immune to statesmen and their diplomacy. The quote from Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1907) that Keynes excerpts concerns the

[24] Eleanor Cook, "T.S. Eliot and the Carthaginian Peace."

vindictiveness of the strong and the impotent rage of the weak, and concludes as follows:

> *Spirit of the Pities*
>
> Why prompts the Will so senseless-shaped a doing?
>
> *Spirit of the Years*
>
> I have told thee that It works unwittingly,
>
> As one possessed not judging.[25]

The critique of the Treaty here as taking a senseless form and being accomplished without rational judgement compares it to the case of the possession of the will. These literary works and, more broadly, the genre of tragedy speak to the experience of the relative inconsequence of the individual will in the course of historical events.

Where this is frequently presumed to be a stylistic flourish, it actually comprises a pattern of Keynes seeking to account both directly and indirectly for forms of atmospheric agency in the *Economic Consequences* – as a mesh of environmental and dispersed actants that circumscribe and determine in advance the meanings and possibilities of subjectively intended actions. In Paris, this included the disciplinary conventions of European diplomacy, cosmopolitan familiarity embodied as culture, and public sentiments in unstable conditions. Keynes explicitly sets out the purpose of the book as showing that the "Carthagianian Peace is not practically right or possible," which then leads him to ask and respond:

> by what legerdemain was this policy substituted for the Fourteen Points, and how did the President come to accept this? The answer to these questions is

[25] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 2

> difficult and depends on elements of character and psychology and on the subtle influence of surroundings, which are hard to detect and harder still to describe. But, if ever the action of a single individual matters, the collapse of The President (sic) has been one of the decisive moral events of history.[26]

Illusion figures here as a trick that one can account for only by considering a set of factors, the first relating to character psychology, and the second to aspects of atmosphere that Keynes notes are subtle, elusive, and ineffable. Consequently, the character portraits of the Council of Four, and the literary and genre citations describing the atmosphere, cannot simply be read as coloring for the economic argument of the *Economic Consequences*, but as specific tasks of analysis that outline a different model of diplomatic-historical agency.

The *Economic Consequences* sets out early on to explain the dramatic shift from the President's early "prestige and moral influence throughout the world" and the big political hopes reposed in this figure, to complete disillusionment. The *Economic Consequences*'s characterization of Wilson ("a blind and deaf Don Quixote") is a rebuke of his stubborn and impractical idealism, and his insensitivity to his surroundings. While is tempting to see the title as a declaration of Keynes's opposition to idealism in general, this opposition between idealism and consequentialism is undone in Moore's moral philosophy. It is worth pointing out that the *Economic Consequences* supports the idealism that animates Wilson's League of Nations: "even in an imperfect form… it was the first commencement of a new principle in the government of the world. Truth and Justice in international relations … must be born in due course by the slow gestation of

[26] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 36-37

the League."[27] Where Keynes faults Wilson is when this idealism is divorced from worldly implementation or assessment, as when his "nebulous and incomplete" ideas are not accompanied by a plan or scheme. The result is that while he could have "preached a sermon" he was unable to "frame their concrete application to the actual state of Europe." Wilson's theological character makes him unfit for the practice of diplomacy, Keynes suggests, firstly, in his ineptitude for the "simple and usual artfulness" in diplomacy of making strategic concessions, secondly, in not being ready with alternative proposals, and finally, in compounding everything by his aloofness in not consulting his more knowledgeable advisors.

Indeed, Keynes describes Wilson as incapable of "clothing with the flesh of life the commandments which he thundered from the White House."[28] The phrasing implies that Wilson disappoints as a divine savior. But more importantly, these figurative terms connect Wilson's idealism (as failing to clothe his commandments with practical life) with Baruch's realism (as mistaking "living words" for dead simply because what they describe is impossible). Despite Wilson's academic background, Keynes is disappointed that Wilson appears not to have an inquisitive temperament, nor even the kind of cosmopolitan culture that might function as a surrogate. His "first glance" at the physical appearance of Wilson suggests not only that "his temperament was not primarily that of the student or the scholar, but that he had not much even of

[27] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 48

[28] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 17

that culture of the world that marks M. Clemenceau and Mr. Balfour as exquisitely cultivated gentlemen of their class and generation."[29]

But "more serious than this" is that Wilson "is not only insensitive to his surroundings in the external sense, he was not sensitive to his surroundings at all." "What chance," Keynes asks, "could such a man have against Mr. Lloyd George's unerring, almost medium-like sensibility to everyone immediately round him" with "six or seven senses not available to ordinary men, judging character, motive, and subconscious impulse … and compounding with telepathic instinct the argument or appeal best suited to the vanity, weakness, or self-interest of his immediate auditor." Keynes makes a subtle distinction here between sensitivity to surroundings in an external sense – what we might describe as setting and atmosphere in the sense of an elaborated physical and social reality – and to "surroundings at all". The latter phrase implicitly includes sensitivity to surroundings in an internal sense – which can be understood as a primary attunement to the furniture of self-consciousness – but still some distance from Lloyd George's apparently supernatural capacity to read and anticipate others. In this deliberately odd phrasing of interiority as "surroundings," Keynes both leans on and troubles the topology of the self as a distinction between inside and outside (what Lacan terms *Innenwelt* and *Umwelt*). What Keynes suggests is that to understand the development of the Treaty negotiations we need an account of agency not as reposed in the stable interiority of rational "selves," but as both environmentally dispersed and super-sensible.

[29] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 41

The *Economic Consequences* describes the causes of the President's failure as "very ordinary and human." "The President was not a hero or a prophet, he was not even a philosopher; but a generously intentioned man, with many of the weaknesses of other human beings and lacking that dominating intellectual equipment which would have been necessary to cope with the subtle and dangerous spellbinders … face to face in Council."[30] The reference to philosophy is significant here, both signaling Plato's prescription of a philosopher-king, but also in prosaic contrast ("even") to mythic characters. The *Economic Consequences*'s criticism of Wilson's diplomacy in the Conference is not that he is seduced to compromise on his original principles, but rather that his excessive formalism of conscience is taken advantage of. "He was too conscientious … he would do nothing that was not honorable; he would do nothing that was not just and right."[31] The text conflates Wilson's inability to distinguish between the treaty's letter and substance in diplomacy with a failure of self-understanding. Specifically, Wilson fails to "secure as much as he could of the substance, even at some sacrifice of the letter" because he was "not capable of so clear an understanding with himself". Wilson's refusal to compromise the letter for the substance is presented here in terms of a temperamental-cognitive incapacity rather than willfulness. The incapacity concerns an "understanding with himself" – that is, a compact that establishes a cognitive self-relation, which Keynes suggests is deficient because it subordinates the substance to the letter.

[30] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 39

[31] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 50

This leaves Wilson's non-Conformist conscientiousness open to exploitation by the "Jesuitical exegesis" of the other members of the Council of Four. For instance, this plays out in Clemenceau framing the French proposals to "mimic the language of freedom and equality," thereby strategically appealing to the form of Wilson's ideals while actually enacting punitive reparations.[32] The consequence is that "the Fourteen Points became a document for gloss and interpretation and for all the intellectual apparatus of self-deception, by which I daresay, the President's forefathers had persuaded themselves that the course they thought it necessary to take was consistent with every syllable of the Pentateuch."[33] The problems with stubborn formalism in conscience and diplomacy, Keynes implies, are that it forecloses the possibilities for negotiation and occludes the critical recognition of interpretation as implicitly depositing special interests as natural, especially where this supports one's self-representation (in this case, Wilson in his role as the voice of divine conscience declaring rights and freedoms). As we have seen, Keynes's depiction of Wilson's character at the Paris Conference returns to the problem of self-knowledge. In the absence of self-knowledge, Wilson's virtues are turned into vice, as an admirable conscientiousness transforms into an obstinate and aloof formalism that is ineffective as diplomacy, and with little regard for material consequences and actual practice.

4. Reading Conventions: Supernatural, Tragedy, Melodrama

The critique that the *Economic Consequences* offers of the diplomacy of the Council of Four takes the form of psychological portraits of the temperaments of the individual

[32] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 52

[33] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 50

statesmen. Yet the text declares that "the events of the coming year will not be shaped by the deliberate acts of statesmen, but by the hidden currents, flowing continually underneath the surface of political history, of which no one can predict the outcome," and which are only susceptible to influence by "those forces of instruction and imagination which change *opinion*."[34] Moreover, the text repeatedly emphasizes supernatural aspects of atmosphere and surroundings as countermanding individual will and reason. Harries reads Keynes's supernatural citations as mediating his ambivalence between imagining the occulted powers of influence, and his rational, secular commitments. Specifically, Harries argues that "M*acbeth* gives Keynes a core for his meditations on the uses and abuses of influence. The scare quotes to *Macbeth* locate a troubling nexus for Keynes, where rational structures of influence and persuasion give way to ones that occupy supernatural margins… Keynes rejects supernatural influence and yet appears unable to imagine influence apart from occult communication.[35]"

I extend Harries' analysis of Keynes's supernatural citations as a concern with the invisible powers of influence, in order to argue that these citations play out threads in the *Economic Consequences* about attunement to the conventions of literary genre, to the forms of non-subjective agency dispersed into atmospheres or surroundings, and the unconscious forces shaping political events. That is, I contend that these citations are not simply a thematization of, nor symptomatic of anxiety over, the captivation of individual free will. In the *Economic Consequences* and his other writings on the Peace, Keynes elaborates on fantastic descriptions of the whispering air, of Lloyd George as a

[34] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 296

[35] Harries, *Scare Quotes From Shakespeare*, 135.

Welsh witch, of the Council of Four as the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, of vengeance as a spirit or curse afflicting Germany and transmitted in her dying breath to the Allies, and of himself as a prophetic Cassandra. According to Stanley Cavell, "more than any other Shakespearean melodrama, *Macbeth* thematically shows melodramatic responsiveness as a contest over interpretations, hence over whether an understanding is – or can be – intellectually adequate to its question, neither denying what is there, nor affirming what is not there (a deed, a dagger). As if what is at stake is the intelligibility of the human to itself."[36] This theme of interpretation as tied to self-intelligibility also appears in the *Economic Consequences* in the critique of Wilson's diplomacy. Here, the problem of understanding the Treaty without being misled by "Jesuitical exegesis" involves a black-letter reading of Wilson's pronouncements and of the Treaty, as the basis for evaluating their consequences in the world.

In the text's narrative mix of fantastic excess and enumeration of statistical estimates, I argue that Keynes underscores the significance of both the imaginative suspension of disbelief required for statistical projections in economics and demography, and the concrete, material effects of discourse, ideas, and words. In a fragment omitted from the *Economic Consequences*, but later published in *Essays in Biography*, Keynes asks how the Treaty came about, and proceeds:

> The answer is to be sought more in those intimate workings of the heart and character which make the tragedies and comedies of the domestic hearthrug than in the supposed ambitions of empires or philosophies of statesmen. The President, the Tiger, and the Welsh witch, were shut up in a room together for

[36] Cavell, "Macbeth Appalled," 223..

> six months and the Treaty was what came out. Yes, the Welsh *witch* – for the British Prime Minister contributed the female element to this triangular intrigue…. Let the reader figure Lloyd George as a *femme fatale*.[37]

On this passage, Harries suggests that "witchcraft figures not only the interpretation of the Fourteen Points and the shaping of them, but also Lloyd George's magical seduction of and persuasive hold over Wilson" – describing Lloyd George as the "supernatural diplomat in drag."[38] The gender-crossing that Keynes evokes in describing Lloyd George clearly leans on clichés of feminine seduction as leading men into irrationality.

While the interpersonal sense of influence is evident, I argue that Keynes deploys the hackneyed "types" that inhabit folklore and popular fiction (the Tiger, the witch, the *femme fatale*), to exploit the accessibility of their compression of cultural meanings, but also to reflect on the work of conventions. The passage sets up the *dramatis personae* of this play in terms of reading "the intimate workings of the heart and character which make the tragedies and comedies of the domestic hearthrug" – as a diagnostic step in the economic analysis of the Treaty.[39] In this, the text enacts a series of departures from the tradition of conceiving the public (particularly in the international scale) as an exclusion of the market; what Bruce Robbins elsewhere calls the "culture and society tradition – from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Matthew Arnold through to the New York intellectuals," where culture and public are conceived "on an implicit opposition to the

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[37] John Maynard Keynes, *Essays In Biography*, 36.

[38] Harries, *Scare Quotes From Shakespeare*, 149.

[39] John Maynard Keynes, *Essays In Biography*, 34.

privacy of the market."[40] Not only are the economic consequences of the Treaty central to its political significance, but the popular genres of the "domestic hearthrug" supply the optics of our analysis. Indeed, there is a repeated concern in the text with conventions– across its range of forms in narrative genres, diplomatic treaties, and economic value – as governing both the interpretation of the past, as well as our future expectations.

Keynes's interest in the conventions of popular dramatic genres began much earlier. While at Cambridge, he avidly attended "the melodramas at popular prices", observing in an early, undated manuscript that "a great many frequenters, like ourselves, explain that they go to laugh in their superior way at the Drama of the People. I suppose we do laugh a good deal. But speaking for myself and I secretly expect for all we go almost entirely because of the enthralling dramatic interest." In this manuscript which appears to have been read to the Apostles in 1906, Keynes extols the virtues of melodrama, defending its heightened sensations and sentimental excess against the imposition of the aesthetic standards of a rigorous realism.[41] He goes on to ask: "for how is it possible to let the audience know the most intricate play of feeling in the minds of persons whom they meet for the first time that evening, if these persons may never believe in any other way than would be natural in life outside the stage?" Here, Keynes considers theater as offering an abbreviated intimacy with the subtle movements of other minds, and that this access relies on its audience assuming ways of believing different from life off-stage.

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[40] Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress*, 54.

[41] John Maynard Keynes, "Shall We Write Melodramas?"

Accordingly, these portraits of the Council of Four in the *Economic Consequences* should be read in this light – not as a source of biographical realism for Wilson or Lloyd George, but as popular melodrama that telescopes into those aspects of character significant for explaining the Treaty.[42] Moreover, this approach is justified in this text insofar as Keynes refuses the account of history as premised on the "deliberate actions of statesmen." In these moments, the literary citations of fateful tragedy, the conventional types, and the determinism of atmosphere, contribute to the sense that the task of these character portraits is a dramatic diagnosis of the treaty, rather than necessarily the prosecution of personal, moral responsibility.

There is a stark contrast between the characterization of Wilson as an ordinary if ponderous Presbyterian minister, and its figuration of Lloyd George in extravagantly fabulous terms. In a passage of the original draft of the *Economic Consequences* that was expunged from the published version, Keynes describes him as,

> this extraordinary figure of our time, this syren, this goat-footed bard, this half human visitor to our age from the hag-ridden magic and enchanted woods of Celtic antiquity. One catches in his company that flavor of final purposelessness, inner irresponsibility, existence outside or away from our Saxon good and evil, mixed with cunning, remorselessness, love of power, that lend fascination, enthrallment, and terror to the fair-seeming magicians of North European folklore.[43]

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[42] Among others, Margaret McMillan considers how details of Keynes's portraits are biographically inaccurate: MacMillan, *Paris 1919*.

[43] John Maynard Keynes, *Essays In Biography*, 36–37.

Lloyd George is figured in fascinating if vaguely inhuman terms through Celtic amorality which suspends Saxon moral distinctions. Where Wilson is simply too human in failing to clothe his words with flesh, the references to the Council of Four in the *Economic Consequences* as Macbethian hags depicts them inverting meanings ("foul is fair"), accomplished through the interpretation of the Treaty.

In these flights of fancy, Keynes appears to infer that the tendency to overdraw the opposition between objective fact and subjective fantasy fails to account for the ways that the materiality of discourse determines history and puts in place the horizons of the thinkable – whether in the form of words inscribed on a treaty, as practices of reading across genre conventions, or as market exchanges that fix the relative value of the monetary note. (Indeed, in *My Early Beliefs*, Keynes asserts that the actions of princes often unknowingly enact the ideas of some old, forgotten philosopher). The supernatural citations point to forms of causation that elude the narrative capture of both the conventions of empirical realism and forms of agency beyond modern melodrama's conflation of individual feeling with moral right. The conventions of fate and prophecy in Greek tragedy, and the captive will in folklore, point to a sense of other actants that are invisible since they comprise interactions between forces dispersed in a given structure that permeates individual subjects.

At the same time, the text explicitly castigates those who "seek excitement in its least innocent form, and believe, or at least behave as if foreign policy were the same *genre* as cheap melodrama."[44] This instance of the thematization of misreading as connected to an insufficiency of self-knowledge, links up to another in the figurative

[44] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 306.

description of Wilson as Don Quixote which is usually interpreted as a caricature of impractical idealism. But the comparison is still more precise in that Don Quixote is a serial mis-interpreter of events and genre. Quixote's certainty that he is a knight in a chivalric romance is only affirmed by all outward signs to the contrary, and the dramatic irony in his lack of self-awareness is that he fulfils in fact the role of the *picaro*. As the "bad" reader, he misapprehends real conditions because his sights are fixed on lofty ideals, but more fundamentally, he is tragi-comically incapable of becoming aware of the extent that events and his role in them have been determined in advance by conventions. Keynes suggests that like Quixote, Wilson does not appreciate that the form of heroic agency that he assumes (both in the sense of identifying with and as having presumptions about), is simply a repetitive enactment of the *clichés* of "cheap" genre fiction.

In the *Economic Consequences*, the reader is invited to suspend their incredulity in order to indulge in the fantastic, garish descriptions of melodrama, but simultaneously to clearly distinguish between the work that conventions execute in melodramatic fiction versus political life. Where melodrama offers moral clarity and sentimental outrage, its effectiveness relies on the simplification of a complex reality, which Keynes implies, Wilson fails to properly distinguish. In this light, the supernatural descriptions of the text should be read as the foregrounding the incommensurability between two contrasting accounts of historical causation – firstly, as determined by the deliberate actions of statesmen, and secondly, as ultimately shaped by occult and "hidden currents." Keynes's concern here is not just with the individual will compelled by occult influence, but as stated in the concluding passages, "to view the world with new

eyes."[45] This obviously indicates that the conceptions of the world are distorted by the habituation of the senses. But conventions are not simply dismissed as pertaining to insubstantial and unreal forms. Rather, Keynes prescribes as a remediation of diplomacy two things: firstly, a sensitivity to how conventions shape sense-making; and secondly, which I consider in the next part, a procedure of literal reading as a mode of apprehending the living materiality of words.

Where Harries astutely reads *Macbeth* into the *Economic Consequences* as a concern with occulted influence, it is also instructive to place these references in the context of developments in late Victorian performances of the play. In particular, Irving's 1888 production at his Lyceum was known for its unearthly landscapes and melodrama– particularly, pertaining to the play's supernatural scenes. The music composed by W.S. Sullivan, drew on the influence of Verdi's opera to create an "uncanny ambience" and deployed "melodrama in its most literal sense, as a musical underscore to specific moments of action and dialogue." [46] According to Adrian Poole "Irving had some sixty witches peopling the wind in Act 4 of his *Macbeth*," and this tradition of over the top, monumental Shakespearean productions continued up to the outbreak of the war with the productions of Herbert Beerbohm Tree.[47] Keynes's descriptions of the proceedings of Paris having an "air of extraordinary importance and unimportance at the same time," that "whispered that the word was not flesh" appear to draw from Irving's

[45] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 310.
[46] Sanders, "Shakespeare and Music," 199.
[47] Poole, *Shakespeare and the Victorians*, 23.

theatrical literalization of voices in the wind, in which the latent agency of atmosphere is stood in for by being embodied in a multitude.[48]

In treating the Armistice and Treaty terms, the *Economic Consequences* explicitly shifts to reading it "*a pied de lettre*" – that is, with a black letter literalism as a means for figuring the "substance of this Contract to which the Allies had bound themselves."[49] As noted above, against Baruch, Keynes insists on a regard for the life of words even where they describe impossible situations – and this begins with a construction of the plain meaning. On this basis, Keynes attends to the efficacy of words – apprehending their impact in shaping public conversations, assumptions, and conventions. As a form of reading and re-description focused on ordinary and plain construction, this approach brackets suspicion about the hidden agenda of the Treaty.

5. Debauch the Currency

Where the previous sections focused on conventions of genre, I turn at this point to examine how the *Economic Consequences* moves to consider conventions of currency value. In an extended digression in Chapter 6 of the *Economic Consequences*, Keynes attributes to Lenin the imperative to "debauch the currency," which only relatively recently has been attributed to an interview with Lenin published on April 22, 1919 in the *New York Times*, and on April 23 in the *Daily Chronicle*. The interview quotes Lenin as stating, among other things, that:

Experience has taught us it is impossible to root out the evils of capitalism

[48] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 2.

[49] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 62.

> merely by confiscation and expropriation, for however ruthlessly such measures may be applied, astute speculators and obstinate survivors of the capitalist classes will always manage to evade them and continue to corrupt the life of the community. The simplest way to exterminate the very spirit of capitalism is therefore to flood the country with notes of a high face-value without financial guarantees of any sort… This is the real reason why our presses are printing rouble bills day and night, without rest.[50]

E.H. Carr observed that this kind rationalization of inflation in Soviet Russia happened after the fact:

> None of the Bolsheviks wanted, or planned, inflation. But, when that happened (since the printing press was their main source of revenue) they rationalized it ex post facto by describing it as (a) death to the capitalists and (b) a foretaste of the moneyless Communist Society. Talk of this kind was widely current in Moscow in 1919 and 1920."[51]

In his pithy paraphrase, what is notable is that Keynes references Diogenes the Cynic. In the well-known account, after Diogenes and his father are exiled from Sinope for the crime of defacing or counterfeiting literal coins, the Oracle of Delphi curiously advises Diogenes to "falsify/deface/adulterate the current coin" (*parakharattein to nomisma*). This, Diogenes interprets as the coin of custom or moral currency, adopting it as a Cynic

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[50] White and Schuler, "Retrospectives: Who Said 'Debauch the Currency': Keynes or Lenin?," 217.

[51] In a memorandum from E.H. Carr to Fetter dated 1969 quoted in Frank Whitson Fetter, "Lenin, Keynes and Inflation."

motto that figuratively joins the minted coin as the universal bearer of exchange value, to the circulation of convention as bearers of the social status quo.

The reference to Diogenes that Keynes references in relation to Lenin's justification of Russian inflation suggests that its prophecy of revolution discloses something of this truth. That is, the transvaluation of value is the basis for overturning the prevailing social order. An alternative version of the tale according to Diogenes Laertius is that Diogenes at first misinterprets the oracle's meaning by adulterating the state coinage, before realizing later as a philosopher that Apollo refers to the coin of custom or law. Louisa Shea states the established scholarly view that "as this version makes clear, the injunction *parakharattein to nomisma* must be understood figuratively, as a riddle or a wordplay" since it plays on the connection between *nomisma* (currency) and *nomos* (custom or law).[52] In contrast, Keynes's analogy draws on the literal sense of "currency" as coin in the tale, while at the same time rendering *parakharattein* as "debauch" with a distinct connotation of moral debasement by excessive sensuality (from the French *débauché*: to turn away from one's duty). The connotations of "debauch" as seduction or sensual indulgence suggests a critique of Bolshevik policy as exploiting post-war weakness or confusion.

Scholars note the various meanings of *parakharattein* as comprehending at least the following senses: 1) to falsify (by making a false coin); 2) to adulterate (by changing the value of old coin), and 3) to deface (by rendering the coin illegible and valueless).[53] Rather than the figurative reading of currency as signifying custom, Keynes reads the

[52] Louisa Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon*, 8–9.

[53] Louisa Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon*.

Diogenes tale literally in order to describe spiraling inflation as an adulteration of currency (changing its value *qua* purchasing power) leading to its defacement (as eventually valueless), and effecting a falsification (by effectively redistributing wealth randomly). The process begins with the adulteration of the currency (as a transcription of the universal equivalent of exchange value), which once valueless, undermines the entire conventional basis of a society as the class-based system of the relations of production. Once currency is turned away from its function as the universal equivalent, both Keynes and Lenin agree that the consequences would not be limited to an autonomous sphere of the "economy" imagined as self-stabilizing markets in the classical laissez-faire model, but toppling the existing social, political, and moral order.

Lenin in turn responded with sardonic approval to Keynes's proposal for the annulment of inter-governmental war debts:

> As you know... these [Soviet Russian] debts do not disturb us, because we followed Keynes's excellent advice just a little before his book appeared—we annulled all our debts… He has arrived at conclusions which are more weighty, more striking and more instructive than a Communist revolutionary could draw, because they are the conclusions of a well-known bourgeois and implacable enemy of Bolshevism, which he, like the British philistine he is, imagines as something monstrous, ferocious, and bestial."[54]

If Keynes turns from the figurative to the literal rendering of "currency" in warning against spiraling postwar inflation within European states, he finds common ground

[54] V.I. Lenin, "Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International (July 19) to the Second Congress of the International in 1920."

with Lenin (and Diogenes) in prescribing the annulment of inter-governmental war debts in the *Economic Consequences.* On a strictly formal level, this proposal resembles the defacement of currency by calling for the annulment of the face value of public debt instruments. However, it tends to the opposite outcome if considered in terms of its anticipated effects in relieving internal inflation caused by states arbitrarily printing notes to pay for wartime expenses. Mary Poovey argues that the distinction between the genres of fact and fiction results from attempts throughout the 18th and 19th century to distinguish literary texts as relatively removed from concern with economic value, and financial instruments as seeking to enact objective relations between debtors and creditors.[55] In this context, debt forgiveness amounts to treating the documentation of a debt as fiction.

Describing the complexity of inter-European debts, the *Economic Consequences* states: "The whole position is in the highest degree artificial, misleading, and vexatious. We shall never be able to move again, unless we can free our limbs from these paper shackles."[56] Yet while Keynes proposes to overturn certain conventions, his ends are reformist rather than revolutionary. As the *Economic Consequences* sets out at the beginning, the ordinary conditions of living in modern Europe and especially Britain, are only maintained by a complex and fragile set of conventions that includes trade with the New World, the relative stability of monetary values, and a social order which relies on the wealthy to practice relative austerity. These conventions which have been destabilized by the war and are at risk of being demolished by the peace, cannot be

[55] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*.

[56] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 110.

nostalgically retreated into nor completely ignored. Instead, for Keynes, the conditions that secured an era of relative political stability and widening economic prosperity, need to be reconstructed by the Peace Treaty.

While Lenin speaks his prophecy of the unravelling of the capitalist order as an exhortation, Keynes looking back described his own position as "the croakings of a Cassandra who could never influence the course of events in time."[57] Keynes calls for disaster to be averted through the scheme of international debt-cancellation so that European states can be released from these paper shackles on their ability to effectively allocate resources and manage wealth distribution in a way that staves off social and economic revolution. The annulment of war debts relieves inflationary pressures caused by excessive spending by states in the war, and thereby stabilizes monetary value (that is, resists the debasement of their currency). A write-off ultimately funded by the U.S. and to a lesser extent Britain recognizes the expenses precipitated by global war as an extraordinary event, but also that these two creditor nations substantially benefit from stable trade relations with Europe.

War debt between states constitute "paper shackles" insofar as they constitute undue restrictions on their ability to respond to crises and effectively manage populations, thereby turning states from the proper exercise of sovereignty. Contracted during wartime, such debts effect substantial obligations on debtor nations frequently in an arbitrary way due to circumstances beyond their control. Here, Keynes

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[57] John Maynard Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion*.
On this self-characterization, Friedrich Hayek charges Keynes with insincere posturing as "his early success in swinging round public opinion about the peace treaties had given him probably even an exaggerated estimate of his powers." F.A. Hayek, "Review of Harrod's Life of J. M. Keynes," 232.

emphasizes that such debts have the form of reified and objective constraints but, are essentially conventions that can be torn up where this is mutually advantageous, despite one party bearing the loss on paper. It is not simply that proprietary claims and contracted obligations are mere conventions that can be undone by mutual agreement. "In the case of internal debt, however there are interested parties on both sides and the question is one of the internal distribution of wealth. With external debt this is not so, and the creditor nations may soon find their interest inconveniently bound up with the maintenance of a particular type of government or economic organization in the debtor countries."[58] The specter that Keynes points to here seems to be the recent Bolshevik repudiation of foreign debt which had provoked stern objections from the major Allied Powers. Leaving aside calculations of which states should bear what portion of the expenses of a European imperial war, Keynes considers them bound by geographic proximity and intertwined markets into a community of fate. This proposal effects a transvaluation of economic value and a debasement of the coin of public debt financing. It points to a structural crisis in the global balance of trade, even as the *Economic Consequences* emphasizes that in Britain, the relatively comfortable standard of living taken for granted by the middle classes was really a recent development underpinned by global trade.

According to Antonio Negri, what Keynes in the *Economic Consequences* was able to perceive is the "new dimensions of class struggle" after the October Revolution, that the response of the international capitalist leadership in the Versailles peace conference failed to address, and that would lead to the 1929 crisis of the global capitalist system.

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[58] Keynes, *Economic Consequences*, 279

In his 1967 essay (published as "Keynes and the Capitalist Theory of the State" in *Labors of Dionysus*), Negri argues that the capitalist class was unable to grasp or respond to the challenge of the October Revolution in a way that unifies its domestic and international aspects, instead treating these as disconnected issues. He notes that "it is remarkable how these two aspects of the problem were kept rigidly separate by the international capitalist leadership at the time."[59] They engaged the internal threat by isolating the vanguard from the class through technologies of massification and deskilling (Taylorism and Fordism). The international danger was targeted separately as a problem of containing Soviet Russia ("to turn the revolution into a foreign issue").

Negri traces the shift from Keynes's political intuition in his 1920's dismantling of the nineteenth-century ideology of laissez-faire, to his formulation of a scientific system in the attempt to reconstruct a model of economic equilibrium in the *General Theory*, in terms of a significant transformation in the form and function of the State. For Negri, the Wall Street crash of Black Thursday 1929 "marked the historic end of the rights State, where formal protection of individual rights through bourgeois safeguards of "due process" was understood as an apparatus of State power, to a recognition that the antagonism of the working class was endemic to and "a necessary feature of the system that State power would have to accommodate."[60]

Keynes's 1920's critique of the nineteenth-century ideology of laissez-faire had enacted, according to Negri, "a radical destruction of the object of economic science, insofar as political economy was premised – structurally – on the theory of economic

[59] Hardt and Negri, *Labor Of Dionysus*, 30.
[60] Hardt and Negri, 28.

equilibrium" and was nothing less than the "the final burial of the classic liberal myth of the separation of State and market, the end of laissez-faire."[61] In his response to the *Economic Consequences*, Lloyd George admitted to Keynes's expertise in economics but rebuked his lack of political experience as leading to a faulty analysis of the Peace negotiations. However, one of the points that the *Economic Consequences* makes is that the attempt to distinguish economic considerations from political ones fails to apprehend the dimensions of the economic threat to the social fabric of Europe, and more broadly to the global capitalist system.

Negri shows that Keynes's oeuvre tracks the changing nature of the State where it eventually assumes the role of having "to re-create continuously the source of its legitimacy in a process of permanent adjustment of the conditions of equilibrium" which becomes "articulated in the form of planning." This was central to Keynes's macroeconomic approach in the *General Theory* in 1936 which formulates what Negri calls "this new material basis of the constitution of the State as planner, or better still, the State as the plan." Responsible for managing the allocation of wealth and regulating labor markets, the State accommodates the structural opposition of the working class through reforms directed at the internal preservation of the capitalist mode of production. But as noted above, Keynes in the *Economic Consequences* envisages that this can call for the annulment of existing financial relations between debtor and creditor states, particularly when these relations become usurious. Although Keynes does not dwell on the self-determination article of Wilson's Fourteen Points in great detail, he criticizes the Reparation Commission for having "wide powers over the internal

[61] Hardt and Negri, 27–28.

economic life of the enemy countries, who are to be treated henceforward as bankrupt estates to be administered by and for the benefit of the creditors."[62]

The economy cannot be considered distinct from the public sphere, Keynes suggests here, since inflation is a dominant cause of the credulity of the public, specifically concerning Germany's capacity to pay. The *Economic Consequences* explains that

> the inflation of prices, and the depreciation of currency, leading up to a complete instability of the unit of value, have made us lose all sense of number and magnitude in matters of finance. What we believed to be the limits of possibility have been so enormously exceeded, and those who founded their expectations on the past have been so often wrong, that the man in the street is now prepared to believe anything which is told him with some show of authority, and the larger the figure the more readily he swallows it.[63]

The radical loss of a stable unit of value makes the impossible plausible. It does so by disorienting the public's sense of magnitude in financial matters and discrediting those who have relied on the past as a reasonable guide for forming expectations. In this atmosphere, any number is believable, especially when it is bullish and accompanied by the performance of authority. This is both a cause and an effect of the "air of unreality" that the text opens with, which Keynes implies, makes the public susceptible to demagoguery and authoritarianism.

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[62] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 209.

[63] John Maynard Keynes, 205.

If conventions allow people to coordinate expectations and meanings (such as providing a stable point of value), they can also become "paper shackles" that are needlessly inflexible in refusing to respond to change. In the latter case, Keynes literalizes the injunction to deface the currency in Diogenes. If, for Diogenes, to deface custom is to show the false coin underlying social morality; in Keynes, a scheme of international war debt forgiveness is a proposal to reset the international ledger by recognizing it as simply conventional. To "de-base" is also literally a dissociation of currency value from its metallic base – such as Keynes would later argue for in resisting the traditional gold standard at Bretton Woods. Keynes had referred to the "Freudian theory of the love of money, and of gold in particular" in *A Treatise on Money*, in accounting for irrational accumulation as a sublimation of socially aggressive drives.[64] To treat value as an innate substance in things is to misread the conventional nature of currency. Conversely, to treat value as purely arbitrary is to overlook its material determination in processes of production, circulation and exchange.

6. Transparent Diplomacy

In a dismissive review of the *Economic Consequences*, Thorstein Veblen accused Keynes of only reflecting the commonplaces of "thoughtful citizens" by attending to the literal letter of the Treaty, rather than focusing on its real and secret purpose – that is, according to Veblen, to develop a *cordon sanitaire* against Soviet international influence.[65] Veblen sees the underlying use of the Peace as "a strategic point of

[64] John Maynard Keynes, *A Treatise on Money*. On Keynes and Freud, see Winslow, "Keynes and Freud."

[65] Thorstein Veblen, "Review of The Economic Consequences of the Peace, John Maynard Ks."

departure for further negotiations and a continuation of warlike enterprise" allowing for the preservation of 'international jealousies" in the coordinated effort against Bolshevism. "Of course, this compact for the reduction of Soviet Russia was not written into the text of the Treaty; it may rather be said to have been the parchment upon which the text was written." This unwritten, animating motive of the Treaty is metaphorically reified into the form of the parchment itself as the raw material substrate on which the writing takes form. Veblen's materialization of the hidden motive upends his otherwise conventional metaphorics of surface and depth, truth and deceit, where appearance is discounted as the veil concealing an underlying reality. As the parchment itself, the hidden motive takes a material form that unites surface and depth, containing and subsuming the partiality of the written clauses into a physical object whose secret purpose comes into view as a full object. To this, Keynes might well respond that if this were the hidden political motive of the Treaty, it would fail insofar as its economic consequences would set Europe on the course towards political revolution.

Veblen's demand for the revelation of the hidden compact; Trotsky's promise to abolish "secret diplomacy and its intrigues"; and Wilson's declaration in the Fourteen Points of support for "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at" and that "diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view. Against these calls for a democratization of diplomacy since 1914, the diplomat and the husband of Vita Sackville-West, Harold Nicholson wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that:

> The old diplomacy was based upon the creation of confidence, the acquisition of credit. The modern diplomatist must realize that he can no longer rely on the old system of trust; he must accept the fact that his antagonists will not hesitate to falsify facts and that they feel no shame if their duplicity be exposed. The old

> currency has been withdrawn from circulation; we are dealing in a new coinage.[66]

Defining diplomacy elsewhere as "the art of negotiating *documents* in a ratifiable and therefore dependable form" rather than "the art of conversation," Nicholson, inveighed against public transparency in diplomacy as actually leading to imprecision and vagueness by inhibiting frank negotiations, such that the Peace Treaty ended up documenting aspirations rather than policy.[67] In these debates over open treaties, the literalism of the *Economic Consequences* holds in view both what words represent and what they perform, both the face value of currency and its effective exchange value.

[66] Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919*.

[67] P208-109 Nicholson, Peacekeeping 1919.

Coda: Andre Brink's *The Ambassador*

Andre Brink's *The Ambassador* centers on the South African embassy in Paris, in the backdrop of black worker strikes in Johannesburg against pass laws threatens to escalate into a repeat of the 1960 Sharpeville Incident and become an international incident. The diplomatic developments are in the background, described in a series of telegrams concerning an appeal to France to veto a Security Council proposal, and a secret arms deal. "the leaders of the resistance movement had dispatched telegrams to the representatives of various Afro-Asian countries at the UN asking for their intervention. (67). Key instructions arrive from Pretoria to "request immediate interview with the French Foreign Minister in effort to keep Afro-Asian proposal out of Security Council. (91)" The main narrative concerns an ambitious, young Third Secretary, Stephen Heyter, who files a report accusing his superior, Ambassador Paul van Heerden of infidelity with Nicolette Alford, Heyter's mercurial mistress. However, the report casts a pall over both of their careers. Despite van Heerden offering to protect Heyter from the fallout, he later discovers Heyter's suicide.

Originally published in Afrikaans in 1963 as *Die Ambassadeur*, and self-translated into English in 1964, the novel triggered a South African Department of Foreign Affairs investigation into potential leaks.[1] As Brink recollects, "arms negotiations between France and South Africa, which I had used as a fiction because it suited the plot, turned out to have been taking place in reality; a South African ambassador to Europe, as it transpired had actually been involved in the kind of relationship depicted in the

[1] This was also his first work of self-translation. See Peñalver, "Encounter with André Brink."

book."[2] This coincidence of diplomatic facts with fictional details presents an opportunity to reflect on how diplomacy as a modern field involves the disciplining of language, consciousness, and the body; but also more generally, of how subjects abroad conduct themselves in negotiating remote citizenship in the styles of coherent liberal subjectivity that mediates both where they are from and where they are at. Alford originally visits the Embassy in connection with a lost passport – and on being offered a cigarette from a box by Heyter, "glanced at the South African trade mark and said with the merest hint of a sneer: 'How patriotic. Thanks.'" He asks her for a receipt from the *mairie*, whereupon she fishes from a straw bag for "a crumpled bit of paper which she carefully straightened out." When he begins on a line of more personal questions, inquiring when she intends to go back to South Africa, she responds "Let's cut out the questions. I must go."[3] In this early exchange, Alford's rebuff of attempts at patriotic intimacy can be glimpsed alongside her lackadaisical compliance with bureaucratic process.

At the same time, the embassy staff are dislocated from a home state, as the condition for representing its political and economic interests abroad. For van Heerden, at the peak of his career and singularly influential with the French Ministry, his encounter with Alford triggers a set of introspective reflection on the nature of his work and life:

> It was his chosen way of life. He'd entered into it with open eyes. – A *remote, invisible Government*. Was that it? A Minister who existed exclusively in terms of

[2] Brink, *The Ambassador*, 10 author's note.

[3] Brink, *The Ambassador*, 25-26.

> coded telegrams, instructions, memos, an official letterhead, the copy of a rambling report, *For your scrutiny and comment*. No flesh and blood, nothing concrete, material, tangible, present, real … nothing of all this had any immediacy. It was all remote, transformed into language, codes, officialese. Everything had to be accepted in good faith, taken for granted; his whole life depended on some magic *if*: the assumption of a Government, a Head Office in Pretoria, thousands of kilometres away. As if he were some toy operated by remote control. Was there anything he knew for certain, anything he could place his life at stake for?[4]

The anxiety of diplomatic work here is figured as the postulate of a state or authority which one experiences as remote, provisional and mediated through its textual and linguistic traces, but which one bears responsibility for representing (in the dual senses of standing in for and depicting) as both embodied and coherent.

While less political than Brink's later fiction, *The Ambassador* cites the Sharpeville Incident which had resulted in the growing isolation of South Africa from the international community. Erika, the Ambassador's wife leaves him to return home to South Africa, stating, "I'm tired of living among strangers, Paul."[5] Increasingly, the Ambassador sense himself becoming affected by "an increasing sense of unreality" and complains that "what affects me nowadays – like that night beside the Seine – is that everything in this office is done *on behalf of* other people – not even 'people', but on behalf of an organization, a monstrous machine called 'Government', something

[4] Brink, *The Ambassador*, 156.

[5] Brink, *The Ambassador*, 113.

invisible."[6] That is, his work consists entirely of mediation, and specifically the mediation of a bloated apparatus that appears intangible and less than human.

As he leafs through archives of old newspapers, the Ambassador observes his waning identification with both the nation and governmental policy that he is supposed to represent: "So this is South Africa. These are its interests. These are its people … And this is the country I have to represent. I must solicit support for a policy in which I cannot believe, because it no longer exists in my personal life." His life to this point, even including his marriage to Erika, is decisively organized by considerations of professional career and the habituation of diplomatic protocol and disposition. But there is a contradiction in his duties, insofar as representing the interests and people of a country involves an initial interpretation of what these are, that necessarily draws on personal experience. Notably, the Ambassador's coolness towards this policy is not premised on principled or moral objections but begins with the practical absence of this policy in conditioning his everyday experience, which in turn shapes belief.

The policy referenced here is apartheid and the pass laws that restricted the movement of blacks in South Africa, which the Ambassador is tasked with defending from international criticism and trade sanctions. This distinct diplomatic backdrop colors the text, as the Ambassador is caught between his duty to advocate on behalf of the state's policy of managing population through racial segregation, and his role as a substitute that stands in the place of the nation. Like James's *The Ambassadors*, Brink's novel centers on an aging emissary who is prompted into existential crisis and a regretful review of his delegated life by an encounter with another expatriate intimately

[6] Brink, *The Ambassador*, 206.

familiar with Paris. In this case, Alford's dissolute spontaneity and immersion in Parisian nightlife is opposed to the Ambassador's routinization of protocol as insulation from his foreign surroundings.

In the place of Strether's aborted mission on behalf of Mrs. Newsome to rescue Chad from himself, in Brink's novel, the Ambassador's diplomacy is on behalf of the apartheid state, by transacting an international arms deal, and limiting international intervention of domestic political arrangements – jointly aimed at maintaining the system of apartheid. Paul Gordon Lauren points to the massacre of black civilians by police at Sharpeville as consolidating the solidarity of the Afro-Asian bloc around the right to racial equality in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[7] The decisive significance of this heterogenous bloc from the 1960's onwards in the General Assembly resulted from the tide of decolonization after the Second World War. When they called for an emergency session of the Security Council to address this incident, the South African Prime Minister characterized it as a matter of "international forces" threatening the national sovereignty of his country. In 1962, the U.N. General Assembly passed the Afro-Asian resolution recommending sanctions against South Africa, but this remained unenforceable without the unanimous approval of the Security Council. This is the diplomatic backdrop in which Brink's Ambassador, driven by a religious devotion to the importance of his work, who loses faith in the remote government that he represents yet only experiences as mediated through texts and interpretation.

[7] Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights*, 253.

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