

PUBLISHING 1922: Popular Writing, Modernism, and the Reader

PhD

Department of English Literature

Benjamin Bruce

June 2024

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Benjamin Bruce

ABSTRACT:**Publishing 1922: Popular Writing, Modernism, and the Reader**

This thesis is a literary study of popular writing (novels and poetry) in the year 1922 to enable a fuller characterisation of these twelve months by recovering a lost literary history. Offering a new and very different view of this year the research undertakes an historicist analysis of some of the year's bestselling poetry and prose, the wider culture, and the mainstream publishing industry which capitalised on the continuing trend towards mass, popular publishing. Based on original primary research in the Archive of British Publishing and Printing at the University of Reading, the Macmillan Archive at the British Library, and the Hodder and Stoughton Limited files at the London Metropolitan Archives, the thesis explores profit and loss ledgers, stock books, advertising material, reviews, and correspondence often previously unconsidered. The research includes a case study of the publication of two Chatto and Windus titles by Aldous Huxley and Beverley Nichols. It considers the crime writing of Victor Bridges, Agatha Christie, 'Sapper', J. S. Fletcher and Cyril Alington in the emerging Golden Age. After debating the romantic fiction of Ethel M. Dell, Elinor Glyn and Ruby M. Ayres, a final chapter discusses the popular poetry of Thomas Hardy, Edmund Blunden and A. E. Housman in the aftermath of the Great War. This thesis argues that it is necessary to re-frame ideas about 1922, which has consistently been misrepresented in earlier studies that have privileged the work of James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and others. As such this is a study centrally concerned with cultural issues of value and the interactions between social context and the publications of the day. This work recuperates some of the important novels and poems otherwise lost to history, those texts that intrigued and excited readers, whilst acknowledging that modernist writing itself is often thematically contiguous with the popular literature it eschewed. This research offers a valuable and countervailing narrative to that offered by previous literary history.

'Everything ends up as a PhD thesis'

Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my thanks must go to my two invaluable supervisors, Nicola Wilson and Maddie Davies, whose wisdom has carried me through four years of reading and drafting. I should also say I had the luck to stumble upon two people whose skills complemented each other so well and gave me every advantage in my writing and research. I must additionally offer considerable thanks to Domonique Davies with whom I organised the 'Inside and Outside Modernism' conference of 2022. She went above and beyond the call of duty on many occasions to make sure things went well and ensured we had a very successful day. I should add Pritha Mukherjee to this list, someone who stepped in to chair sessions at the conference, deal with the IT, and latterly has been kind enough to listen to my grumbles with an admirable fortitude. To her go many thanks. Carolyn Stubbs should equally not go unnoted and I am very grateful for her accountancy skills and for teaching me the very little I am ever likely to learn about the subject. There are of course a great many other people and organisations without whom this work would not have been possible. To the changing cast of staff at the University of Reading Special Collections, particularly the reading room supervisors and those who gave their time in helping provide material for the 'Outside Modernism' conference. When the world was under threat of COVID they still willingly gave of their time and advice remotely and helped with my queries. I should, in addition, mention the very capable staff of the London Metropolitan Archives where I was able to study the accounts of Hodder and Stoughton and the prompt help of the staff at the Lilly Library, University of Indiana, who provided me with information from the Methuen Archive. Finally, I would like to thank my father for his unqualified support over the last four years, and his belief in the work.

Benjamin Bruce
Boxgrove, April 2024.

Timeline: 1922

- January: publication of *The Life and Death of Harriett Freen* by May Sinclair
- January: *The Secret Adversary* by Agatha Christie and *Greensea Island* by Victor Bridges published
- January 1st: *The Sunday Times* reports on the severe storm that battered Britain in the previous days describing it as ‘of exceptional violence’
- January 6th-14th: Reparations Conference in Cannes
- January 7th: vote in the Dail on accepting the Anglo-Irish Treaty; 64 in favour, 57 against
- February 2nd: *Ulysses* published by Shakespeare and Co. in Paris
- February 2nd: *The Times* publishes a photo of the enlargements being made to the Wimbledon lawn tennis arena
- February 10th: Geddes Report published asking the government to make cuts of £75m while a third report on February 24th recommends £11m more in savings
- February 14th-January 9th, 1923: renewal of Marconi’s experimental radio broadcasts
- February 25th: *Publishers’ Circular* announces a strike in the book trade
- February 27th: Lloyd George sends a letter to Austen Chamberlain suggesting he step down as PM of the coalition government but Chamberlain refuses to allow it; Bonar Law had warned him of the feeling against him within the government
- February 28th: marriage of Viscount Lascelles and Princess Mary
- March 1922: Clive Bell publishes *Since Cezanne*
- March 1922: Irish Free State Agreement Act hands power to Ireland
- March 1st 1922: documents published by the government declaring Egyptian independence
- March 3rd: Austen Chamberlain makes known the contents of the letter of February 27th as a ploy to keep Lloyd George in the coalition for the good of the nation

- March 8th: Horatio Bottomley, MP and journalist, tried for fraud on the Victory Bond Club scheme at the Old Bailey and found guilty
- March 11th-June 13th: engineering trades strike
- March 18th: in India Gandhi is sentenced to six years in prison after a campaign of civil disobedience
- March 29th - May 8th: shipyard strike ending in wage reductions
- April: *The Matherson Marriage* by Ruby M. Ayres and *Man and Maid* by Elinor Glyn published
- April: publication of *The Shepherd* by Edmund Blunden
- April 8th: final agreement reached in the book trade strike according to the *Publishers' Circular*
- April 10th-May 19th: economic conference in Genoa called by Lloyd George
- April 13th: Herbert Rowse Armstrong sentenced to death for poisoning his wife
- April 14th: Four Courts complex in Dublin attacked as the Civil War breaks out
- April 29th: F.A. Cup Final at Stamford Bridge; Preston North End vs. Huddersfield Town; Huddersfield win 1-0
- May: publication of Beverley Nichols' *Self* and Aldous Huxley's *Mortal Coils*
- May: *Late Lyrics and Earlier* by Thomas Hardy published
- June: *Aaron's Rod* by D. H. Lawrence published
- June 16th: elections to the Dail with Sinn Fein gaining 58 seats and the anti-treaty parties, 35
- June 22nd: Henry Wilson former chief of staff killed by the IRA outside his house in Belgravia
- June 21st: Prince of Wales returns to Britain after a tour of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Asia including India; his last visit is to the Imperial family in Japan
- July: peerage offered to Sir J. B. Robinson, a South African financier and subject of recent litigation which brings the crisis over the sale of peerages to a head

- August 15th: announcement of the death of Lord Northcliffe, owner of the *Times*: his brother Lord Rothermere takes over his other assets such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* while *The Times* is taken on by a board including J. J. Astor and John Walter
- September: J. B. Priestley leaves Cambridge after completing his degree and comes to London to find work as a journalist
- September: first English publication of Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* in two volumes translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff; part of *À La Recherche du Temps Perdu*
- September: publication of *The Black Gang* by 'Sapper' and J. S. Fletcher's *The Mazaroff Murder*
- September 2nd: report of the War Office Committee of Inquiry into "Shell-shock" issued
- September 9th: Turkish forces in the Graeco-Turkish War enter Smyrna and destroy most of the town
- September 23rd: Turkish cavalry advance on British forces in the Dardanelles and the French reluctantly intervene to support British forces in repelling the attack despite their having earlier signed a treaty with Ataturk and his forces
- October: publication of *Jacob's Room* by Virginia Woolf and A. E. Housman's *Last Poems*
- October: 'The Waste Land' published simultaneously in *The Criterion* and *Dial*; first book publication on 15th December
- October 4th: murder of Percy Thompson in Ilford; the Bywaters Case
- October 11th: Treaty of Mudania ends the Turkish threat but proves the final straw for the Tories who blamed Lloyd George for their involvement in the events of the Graeco-Turkish War
- October 19th: Lloyd George visits the palace to offer his resignation and ends the wartime coalition
- October 20th: meeting at the Carlton Club calls for the withdrawal of the Conservatives from the coalition and the motion is passed with Bonar Law elected as Tory leader
- October 23rd: Bonar Law elected Prime Minister after Lloyd George tendered his resignation to the King

- October 26th: parliament dissolved
- November: first publication of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in English
- November: *A Gamble with Love* by Ruby M. Ayres published
- November 9th: announcement of the winner of the 1921 Nobel Prize for Physics (which had not been awarded in the previous year). This goes to Albert Einstein but not for his work on relativity which was seen as too controversial; instead, the citation speaks of his discovery of the law of the photo-electric effect
- November 14th: British Broadcasting Company starts transmissions from London and has a license to create a single radio broadcast service from eight locations until 1st January 1925
- November 15th: general election; a Tory win but the big news is the large rise in the Labour vote and Conservative big names being voted out such as Churchill
- November 17th: first hunger march of the unemployed reaches London
- November 21st: Labour elects Ramsey Macdonald as leader for a second time
- November 29th: announcement of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb
- December: Cyril Alington's *Mr. Evans* published
- December 9th-11th: reparations conference, London

Publishing 1922: Popular Writing, Modernism, and the Reader

❖ Declaration.....	ii.
❖ Abstract.....	iii.
❖ Acknowledgements.....	v.
❖ Timeline: 1922.....	vi-ix.
❖ Table of Contents.....	x-xi.
❖ List of Figures.....	xii.
❖ Introduction: History and the Culture of 1922.....	1
○ Methodology.....	9
○ Reviewing, Reviewers, and the Public.....	11
○ Publishing and 1922.....	17
○ Libraries and Readership.....	21
○ Issues of Power and Definitions of Popular Writing.....	24
○ An Outline of the Thesis.....	42
▪ CHAPTER 1.	
Producing the Book: A Case Study from Chatto and Windus.....	46
○ A Background to the Publisher and the Writers.....	47
○ The Publishing Culture in the Post-War World.....	51
○ The Background to Publication.....	53
○ The Publisher's Reader and the Axiologies of Chatto and Windus...	57
○ Contractual Considerations and the Literary Agent.....	67
○ Editorial Interventions and the Production Process.....	76
▪ CHAPTER 2	
The Physical Text: Marketing, Selling and the Circulation of Value....	84
○ Contracts and Sales.....	84
○ The Dust Jacket and the Physical Book.....	89
○ Advertising, Marketing and the Texts.....	92
○ Publishers, Booksellers, and Libraries.....	104
○ Reviewing and the Issue of Value.....	111
○ The Book and the Communications Circuit.....	118
▪ CHAPTER 3	
Death and the Publisher: Crime Writing, Humour and Play.....	123
○ 1922 and the Golden Age.....	125
○ The Historical Context and Theories of Play.....	130

○ Narrative, Humour, and Games.....	135
▪ CHAPTER 4	
'I love you with all my soul': History, Value, and the Popular Romance...	188
○ I. Women Writers, Publishing, and the Domestic Sphere.....	189
○ Mass-Market Publishing.....	195
○ The Agent and Their Clients.....	198
○ Magazine Rights and Book Sales.....	201
○ II. History and its Relationship with the Romance.....	208
○ <i>Man and Maid</i> and Veridical History.....	225
○ III. The Romance and the Dispute Over Value.....	230
○ Axiology, the Past, and the Romance.....	234
▪ CHAPTER 5	
Mourning and Memorialisation in Post-War Popular Poetry.....	237
○ Publishing Popular Poetry: Hardy, Housman, and Blunden.....	241
○ The Poetry of Ghosts.....	252
○ Towers, Real and Imagined.....	273
❖ Conclusion.....	289
❖ Bibliography.....	311

List of Figures

Fig. 1. Details of printing and sales for *Mortal Coils* and *Self*, 1922

Fig. 2. Binding figures and wrapper statistics for *The Red House Mystery* 1922-1925

Fig. 3. Sales and accounting details for *The Matherson Marriage*

Fig. 4. Sales and accounting details for *A Gamble with Love*

Fig. 5. Thomas Hardy - *Late Lyrics and Earlier* production figures

Fig. 6. The University College, Reading War Memorial, revised design, 2023

❖ Introduction: Book History and The Culture of 1922

‘Knowledge of the past that comes to us in textual form, Vico says, can only be properly understood from the point of view of the maker of that past...’

Edward W. Said¹

The narrative of modernism has come to dominate the accounts of the inter-war years in Britain, particularly 1922. For one critic the years 1918-1965 were ‘The Age of T. S. Eliot’.² This emphasis on the subject of modernism has led to the disparagement and diminution of other forms of literature that were more popular and influential at the time, such as the poetry of A. E. Housman or the novels of Ruby M. Ayres. As Maurice Beebe has put it, ‘all modern literature is not necessarily Modernist literature’,³ but since the 1970s, as Chris Baldick has said,

literary studies [...] has brought about a habitual substitution of a movement [modernism] and for all its undoubted importance, a minority movement – for a chronological period in the terminology of early twentieth-century literary history.⁴

A continued emphasis on this literary narrative has given way to what Bernard Bergonzi has termed ‘the ahistorical myth of modernism’.⁵ He asserts that ‘[t]he dominance of a limited canon of unquestionably great authors is to be resisted, since it implies that non-canonical authors are not worth spending time on’, helping to

¹ Edward W. Said, ‘Introduction’, in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. xii.

² Quoted in George Sampson, and R. C. Churchill, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 3rd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 843.

³ Maurice Beebe, ‘What Modernism Was’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3, 5 July (1974), 1067.

⁴ Chris Baldick, *Literature of the 1920s: Writers Among the Ruins* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.1.

⁵ Bernard Bergonzi, *The Myth of Modernism and Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), p. xvi.

explain why the popular literature of 1922 has consistently been overlooked.⁶ Thirty years ago Raymond Williams confronted this growing myth when he asserted ‘such categories as “modern” and “Modernism” are now ‘at best anachronistic, at worst archaic’⁷ and some progress has been made towards enlarging the category of modernism as outlined in Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz’s article ‘The New Modernist Studies’(2008).⁸ More recently the work of Patrick Collier and Faye Hammill has further transformed the object of modernist study and yet the myth that modernism dominated the contemporary narrative of 1922 persists, whether it is in discussions of *Ulysses*, ‘The Waste Land’ or possibly *Jacob’s Room*, but critics have not fully engaged with the subject of mass market novels or popular poetry which are the focus of this study.⁹ There have been only intermittent attempts to look beyond the category of modernism and instead, this year has become, in Kevin Jackson’s words, ‘the *annus mirabilis* of literary modernism’ to the exclusion of all other forms of writing.¹⁰ It should be added that I make no claims for 1922 as a ‘crucial year’; others have already done so, such as Jackson, and Jean-Michel Rabaté who has called it the moment of ‘high modernism.’¹¹ Despite this, a critical mass has developed around 1922 as a significant year and part of this study’s aim is to consider these claims and to offer

⁶ All references to primary texts from 1922 will not include a date of publication; other primary literature will include a date.

⁷ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. by Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), p. 38.

⁸ Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, ‘The New Modernist Studies’, *PMLA*, 123:3 May (2008), 737–48.

⁹ Examples of newer research in modernism, include Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism’s Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), Patrick Collier, *Modern Print Artefacts: Textual Materiality and Literary Value in British Print Culture, 1890-1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and Lise Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism: Expanding Markets, Publishers’ Series and the Avant-Garde* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

¹⁰ Kevin Jackson, *Constellation of Genius: 1922: Modernism Year One* (London: Hutchinson, 2012), p. 1.

¹¹ Quoted in Jean-Michel Rabaté, ‘Introduction’ in *1922: Literature, Culture, Politics* ed. by Jean-Michel Rabaté (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3.

a more complex account of the twelve months in question and one substantially different from most previous studies.

The attempt to insist on modernism as the only important form of writing in 1922 was begun in the early years of the century and only confirmed when T. S. Eliot declared that poetry (and by implication most other forms of writing) must perforce 'be *difficult*'.¹² Eliot, whose poem 'The Waste Land' became a substantial part of the discourse of 1922, has been described, not unfairly, as a representative of 'absolute art: high art, when art was at its most serious and elitist.'¹³ Late in Raymond Williams' career, and as a way to oppose hegemonic forms of culture he spoke of 'an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century'.¹⁴ This study builds on notions of 1922 as a wider, more diverse field than has often been assumed. Whilst modernism has taken on a wider focus there has remained an indifference towards popular writing and its substantial presence in this year. In undertaking work on this subject the study revises the canonical critical narrative of literary history and intends to appraise the predominant, popular literature of 1922, that which Williams suggests has been relegated to the margins, and not the minority art of what was a tentative and precarious modernism.

This thesis examines 1922 through the workings of the major trade publishers in the first instance, outlining how general trade publishing worked in this year and describing some of the difficulties from which this industry was suffering, and how a complex communications circuit brought works to the attention of the public. Using

¹² T. S. Eliot *Selected Essays* third ed. (London: Faber, 1999), p. 289.

¹³ Quoted in David E. Chinitz, *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 2.

¹⁴ Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 35.

the methods of book history, this study intends to study the fraught issues of aesthetics and value that appear to have prevented literary scholars from fully engaging with mass market publications. Instead, using the terms of cultural materialism, it will examine what Leslie Howsam has called 'the-book-as-object'.¹⁵ The process then, will be to make sense of how the publishing industry worked in 1922 and describe how individual works and writers were shaped by the machinery of publishing, considering particularly their reception in the marketplace, and, where possible, accounting for sales. From this follows the other central goal of this study, to understand the texts as stories and entertainment, taking a critical look at the techniques these writers used which were rooted in the historical circumstances of a nation still greatly troubled by the war, even in supposedly escapist writing such as the romance.

In addition, I have been concerned to show how the subject matter of popular writing was often little different from that of modernism, taking in the irreducible concerns of human beings including sex and death, and it was only the often fragmented, allusive form of some modernism that separated it from Ethel M. Dell or Edmund Blunden. The research sheds light on what was a strong and vibrant popular culture of writing, one that was being enlarged by the expansion of mass market publishing and which came to dominate the post-war trade because of the publishing industry's reduced circumstances in 1922.

To undertake this work, the thesis takes a historicist approach, engaging particularly with contemporaneous responses to 1922. In doing so the study will

¹⁵ Leslie Howsam, 'The Study of Book History' in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book* ed. by Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-13 (p. 4).

consider history not as a synonym for the study of history but for the actual events, opinions and ideas that occurred in this twelve-month period. In the first instance this is a strategy designed to rebalance accounts of this year and to give a different perspective from those studies that consider the period retrospectively.¹⁶ As Robert D. Hume has written: '*The historicist's primary commitment is to the recreation of the viewpoints of the people he or she studies*' (italics in the original), in this instance the large majority of readers consuming popular writing whose perspective has frequently been dismissed or discounted.¹⁷ It is Hume's theoretical model that has been significant for this study and the reason for using written sources from this year and the inter-war period more broadly, rather than retrospective analysis. As he says, '[a] question that invites appeal to theory from another period starts to take us beyond the bounds of our method.'¹⁸ Thomas Adams and Nicolas Barker have supported this position, arguing that '[l]ater assessment, in a historical context [...] is primarily a study of reception not reception itself.'¹⁹ Hume equally argues that '[w]e inevitably learn from predecessors and rely on them' even if it is necessary to 'read prior scholarship in a highly critical and sceptical spirit', a working practice used to undertake this research and one encouraged by him.²⁰ Hume writes that 'a truly

¹⁶ The books of Patrick Collier and Faye Hamill and Mark Hussey have done a great deal to forcefully overturn previous ideas about modernism. Collier has questioned the advance of contemporary academic modernism while Hamill and Hussey have shown how modernism was more connected to other forms than it was often willing to admit. However, there is still a debate to be had about how far they have changed perceptions about 1922. The books rarely reference the most popular writers of the era while Jaillant's important *Cheap Modernism* begins its discussion at least three years following the publication of *Ulysses* and 'The Waste Land'. See Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, p.1.

¹⁷ Robert D. Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 45.

¹⁸ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, p. 50.

¹⁹ See Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book' in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society* ed. by Nicolas Barker (London: The British Library, 1993), pp. 5-43 (p. 28).

²⁰ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, pp. 48 and 49.

historical investigation can introduce all sorts of “outside” concepts [...] but must also demonstrate clearly how people at the time thought about whatever is at issue.²¹ To reach this kind of understanding Hume demands of the researcher that they immerse themselves in the material culture of the period, from the contemporary records as well as newspapers, novels, and ephemera so that they become less likely to make revisionary, *ex post facto* judgements that distort the historical moment. The work that follows offers a corrective to previous accounts, a rebalancing of the literary and cultural forms making up this particular twelve months to recover the lost literary history of 1922 which has become subsumed beneath the myth of modernism. Hume describes this method as ‘*historical evaluation*’ (italics in the original).²² In practice this will usually mean privileging the critical and cultural judgements of the inter-war years, often those views that immediately followed a text’s publication or soon after. It will inevitably take the form of a synoptic history, not just looking at contemporary thought and events but doing so in a way that allows for an holistic judgement that manages to hold all these disparate elements together. However, even viewing history in this unexceptional form still invites critical comment. Hume offers the pessimistic summary of Michael Oakeshott that ‘what is sundered from present experience is sundered from experience altogether.’²³ Despite this Hume maintains his position commenting that:

Context exerts a powerful effect on the mindset of the author and so contributes to the shaping of the text. Context helps shape the

²¹ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, p. 51.

²² Quoted in Robert D., Hume, ‘Axiologies: Past and Present Concepts of Literary Value’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 78.2 (2017), 140.

²³ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, p. 18.

expectations and responses of the original audience and powerfully affects their decoding of the text.²⁴

The intention is to approach the material in the main body of the thesis in these terms, but it must also be acknowledged that on occasion I am unable to follow these precepts and need to draw on later commentary, often where critical writing in 1922 was mostly silent on a particular issue, for example ‘play’. Johan Huizinga’s seminal work on the subject was not published until 1944.²⁵

Even undertaking research in this form it is important to acknowledge, with Claude Lévi-Strauss, that the history thus created is drawn from ‘a few local histories’ and that a ‘truly total history’ would be ‘chaos.’²⁶ The literary historian must choose and shape their material in a process Siegfried Kracauer has called ‘the formative tendency’ bringing this inevitable chaos into a configuration where it becomes ‘readable’, a process that also confirms the subjective nature of historical commentary.²⁷ This can also be termed a heuristic frame, a way to organise and see the material in a consequential form.²⁸ It should be understood, though, that in these terms any reading of 1922 will be provisional since its history can be shaped into any number of significant formations. Undertaking this work, it is necessary to be mindful that ‘any year, framed and investigated as such, will suddenly seem crucial’ rather than just another year in a sequence.²⁹

²⁴ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, p. 27.

²⁵ See Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). The Dutch original was published in 1938.

²⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 257.

²⁷ Siegfried Kracauer, *History, The Last Things Before the Last* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 47.

²⁸ I take this term from James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 54.

²⁹ Chandler, p. 77.

The first objective of this work is to recover the quotidian literature of 1922, those volumes that have been lost, excoriated, or ignored by the work of both time and academic literary history in the hundred years or so since Sylvia Beach published *Ulysses in Paris* and Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press issued *Jacob's Room*. The academy itself was growing in importance at this moment, as university English began to grow into the rigorous study of texts that now monopolises the subject, and popular writing became something of an anathema. As D. J. Palmer has remarked: 'Since the 1920's [sic] we have been made aware of the dangers attending practical criticism, in particular of its tendency to overrate the virtues of complexity and ambiguity.'³⁰ In 1922 though, it appeared that this is what diligent study entailed and it was only to be encouraged, as part of what Terry Eagleton describes as 'fashioning English into a serious discipline'.³¹ This put further pressure on popular writing which usually extolled the virtues of clarity, simplicity and emotion and in turn led to Q. D. Leavis's *Fiction and the Reading Public*, an academic work based on her PhD, engaged largely with the novels of the 1920s despite its 1932 publication.

To assess the literary and publishing landscape I will be engaging with the responses to 1922 from the year itself, including book reviews, newspaper articles, letters, publishing records and advertising rather than those offered subsequently. Pursuing this form of enquiry enables a view of the year, in part at least, as it would have been understood at the time allowing, for example, a greater understanding of how texts were valued by different groups. It will further offer an alternative to the few

³⁰ D. J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature From Its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 206.

³¹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 31.

modernist texts published in this period that advocated for classicism, difficulty, and the withholding of emotion and will allow the reinscription into the historical narrative of those popular titles that dominated the literary landscape, from the work of Elinor Glyn to that of J. S. Fletcher, giving an original perspective on a year already much considered. Although the number of texts such a study can usefully discuss will inevitably be limited, it is hoped that the wide-ranging subject matter of this thesis can offer some important insights into the literature of this year.

□ **Methodology**

This thesis rests on two substantial areas of study, the texts themselves which must be the *fons et origo* of any meaningful research and underpinning this the archival research conducted at the University of Reading, the British Library, and the London Metropolitan Archives. It is the archival material available that has shaped and made possible the research in this thesis. The absence of a text's sales and publishing history sometimes curtailed further enquiry into a title whose ubiquity suggested it as a subject for critical discussion, but occasionally, as with the work of Edmund Blunden and J. S. Fletcher, there is an assumption of extensive sales. It is on this understanding that Agatha Christie's novel *The Secret Adversary* is discussed here, not because the individual stock figures remain, but because of the writer's extraordinary overall sales.

Critical responses to archival research have, of late, noted an 'archival turn' as scholars have sought to spend more time amidst the records.³² My concerns, though, have been entirely pragmatic given that the documents outlining a book's publishing

³² Matthew Feldman, 'Introduction to Historicizing Modernists: Approaches to "Archivalism"' in *Historicizing Modernists: Approaches to 'Archivalism'* ed. by Matthew Feldman, Anna Svendsen, and Erik Tønning, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), pp. 1-20, (p. 2).

history are usually to be found in the firm's archive. However, my use of company records has served to articulate concepts of historical context and their importance in the study of both literature and publishing; it is the archive as 'a way of seeing'.³³ Whilst the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida on the concept of the archive has usefully enlarged the term, their work has, in contrast, been criticised as 'ahistorical theorizing'.³⁴ Recent theory has underlined the subjective nature of writing conceived of in documentary research, and every archival narrative is a further interpretation of the material. Archives, partly due to their fragmentary nature, do not offer the meta-narratives that historiography once imagined. Even so they are likely to be the repository of factual data (sales figures, binding costs for example) which will be subject to interpretation. It is therefore conceivably more useful to this survey to understand these records in purely instrumental terms and their '*ordinariness*, the unremarkable nature of archives, and the everyday disappointments' (italics in the original) that the researcher encounters.³⁵

Although the critical evaluation of popular writing is not reliant upon publishers' records, they still have a considerable part to play, while many of the memos, letters, and ledger books are still underused and neglected resources. The material concerning Beverley Nichols in the Chatto and Windus Archive at the University of Reading within their Archive of British Printing and Publishing casts important new light on his early career as a writer. It has rarely been consulted until now, even by his biographer, partly because this early period has largely been

³³ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 2.

³⁴ James Knapp quoted by Finn Fordham, 'The Modernist Archive' in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* ed. by Peter Brooker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 45-60, (p. 47).

³⁵ Steedman, p. 9.

overshadowed by his later career as a writer on gardens and gardening. The Macmillan Archive at the British Library has frequently been the focus of research and yet no use has been made of the publishing statistics that I consider in Chapter Five when discussing Thomas Hardy's poetry. Research in the London Metropolitan Archives has allowed access to the untapped resource of Ruby M. Ayres's important publishing accounts while the University of Reading Archive of British Printing and Publishing, besides giving access to the records of Chatto and Windus, has allowed me to study the manuscript of Elinor Glyn's *Man and Maid*, another neglected asset. Access to the Allen and Unwin archive, also held by Reading, gave valuable background to the publishing career and life of J. S. Fletcher, material which has until now been overlooked and was of use in Chapter Three. Finally, and of equal importance, has been the history of 1922 and the 1920s more generally, partly taken from the most applicable histories of the era but critically, from the newspaper and periodical press. This was the medium through which readers would have understood the world and gives a much clearer sense of the year's values and expectations than the broader retrospective histories. The following section, therefore, looks at reviewers and reviewing, their mediating function and their impact on the reading public in 1922.

□ **Reviewing, Reviewers, and the Public**

London had been a draw for men of letters since at least the eighteenth century and in the early 1920s several writers, among them Edgell Rickword, Edmund Blunden, and J. B. Priestley found themselves in the city, intent, as Priestley's biographer has said, on

‘the ragged uncertain life of the freelance writer’.³⁶ It was a literary culture of unrivalled magnitude, where almost every form of written media was expanding, from the magazine and newspaper to the book market, all of which required an avalanche of words.

In the aftermath of the 1870 Education Act literacy levels had reached ‘about 80 per cent’ and England was able to boast a ‘potential “reading public” of about twenty million adults’ although educational disparities meant that not all of them would have read books.³⁷ As Chris Baldick argues, ‘[m]ost people would now read at least one newspaper or magazine a week, and a book from time to time’.³⁸ Books were rarely bought and mostly borrowed from commercial ‘circulating’ and public libraries since book prices were relatively high, and a source of dispute within the trade. When books were more likely to be purchased in the 1930s Mary Grover points out that a book at a relatively modest price of 3/- was ‘just affordable for a family with a small amount of disposable income’ and novels on first publication were usually 7/6.³⁹ Although later editions would reduce the price, sometimes as low as 2/-, this usually meant waiting some time. In poorer families, books were not often bought due to the price and what books a child possessed would often be down to the benevolence of a relative: ‘the books owned were often given to them by women, chiefly aunts.’⁴⁰

³⁶ Vincent Brome, *J.B. Priestley* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), p. 66.

³⁷ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford English Literary History Volume 10: 1910-1940, The Modern Movement*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, 13 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), X, p. 17. John Baxendale expands on these figures commenting that ‘by the start of the new century around 97 per cent of adults were literate, at least by the minimum criterion of being able to sign their names.’ See John Baxendale, ‘Popular Fiction and the Critique of Mass Culture’ in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 555-570 (p. 555)

³⁸ Baldick, *The Modern Movement*, p. 18.

³⁹ Mary Grover, *Steel City Readers Reading for Pleasure in Sheffield, 1925-1955* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), p. 33.

⁴⁰ Grover, p. 36.

This in some measure explains the success of the magazine at this time, when magazines quite often offered several serial fictions in each edition which would only later be bound between boards and sold as books. Not only this, writers could often make more money from serial sales than from the later novel, a situation Agatha Christie found herself in after signing an unremunerative contract with John Lane.⁴¹

Frank Swinnerton, considering literary journalism wrote that:

The reviewer (in theory at least) is unaffected by any consideration but that of his responsibility for an impartial judgment. Some reviewers, it is true, are propagandists.⁴²

J. B. Priestley and other writers often found themselves caught up in disputes that characterised London reviewing in 1922 when ‘gangs of *vers libre* poets and outraged traditionalists fought running battles through the pages of the weeklies’, as D. J. Taylor has described it.⁴³ Coteries had always been a feature of British literature and London in the 1920s was little different, John Lehmann remarking that London was ‘a conglomeration of villages even in the intellectual sense’.⁴⁴ However, it is more accurate to see London literary life as a complex web of enthusiasms and animosities that once caused Ezra Pound to challenge poet Lascelles Abercrombie to a duel; with Pound now safely embarked to Paris, disagreements were instead confined to the capital’s journals and newspapers.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Charles Osborne, *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* (London: Collins, 1982), p. 13.

⁴² Frank Swinnerton, *Authors and the Book Trade*, 2nd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1935), p. 35.

⁴³ D. J. Taylor, *The Prose Factory: Literary Life in England since 1918* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016), p. 64.

⁴⁴ John Lehmann, ‘A Note on this Book by John Lehmann’, *Coming to London* ed. by John Lehmann (London: Phoenix House, 1957), pp. 6-12 (p. 7).

⁴⁵ A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound, Poet: A Portrait of the Man & His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 206.

J. C. Squire, who had been one of the first editors to offer Priestley work in London, was making claims for poetry and literature more widely that were modest and unexceptional, that poetry should provoke, that it was forged out of emotion and should demand clarity of exposition of the writer, and not make too great a claim on the resources of the reader. These claims put him in opposition to modernist conceptions of difficulty, impersonality, and classicism. By 1922 the Cambridge-educated Squire was editor of the mass market *London Mercury* through which he pursued this vendetta against modernism with dogged persistence. In the journal's opening number Squire took aim at those experimental writers who had created 'an orgy of un-directed ab-normality'.⁴⁶ If 1922 was a year less prone to public disagreements, conflict remained in the air and would have worsened had Squire not reviewed either *Ulysses* or 'The Waste Land' until 1923. He proclaimed as far as the poem was concerned '[a] grunt would serve equally as well' and that the book's publication was 'scarcely worthy of the Hogarth Press.'⁴⁷ The modernist contingent, however, usually confined their remarks to the pages of their private correspondence or in foreign journals; T. S. Eliot described Squire in 1921 as a critic 'whose solemn trifling fascinates multitudes' and that he 'knows nothing about poetry'.⁴⁸ A few pointed remarks on both sides might have amounted to a little local difficulty but since Squire's friends and former employees held significant positions on several London periodicals hostilities assumed wider proportions. Ultimately though, a more significant issue underlay this intemperate bickering. As Ezra Pound put it: 'only the

⁴⁶ Quoted in Michael H. Levenson, 'Does The Waste Land Have a Politics?', *Modernism/Modernity*, 6.3 (1999), 10.

⁴⁷ J. C. Squire, 'Poetry' in *T.S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* ed. by Jewel Spears Brooker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 115 (p. 115).

⁴⁸ Quoted in Leonard Diepeveen, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 12.

specialist can determine whether certain works of art possess certain sorts of precision';⁴⁹ such an attitude was a demand for the average reader or critic to cede their authority to a self-appointed elite who would dispense their judgements from the heights and disallow the opinions of people like Squire or those who just wanted to read a 'a pretty story'.⁵⁰ The consequences of this conflict would play out through the 1920s and beyond but the lines of demarcation both sides set down were rather more porous than either side were willing to admit. The *London Mercury* published work by Virginia Woolf (who disliked Squire), W. B. Yeats, Katherine Mansfield, and Siegfried Sassoon while Eliot, as an editor at publishers Faber and Faber went on to publish many of the poets that he had earlier associated with the periodical such as Harold Monro, Sassoon and Edmund Blunden.⁵¹

London was, then, a city of factions and coteries, nodal points around which writers would gather, and what Elizabeth Bowen called 'a succession of parties' where writers and critics tended to put aside their differences. The writer Bowen remembered finding herself in the same room as 'Edith Sitwell, Walter de la Mare' and 'Aldous Huxley' despite their very disparate outlooks on books and reviewing.⁵² This was at one of the evenings held by Naomi Royde-Smith, previously the editor of the

⁴⁹ Quoted in Diepeveen, p. 100.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Nicola Beauman, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-39* (London: Persephone Books, 2008), p. 17. The debate is often portrayed as one between modernists and traditionalists. However, as John Baxendale has shown, there was a gathering antipathy around the idea of the highbrow, a more general term that undoubtedly encompassed modernism. Baxendale notes the response of the *Daily Express* to the phenomenon in 1921: 'They have crammed so much learning into their heads,' declared the paper, 'that there has been no room for ordinary thought. Their greatest contempt is for humanity at large; their greatest admiration - themselves.' Quoted in Baxendale, p. 560.

⁵¹ See Peter Howarth, 'Georgian Poetry' in *T. S. Eliot in Context* ed. by Jason Harding (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 221-230 (p. 223); J. Matthew Huculak, 'The *London Mercury* (1919-1939) and Other Moderns' in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines Volume 1: Britain and Ireland 1880-1955* ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1, 240-260, (pp. 243 and 247).

⁵² Elizabeth Bowen, 'Coming to London 6: Elizabeth Bowen' in Lehmann, pp. 74-81 (pp. 79-80).

Saturday Westminster, but there were many other salons and gathering points. Priestley fell in with the group around Squire who first met in a pub beneath the original offices of the *London Mercury*. Publisher and poet Harold Munro's Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street also attracted critics and poets while *Time and Tide*, 'the only female-controlled periodical of its kind', offered both a sanctuary and a platform for female journalists like Rebecca West and Winifred Holtby.⁵³ Beyond London, with the rise of the 'new reading public' and the incursion of the city's newspapers into the regions, local papers had begun to 'introduce many of the features of the mass circulation [...] press' which included some emphasis on literary culture.⁵⁴

Coterie were important; since reviewers did not exist in the abstract, they would always be writing from an ideological position shaped considerably by their experience of coterie, despite every intention of setting down honest, independent reviews. For literary journalists it was a time of plenty, when a greater number of magazines required more writers, and when a greater number of books compounded the need for more reviewers. The industry insider Frank Swinnerton wrote that 'outside a small public, most of the reviews printed by the critical press have no influence' but reviewing continued apace.⁵⁵ Swinnerton's picture, though, is of a public that is 'incalculable because it is made up of everybody and anybody. It is incalculable because all it demands of the book trade is "something to read".'⁵⁶ This is only

⁵³ Catherine Clay, *Time and Tide: The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ Kevin Williams, *Read All about It! A History of the British Newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 136. A good example is the substantial article by Guy Thorne on Beverley Nichols' *Self* in the *Dorset Daily Press* (25 July 1922). Extracted in University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus Cuttings Album number 22, CW C/24.

⁵⁵ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 119.

⁵⁶ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 124.

confirmed by the readers surveyed by Mary Grover who, she notes, ‘were usually unguided’⁵⁷ and their reading involved ‘chance encounters’ but these were ‘rarely with what are now considered classics.’⁵⁸ It is most likely that for some books, reviewing did make a difference to the sales figures, however, where popular writing was concerned, the books were often not reviewed (especially if they were romantic fiction) and sometimes reviled, yet sold in enormous numbers to a public beyond the reach or influence of the reviewer.

□ Publishing and 1922

In 1922 publishing companies were still disadvantaged having suffered substantial disruption during the war. Paper had been rationed and profits declined. As Jane Potter has said, the war ‘tested the business acumen [...] of all in the book trade’ even if there was a continued demand for books.⁵⁹ As well as this companies found themselves losing valuable staff who either volunteered for war service or were later conscripted. R. C. Jackson of Sidgwick and Jackson was killed in 1915,⁶⁰ and at least one firm had to close its doors after the majority of its staff joined the forces.⁶¹ The figures for book publication, though, were slowly improving. In 1914 8863 new books had been published and by 1917 this had dropped to a low of 6606. In 1922 numbers had recovered to 8754 and would continue to grow through the decade as

⁵⁷ Grover, *Steel City Readers*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Grover, *Steel City Readers*, p. 54.

⁵⁹ Jane Potter, ‘The Book in Wartime’ in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond* ed. by Andrew Nash, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII, 567-579 (p. 568).

⁶⁰ Potter, p. 569.

⁶¹ P. J. Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 926.

mass-market publishing slowly took hold, and publishers began to worry about publishing too many books.⁶²

It was in 1921 that government control of mines and railways which had taken place under the wartime Defence of the Realm Acts (DORA), ended, and employers attempted to force down wages leading to industrial action. There were riots over lack of work and at Christmas 1921 '[u]nemployed ex-servicemen wearing medals were shaking collecting boxes in London's West End.'⁶³ Little remained of the wartime consensus other than Lloyd George as Prime Minister and a coalition government. Neither would survive the year.

The slump that now engulfed the country had begun before the end of 1920 but was now hitting harder and as such, workers were beginning to react to this new financial realism. With the mines returned to their owners, in South Wales wage reductions could be as high as '49 per cent per shift' but across any number of industries managers were enforcing similar wage cuts.⁶⁴ There were strikes in the engineering trades, in the shipyards and many other industries whilst 'in paper, printing and bookbinding it "continued bad"' which led directly to the 'Strike in the Book Trade' first announced in the *Publishers' Circular* of 25 February.⁶⁵ The strike was centrally concerned with the variable rates of pay between packers in the book trade and those in the printing and paper industries, the unions believing that 'the wages in Publishers' houses should be based on those obtained by their members in printing

⁶² Anonymous, *The English Catalogue of Books for 1922* (London: The Publishers' Circular Ltd., 1923) [unpaginated].

⁶³ Noreen Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975), p. 69.

⁶⁴ Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 121.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 25 February 1922, p. 143; Branson, p. 69.

firms'.⁶⁶ The union position was that they were being asked for a cut in wages when 'railway fares have not been reduced' and 'both milk and bread have gone up' meaning a 5s. cut in wages would be unaffordable.⁶⁷ Most of these kinds of dispute were resolved in favour of the employers, a situation only repeated here. The *Publishers' Circular* reported on the final agreement on 8 April 1922, which would result in an immediate pay cut for workers and further to follow.⁶⁸ The employers were genuinely struggling with higher costs, as the publishing media made clear. The year began with two articles in the *Publishers' Circular* on January 21st; the first on book pricing declared that 'for the past few years publishers have been working at a loss, or at least have been making no profit' and that this was due to the 'enormous cost of production'.⁶⁹ The second piece, 'The Cost of Printing', an article gleaned from *The Author*, noted that 'due to the high price of labour' publishing houses were 'making contracts with printers in foreign countries for the printing of English books' but concluded that even if this resulted in lower standards, 'it is essential [...] that books should be on the market'.⁷⁰ The other burden that publishers carried was postal rates for printed matter and postcards were still high and according to a letter in the same issue it had caused 'unemployment in the printing industry'.⁷¹ Since books and papers were often sent by post the rates were putting an extra strain on the trade. This problem, at least, was later remedied in the 1922 budget.⁷² The year was one dominated by cuts as the slump took a further hold on the economy and on February

⁶⁶ Anonymous, 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 18 March 1922, p. 257.

⁶⁷ A London Correspondent, 'The Strike in the London Book Trade', *Bookseller*, 1045.3 (1922), 84.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, 'Book Trade Strike Settled', *Publishers' Circular*, 8 April 1922, p. 319.

⁶⁹ From Our Correspondent, 'Book Prices', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 47.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, 'The Cost of Printing', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 49.

⁷¹ James MacLehose, C. W. Bowerman, A. E. Goodwin, and A. E. Holmes, 'Effects of High Postal Charges', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 48.

⁷² Loch Mowat, p. 131.

10th the Geddes Report was published recommending the government make huge cuts in its spending, becoming known as the ‘Geddes Axe.’⁷³ This cost-cutting exercise immediately impacted the public libraries who had only recently been allocated the funds for the library books they required by virtue of the Public Libraries Act of 1919. According to Thomas Kelly it led to progress ‘being slowed by economic difficulties’.⁷⁴ These, in the end, were minor inconveniences, but seemed of greater significance in 1922; it was only the financial aspects of publishing that continued to offer problems until the end of the decade.

The economics of publishing are obviously directly relevant to this study once the intangible value of the manuscript is set aside. These values include the monetary value of stock, the bookseller’s discount, and staff wages amongst other items. Michael Bhaskar, in theorising these multiple points of value speaks instead of ‘the value chain’, the core elements of publishing, consisting of ‘the acquisition of intellectual property, editorial, design and production, marketing, and sales’.⁷⁵ The majority of this discussion will be reserved for those chapters concerned with publishing and bookselling more specifically. Bhaskar has written that ‘[p]ublishing isn’t like most industries. It busies itself with questions of intangible value and moral worth.’⁷⁶ This argument is less certain than Bhaskar’s other remark that the publisher is ‘Janus-faced’ with ‘one eye on culture and the other on commerce’ and the second of these will

⁷³ Loch Mowat, p. 130.

⁷⁴ Thomas Kelly, *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, 1845-1975*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Library Association, 1977), p. 220.

⁷⁵ Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), p. 34. Bhaskar is quoting here from Giles Clark and Angus Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing* 4th ed. by (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008). His concept of the value chain is taken from John B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

⁷⁶ Bhaskar, p. 2.

always be of greater importance.⁷⁷ Stanley Unwin put it in his usual forthright terms: 'If the public will not buy your book the publisher cannot make money either for [the author] or for himself' and the book trade concerns itself with translating the intangible value placed on the original manuscript into monetary value in the published work.⁷⁸ The public, however, does not always conform to the views of the publisher, nor is there any compunction upon it to do so.

□ Libraries and Readership

Despite the work of a generation of assiduous journalists the readers of popular novels were most likely to bypass the system of reviewing via the services of the circulating library which, overall, did little to guide the tastes of its readers, while the public libraries often guided readers only by excluding particular writers or novels from their stock.

The era's circulating libraries and their public counterparts were largely conceived in the nineteenth century, beginning with Mudie's Select Library (1842), and followed closely by W. H. Smith in 1860. Since the expensive triple-decker books were beyond most readers' pockets an affordable library service arose. This allowed comparatively cheap access to these books and was a system that proved more successful than the public library provision.

The growth of the public library service was stimulated by the 1850 Public Libraries Act but was fatally compromised by its details which allowed for the purchase and upkeep of a library building but not for the book stock. Hence, at the

⁷⁷ Bhaskar, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Stanley Unwin, *The Truth About Publishing* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1946), p. 13.

beginning of the twentieth century, while some of these problems had been resolved with the Public Libraries Act of 1919, the libraries were still less attractive and often less well-stocked than their commercial counterparts.⁷⁹ In 1922 circulating libraries had become a feature of most towns; there was the Library Corner in Porthcawl, for example, selling stationery, music and fancy goods, advertising their wares in the local press.⁸⁰

Some circulating libraries did try and guide their customers in what they read, and Boot's librarians undertook a course in literature although it was finally admitted that 'books are but tools and it is our duty to supply them to our subscribers without questioning their taste', and female customers would often ask for 'a "pretty book"' without concern for critical opinion or current trends.⁸¹ It had quickly become apparent that readers' main interest was in fiction, and this led to the 'Great Fiction Question' about what a public library should legitimately stock which was 'contested over many decades, most fiercely between 1890 and 1914.' It was a time when the profession of librarian was seeking validation but found itself instead contending with accusations that public libraries were simply 'storehouses of romances and adventure stories.'⁸² If the war years had largely put paid to debates about stock, librarians were often still barely qualified for their post since training was correspondingly low. The Act of 1919 had at last freed up money to buy books, money which had often been disputed in the past, but especially in rural districts, where libraries still needed to

⁷⁹ For a short history of the nineteenth century rise of the library see Laura Schmidl, "'A Very Different Class of Goods': The History of Twopenny Libraries 1', *Publishing History*, 69 (2011), 41-2.

⁸⁰ Anonymous, 'The Library Corner', *Porthcawl News*, 30 November 1922, p. 2.

⁸¹ Beauman, p. 18.

⁸² See Robert Snape, 'Libraries for Leisure Time' in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland: Volume 3, 1850-2000* ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, pp. 40-55 (p. 43).

catch up with their urban cousins. And if the war had largely settled the ‘Great Fiction Question’ the financial crash of 1921 impacted libraries and their services in 1922, and even in 1926 some commentators felt the disruption of the Great War was still affecting services.⁸³

If a great deal is known about how books circulated in the 1920s, the individual reader was still only visible in glimpses and those who read popular fiction were even less visible since they were often unlikely to leave a record of their reading, unlike Virginia Woolf or Evelyn Waugh who had some leisure in which to write diaries and letters. Certain popular writers are noted on the Reading Experience Database such as Ruby M. Ayres, but the fragmented nature of the data can be surmised when it is noted that ‘Sapper’'s ‘Bulldog Drummond’ novels, despite their huge success, go unmentioned while Agatha Christie merits a single entry.⁸⁴ It was a reading public still largely undifferentiated despite the passage of time since Wilkie Collins had first written about the subject in his article, ‘The Unknown Public’, in 1858.⁸⁵

It is notable that the contemporary reading surveys that often form the basis of research into reading habits largely by-passed the 1920s. Jonathan Rose cites the survey of working-class readers in Sheffield of 1918 and the preceding study of Middlesborough by Florence Bell.⁸⁶ However, no substantial study of reading habits was carried out in the 1920s unless we count the brief mention of the library service in the 1928 survey of industrial Tyneside. Although some progress has been made in this

⁸³ See Frank Pacy, ‘Public Libraries in England’, *American Library Association Bulletin*, 20.10 (1926), 222.

⁸⁴ The Reading Experience Database; <https://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/index.php> [Accessed 4 August, 2023].

⁸⁵ Wilkie Collins, ‘The Unknown Public’, *Household Words*, 439, 1858, 217–22.

⁸⁶ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). See Chapter Six, ‘Cultural Literacy in the Classic Slum.’

field Virginia Woolf's remark (in a different context) is still true to some extent: 'These lives are still half-hidden in profound obscurity.'⁸⁷ In terms of surveys from the time there would be no further systematic attempts at defining the reader until the advent of Mass Observation.⁸⁸ The Work of Mary Grover has retrospectively attempted to fill at least a part of this absence.

□ Issues of Power and Definitions of Popular Writing

The statements of these coteries touched the opposite extremes of the ideological culture of 1922 from the extreme right to liberal and beyond; therefore, ideology itself requires consideration, as does value. It is useful to begin this enquiry with a further remark from Terry Eagleton:

Literature does not exist in the sense that insects do, and [...] value-judgements by which it is constituted are historically variable [...] these value judgements themselves have a close relation to social ideologies.⁸⁹

This is a significant reading of both literature as a category and its relationship to value and ideology. Although ideology is of the first importance since it always precedes and informs value and shapes the way culture is viewed, it is helpful to begin with a few remarks on literature. Eagleton sees it, 'less as some inherent quality or set of qualities', concluding that 'there is no "essence" of literature whatsoever'⁹⁰ and just as importantly ideas and interpretations are shaped by history and culture or, as Karl

⁸⁷ Virginia Woolf, 'Introductory Letter' in, *Life as We Have Known It by Co-Operative Working Women* ed. by Margaret Llewelyn Davies (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), p. xxxix.

⁸⁸ Henry A. Mess, *Industrial Tyneside: A Social Survey Made for the Bureau of Social Research for Tyneside* (London: Ernest Benn, 1928), pp. 129-30.

⁸⁹ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, p. 16.

⁹⁰ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, p. 9.

Mannheim puts it, they are ‘in a constant process of becoming.’⁹¹ If this is credible then it imperils any idea of value that writers like Eliot or Leavis sought to impose. But it is Eagleton’s suggestion of ideology as a question of power which surely lies behind the propagandizing of both the modernists and the ‘Squirearchy’ who each sought to control the idea of literary culture within London and beyond.⁹² This situation, as Diepeveen notes, ‘attracted dichotomies and did not lend itself to moderate judgments. The argument was structured so that the winner would take all.’⁹³

Ideology, though, exists beyond simple issues of power and the sociological form of the idea, concerned, as Terry Eagleton has said, ‘with the function of ideas within social life’, was the conception of Karl Mannheim in his work *Ideology and Utopia* (1936).⁹⁴ He believed there were two approaches to ideology, ‘the particular’ and the ‘total’, the second of which, encompassing the German term *Weltanschauung* or worldview, will inform this study. Mannheim says this:

The ideas expressed by the subject are thus regarded as functions of his [sic] existence. This means that opinions, statements, propositions, and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life-situation of the one who expresses them.⁹⁵

This requires that an individual’s total experience is taken into account in comprehending their ideological outlook and follows the remarks of Marx and Engels

⁹¹ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936), p. 59.

⁹² See Patrick Howarth, *Squire: ‘Most Generous of Men’* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 146, for the origins of the term ‘Squirearchy’.

⁹³ Diepeveen, p. 83.

⁹⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 3.

⁹⁵ Mannheim, p. 51.

who said that '[l]ife is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.'⁹⁶

Mannheim though, believes that confining an analysis to

the mental processes which take place in the individual and regard him [sic] as the only possible bearer of ideologies, we shall never grasp the totality of the structure of the intellectual world belonging to a social group in a given historical situation.⁹⁷

Ideology never resides just in the individual but is the construct of a social grouping or class and in looking just to the individual the researcher sees only 'certain fragments of the thought-system.'⁹⁸ In other words, the isolated reader never reads in isolation since they, often unknowingly, form part of a wider nexus, such as crime readers or poetry enthusiasts. In concert with the cultural framework of the time, these various likeminded individuals set the 'horizon of expectations'. This was an ideological schema that established the limits within which these texts could work, and readers engaged in a 'process of continuous horizon setting and horizon changing' becoming the gatekeepers of what a genre could encompass and allow.⁹⁹ Radical texts like *Ulysses* would have questioned the readers' expectations of narrative fiction, just as E. C. Bentley's novel, *Trent's Last Case* (1913) with its innovative structure and outcome would have put pressure on the horizon of crime writing. What becomes certain is that each genre would have created its own set of expectations so that this collection of readers, consciously or not, had to maintain a consideration of multiple horizons,

⁹⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'Selected Texts' in *Ideology* ed. by Terry Eagleton (London: Longman, 1994), pp. 23-30 (p. 25).

⁹⁷ Mannheim, p. 53.

⁹⁸ Mannheim, p. 53.

⁹⁹ Hans Robert Jauss, 'History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', *New Literary History*, 2.1 (1970), 13.

either reading within this ideological frame or allowing for its enlargement as a new text redefined the genre's limits.

As Warren Frederick Morris puts it, it is hard to 'get one's arms around a general conception such as ideology.'¹⁰⁰ However, it is still possible and necessary where ideologies and class-formations find themselves in conflict although it is often difficult to identify and formulate the value-systems embedded within an ideological worldview.

Mannheim addressed this in his work, pointing out that in a 'confused world' its unity can be guaranteed only 'by the unity of the perceiving subject' and hopefully the perceiving community.¹⁰¹ Mannheim writes instead of 'a conception which varies in accordance with historic periods, nations, and social classes.'¹⁰² This lends itself to the belief that Mannheim was offering a relativistic position on knowledge, but instead, he characterises knowledge not as relative but as 'relational' in positions where it is not possible 'to conceive of absolute truth existing independently of the values [...] of the subject and unrelated to social context.' It therefore becomes invidious to make comparisons between popular fiction and modernist experimentation despite the intentions of modernist advocates. Mannheim extrapolates from this that '[t]he prevailing philosophic view which cautiously admits that the content of conduct has been historically determined, but which at the same time insists upon the retention of eternal forms of value [...] is no longer tenable.'¹⁰³ This view will be primary in what follows and offers the critic the ability to discuss

¹⁰⁰ Warren Frederick Morris, *Understanding Ideology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), p. x.

¹⁰¹ Mannheim, p. 57.

¹⁰² Mannheim, p. 67.

¹⁰³ Mannheim, pp. 63 and 64.

multiple ideological perspectives, in part to understand how value is created and disseminated.

Ideology and value were central to the intellectual disputes between J. C. Squire and T. S. Eliot (amongst others) but Squire's reputation has to some extent been rehabilitated more recently. His broad literary tastes often highlight how little effectively divided the modernists and those who made up 'the Squirearchy'. J.

Matthew Huculak has written that Squire had, with the *London Mercury*:

attempted to create a journal that could speak to two groups simultaneously: an avant-garde public attuned to experimental movements and the general public-at-large accustomed to Edwardian and Georgian literary production.¹⁰⁴

Squire was intent on creating a broad consensus which could 'invigorate a broken culture nearly destroyed by war – his injunction was not to "make it new" but rather to make it whole.'¹⁰⁵ This view should be tempered by some of the language he used in discussing modernism, though. If we take Squire's attitude at face value it becomes more puzzling that Eliot, Pound, and others were intent on breaking from this position. Eliot wrote to his patron in New York, John Quinn, that 'if he [Squire] succeeds, it will be impossible to get anything good published.'¹⁰⁶ It seemed to Eliot that if Squire prospered the modernist project might stumble.

The fairly insignificant squabbles of the London literati were in fact early skirmishes in the war over the soul of literature. Distilling the argument for the

¹⁰⁴ Huculak, p. 244.

¹⁰⁵ Huculak, p. 245.

¹⁰⁶ T. S. Eliot, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Vol. 1: 1898 - 1922*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton, rev. ed (London: Faber & Faber, 2009), I, 435.

populists (of whom there were few in positions of influence) novelist Hugh Walpole said of books:

If a reader [...] likes the stuff composed by Ethel M. Dell, Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton Porter &c., he should not be ashamed to admit it [and] should have no cause to blush if a superior person talks about Blaise Cendrars or Guillaume Apollinaire.

He was insistent that ‘the readers of today truckle entirely too much with the pronouncements of superior persons.’¹⁰⁷ However, opposing this view was Q. D. Leavis’s influential and damning testament on popular writing, *Fiction and the Reading Public*. Leavis’s compelling voice expanded upon an ideology which regarded the existence of the popular novel as ‘impinging directly on the world of the minority, menacing the standards by which they live’ and only reinforced the views already expressed by modernists in the 1920s.¹⁰⁸ She willingly condemned the ‘assumption that a novel is more likely to be “good” if it appeals to a horde of readers rather than a minority’.¹⁰⁹ Although citing Leavis might appear incongruous in a study of the events of a decade earlier, her work epitomises the modernist values gathered in opposition to the mass-market fiction of 1922, and is very much a retrospective survey of the literature of the previous decade, referencing as it does ‘Sapper’, J. S. Fletcher, Ethel M. Dell and Ruby M. Ayres, and is congruent with the concerns of the newer academics developing university English, particularly those of her husband F. R. Leavis. In the post-war world there was a determination that ‘English studies should rank as the central humane and cultural study for both formal and informal, specialist and general

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous, ‘Will Offer Advice on Reading of Novels’, *Washington Post*, 4 February 1923, p. 61.

¹⁰⁸ Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Pimlico, 2000), p. 67.

¹⁰⁹ Leavis, p. 25.

education’, as the 1921 government paper, *The Teaching of English in England*, pronounced. In Cambridge the work of I. A. Richards, particularly his work on practical criticism, was at the forefront of this cultural shift. The scholar E. M. Tillyard saw the work being undertaken as having a ‘kinship with the critical essays of T. S. Eliot, then first appearing’.¹¹⁰ Richards had already attempted to enlist Eliot as a Cambridge academic to further his ideas and afterwards F. R. Leavis and then Q. D. Leavis would take up Cambridge posts consolidating a particular idea of English Literature.¹¹¹ F. R. Leavis was ‘an admirer of I. A. Richards, and one of the first critics to recognize the literary revolution promoted by T. S. Eliot.’¹¹² However, if they promoted the attitudes of modernism with its tendency towards elitism and opposition to mass culture they would not do so unopposed, with one critic railing against Q. D. Leavis’s work as “‘the angry arrogance’” of “‘the critical minority’”.¹¹³

The simmering feuds of these years were driven by issues of power and ideology even if it sometimes became an issue of personal animosity. Terry Eagleton has noted that in Marxist terms ideology is usually concerned ‘with questions of *power*’ (italics in the original).¹¹⁴ And, adapting the words of Leonard Diepeveen, modernism was ‘the early twentieth century’s tool for arguing about what literature is and who should control it.’¹¹⁵ John Carey sees in these debates an attempt by the modernist elite ‘to segregate the intellectual from the mass and to acquire the control

¹¹⁰ See Palmer, p. 154.

¹¹¹ As Peter Ackroyd explains, Eliot and Richards ‘became close acquaintances, thus establishing his first connection with academic “English studies.”’ Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p. 100.

¹¹² Palmer, p. 158.

¹¹³ See Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of ‘Scrutiny’* (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 30.

¹¹⁴ Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Diepeveen, p. 2.

over the mass that language gives.¹¹⁶ While Squire did not necessarily represent the undifferentiated mass, he was intent on maintaining a wider access to literature than modernism allowed for. The modernists, in Carey's view, believed 'in giving the public what intellectuals want' not 'stories of the everyday life of the ordinary people.'¹¹⁷

Modernism was often trying to construct a divide between its own productions and that of the mass market, at least that was the rhetoric, a position articulated by Q.

D. Leavis who wrote:

It is not perhaps surprising that, in a society of forty-three millions so decisively stratified in taste that each stratum is catered for independently by its own novelists and journalists, the lowbrow public should be ignorant of the work and even the names of the highbrow writers [...]¹¹⁸

Leavis posits a literary culture cleaving along specifically class lines invoking a singular divide between elite and popular forms of literature, between 'D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce' and the readers of popular novels as Carey has acknowledged.¹¹⁹ Critics of Leavis have equally noted that her real ire is reserved for what she terms 'the middlebrow' and the work of the Book Society which purveyed these works. There is some truth to this, but it is also important to recall that she saw in the work of the major popular novelists like Ethel M. Dell and Hall Caine, '[b]ad writing, false sentiment, sheer silliness, and a preposterous narrative'.¹²⁰ Arguably, Leavis's categorisation does not hold water since as John Baxendale has observed, 'the

¹¹⁶ John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 23.

¹¹⁷ Carey, pp. 6 and 7.

¹¹⁸ Leavis, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ Leavis, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Leavis, p. 62.

majority have not really succeeded in defining the category with any precision. It is simply too broad, a category of leftovers'.¹²¹ This study cleaves to the idea of the popular that takes in the work of Hugh Walpole as well as Ruby M. Ayres. It is almost wholly taken up with a question of sales and cultural reach.

Even so, Leavis's construction did not mean that there were to be separate valuing communities; value existed in the singular with the elite best placed to expatiate on the concept. It would lead to Willa Cather writing of a 'world [that] broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts' although this brief aside was not published until 1936.¹²² The culture Leavis described in her 1932 book, and Willa Cather despaired of, was one that Lise Jaillant has called into question, remarking that 'the Battle of the Brows [in this case highbrow and lowbrow] was less fierce than Q. D. Leavis could lead us to believe', although Leavis's depiction of a divided literary sphere certainly suits the modernism of 1922 and the needs of the media. Even *The Times* was willing to make comment on the highbrows who 'presented a "ludicrous image" with the sound of laughter in it.'¹²³ At this point a certain amount of rhetoric, particularly from T. S. Eliot and, soon after, academics like I. A. Richards, determined to create what Andreas Huyssen has characterised as 'the Great Divide.'¹²⁴ What is clear is that 1922 and one or two years following were an instant in time when small press, limited editions, and an elitist mindset did try to forge a cultural divide, one which almost immediately foundered under pressure from impecunious writers and those who wanted a larger

¹²¹ Baxendale, p. 566.

¹²² See Willa Cather, *Not Under Forty*, 'Prefatory Note' (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), p. v.

¹²³ See Baxendale, p. 559.

¹²⁴ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

public for their writing such as Virginia Woolf.¹²⁵ Woolf did not necessarily condescend to a larger reading public; as Jaillant has asserted, the Hogarth Press were marketing her, not as any other writer, but as ‘a canonical writer.’ When the Press determined on a uniform edition of her works it was to create books and ‘texts with permanent literary value.’¹²⁶ This, nevertheless, was some time after 1922. *Jacob’s Room* in Jaillant’s account, at first had a ‘relatively small readership already familiar with Woolf’, and *Mrs Dalloway* only sold a modest 2,000 copies in 1925. Both titles were out of print by 1929 and attempts to widen the writer’s public date from this point and were, on the whole, successful.¹²⁷ Meanwhile, Jonathan Cape was making inroads into James Joyce’s backlist, publishing the less objectionable *Dubliners* but ‘waiting four years’ before embarking on the publication of the more controversial *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1924.¹²⁸ In 1922, Leavis’s narrow view of the world would have made some little sense, but by the middle of the decade, enterprising publishers in search of a profit were prepared to gamble on less obvious bestselling material, although *Ulysses* would remain in splendid isolation, banned in Britain until 1936. Leavis was intent on creating a separate valuing ‘community’ and one to pass universal judgements on literature, but novels by Woolf and Joyce would eventually brush up against those works that Leavis deemed especially invidious (such as the work of Warwick Deeping and Edgar Rice Burroughs) in many bookshops. As Baldick has

¹²⁵ Lawrence Rainey has been particularly good at teasing out this tension between niche publication and the demands of the market. See Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹²⁶ Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, p. 130.

¹²⁷ Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, p. 121. John Xiros Cooper believes that ‘[t]he period of early modernism ended in the mid- 1920s and early 1930s. From that historical moment, it begins its long expansion into the mainstream.’ See John Xiros Cooper, ‘Bringing the Modern to Market: The Case of Faber & Faber’ in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry* ed. by Lise Jaillant (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 88-108 (p. 90).

¹²⁸ Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, p. 52.

concluded: ‘We must not expect to find any clear separation between camps of traditionalists and experimenters.’¹²⁹

To navigate this complex axiological landscape requires a clear understanding of what kinds of value were in circulation in 1922, how they impacted individual texts, and how these might be interpreted and critiqued. John Guillory notes, ‘[i]t is only at the point when judgments differ, that the universality of aesthetic perception is revealed to be restricted to certain individuals or social groups’.¹³⁰ This was not always clear in 1922; for some there was a universality about value and even, as D. W. Prall contemplated, an ‘intrinsic value’ in the literary work.¹³¹ To attempt a study of the popular text requires a re-writing of this formulation to circumvent the hierarchical ideas of modernism, and much of the era’s criticism, in which Edward Garnett could write that it was ‘a comparatively small band of artists whose creative instincts shape true works of art for us’, rather than ‘the hasty brew of “popular work.”’¹³² This reformulation should begin with the reader and how disparate individuals and genders can then be ascribed to discrete social or more correctly, valuing groups, where the passionate advocate for Ruby M. Ayres might have little in common with the individual reading (and re-reading) ‘Sapper’ or Edgar Wallace. Barbara Herrnstein Smith advances the idea of the ‘valuing community’, that group which will set the horizon of expectations. She cautions that ‘a community is never totally homogenous, that its boundaries and borders are never altogether self-evident, that we cannot

¹²⁹ Baldick, *Literature of the 1920s*, p. 25.

¹³⁰ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 275.

¹³¹ David Wight Prall, *A Study in the Theory of Value* (California: University of California Press, 1921), p. 271.

¹³² Edward Garnett, *Friday Nights: Literary Criticism and Appreciations* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), p. 281.

assume in advance that certain differences among its members are negligible or irrelevant'.¹³³ So, having only just created these two valuing individuals as a part of a community, it now appears to be under threat from its own internal contradictions. Smith counters this with a further observation that, 'each of us is a member of many, shifting communities, each of which establishes, for each of its members, multiple social identities.'¹³⁴ In effect, although readers within a certain community all value popular writing, they are divided by the other groups in which they exist, creating a Venn diagram of fiendish complexity. None of this signifies that these groups need to be either small or physically connected. A social formation, in Benedict Anderson's phrase, is an 'imagined community' since the individuals will rarely ever know 'most of their fellow members' or 'meet them' so that these groups are to be distinguished 'by the style in which they are imagined.'¹³⁵ It is this concept of value existing within communities I will be using in this study, complementing Mannheim's ideas on ideology. Herrnstein Smith's conception of valuing communities invites further discussion of the liminal zones created where definitive categorisation of genres or readers becomes more difficult and seemingly oppositional values become entangled, exemplified in the relations between modernism and tradition.

This mess of contradictory valuing strategies and amorphous reading communities makes it even more desirable that an attempt be made to define popular writing. This is essential when academic study has set out the tenets of modernism with a clarity denied to mass-market publications that have most often languished in

¹³³ Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 182.

¹³⁴ Smith, p. 168.

¹³⁵ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed (London: Verso, 2006), p. 6.

the margins. I begin with a working definition derived from the work of Bernice M. Murphy, although what follows is largely in dialogue with her writing and is sometimes critical of its tenets.¹³⁶ Murphy takes the phrase ‘popular fiction’ to mean “fiction that is popular”, although this itself is problematic.¹³⁷ As Ken Gelder has noted, those who believe they are writing ‘literary’ fiction can have bestsellers (promotion on the back of a film adaptation can have significant sales potential), and there will alternately be occasions when publishers expend a large advertising budget on a work of popular fiction that fails to attract readers. Indeed, in a capitalist marketplace of thriving sales there are inevitably winners and losers, so that a popular novel or poetry collection can sink without trace.¹³⁸ Most recent accounts of the popular have had recourse to Raymond Williams’ important definition of the term from 1976. He gives a number of historical definitions: “**Popular culture** was not identified *by the people* but by others, and it still carries two older senses: inferior kinds of work [...] and work deliberately setting out to win favour’ but it can also be seen in the ‘more modern sense of being liked by many people’ (bold type in the original).¹³⁹

Murphy further concludes, much like Leavis, that there is a class aspect to popular writing. This connects it directly with working-class culture, although she assumes a similar connection to the ‘ever-widening ranks of the middle classes.’¹⁴⁰ It should be noted that there is no impermeable dividing line between so-called middle-

¹³⁶ See Bernice M. Murphy, *Key Concepts in Contemporary Popular Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

¹³⁷ Murphy, p. 1.

¹³⁸ See Murphy, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Murphy, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Murphy, p. 3.

class writing and popular fiction. Such writing, as Janet Galligani Casey perceives, is closely aligned ‘with the consumer marketplace,’ just like writing aimed at a working-class audience.¹⁴¹ What can be said without contradiction is that popular writing ‘has been expressly written for a general rather than an elite audience’.¹⁴² Even so, as Jonathan Rose has argued, it is important to ‘break the habit of treating high and low culture as two distinct categories’,¹⁴³ as Virginia Woolf’s later success illustrates.¹⁴⁴

If some debate remains over whether there can be any clear distinctions between elite and popular writing, one of the key elements in popular prose and poetry will always be readability, referring to what Murphy calls ‘a “compulsive read” or a “page turner”’, something that offers ‘escape from the “real” world.’¹⁴⁵ In relation to this, Walter Nash remarks: ‘[w]e do not want *again*, though we may want *more*’ (italics in the original).¹⁴⁶ He means by this that the reader, having consumed a romance will not want to read the same one again but will read something very similar, that reading in this context only leads to more reading.

Readability is inevitably connected to issues of style. Nash believes that the essence of popular style lies in the single term, ‘convention’:

We read conventions of popular narrative like a map, a crude map that designates a route and a few easily recognizable landmarks. All narrative employs conventions it is true, but there are degrees of complexity [...] If the ‘maps’ of novels by Graham Greene or L. P. Hartley or Iris Murdoch

¹⁴¹ Janet Galligani Casey, ‘Middlebrow Reading and Undergraduate Teaching: The Place of the Middlebrow in the Academy’ in *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920-1960* ed. by Erica Brown and Mary Grover (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 25-36 (p. 28).

¹⁴² Murphy, p. 4.

¹⁴³ Rose, p. 371.

¹⁴⁴ By 1929 many of Woolf’s books were out of print but the ‘Uniform Edition’, a cheap reprint of previous titles, brought her work to a new audience, now more familiar with modernism, and print runs could be more than twice that of the first edition, bringing Woolf genuine wealth. See Lise Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, Chapter Five.

¹⁴⁵ Murphy, p. 4 and 5.

¹⁴⁶ Walter Nash, *Language in Popular Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.

seem to present subtler apprehensions of the terrain than anything by Ian Fleming or Frederick Forsyth or Barbara Cartland, it is not because they employ different conventions. It is rather the case that in popfiction the conventions are simplified and more or less fixed [...]¹⁴⁷

To take an example from poetry, the opening to 'The Waste Land' has a complexity that seems to shame the utter simplicity of W. H. Davies's 'The Hour of Magic': 'This is the hour of magic, when the Moon/With her bright wand has charmed the tallest tree/To stand stone still with all his million leaves!'¹⁴⁸ However, it is important to recognise that Nash's account, while embodying a certain veracity, is already ideologically opposed to the style of popular writing. It is guided by a 'crude map', Iris Murdoch's work offers a 'subtler' approach and popular fiction is about simplification, a watering down of the style of the greater writers. As Scott McCracken notes, '[i]t is one thing to say that popular fiction consists of simple narratives, quite another to say all simple narratives would make successful popular fiction.'¹⁴⁹ But McCracken is himself mistaken to a considerable degree since '[p]opular novels are frequently crammed with incident, and often have complicated, intricate plots' such as those found in Agatha Christie and John Buchan. Although conventions are important to popular writing, even in Davies's bucolic visions, as Murphy writes, 'plot is always more important than language, style or tone.'¹⁵⁰ Even if we accept this statement, the language of popular writing can be tonally distinct and individual works can stand out.

¹⁴⁷ Nash, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ W. H. Davies, *The Hour of Magic and Other Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1922), p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ Scott McCracken, *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p.

11.

¹⁵⁰ Murphy, pp. 7 and 6.

Parody, after all, depends on these distinctions, and there have been notable parodies of J. R. R. Tolkien, A. A. Milne and others.¹⁵¹

One of Murphy's other key concepts is that popular writing is transitory.¹⁵² This can easily be established with a glance at the novelists Clive Bloom suggests dominated the inter-war era such as Jeffrey Farnol, Ethel M. Dell and others whose names have all but disappeared.¹⁵³ If some writers have survived through chance and intention, a greater number have not. There is an argument to be had over whether publications are intended to be ephemeral. McCracken argues that '[p]ublishers require a quick return on their investment and the term "bestseller" usually describes high sales in the short term rather than enduring popularity.'¹⁵⁴ This gives the impression of the text as disposable, a point Nash is amenable to, suggesting 'we can always leave the book of our choice in some hotel room, to beguile another traveller.'¹⁵⁵ Grover has pointed out that in 1922 when only a small proportion of books were purchased, '[n]ovels were transient, to be borrowed from the library', another reason why memories of titles might have been short-lived. It is, however, clear that what was meant as ephemeral can take on an extended life since, at the head of Bloom's list is Agatha Christie, whose 'popular following is undiminished.'¹⁵⁶ I suspect the survival of certain literary forms depends on an entangled set of concerns such as the publisher, the longevity of the author, style, and the themes of the works

¹⁵¹ Murphy, p. 7. I would include alongside Murphy's list a text such as Roger E. Allen's, *Winnie the Pooh on Management* (London: Methuen, 1995). The greater the bestseller's cultural impact, the more likely it is to be parodied.

¹⁵² See Murphy, p. 8.

¹⁵³ Clive Bloom, *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction since 1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 132-43.

¹⁵⁴ McCracken, p. 22.

¹⁵⁵ Nash, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Janet Morgan, *Christie [Née Miller; Other Married Name Mallowan], Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa (1890-1976), Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2017) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30926>> [Accessed 19/11/20].

suggesting that ephemerality is both an internal feature of the text and the creation of forces external to it such as history and the academy.

As D-M Withers has asserted, '[w]hen marketing a book [...] timing is everything' but not only that, 'timeliness is culturally constructed' often by the publisher but sometimes by the wider culture 'within discrete historical contexts.'¹⁵⁷ Even then, the constructed sense of timing has to be adopted by an audience as its own, otherwise the publisher will fail to capitalise on the text. If some books, like the horse racing novels of Nat Gould or the romances of Ouida, no longer register in the public imagination it may be that they can live on 'as sedimentary possibility, trapped in the materiality of texts and artefacts' awaiting their revival in an altogether different context.¹⁵⁸ Even if these works do suffer, on the whole, from ephemerality, as Christine Berberich has written, they can still 'tell new generations about what our society cherished, celebrated or felt strongly about'.¹⁵⁹

It is necessary to show how the hard and fast categories often evoked by modernists failed to take into account the actually existing situation where categories were often compromised and high and low were not so rigidly demarcated, and neither were readers, something that needs to be borne in mind through this thesis which investigates the claim. Mary Hammond asserts that categories like modernism, romance, or 'middle class' have 'permeable boundaries'.¹⁶⁰ In illustration of this is Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* which confounds

¹⁵⁷ D-M Withers, *Virago Reprints and Modern Classics: The Timely Business of Feminist Publishing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Withers, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction* ed. by Christine Berberich (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 4.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Hammond, *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 6.

several of the more persistent ideas about class and reading. He refers to Margaret Powell, born in 1907, who worked as a housemaid for an aristocratic Chelsea couple where the class divide, and their reactionary politics, meant borrowing a book from their library was fraught with issues. As Powell put it, '[y]ou could almost see them reporting to their friends. "Margaret's a good cook, but unfortunately she reads. Books you know."' This was a woman who had read Proust 'three times through.'¹⁶¹ Rose also cites the 1918 survey of manual workers in Sheffield where they found a great mix of individuals, such as the factory machinist aged twenty-four who attended WEA lectures, often visited art galleries, loved concerts and read Shakespeare, Tennyson, Scott and *The Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Critics might suggest that these were isolated individuals, unrepresentative of their class, but Rose's considerable data disputes this. There does seem, though, to have been some gender bias and in a Middlesbrough survey there was a cohort of women 'above age fifty (and some who were younger) who not only could not read but were almost glad to have never learned.'¹⁶² It is useful to be reminded of these individuals at a moment in British history when mass-market publishing was coming of age. The concept of readers as separate and discrete is an essential bulwark against ideas of the 'masses', a political appellation that grew in significance at the turn of the twentieth century and for some thinkers became synonymous with the 'mob' whose characteristics were 'gullibility, fickleness [...] lowness of taste and habit' and were a 'perpetual threat to culture.'¹⁶³ A perceptive reader might glimpse them in T. S. Eliot's portrait of those crossing London Bridge in 'The Waste Land' but the biographical details above make clear that even

¹⁶¹ Rose, p. 25.

¹⁶² Rose, pp. 192 and 193.

¹⁶³ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Vintage, 2017), p. 391.

amongst the putative reading communities already mentioned, there were individuals.¹⁶⁴ As Raymond Williams has said: “There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses.”¹⁶⁵ Q. D. Leavis in her survey made out a series of patterns in the information she collected, however, Rose’s work sets itself to complicate and even fragment those patterns much like the work of Christopher Hilliard which, while disputing some of Rose’s claims, notes that certain working-class writers actively embraced modernism as ‘a stimulus but not an intellectual rupture.’¹⁶⁶ The complications of class, culture and ideology meant that, in retrospect at least, the hard and fast divisions invoked by modernism seldom existed in the quotidian. Chapter One explores this idea through a discussion of two books from publishers Chatto and Windus, one from an acknowledged modernist, the other regarded as a popular work and the consequential relationship between the two texts.

□ An Outline of the Thesis

Chapters One and Two concern themselves with two books, Beverley Nichols’s novel, *Self*, and Aldous Huxley’s short story collection, *Mortal Coils*. These titles presented themselves because there was sufficient detail about their publication and sales, but just as important was that the tone and substance of these books was frequently quite similar and yet one was by a modernist writer, and the other considered a popular novel by the publishers. The thesis compares the texts to argue that modernism and popular writing were handled differently by the publishers. Chatto and Windus

¹⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T.S. Eliot. Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, 2 vols (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 1, ll. 62-66, 57.

¹⁶⁵ Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 393. See also Carey, Chapter Two.

¹⁶⁶ Christopher Hilliard, ‘Modernism and the Common Writer’, *The Historical Journal*, 48.3 (2005), 775.

considered itself as a quality publisher although it required certain popular successes to maintain its balance sheet. In making sense of the decision to publish both works the chapter considers the role and objective of senior staff at Chatto who viewed Nichols's novel with some distaste and whose aesthetic, political and economic decisions framed the publication of both books. Following from this there is a reflection on the mechanisms that are involved in the production of the physical book. Less convinced by Nichols' book, Chatto ordered stereo moulds for Huxley's stories, which would make it much easier to reprint suggesting they were prepared to make a longer-term commitment to the writer.

Chapter Two continues the firm's concern with value and traces the two books through the communications circuit initially devised by Robert Darnton that demonstrates the text's movement from the publisher through to booksellers and readers.¹⁶⁷ Although Darnton's original model concentrated on the idea of communication it can additionally be viewed as a valuing circuit, as the values assigned to the volumes by the publisher are tested and contested by booksellers, the library sector and the critics, even as the marketing and advertising is an attempt to exert continued control over the aspect of value. Finally, the books reach the general reading public who become the final arbiters of value, rejecting or embracing Chatto and Windus's original belief in the texts' commercial and aesthetic value. The production figures suggest that the division the publishers tried to make between the two titles did not, in practice, lead to manifestly different sales figures.

¹⁶⁷ See Robert Darnton, 'What Is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, III.3 (1982), 65-83.

The third chapter deals with the changes in the form of crime writing after the Great War and the emergence of the genre's Golden Age, a process not yet complete in 1922. If the romance had already secured its place as a popular form, sales figures and anecdotal evidence show the crime story becoming one of the most commercial types of fiction in the inter-war years. This chapter, of necessity, argues that a new form of writing developed, one with a focus on forms of play and humour in reaction to the events of the Great War, but also due to changes in society. Bringing these elements into the writing connected to new ideas about leisure and recreation that abounded after the war, whilst helping to leaven the effects of violent death between their pages. It should be noted, however, that if the influence of the war was probably foremost, the model for this new type of novel was the 1913 detective story *Trent's Last Case*. If the consumption of crime writing was to form part of this new leisure it needed to attenuate the bloodier aspects of the offences, which more often now concerned murder at a moment when the slaughter on the Western Front was still a very visceral presence in most families' lives.

If crime writing had a certain cachet since it offered a mystery and a puzzle as well as entertainment, the misogynist character of the culture of 1922 meant that romance fiction was usually devalued and dismissed, helping to explain its own absence from literary history. Chapter Four discusses the romance through the work of three novelists, Ruby M. Ayres, Elinor Glyn, and Ethel M. Dell considering their relationship with publishing as largely conservative novelists whose preference was to work in a domestic setting. It shows how these writers used post-war magazine culture to their advantage, often publishing their work here before it appeared in book form which was both financially astute but was additionally a way to circumvent the

hostility of those reviewers who had little positive to say about their works. One of the articles of faith for some of these writers was that these were novels that refused to engage with their contemporary circumstances. Despite this, the chapter shows how the texts, often surreptitiously, found themselves in dialogue with their historical situation, whether it be issues of divorce or the growing independence of women in the workplace.

The poets of Chapter Five, A. E. Housman, Thomas Hardy, and Edmund Blunden had all accumulated a consequential amount of cultural capital by 1922, Blunden more recently when he won the Hawthornden Prize in this year. They were popular poets at a moment when the poetry boom of the post-war era was coming to an end. Although neither Housman nor Hardy made much reference to the recent war in their work, all three poets dealt in imagery that found common cause with the culture of 1922 which was engaged in various forms and expressions of mourning including a turn to spiritualism and the need to memorialise the dead. This was the reality of 1922 even as the government tried to draw a line under the events of the war. These poets appeal to a popular public was partly mediated through their relations with their publishers and peers, and this chapter explores these connections and how Grant Richards, for example, made Housman into a well-loved and successful writer. The final part of this section considers the poetry in more detail and looks at the imagery of towers and ghosts that pervades the work of all three writers. The conclusion is that, despite the poetry having its roots in quite different soil, all of the poets' work resonated with a post-war sensibility of pessimism, mourning and memorialisation.

❖ Chapter 1. Producing the Book:
A Case Study from Chatto and Windus

‘Like all history’, one critic has observed, ‘the history of literature is economic and institutional as well as personal’

Lawrence Rainey¹

Amongst the hundreds of works offered for sale by Chatto and Windus publishers in 1922 were two books, Aldous Huxley’s *Mortal Coils* and Beverley Nichols’ *Self*. The first of these was from one of those ‘reluctant modernists’, Huxley,² and the other from Nichols, a recent university graduate who, in a letter to his editor, Geoffrey Whitworth, said that he wrote his novel ‘purely as an experiment, and with the idea of being “popular”’.³ The argument of this chapter is that throughout the publishing process the senior staff at Chattos made decisions about both texts that foreground issues of popular writing, modernism and value. In doing so they created an artificial divide between two books with similar outlooks, and used marketing techniques that did not serve either novel well, but proved more of an issue for Nichols whose novel was a potential bestseller. Chatto and Windus and publishing more generally in 1922 found itself between two poles as John Baxendale has set out: ‘at the same time as this democratization and commercialization process was going on, within the arts there was a shift in the opposite direction: the rise of modernism.’⁴

¹ Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 5.

² The description comes from the work by Peter Edgerly Firchow, *Reluctant Modernists: Aldous Huxley and Some Contemporaries* ed. by Evelyn S. Firchow and Bernfried Nügel (Münster: Lit, 2002).

³ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW 14/8, Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, ‘Letter sent from 7 Beechen Cliff Villas, Bath dated 2.xii.21, to Geoffrey Whitworth at Chatto and Windus.’

⁴ John Baxendale, ‘Popular Fiction and the Critique of Mass Culture’ in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 555-570 (p. 559).

□ A Background to the Publisher and the Writers

Chatto and Windus had its origins in the publishing firm set up in the nineteenth century by the innovative and unscrupulous John Camden Hotten whose publishing house ventured into the territory of mass selling and even paperback publishing by ‘issuing books in 1866 and 1867 [...] unabridged at 6d each paperbound’, produced in runs of ‘50,000 or even 100,000 copies’ as the only way to show a profit.⁵ Nevertheless, Hotten collected an array of middle class novelists to his stable such as Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade and Sir Walter Besant; on his death he left what Oliver Warner has called ‘a sturdy business’.⁶

Hotten might be said to have been more astute than some other publishers in bringing into his firm Andrew Chatto, who had worked for the firm since the age of fifteen and was ultimately able to buy Hotten’s business on his death for the sum of £25,000.⁷ He was joined by the poet W. E. Windus who gave little to the business but his name and capital. Despite younger members of the Chatto family having some involvement in the firm it was those men that Andrew Chatto brought into the company who ensured its continued success. Percy Spalding was the first, and most important, of these men, taking the firm from the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries, and he was supported in the publisher’s work by Harold Raymond, art director Geoffrey Whitworth, and Charles Prentice who became a partner fresh from

⁵ Simon J. Eliot, ‘Continuity and Change in British Publishing, 1770-2000’, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 19.2 (2003), 43.

⁶ Oliver Warner, *Chatto & Windus: A Brief Account of the Firm’s Origin, History and Development* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 10.

⁷ Warner, p. 11.

Oxford in 1914, only to be ‘caught up into the military machine’, as Warner has said.⁸ But, as senior partner, and alongside Harold Raymond, he created the post-war firm. Andrew Nash has said of Frank Swinnerton who was the company’s reader at this period, as well as being a noted novelist, that he ‘played a major role in helping to transform the firm.’⁹ It was this tight-knit group that formed, according to Andrew Nash, ‘one of the leading publishers of the 1920s and 1930s’, issuing books by Lytton Strachey (the incendiary *Eminent Victorians* of 1918), Clive Bell, Wyndham Lewis and later, William Faulkner.¹⁰

Aldous Huxley was born in Godalming, Surrey in July 1894 to Leonard Huxley, a schoolmaster at the nearby Charterhouse, and his wife Julia, one of the first women to complete a degree at Somerville College, Oxford. Latterly, Leonard would move into journalism and edit the *Cornhill Magazine*, while Julia would start a small school. Huxley was born into an upper-middle-class family identified by Sybille Bedford as part of an ‘intellectual aristocracy’.¹¹ His grandfather was T. H. Huxley, the eminent scientist, and his great uncle was Matthew Arnold, the poet. After losing much of his sight due to a serious eye infection whilst at Eton, Huxley still made the transition to Balliol College, Oxford, but, despite his best efforts, was never to participate in the Great War. Mixing with an intense group of intellectuals during and after the war, between 1921 and 1922 he spent much of his time in Italy, where *Crome Yellow* (1921) was written and where he developed the stories that became *Mortal Coils*.

⁸ Warner p. 19.

⁹ Andrew Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader on the Verge of Modernity: The Case of Frank Swinnerton’, *Book History*, 6.1 (2003), 175.

¹⁰ Andrew Nash, ‘Literary Culture and Literary Publishing in Inter-War Britain: A view from Chatto & Windus’ in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* ed. by Simon Eliot, Andrew Nash, and Ian Roy Willison (London: The British Library, 2007), pp. 323-42 (pp. 325-26).

¹¹ Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography Volume 1: 1894-1939* (London: Chatto and Windus; Collins, 1973), 1, 19.

Beverley Nichols was not descended from such exalted stock, claiming ancestry from 'Gloucestershire yeoman farmers' on his father's side and on his mother's, from a pawnbroker in Norwich. However, both sides of the family had flourished, and his mother was convent-educated in Paris while his father became a successful Bristol solicitor before the family moved to the fashionable seaside town of Torquay. Nichols, despite being 'a happy, laughing child' when he was younger, developed an intense hatred for his father who he described as 'the personification of evil', partly because he 'became an alcoholic in the clinical sense', as his biographer has said.¹² Later he would declare that he had tried to kill his father on three occasions although Nichols often had a peculiar relationship with the truth. Despite an intense belief in his own abilities, Nichols, after public school at Marlborough, failed to find his footing at Oxford and spent the war years between the Café Royal in London and his battalion in Cambridge, an old leg injury exempting him from front line service. It was at this time that he met his first serious lover, Alvaro Guevara; Nichols' homosexuality had been apparent to him since his schooldays.¹³ Returning to Oxford after the war he threw himself into student journalism and won the Presidency of the Oxford Union on his second attempt. He did so whilst attending to his first novel, *Prelude*, published by Chatto and Windus in 1919, followed by *Patchwork* (1921) which essentially re-worked his real-life antics in post-war Oxford. It was at Christmas 1921 that Nichols finished his next novel, called *Self*, 'and I hope it will be rather better than the last', he wrote to a cousin.¹⁴ The book was published in the following year.

¹² Bryan Connon, *Beverley Nichols: A Life* (London: Constable, 1991), pp. 15 and 31.

¹³ Connon, p. 38.

¹⁴ Quoted in Connon, p. 99.

In the case of Beverley Nichols' *Self*, the author regarded it as a popular work and was not even certain that his regular publisher would wish to take it up. Nichols, whilst in preparation for a trip to Greece, wrote this to Geoffrey Whitworth at Chatto and Windus:

With regard to my other novel 'Self', I rather doubt whether it is the type of thing you would wish to publish [...] It was written purely as an experiment, and with the idea of being 'popular.' It is more a Herbert Jenkins book than anything else.¹⁵

Nichols' reference to Herbert Jenkins is to the publishing house founded by Jenkins in 1912 and home to P. G. Wodehouse.¹⁶ Nichols, at least, is using the Jenkins' name as a generic term for mass-produced, commercial fiction. Later in the firm's history it would become known as a 'library house', one of those publishers that produced popular titles for the circulating libraries.¹⁷

Despite sharing a publisher, none of the biographers of the two men have them meeting before Nichols interviewed Huxley for the *Daily Sketch*, and in doing so emphasised the differences between them. Huxley remarked in conversation that as he grew older 'I become more and more highbrow' which perhaps prompted Nichols' observation that '[h]e gives one a sense, in his writings, of a little group of intelligentsia, clinging unhappily together in a grossly hostile world.'¹⁸ Nichols never intended this to be his own position, not least because of his own gregariousness.

¹⁵ CW 14/8, Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, 'Letter sent from 7 Beechen Cliff Villas, Bath dated 2.xii.21, to Geoffrey Whitworth.'

¹⁶ 'Jenkins, Herbert' (Oxford University Press, 2010)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-2524> [Accessed 29 February 2024].

¹⁷ See Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 58.

¹⁸ Quoted in Nicholas Murray, *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (London: Abacus, 2003) p. 191.

□ The Publishing Culture in the Post-War World

As outlined in the Introduction the publishing world of 1922 was facing a number of challenges, not the least of which was that the industry had not yet fully recovered from the effects of the Great War, although things were improving. They were also different. Bookselling and the book market had begun to change in the post-war world, and inevitably the various values it embodied shifted in its wake. In the first place the twenties saw the death of several notable Victorian figures such as William Heinemann (1863-1920) and Algernon Methuen (1856-1924) which inevitably drew new blood into the industry, while the experience of the Great War had left 'a new generation search[ing] for a more reliable assessment of life'. This same public was serviced by booksellers who 'found it necessary to stock books for the plain man, as well as for the student, embracing every branch of this new knowledge.'¹⁹ The book market was continuing to grow after the recent conflict had restricted the trade but the public and circulating libraries continued to dominate given book prices, something the trade readily acknowledged. The *Publishers' Circular* wrote that

for the past few years publishers have been working at a loss, or at least have been making no profit, because if they had raised the prices of books to an economic level in order to meet the enormous cost of production, the public would not have bought the books.²⁰

The post-war years were 'notable for an intensification of popular reading and publishing'.²¹ However, the idea that publishers could simply direct readers to their

¹⁹ Frank Arthur Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), p. 323.

²⁰ From Our Correspondent, 'Book Prices', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 47.

²¹ Andrew Nash, 'Literary Culture and Literary Publishing', p. 323.

books did not contend with the realities where readers encountered texts as ‘acts of pure serendipity’ rather than reading guided by reviews or recommendations.²²

Most firms had weathered the war years but in 1922 book production had still not reached pre-war levels. Overall, there had been 12,379 volumes produced in 1913 but in 1922 the figure still languished at 10,842.²³ Later, Michael Joseph was able to write that ‘in 1913 there were actually as many books issued as in 1923’, so book production began to make a rapid advance. But, as he put it: ‘the big increase in the cost of producing books has undoubtedly tended to limit the output of publishers.’²⁴ This was due to the economic slump that had followed a brief post-war boom, one that had now evaporated:

Signs of the slump were only too manifest in 1921 and 1922. The value of Britain’s overseas trade declined: exports by 47.9 per cent, imports by 43.7 per cent, in 1921, compared with 1920 [...]²⁵

This is matched by the *Economist’s* estimate that the working man had lost three-quarters of his wartime wage increases by 1922.²⁶ This did not, though, immediately impact on the publishing trade. At the end of the war, although publishing output had declined, ‘reading demand had soared’ and ‘the number of people employed in printing and allied trades in England and Wales rose as skilled workers were demobbed and returned to their former employment’.²⁷ It was in fact, the nature and

²² Mary Grover, *Steel City Readers Reading for Pleasure in Sheffield, 1925-1955* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), p. 17.

²³ See ‘Analysis of Books Published During 1922 in the United Kingdom’ in *The English Catalogue of Books for 1922* (London: The Publishers’ Circular, 1923).

²⁴ Michael Joseph, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925), p. 9.

²⁵ Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 125.

²⁶ Loch Mowat, p. 125.

²⁷ See David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, ‘Publishing’ in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond*, ed. by Andrew Nash, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII, 146-90 (pp. 149 and 151).

values of publishing firms at the start of the twentieth century that mattered more to their continued existence. To survive the Great War demanded a little determination but to outlive their Victorian founders and patriarchs proved more difficult.²⁸ It was dependent on the management of the individual firms and often whether their offspring had a feel for the industry as to whether the firm survived or not. Chatto and Windus suffered their own dynastic hiatus when the younger Andrew Chatto, son of the original Chatto, left the firm in 1919. He has been described as ‘a not over-interested partner’ while the other son, Tom Chatto ‘defected to the antiquarian book trade’, but through careful hiring the firm was able to continue and thrive.²⁹

□ The Background to Publication

Self and *Mortal Coils* contributed to Chatto and Windus’s revival although the values attaching to them show an interesting contrast between the two works. While Nichols’ book was the subject of some concern, no such worries attached to Huxley’s stories or to the author himself as the texts reached the point of publication.

Both Huxley and Nichols were used to dealing with publishers. Huxley had published some youthful poetry in Oxford but with his poems, *Leda*, and the prose of *Limbo*, both books from 1920, he transferred his loyalties to Chatto and Windus and would remain with them until his death. Nichols too, was a Chatto author with a backlist. After publishing his first novel with Chattos in 1920, he went on to publish

²⁸ Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling*, p. 319.

²⁹ Frank Arthur Mumby and Ian Norrie, *Mumby’s Publishing and Bookselling in the Twentieth Century*, 5th ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), p. 343.

Patchwork.³⁰ The MS for his new novel seems to have been posted to his publishers from Portsmouth, where the Nichols family were living in rented accommodation while their Torquay home was itself rented out to raise some much-needed income.³¹ In the aftermath of the war it was sometimes the middle-classes who found themselves financially embarrassed.³² Nichols had begun the novel the previous December (1920).³³

Huxley, meanwhile, was presenting his publishers with a collection of short stories, plus a play, 'Permutations Among the Nightingales.' Even though Huxley worked on a typewriter it was his wife, Maria, who re-typed his manuscripts and no doubt would have made a final version of the pieces that made up *Mortal Coils*.³⁴ Most of the texts had already been published in *The Cornhill*, *The English Review* or *Coterie* (*The Cornhill* being the publication his father edited).³⁵ Both of the others were well-regarded, even elite publications. *The English Review*, begun by Ford Madox Hueffer had published such luminaries as Henry James and Wyndham Lewis,³⁶ while the short-lived *Coterie* was a magazine Huxley was closely associated with since he was on its editorial board.³⁷ If *Crome Yellow* had been written in Italy,³⁸ the final version of *Mortal Coils* was decided in the dimmer light of London since Huxley had returned to

³⁰ Like many a first-time author, he had delivered the precious MS by hand, then went out to lunch with a friend confiding that he 'got very drunk,' suggesting a certain nervousness at how the pages would be received. Quoted in Connon, p. 79.

³¹ Connon, p. 99.

³² See Loch Mowat, p. 27.

³³ Connon, p. 99.

³⁴ See for example, Murray, p. 307.

³⁵ See note at the beginning of *Mortal Coils*.

³⁶ Dinah Birch, 'English Review' (Oxford University Press, 2009) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.013.2537>>.

³⁷ Murray, p. 103.

³⁸ Bedford, p. 119.

the city where, from October 1921 to late spring 1923, he worked for Condé Nast.³⁹ In a letter to Chatto and Windus Huxley set out his plans for the book:

I have already written two fairly long short stories, “The Tillotson Banquet” (published Cornhill, last January,) [sic] and “The Gioconda Smile” (English Review, last August.) I have another in MS which will probably do, though I may have to alter it, and another is now under way, while I have several plans in my head for execution in the next few months if I have the time.⁴⁰

In these few lines is a portrait of the writer as a professional author. Where Huxley is concerned, a pattern is emerging in his writing. He would in future often work on a substantial piece, usually a novel, and with that published would then work on a smaller book composed of short stories or review pieces which would help shore up his finances and keep his name in the public eye until the next publication. This only goes to demonstrate the faith Chattos had in the writer since, as Carol Birch has written, ‘publishers remain in general wary of the sales potential of short stories and often lean on their writers to “move on” to writing a novel’ here the short stories and essays were a stopgap leading to the next piece of long fiction.⁴¹ So, for example, *Crome Yellow* (1921) was followed by *Mortal Coils*, then his second novel, *Antic Hay* (1923) appeared followed by *Little Mexican and Other Stories* (1924).

Autumn and Winter 1921 were a busy time for Huxley and it is clear that he visited Chattos in person while letters arrived daily, overlapping at times. On 16 December came the final letter of the year concerning the volume that would become *Mortal Coils*:

³⁹ See Bedford, ‘Chronology’, pp. 385-6.

⁴⁰ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW 9/6 Letters from Aldous Huxley 1920-1925, ‘Typed carbon copy of letter from 155 Westbourne Terrace, W. 2., dated November 14th 1921’.

⁴¹ Carol Birch, ‘Lives Beyond the Page’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5707/8 (2012), 21.

it would help us if you could inform us of the title you propose giving the book in the course of the next week or so, since we shall be proceeding next month with the composition of our Spring Announcement List.⁴²

The letter also contained details of the proposed royalties and discussion of possible overseas sales. It now came down to an issue of percentages, pounds, shillings and pence.

Chatto, like all publishers, kept a neat series of manuscript books to record each MS as it came into the firm. The Beverley Nichols' novel was registered in the Chatto and Windus Manuscript Entry Book as number 29318 and it was received on 31 October 1921.⁴³ However, while the Nichols book was registered, the Aldous Huxley volume never was. This is partly, as has been noted, because Huxley was able to call in on his publisher and hand in his work, but the Chatto and Windus manuscript book also indicates which reader was assigned the MS, so it is unlikely that Huxley's work was evaluated by a reader. The implication is that Chattos had already marked the author out as someone of long-term value to the company and one with whom they had a firm relationship. The truth of this is in the words of Chatto's reader, Frank Swinnerton who has this to say of *Limbo*, Huxley's short story collection of 1920: he does 'not think it would have a large sale. But we ought to publish it, because it would unquestionably help to establish us among the young writers as a house of distinction and enterprise - and with the public also.'⁴⁴ If Huxley's future as a Chattos author had already been secured the same could not be said for Beverley Nichols and *Self*. The

⁴² University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW A/120, Letter Book 120, Letter Dated 'December 16th 1921', 372.

⁴³ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW E/11 Manuscript Entry Book, 15 July 1919-29 December 1922, 'Self', Beverley Nichols, 29318, 31 October, p. 336.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader', 191.

publishers still had concerns about Nichols, and had done from the very start, even as they were content to profit from his work.

□ **The Publisher's Reader and the Axiologies of Chatto and Windus**

The role of the publisher's reader was an important one and had probably changed little since the nineteenth century. Stanley Unwin was clear about their merits:

Publishers' readers seldom, if ever, get the praise they deserve. The public knows little or nothing about their conscientious and exhausting work, and few are the authors who are prepared to recognize publicly the benefits they have derived from their friendly suggestions and criticisms.⁴⁵

They were often badly paid: Swinnerton noted that he had never been paid more than £550 a year for his work while Edward Garnett, often considered the best and most important reader of the early twentieth century, was still earning just £400 in 1927.⁴⁶ This was after much negotiation with his firm, Jonathan Cape, and despite reading 'eight or ten manuscripts each week.'⁴⁷ Linda Marie Fritschner has called publishers' readers 'the skeleton in every publisher's house.' This Gothic-sounding epithet is not entirely misplaced. Readers were often treated as low-paid, disposable labour and were 'elusive and anonymous.'⁴⁸ This was usually how the publishers preferred it since in the process that followed:

The reader returned his report and the manuscript to the publisher who then contacted the author. Direct contact between reader and author

⁴⁵ Stanley Unwin, *The Truth About Publishing* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1946), p. 29.

⁴⁶ Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader', 178.

⁴⁷ Linda Marie Fritschner, 'Publishers' Readers, Publishers, and Their Authors', *Publishing History*, 7 (1980), 52 and 50.

⁴⁸ Fritschner, pp. 45-46.

was rare. In this group the reader was the publisher's advocate, not the author's sponsor.⁴⁹

As Swinnerton himself put it, '[t]he publisher takes credit for a success; in the case of a failure he often calls for a reperusal of the report upon which acceptance was based.' Often, she or he had every intention of remaining what Swinnerton called 'the anonymous and frequently ill-paid servant of his employers.'⁵⁰ As Fritschner makes clear, 'the anonymity of the common reader acted as a protective shield and allowed the adviser to speak candidly'.⁵¹ For the reader frankness was a necessity but for the publisher it could be a liability. A reader's credentials did not have to be formal, but they did have to know and be aware of both the classics and modern publications alike. Fritschner differentiates between two types of reader, the first of which she labels 'prestigious' and these, like Edward Garnett, had frequent and direct contact with the authors of the manuscripts they read and could thus be termed 'an "author's reader"'; the other had a more business-focused approach, discussing 'probable audiences and potential benefits.' These Fritschner calls the 'publisher's reader.'⁵² Swinnerton, Chatto's reader, seems to have worked for the interests of the firm and with an eye to the bottom line. He had begun his career in journalism then moved as a clerk to J. M. Dent's before his interest in literature propelled him into his role at Chatto and Windus. A committed liberal, his analysis of what makes a good reader is often quoted: he says that '[h]is prejudices must all be sunk when he takes up a manuscript' and he needs an 'easy familiarity with the work of all living authors' as

⁴⁹ Fritschner, 48.

⁵⁰ Frank Swinnerton, *Authors and the Book Trade*, 2nd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1935), p. 27.

⁵¹ Fritschner, 64.

⁵² Fritschner, 48.

well as understanding ‘the book trade’.⁵³ Andrew Nash has written that ‘Swinnerton’s great asset to Chatto & Windus was his knowledge of, and exposure to, the literary world.’⁵⁴ Ultimately though, every publisher’s reader had to solve the complex equation that Raymond Mortimer put forward when he called publishing ‘an art, a craft and a business.’⁵⁵ Swinnerton combined the qualities Fritschner has indicated being both the ‘publisher’s reader’ but also having considerable contacts within the contemporary literary culture. If readers were badly paid, overworked and largely invisible, sometimes simple ‘hack’ readers in Fritschner’s words,⁵⁶ they were also essential to a firm and Nash believes that as a single individual Swinnerton ‘could influence the policies of a publishing firm’ and its values; despite not holding a partnership in the company, ‘he used his expertise and knowledge of the literary scene to help establish the careers of many writers, and he steered the firm toward the position of prestige that it came to hold in the 20s and 30s.’⁵⁷ Swinnerton not only had to understand the already existing values that the firm espoused, he had to keep pace with the cultural change of the post-war era: ‘the professional reader must be ready to anticipate any change of fashion’, he wrote, and thus to re-shape and reinforce those values.⁵⁸

Prelude, Nichols’ novel of 1920, had been brewing for some time. He had read parts of it to the Master of Christ’s, Cambridge, Dr Shipley, during the war, and undertook research for the book, returning one leave to his school, Marlborough, to

⁵³ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 27.

⁵⁴ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, 177.

⁵⁵ Bhaskar, Michael, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), p. 1.

⁵⁶ Fritschner, 47.

⁵⁷ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, 176-77.

⁵⁸ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 28.

soak up the atmosphere, since his narrative had as its backdrop a rather similar institution, 'Martinsell.'⁵⁹ His first book was already problematic since there was no lack of public-school novels, and they now trailed a wake of controversy behind them after Alec Waugh's unflattering portrait of Sherborne ('Fernhurst') in his 1917 *The Loom of Youth*. The school had, soon after, refused to accept Alec's younger brother, Evelyn, in the aftermath of the scandal.⁶⁰

The tone of the reader's report on *Prelude* is assured, but even so, Swinnerton was concerned enough that he had both Geoffrey Whitworth, the art director (who had brought Nichols into the fold), and Charles Prentice read it through, although 'neither has written a report.' Swinnerton comments that the MS is 'sentimental and immature' and 'is therefore a juvenile product, and as a book it is puerile and exasperating.' He is even drawn to say that it 'is in no sense a good book' but, Swinnerton says, it is 'a possible money-earner.'⁶¹ There is no extant report on Nichols' following novel, *Patchwork*, but the written report on *Self* maintains many of the misgivings that characterised the reception of the first novel and only adds to them. If *Prelude*'s faults were just down to sentimentality and immaturity Swinnerton in his report records *Self* as being 'ludicrously vulgar' and 'bad.'⁶²

At the point of the reader's report the potential novel is caught in an interlocking series of values, often at odds with each other and impinging upon the concept of 'intangible value' since the value of a manuscript cannot be decided by the number of

⁵⁹ Connon, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁰ Connon, p. 54.

⁶¹ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW RR/7/253 [28005], Reader's Report on *Prelude* by Beverley Nichols, n.d.

⁶² University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW RR/9/[29318], Reader's Report on *Self* by Beverley Nichols, n.d.

words it contains or the subject matter. Pierre Bourdieu put it in these terms: '[t]he producer of the *value of the work of art* is not the artist but the field of production as a universe of belief, a complicated gloss on the idea that external, social factors will, in some form, dictate the value assigned to the object.'⁶³ This is a perspective that Mannheim had already formulated and his ideas are centrally important at this juncture. There are two forms of societal values in play: firstly, the values assumed by the wider society and the state, and secondly the values of certain individuals in close proximity to the process of valuing. And the state's valuation of new and daring literature tended to be reactionary: in 1915 D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* had been seized and destroyed under the Obscene Publications Act and his publishers, Methuen, agreed to the government's demands.⁶⁴ *Ulysses* was a book that had already caused issues before it was published and its frank depictions of sexuality meant that in this year the New York Post Office, according to Joshua Kotin, burned 'between 400 and 500 copies of the book'.⁶⁵ As Frank Swinnerton remarked of publishers: '[m]ost of all, they think as they are made to think by the times in which they live', something which is also relevant to the individuals in this instance.⁶⁶

The manuscript book entry for *Self* describes a 'typed MS in 3 parts' for which Swinnerton would have written the report but appended to the entry is a second comment:

⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 229.

⁶⁴ Fiona Becket, 'D. H. Lawrence and Metaphysical Fiction' in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 337-352, (p. 345).

⁶⁵ See Rachel Potter, 'Censorship and Sovereignty (1916-1929)' in *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* ed. by David Bradshaw and Rachel Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Chapter Four (pp. 71-89); Joshua Kotin, 'Shakespeare and Company: Publisher' in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry* ed. Lise Jaillant (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 109-34 (p. 122).

⁶⁶ Frank Swinnerton, 'Authorship' in *The Book World* (London: Nelson, 1935) ed. by John Hampden, pp. 12-35 (p. 24).

‘[v]ide HR & GAW Reports filed under “Nichols.”’⁶⁷ This is significant. Swinnerton had called in Geoffrey Whitworth and Charles Prentice to review *Prelude*. With *Self* he once again felt the need to call on similar, experienced eyes. In the early days of his time at the firm he used art director Geoffrey Whitworth ‘as a safety net’ looking over writing of which Swinnerton was unsure.⁶⁸ In fact they had shared an office ‘from the summer of 1909’.⁶⁹ The GAW noted in the manuscript book is Whitworth and, as always, the original reader’s report would have been read through by Percy Spalding as a partner, whose practice was to read the reports and then mark them in red. The report from HR, presumably Harold Raymond, like Prentice, one of the ‘guiding spirits of the twenties’, is possibly the few words in pencil included at the top of Whitworth’s report which read ‘[c]oarse and vulgar/a very sad & Sordid Story’ (caps in the original).⁷⁰ With regard to Spalding Andrew Nash believes that ‘the trace of his red pen betrays his Victorian values at every turn.’⁷¹ Spalding had begun life as a bank clerk and was now in charge of the firm’s finances.⁷² Despite his background in banking he was the son of a paper merchant, and had been brought up in a household ‘of such religious strictness that even the finding of a lost spectacle case was attributed to prayer’.⁷³ However, he had been converted by Thomas Henry Huxley and was a ‘thoroughgoing materialist’ having abandoned God, although his staff continued to attribute a certain Christian morality to his opinions. This background led staff to refrain from publishing ‘books of which we thought he would disapprove’ while he gave his staff

⁶⁷ CW E/11 [29318] Manuscript Entry Book, 15 July 1919-29 December 1922, ‘Self’, Beverley Nichols, 31 October, 336.

⁶⁸ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, p. 180.

⁶⁹ Frank Swinnerton, *Swinnerton: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1937), p. 123.

⁷⁰ Warner, p. 19.

⁷¹ See Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, 180.

⁷² Swinnerton, *Swinnerton*, p. 96.

⁷³ Warner, p. 12.

‘exceptional liberty.’⁷⁴ Swinnerton records that Whitworth had, however, undergone no such materialist conversion. He describes him as ‘sometimes horrified by jocularities at the expense of Faith’, an Oxford graduate, and ‘a Churchman, an enlightened - sometimes unenlightened - Tory and a member of the English Middle Class which is insatiable in its love for the Arts.’⁷⁵ It was this tight-knit group that was to pass judgement on *Self* and it would seem unlikely that the manuscript would survive their penetrating gaze with its themes of blackmail, semi-prostitution and clerical misdeeds.

Swinnerton begins with a synopsis of a somewhat complicated plot, and it is only in the final third of the page that he records his evaluation. Swinnerton opens his analysis with ‘[t]his is a bad novel’ duly underlined in red. He regards the novel as ‘hollow & grotesquely false’ (again underlined in red) and ‘it is unoriginal & unimaginative & above all is hideously vulgar.’ For Spalding these are the only comments of interest. Swinnerton though, goes on to make a case for the book, saying that it will ‘probably appeal to the many. It has little of that lucrative vice, sentimentality’ and ‘[i]f we don’t publish it, someone else will.’ He even recommends ‘the firm’s name printed small on the title page’ as a way to distance the company from their product. It was these kinds of comments that made it useful for the reader to remain invisible in the publishing process since Swinnerton was unsentimental in his work like most other readers and was able to muster the same high dudgeon. His comments on *Self* have a similar quality to those of the nineteenth-century reader Geraldine Jewsbury who could write of one manuscript: ‘Unless you intend to pay yr. customers for reading it - do not publish it.’⁷⁶ Readers had to present the manuscript unambiguously to the publisher, in-house. Note too that despite Swinnerton writing that the reader’s

⁷⁴ Swinnerton, *Swinnerton*, pp. 131 and 130.

⁷⁵ Swinnerton, *Swinnerton*, pp. 123-4.

⁷⁶ Fritschner, 58.

‘prejudices must all be sunk when he takes up a manuscript’, these are in fact vital in an MS’s assessment. The reader must understand the ethos of the company and act as its gatekeeper and Swinnerton’s own prejudices are surely seen in vivid flashes here.⁷⁷ In some respects he is following the theoretical line taken by D. W. Prall in allowing a ‘motor-affective reaction’ to define his initial assessment of the text and afterwards putting on paper ‘the expression of this rational discourse, in logical form.’⁷⁸

Geoffrey Whitworth’s report is surely something dashed off quickly in the office. While Swinnerton usually fills a sheet of A4 with his small, neat hand, Whitworth’s report is written in the centre of a sheet with a large margin but has demanded more red ink from Spalding than the original statement. Whitworth remarks: ‘I cannot say the book pleased me’ and his red pen has sought out this line. He goes on to say that there is ‘an element of perversion’ in the book, and the word ‘perversion’ is underlined by Spalding, as is the idea that the MS is ‘very disagreeable’. However, Whitworth remarks that Nichols ‘will certainly write popular novels’ which Spalding has marked, while Frank Swinnerton sees him ‘in the future as a possible rival to Sir Hall Caine with the prolificacy of a Nat Gould.’⁷⁹ Hall Caine, was of course, famously popular, a prolific writer and one of Chatto’s Edwardian successes while Gould was published by less well-regarded firms, but his final tally of one hundred and thirty bestselling novels on horseracing is to be envied.⁸⁰ Towards the end of Whitworth’s report he describes the central character, Nancy Worth, as ‘a lurid picture of

⁷⁷ All preceding references are to CW RR/9/[29318], Chatto and Windus, Readers’ report on ‘Self’ by Beverley Nichols, 1921.

⁷⁸ David Wight Prall, *A Study in the Theory of Value* (California: University of California Press, 1921), p. 271.

⁷⁹ CW RR/9/[29318], Readers’ report on ‘Self’ by Beverley Nichols, 1921.

⁸⁰ Sandra Kemp, Charlotte Mitchell, and David Trotter, ‘Gould, Nat’ (Oxford University Press, 2005) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780198117605.013.0476>>

female depravity' and yet, after three individuals had inspected the MS, Chattos rather surprisingly went forward with publication.⁸¹

Andrew Nash argues that Swinnerton helped to uphold the prestige of the firm and yet Nichols' book was eventually published by Chattos. Both Nash and Swinnerton comment negatively on Whitworth and Spalding's judgement but what becomes clear from examining the readers' reports for *Prelude* and *Self* is their ability to transcend their individual Victorian prejudices for the sake of the company's business model. In a sense, this triumvirate were all conservatives of different complexions. There was Spalding the lapsed Christian who could still evince a certain shock at works that 'commended polyandry and polygamy' and Whitworth with his middle-class Toryism. Swinnerton though was similarly conservative in his outlook despite his judgements always being solid and insightful. The decision to publish lies in the way a writer's report would always weigh 'commercial impulses against an aesthetic judgment', as Nash has said, reflecting the firm's ethos.⁸² Michael Bhaskar discusses theoretical models: 'abstract extrapolations, which we use to guide our actions, with both explanatory, predictive and, through these, causal efficacy.' For the publisher, 'the obvious model is the business model' which consists, crudely, of 'working in a capital-intensive, risk-laden environment to shift stock as quickly as possible.'⁸³ Beyond Spalding, Swinnerton, and Whitworth as individuals was an overriding business model, unlikely to have been committed to paper, but which bound the men to the company as a business and allowed them to estimate the returns on a title they had invested in. Despite their repugnance at the book they could still see the commercial

⁸¹ CW RR/9/[29318], Readers' report on 'Self' by Beverley Nichols, 1921.

⁸² Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader', 181-82.

⁸³ See Bhaskar, p. 97.

potential it offered, suggesting that ‘it will probably appeal to the many’. Discussing Swinnerton, Nash says that from the start of his employment his task was to ‘seek out new lights and to raise the quality of the firm’s ailing fiction list’ but the genuinely new was often beyond him.⁸⁴ He had cleared out the dusty Edwardian writers like Constance Smedley and Dick Donovan but Nash reports that Swinnerton ‘was really quite old-fashioned in his aesthetics, and invariably assessed a novel along such criteria as seriousness, sincerity, probability and conviction’.⁸⁵ He was never less than suspicious of writers like Ezra Pound, John Cowper Powys or William Carlos Williams. He rejected ‘as many as five of Powys’s early works of prose’ and in 1921 wrote of two volumes of Williams’ work that they were ‘silly muck, some in prose, some in verse’.⁸⁶ Although his attitude would retrospectively look like ignorance he had probably protected the firm from loss since the market for modernist verse before the advent of ‘The Waste Land’ would have been small to non-existent. Ian Willison has characterised the immediate post-war years as a time when modernist writers ‘virtually contracted out of an established literary market that was now openly hostile to it’, and while D. H. Lawrence had been taken up by mainstream publishers in New York they had been unable to generate sufficient profits leading the writer to turn to the limited-edition market.⁸⁷ In the case of Cowper Powys his work was never as popular in Britain as in the US.

Stanley Unwin only had praise for the publisher’s reader but in doing so he obscured the role of the editor. When he remarks that the reader often intervened

⁸⁴ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, 181.

⁸⁵ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, 188.

⁸⁶ Nash, ‘A Publisher’s Reader’, p. 189. See the original remarks on Williams in CW E/11, p. 325.

⁸⁷ Ian Willison, ‘Introduction’ in *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace* ed. by Warren Chernaik, Warwick Gould, and Ian Willison, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1996), pp. xii-xviii (p. xiv).

with suggestions to the author it becomes clear that the demarcation lines between reader, editor and publisher were not firmly established in 1922. Since firms were mostly small or medium-sized, all kinds of work fell to the senior figures like Spalding, Whitworth, Prentice, and Raymond at Chatto. The vertical separation of roles of subsequent decades connected to much larger publishing concerns was yet to emerge. It was Whitworth, for example, with whom Nichols always dealt, although he was technically the art director. And it was Spalding, who was the finance director, who informed Nichols that *Self* had been passed for publication, but also asked him to return the manuscript with his corrections for the printer.⁸⁸

□ Contractual Considerations and the Literary Agent

The books had been accepted; however, the agreement between the two parties was crucial in ensuring the rights of both sides and defining what value the firm placed on the book. For the author the concern would be with royalty payments, and for the publisher the opportunity to publish the book at a price that ensured they could recoup their costs and squeeze a small profit out of the sale. And, as Joseph pointed out:

the commercial side of literature is bristling with complications. Territorial rights throughout the world, translation rights, dramatic and film rights, serial rights, broadcasting, cheap edition rights - all have to be taken into consideration.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus Letter Book 102, CW A/102, carbon copy of letter dated 'December Ninth, Nineteen Twentyone' signed 'Percy Spalding', 315.

⁸⁹ Joseph, pp. 61-2.

In 1922 the broadcasting rights were yet to have a value as it was only in this year that the British Broadcasting Company inaugurated its service.⁹⁰ Otherwise, most, if not all of these rights had to be settled in a single contract. Beverley Nichols' agreement for *Self* is not extant although Percy Spalding's covering letter for the agreement is dated 'December Ninth, Nineteen Twentyone [sic],' sent not long before his departure for Greece.⁹¹ The contract for the Greek book does remain and probably gives a fair indication of the terms for *Self*. The contract, witnessed by the writer's mother, involves the payment of £50 to Nichols, 'to enable him to visit Greece for the purpose of writing a book' and on receipt of the manuscript he is to receive 'a further Fifty Pounds'. This is to be considered an 'advance royalty on account of Fifteen per cent (15%) on the publishing price of all copies sold at Ten shillings and Sixpence (10/6) net'. Going on, 'when royalties shall have accrued to the amount of One Hundred Pounds (£100), the royalty shall be at the rate of Twenty per cent (20%) on the publishing price of all copies sold' except in the US.⁹² The contract had been all but finalised in a letter sent to Nichols in November 1921. He had been holding out for an extra £50 in expenses for his Greek foray which he was suggesting could be paid after £100 of royalties had been accrued. Geoffrey Whitworth demurred however, telling Nichols, 'this is not a very practical method of payment' and that the publisher 'might easily find that his modest profit had been turned into a dead loss.' Instead the company was willing to 'increase the royalty to 20% as soon as the £100 advance

⁹⁰ See John Montgomery, *The Twenties* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1970), Chapter Seven.

⁹¹ CW A/102, carbon copy of letter dated 'December Ninth, Nineteen Twentyone' signed 'Percy Spalding', 315.

⁹² CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922; 'Memorandum of Agreement' on Chatto and Windus headed paper, dated 1 December 1921.

payment had been earned.⁹³ This was a fair and reasonable contract, roughly in line with the industry at the time although it was placing the burden on the book selling well, something that could not be guaranteed under normal circumstances but was made more uncertain by pricing it above the usual 7s. 6d. price of a novel, but non-fiction was always sold at a higher price based on lower sales.

The agreement for *Mortal Coils* appears not to exist but the firm wanted Huxley to remain a Chatto author following the book's publication and in a meeting of 4 January 1923 offered some exceptional terms to ensure his loyalty. For a work of fiction, he was to receive a royalty of 15% 'on the published price up to 2000 copies, 20% on the next 6000 and '25% thereafter.'⁹⁴ By offering a set point at which he would receive a higher royalty they were offering him more money, and more quickly than Nichols' agreement. This should be seen in terms of an economic upset and 'increased costs all round' even though 'the published price of the novel has not advanced in proportion.' This led to a situation where '[p]ublishers are actually working on a smaller margin of profit.' Using Stanley Unwin's production figures Joseph concluded that, if the costs of advertising were added to the overall costs, publishers would 'actually *lose money* on the first edition' (italics in the original).⁹⁵ If there was a degree of pessimism in the industry it only goes to reflect the circumstances of Britain in the 1920s as the economy worsened and unemployment rose.

⁹³ CW A/102, 'Carbon copy of letter dated November Twenty-Fifth, Nineteen Twenty-One from Geoffrey Whitworth to Beverley Nichols at 5 Dover Street, W. 1., 239-40.

⁹⁴ CW 9/6 Letters from Aldous Huxley; 'Note on a Meeting Between Aldous Huxley and Chatto and Windus on the Subject of a Long-Term Contract, Dated 4/1/23'. This scruffy note inserted into the letters file will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

⁹⁵ Joseph, pp. 176-77.

Two factors worked in favour of publishing remaining robust though. The Berne Convention of 1886 and its subsequent revisions meant that by the time of the 1911 Copyright Act in Britain an author's rights were extended to a 'minimum term of the author's life plus fifty years' important in Britain which had earlier set a shorter period, making the author's work suddenly more valuable.⁹⁶ Not only that, authors of 'dramatic and musical works' were given added protection while the author was given 'dramatisation and translation rights.'⁹⁷ However, since the US remained outside the convention British publishers had to rely on the Chace Act of 1891 whereby British writers gained some protection, but only if 'their work was printed and typeset in the United States',⁹⁸ a state of affairs not much altered by the American Copyright Act of 1909.⁹⁹ Despite this the publisher could have greater confidence in publishing and the author could potentially reap the rewards of their labour for longer, knowing that piracy was no longer likely to deprive them of their income. The second factor, already a particular feature of the trade, was the Net Book Agreement which began with the work of Sir Frederick Macmillan as early as 1890 and to begin with meant offering certain titles, almost always non-fiction, to booksellers on fixed terms with no room for manoeuvre but in the knowledge that profit margins for the bookseller and publisher were secure. All books published for the 'next ninety-five years' were subject to its injunctions but in 1922 it must have offered publishers extra assurance in the

⁹⁶ Catherine Seville, 'Books, Intellectual Property and Copyright' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond* ed. by Andrew Nash, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII, 580-591 (p. 581).

⁹⁷ Seville, p. 586.

⁹⁸ Seville, p. 581.

⁹⁹ Joseph, p. 163.

difficult financial climate.¹⁰⁰ This was particularly the case for fiction titles, originally exempted from the agreement but since the Great War “almost universally published at net prices.”¹⁰¹

Against this was a situation where publishers (and authors) were still beholden to the libraries, both public and circulating, since as Joseph puts it, ‘[t]he public which actually *buys* novels is, in point of numbers, negligible.’¹⁰² As Nicola Wilson has observed ‘it was via the counters of the public and subscription libraries that the vast majority of readers got hold of new books.’¹⁰³ By the mid-nineteen-thirties, ‘Boots Booklovers library [sic] had almost 500 branches and up to half a million subscribers’ and this was only one service to place alongside W. H. Smith’s circulating library, Mudie’s Select Circulating Library and the burgeoning public library service.¹⁰⁴ As such the circulating libraries particularly ‘gained a well-merited reputation for censoriousness and narrow-mindedness’ and threatened ‘the novel’s potential to deal with more complex subjects.’¹⁰⁵ This might be the view of publishers and authors but ‘the much maligned “circulating morals” of the libraries, were, in fact, commercially successful policies that largely reflected the tastes of their readers.’¹⁰⁶ If Nash made much of Percy Spalding’s prudishness, Spalding’s caution was framed by the ideology of the circulating library and it is ironic that while Chatto and Windus concerned

¹⁰⁰ Iain Stevenson, ‘Distribution and Bookselling’, in, eds, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond* ed. by Andrew Nash, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII, 191-230 (p. 194).

¹⁰¹ Frederick Macmillan quoted in Stevenson, ‘Distribution and Bookselling’, p. 195.

¹⁰² Joseph, p. 181.

¹⁰³ Nicola Wilson, ‘Libraries, Reading Patterns, and Censorship’ in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 36-51 (p. 37).

¹⁰⁴ Wilson, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Wilson, p. 41.

¹⁰⁶ Wilson, p. 43.

themselves over the content of *Self* they allowed Huxley's 1923 work, *Antic Hay* to fall victim to The London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality.¹⁰⁷ It is illuminating that Oliver Warner says, 'Mr. Chatto himself always went to Smith's and Mudie's for subscription orders for new books.'¹⁰⁸ They were such important clients and held such sway over the industry the head of the firm needed to call in person.

The other check on publishers' potential sharp practices was the literary agent who by 1922 had established a place within publishing although their reach did not extend across the entirety of the industry. Unwin, writing in the revised edition of his *The Truth About Publishing* in 1946, still claimed that 'it is doubtful whether even 10 or 12 per cent. [of new books] are placed by agents.'¹⁰⁹ Nichols did not employ an agent to place his book with Chatts, partly because he had an already established relationship with them. Huxley, meanwhile, did employ an agent. The writer had found a home for himself in Italy for the 'whole summer from May to September 1921' and had established relations with what Nicholas Murray describes as 'his new American agent, J. B. Pinker'. Murray is slightly wide of the mark here, since he himself notes that '[h]e gave Pinker a list of English editors "with whom I am on friendly terms", a list that included his father'.¹¹⁰ It seems more likely that Pinker was engaged because Huxley could not deal with publishers from his Italian base and therefore needed help to place work in British publications. Letters in the University of Reading archive suggest he still relied, to some extent, on Chatts to secure publication in the US even after

¹⁰⁷ See the letter from the council in CW 9/6 Letters from Aldous Huxley, Letters from Aldous Huxley 1920-1925, 'Letter on Notepaper headed confidential from The London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality, dated 30th April 1924, and signed Howard M. Tyrer.'

¹⁰⁸ Warner, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ Unwin, p. 289.

¹¹⁰ Murray, p. 128.

Pinker stepped in.¹¹¹ However, Pinker placed the short story ‘The Gioconda Smile’ with the *English Review* in 1921 suggesting this was his primary purpose for Huxley.¹¹²

The agent in 1922 might not have been a necessity but most commentators seemed to have welcomed his appearance. Frank Swinnerton wrote, a little later:

Authors have never been more prosperous than they are now; the relations of authors with publishers have never been more friendly; and I believe I am right in saying that most publishers would rather deal in business matters, with an agent than with an author.¹¹³

The important point is that these were matters of business, not of style or grammar, and an agent like Pinker, described as ‘business-like’ could attend to these matters, leaving writers like Huxley to their work. As Swinnerton further explained: ‘however much they may think otherwise, and whatever exceptions there may be, they are bad at business.’¹¹⁴ Not only that but the rights situation had become more difficult and entangled. It is interesting to note, for example, that Pinker’s letter-head had once simply read ‘James B. Pinker. Literary and Dramatic Agent.’ An April 1922 letter from the agency was now headed ‘James B. Pinker & Son, (Eric S. Pinker.) Literary, Dramatic & Film Agent’ as moving picture rights became ubiquitous and lucrative.¹¹⁵ Joseph, similarly remarked that when using an agent the ‘author certainly benefits’ and ‘the publisher appreciates the advantage of dealing with a man who understands the business and can come straight to the point.’¹¹⁶ Stanley Unwin who was one of the very

¹¹¹ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW 37/6, Letters from George H. Doran Company.

¹¹² Murray, p. 132.

¹¹³ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 49.

¹¹⁴ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 57.

¹¹⁵ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW 17/1, Letters from James B. Pinker and Son, ‘Letter dated 4th April 1922, on James B. Pinker & Son headed notepaper, regarding advance payment of £100 for Catherine Carswell’s “The Camomile”’.

¹¹⁶ Joseph, p. 93.

few to have reservations wrote that to ‘a few authors an agent is indispensable [...] but to the majority unnecessary.’¹¹⁷ Unwin believes that since all publishers are honest the agent is a simple distraction, but if an agent can defraud their client, then it seems logical to assume the publisher can do likewise.¹¹⁸

Agents grew in importance through the inter-war years but as becomes clear from Unwin’s remark, they still had a relatively minor position in the literary world.¹¹⁹ Their value was certainly not in cutting the publishers’ costs since they insisted upon their authors’ works being given reasonable recompense, sometimes setting themselves against the publisher’s own instincts and budget. Bhaskar, in his survey and theoretical model of publishing stresses that ‘[a]t the heart of publishing are two mutable activities: filtering and amplification.’¹²⁰ If the agent is willing to be the filter, and Pinker saw this very much as his role, the publisher has less to do in-house. As Pinker said in 1898: ‘[b]y sending to an editor only those things which are “in his line” I save him trouble, and get better results for my clients.’¹²¹ Pinker and his like were adding value to the system. Swinnerton makes the point that ‘the situation produced the agent’ and discusses that moment at the opening of the twentieth century when ‘the whole law of copyright was in chaos; prices were low; authors did not know where

¹¹⁷ Unwin, p. 289.

¹¹⁸ In fact, J. B. Pinker’s son, Eric, who emigrated to the US and founded a branch of Pinker’s, was eventually convicted of fraud, accused of pocketing \$21,000 of his client, E. Phillips Oppenheim’s money. See J. H. Stape’s “‘The Pinker of Agents’: A family history of James Brand Pinker’, *The Conradian*, Spring 2009, vol. 34.1 (Spring 2009), 134.

¹¹⁹ Having said this, James Pinker, at least, has been immortalised in somewhat dubious fashion. He took up James Joyce on the recommendation of H. G. Wells (see Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, new and rev. ed., with corr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 384) and a few years later his name appeared in the ‘Nighttown’ episode of *Ulysses*, a scene almost entirely set in a Dublin brothel. See James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 435.

¹²⁰ Bhaskar, p. 102.

¹²¹ A. D., ‘An Interview with Mr. J. B. Pinker’, *The Bookman*, 14.79 (1898), 10.

to take their wares.¹²² This is certainly a part of the formula but the rise of the agent in this period was just as much due to the era of mass publishing when more and more titles were being issued and the publisher needed ways to sift the tidal wave of manuscripts they were receiving. This, according to Geoffrey Faber, was leading to an age of a 'deplorable mass of rubbish which clogs the bookshops and disfigures bookstalls all over the country.'¹²³

The account of agents at this date, certainly by Mary Ann Gillies, suggests a clear strategy and a targeted approach were the weapons of the agent. She writes that Pinker 'became intimately involved in the transformation of literature' at this period and cites some of his clients, suggesting, but not saying outright, that Pinker as an agent leant towards modernism, representing T. S. Eliot, Henry James, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence and others.¹²⁴ In a sense this is unproblematic since those named above were, after a time, successful in gathering about them a great deal of cultural capital which reflected on Pinker's, while for those who lived long enough wealth would eventually follow on from the cultural capital they had accrued. However, Pinker's did not just represent the successful and the pages of Chatto and Windus's manuscript entry books remain littered with the names of those unsuccessful writers who Pinker and Son also represented. Names lost to the annals of literature include A. E.

¹²² Swinnerton, *Authors*, pp. 49 and 48.

¹²³ Geoffrey Faber, *A Publisher Speaks* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 23.

¹²⁴ Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 88.

Stilwell,¹²⁵ George Malloch,¹²⁶ and Horace B. Samuel¹²⁷; all of them submitted to Chatto through J. B. Pinker's agency who were not only rejected by Chatto but not published elsewhere. Malloch did maintain a career as a writer although the poems he sent to Chatto never appeared in that form, while Samuel maintained a successful career as a translator and occasional writer of non-fiction. Not everything submitted by agents was successful or even relevant to the publisher's list, so it is worth being circumspect about statements regarding the use of agencies at this time. They might have oiled the wheels of the publishing industry, but they might also have gummed up its works.

□ Editorial Interventions and the Production Process

There is little surviving evidence that a great deal of work was done to either Nichols' or Huxley's works. Since Huxley's stories had, by and large, already been published, the necessary polishing would have been minimal and had already taken place. At this point Huxley was resident in London, so the editorial undertaking has not been preserved in letters between him and the firm. Most of the editorial work on *Self* appears to have been undertaken by Geoffrey Whitworth and the typescript shuttled between London and Athens where Nichols had been sent to research a book on the

¹²⁵ CW E/11 [25920], 15 July 1919-29 December 1922, Entry for A. E. Stilwell, 'The Bushing of the Chrysalis', 236. Frank Swinnerton's appended comment is that it is 'rather mush.'

¹²⁶ CW E/11 [29354], 15 July 1919-29 December 1922, Entry for George Malloch, 'Elegy and Other Poems', 345. His previous volume had been published by Heinemann and presumably Chatto and Windus was his fall-back option, although Swinnerton muses that he is 'possibly a better dramatist than poet.'

¹²⁷ CW E/11 [29370], 15 July 1919-29 December 1922, Entry for Horace B. Samuel, 'Typed MS of a Volume of Short Stories', 349. The stories seem to sum up the mood of the time including one about a drowned baby and Swinnerton admits they are told with a 'dingy skill' and believes they are only fodder for the magazines.

Greek situation in the aftermath of the Great War.¹²⁸ He writes to Whitworth from Athens on 22 December 1921 announcing his arrival and later in the letter declares: 'I will send back "Self" tomorrow. I have taken out the objectionable pieces, and I think you will find nothing in it now that people would complain of' and he asks Whitworth if he would look out for any 'grammatical mistakes I have overlooked.'¹²⁹ There is no account of what the publishers found objectionable but the written reports give a hint of what required excision. It is interesting that Nichols submitted to these cuts so meekly but his biographer characterises him as someone 'driven by a compulsive desire to be famous' and an unpublished manuscript could never bolster his still slender reputation.¹³⁰ The next communication is dated a little under two weeks later, on 8 January 1922, although Nichols says that '[i]t seems a very long time since I left England.' The majority of the text is taken up with events in Greece but he does comment on the MS 'which I registered about a week ago.' Nichols concerns himself with the cover of the upcoming novel as he had done previously with that of *Patchwork*.¹³¹ He suggests, 'unless you stick to the green one, that a yellow cover with black lettering on the spine and a big black "Self" on the side would be rather effective' and for the dust jacket, something 'modern, and in black and white. What about a rather haggard woman and a black tree, if you understand what I mean?' In the event scrutiny of the 1922 edition finds it in moss green boards. Nichols' interest in a 'yellow cover in black lettering' is reminiscent of the popular fiction titles sold by Hodder and

¹²⁸ For an account of his time in Greece in Nichols' own words see Beverley Nichols, *Twenty-Five* (London: Penguin Books, 1935), Chapter X 'In Which I Journey to Greece'.

¹²⁹ CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, 'Letter dated 22.12.21 with the address "Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens" to Geoffrey Whitworth.'

¹³⁰ Connon, p. 13.

¹³¹ CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, 'Letter dated 28.8.21 on notepaper headed "Blythe Hall, Ormskirk, Lancashire"'

Stoughton.¹³² As John Attenborough pointed out, ‘if you wanted to go adventuring with Richard Hannay or Bulldog Drummond or the Scarlet Pimpernel, you did so in pocket-size bound books with yellow jackets’.¹³³ Nichols was perhaps thinking that the book cover would associate it with this popular series. To further Nichols’ intentions he even offers a tiny illustration in the letter showing the boards as he conceived them.

There was also an issue of libel that briefly occupied the minds of the Chatto staff, which was always a concern since it could devour profits and turn a successful work into an ignominious failure. Geoffrey Whitworth wrote on 9 January 1922, after receiving the revised MS of *Self*, ‘[w]e all feel that your heroine’s name, Nancy Price, might offend a less infamous owner of that name now appearing in “Blood and Sand” at the New Theatre’ and asked Nichols to provide a different moniker.¹³⁴ In a letter dated 19 January 1922 he said he had ‘no idea I was libelling anybody’ and wanted to ‘re-christen her Worth’. In saying this he also reveals some of the targets of his novel, remarking that ‘we might give her the name of one of the other characters - (Lady Schooner) but Nancy Cunard might find the combination invidious.’¹³⁵

Just when Nichols thought he would be leaving Athens he sent a further letter to Whitworth dated Saturday 11 March which begins: ‘Thank you so much for “Self” which I am returning to you via the Foreign Office bag, with the necessary alterations,

¹³² CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, ‘Letter dated 8.1.22 with the address “Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens” to Geoffrey Whitworth.’

¹³³ John Attenborough, *A Living Memory: Hodder and Stoughton Publishers, 1868-1975* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p. 104.

¹³⁴ CW A/102, Letter Book 102, ‘carbon copy of letter sent to Beverley Nichols by Geoffrey Whitworth dated January Ninth Nineteen Twentyone [misdated for 1922], 478.

¹³⁵ CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, ‘Letter dated 19. 1. 22 written on “The National Bank of Turkey, Mechanical Transport Stocks” notepaper to Geoffrey Whitworth.’

which fortunately are not many.¹³⁶ Nichols' last letter from Athens regarding *Self* was dated 8 May 1922.¹³⁷ Nichols says in the letter that he expected to be home in three weeks but by then, of course, his novel had been published. If all this editing had been to secure the novel against any form of censure, then the staff of Chatto and Windus had missed the point entirely. The simple trick of *Self* is obvious in retrospect and it would also have been clear to a small homosexual audience. Nichols had written the book with his heroine as 'a re-interpretation of Thackeray's Becky Sharp as a modern girl' determined to get on in the world and 'us[ing] sex to do so.' To the reader this would have been clear but in 1973 Nichols wrote that 'as far as her sexuality was concerned, he was actually writing about himself' and if it needed spelling out, Cannon notes that 'the name was a joke, reflecting the term "Nancy boy.'" Indeed, the scene in the novel when Nancy meets the boxer, Bill, in the 'Café Racine' was based on Nichols' first encounter with his sometime lover, Alvaro Guevara, who was a boxer as well as an artist.¹³⁸ The novel then, is subversive in more ways than one. Not content with maligning vicars, wealthy collectors and money grabbing girls in the book, Nichols was undermining the values of the popular novel by granting it a second identity as a novel of homosexual desire.

The manuscript had now reached the point where consideration could be given to how it would appear as a physical book. Unwin, in his outline of the publishing process puts estimating costs and 'casting off' before most other operations as of central importance. His justification is that an exact costing is essential since 'until

¹³⁶ CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, 'Letter dated Sat. March 11th [1922], address "Hotel Splendid, Athens" to Geoffrey Whitworth.'

¹³⁷ CW 14/8 Letters from Beverley Nichols 1920-1922, 'Letter dated 8.5.22 and addressed "Hotel Splendid, Greece" to Geoffrey Whitworth.'

¹³⁸ Cannon, p. 111.

one has made out a fairly accurate estimate of the cost of production and publication, it is impossible to tell what margin there is to share with the author.¹³⁹ While many publishers accomplished the work in their offices Unwin points out that ‘it is seldom that more is attempted than to provide approximate figures’¹⁴⁰ and his company took the process a step further, asking the printer to ‘cast off’ the manuscript:

“Casting off” technically means calculating how many pages a given quantity of matter that has been set up in type will make; but the term is now generally used in a wider sense as covering an estimate of the number of pages a manuscript will make, if set in such and such a style.¹⁴¹

Using Unwin’s method would inevitably lead to small cost savings and taking a holistic view of the finished book meant considering from the start ‘[t]he selection both of the format and the fount of type’ which would affect the length of the finished volume while certain formats were favoured for different kinds of text. In weighing up the merits of certain designs and materials they were, in effect, deciding the value they placed upon the book as set against the possible profits it could bring them. A ‘novel will probably be set in Crown 8vo size whereas a biography or work of considerable length is more likely to be Demy 8vo.’ Unwin remarks that ‘the mechanical production of books will yield no better results than does the mechanical production of clothes’ and this is reflected in Chatto and Windus’s differentiated treatment of *Self* and *Mortal Coils*.¹⁴²

It is immediately worth distinguishing between the two books in physical and textual terms. *Mortal Coils* as a book of short stories of only two hundred and twenty-

¹³⁹ Unwin, p. 32.

¹⁴⁰ Unwin, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Unwin, p. 36.

¹⁴² Unwin, pp. 35-6.

nine pages was priced at 6/, both due to the modest length but mainly, as Michael Joseph put it, '[f]or several years there has been a strong prejudice against volumes of short stories.'¹⁴³ At three hundred and thirteen pages, *Self* was priced at the usual 7/6-, the price at which almost all fiction at this period was sold.

Further comparisons between the two are instructive. *Mortal Coils*, printed in March 1922, was dealt with by a single company, Morrison and Gibb, who in the first instance (2 March) printed 2000 copies, following this with another 1500 copies on 28 April, suggesting the book had been quickly taken up.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, *Self*, printed in January, had been produced by the printers Baker and Tanner who would print the first 3000 copies, a first run of 2000, then another of 1000 before a later order for another 2500 printed by P. Lund Humphreys in 1928.¹⁴⁵ Soon after publication both books had been produced in similar quantities despite Chattos, and particularly Whitworth's, belief that in Nichols, they had found a possible bestseller. In fact, *Self* as a published volume was being treated with more care than perhaps Huxley's book. *Self*'s production included an engraving for the coloured dust jacket, undertaken by Odhams, and a sum has been entered for the design of the dust cover whereas *Mortal Coils* would have been designed by Charles Prentice who took on most of such work after 1918.¹⁴⁶ The work done for *Self* partly reflects the concerns of the author, who in his letter dated 8th January 1922 had described how the cover and dust jacket should be laid out.

¹⁴³ Joseph, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Stock Book 8, CW B/2/19, c. 1911-1927, 'Mortal Coils', 793.

¹⁴⁵ CW B/2/19, c. 1911-1927, 'Mortal Coils', 796.

¹⁴⁶ CW B/2/19, c. 1911-1927, 'Mortal Coils', 793; Warner, p. 20.

Noticeably, Chattos had not only invested in a proper cover design but, as the accounts book shows, ordered 3050 coloured jackets, an unusual feature for books of this date and more associated with the 1930s when they became the norm.¹⁴⁷ Often, and certainly in 1922, the use of an illustrated cover (and one in colour) indicated popular writing. For example, a trade advertisement for ‘Nash’s Famous Fiction Library’ of popular works such as Hall Caine’s *Shadow of a Crime* (1885) is illustrated by six striking covers with the information that the books are published ‘Crown 8vo., Cloth. Gilt lettering, with picture in three colours on wrapper.’¹⁴⁸ Confounding this, though, is Nichols’ desire that the illustration be ‘rather modern.’ What Chattos are evolving is a popular title but aimed at their preferred middle-class audience. The colour illustration is there to draw in the reader of popular works while the design is there to appeal to the self-consciously modern reader of undemanding writing. Not Hall Caine exactly, but the type of book the publisher was trying to cultivate.

Mortal Coils was treated differently in one particular since Huxley’s book was set up at the printers and a series of stereo moulds were made up at a cost of £7.16.3, something missing from the production costs of *Self*. The use of moulds enabled the publisher to reprint the book without having the type re-set which was one of the biggest costs of production. Initial composition figures for *Self* were a high £60 while *Mortal Coils*, a shorter text, came in at £36.1.11. However, Chattos had already made a value judgement about what lay ahead for the two books. By investing in moulds they

¹⁴⁷ See for example Sebastian Carter, ‘Format and Design’ in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond* ed. by Andrew Nash, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 7 vols (Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII, pp. 61-84, (p.70). there is an illustration of a full-colour Arnold Bennett dust jacket from 1916, labelled ‘early.’

¹⁴⁸ *The Publishers’ Circular*, 1 July 1922, Front Cover.

had decided that *Mortal Coils* was likely to be in demand in the future and they needed the moulds as insurance against having to re-set the book for a new impression. No such undertaking was made for *Self* and, initially at least, it seems Chattos were justified. Going on the binding figures alone by 1 May 1922 2026 copies of *Mortal Coils* had been bound ready for the publication date. That does not, of course, relate exactly to sales figures, but gives an indication of how much Chattos thought they were going to sell. By March 1923 when the accounts were prepared, *Mortal Coils* had sales of 2142 copies. *Self* lagged behind, with sales to both libraries and bookshops counting for 1398 copies. However, when considering the binding figures a different picture emerges. By 1932 only a further 1450 copies of *Mortal Coils* had been prepared for sale whereas 2433 copies of *Self* had been bound, suggesting in the long term, Nichols' book was the better investment.

❖ Chapter 2. The Physical Text: Marketing, Selling and the Circulation of Value

‘value is a domain of dispute, not of consensus’

John Frow¹

Both *Mortal Coils* by Aldous Huxley and *Self* by Beverley Nichols had been bound, provided with dust jackets, and sent out. This is an account of the reception of a ‘modernist’ book and one considered as ‘popular’. The texts now represented a certain tangible value which remained as yet unrealised but required that the marketing process begin even before the printers and binders had completed their work. What follows is a critical study of value as the finished text enters into the marketplace and what Robert Darnton has identified as the ‘Communications circuit’.² It will examine the dissemination of value and its plural, conflicted nature as the texts pass through the circuit, considering whether the values the publisher has assigned to the two books remain intact as they entered the public sphere. This could include economic, aesthetic, and even moral considerations.

□ Contracts and Sales

Chatto and Windus were now dependent on each book’s take-up by the libraries and booksellers who formed the majority of their market. Advertising, reviewing, and the work of the sales representative would all contribute to the creation of tangible, monetary value. However, one of the most significant ways in which the text could

¹ John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 19.

² Robert Darnton, ‘What Is the History of Books?’, *Daedalus*, III.3 (1982), 65–83. See particularly the diagram on page 68.

accrue value was if it was offered for sale beyond British shores, both in the colonial territories and, possibly most importantly, in the United States.

Chatto and Windus had formed an agreement with George H. Doran in New York who had printed 4500 copies of Huxley's collection and they forwarded the sum of £34. 15. 3 on 10 July 1922 which was 'Royalty on sales to date of publication'.³ This was followed in December by a statement of accounts for September 1922 recording, according to a note probably made by Chattos, a further profit of £66.12.3, a substantial addition to the British and colonial sales.⁴ In Nichols' case his previous novel, *Patchwork*, was placed with Henry Holt in the US, but the Chatto stock book records that *Self* was a more difficult prospect.⁵ It lists a series of refusals from US firms, the first of them from Henry Holt 'by cable' dated 7 May 1922, followed by Doubleday, Jacobs, and Little, Brown, whose refusal came on 1 September 1922.⁶ The refusal from Holt was probably an issue of value. Holt was a nineteenth century firm of the kind that defined themselves as 'gatekeepers of American culture', publishing houses that Holt himself said had 'high tastes', something of which *Self* could never be accused.⁷ Eventually the stock book records that 520 copies, sold as 500, were sent collated and folded only, to Moffat, Yard in the US.⁸ Nichols' book did reach the

³ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW 37/6, Letters from George H. Doran and Company, 'Pay slip received from George H. Doran and Company 10th July 1922 for £34.15.3 regarding royalty on sales to date of publication for *Mortal Coils*.'

⁴ CW 37/6, Letters from George H. Doran and Company, 'Royalty Statement' dated 13 December 1922.

⁵ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, CW A/102, Letter Book for Chatto and Windus, 'Letter sent to John Nichols dated December 16th 1921, at 7 Beechen Cliff Villas, Bath', 370.

⁶ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Stock Book 8, CW B/2/19, c. 1911-1927, 'Self', 796.

⁷ Quoted in Catherine Turner, 'The Business of Publishing American Novels' in *The American Novel, 1870-1940* ed. by Priscilla Wald and Michael A. Elliott, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), VI, 20-35 (p. 24 and 25).

⁸ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Profit and Loss Ledger, CW B/3/1, 1920-1927, 157.

American market, but in such a limited form that it is not recorded in the Library of Congress and Chatto holds only a single press review, a favourable *New York Times* piece from April 1923.⁹

There were obvious reasons that publishers and writers chased the American market. The argument for the US can best be made by Frank Swinnerton who recalled a time when ‘English authors were more popular in America than they were at home’.¹⁰ His novel, *Nocturne*, unfavourably reviewed at first in Britain, ‘gradually [...] sold out its first edition of fifteen hundred copies’ and maintained a ‘small but persistent demand.’ In the United States, with an H. G. Wells preface, it sold ‘nearly fifty thousand copies’.¹¹ Knowing such possibilities existed, British firms worked to gain entry to the US market and even a moderate success in such an environment could be hugely profitable for a British writer. Jonathan Cape began his publishing house with a visit to the US in January 1921 securing books from Knopf and Lippincott, and Cape continued visiting, usually every two years, until he was eighty.¹² He bought US titles but obviously introduced his own books to the market;¹³ agents like J. B. Pinker, and later his son, wisely maintained good relations with publishers in North America, Pinker dying on a business trip to New York.¹⁴

There were various ways for a writer to enter the US book trade, itemised by Stanley Unwin. He remarks that:

⁹ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Newspaper Cuttings Album no. 22, CW C/24, 1922, 33.

¹⁰ Frank Swinnerton, *Swinnerton: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1937), p. 278.

¹¹ Swinnerton, *Swinnerton* pp. 222 and 223.

¹² Michael Spencer Howard, *Jonathan Cape, Publisher: Herbert Jonathan Cape, G. Wren Howard* (London: Cape, 1971), p. 42.

¹³ Howard, p. 46.

¹⁴ J. H. Stape, “The Pinker of Agents”: A Family History of James Brand Pinker’, *The Conradian*, 34.1 (2009), 131.

Apart from fiction not 3 per cent. of British books issued in any year are thus separately printed and copyrighted in the U. S. A. What about the other 97 per cent.? Under a profit sharing agreement it often pays the author handsomely to allow his publisher to sell an edition to the United States.¹⁵

As Unwin says, '[e]very English publisher worth his salt tries to ensure American copyright for his authors' books'.¹⁶ To secure full advantage of American copyright law, the book had to be set up and printed in the US within a period of four months at which point 'copyright is obtained for 28 years.'¹⁷ Book piracy had been a frequent issue in the US until recently and this, as well as issues of revenue, motivated British firms to register or publish their works there. If the publisher could not find a US firm, 'he sells sheets, which is usually less profitable to the author, though sometimes more'.¹⁸ These could then be bound and sold in America.

There were, though, other markets and other rights to be disposed of. In *The Commercial Side of Literature* Michael Joseph listed twenty-six distinct rights from '(1) American serial rights' to '(26) separate cheap rights in America' and each of them could be valuable.¹⁹ Sometimes selling the serial rights could be more lucrative than the original publishing deal while sales to the dominions and Canada, and to the motion picture industry, bolstered an author's income.

For comparison, the immediate sales for *Mortal Coils* and *Self* are given below.

¹⁵ Stanley Unwin, *The Truth About Publishing* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1946), p. 73.

¹⁶ Unwin, p. 74.

¹⁷ Michael Joseph, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925), p. 163.

¹⁸ Unwin, p. 74.

¹⁹ Joseph, p. 103.

Sales of *Mortal Coils* and *Self* (from March 1923 Accounts)²⁰

Title	Category	Figures
<i>Self</i>	Print Run (1922)	2000 copies
	(Sales) Libraries	1000 sold @ 4/10 £241.13.4
	Booksellers	398 sold @ 5/- £99.10
	Colonial	259 sold @ 3/9 £48.11.3.
<i>Mortal Coils</i>	Print Run (1922)	3500 copies
	(Sales) Libraries	1500 sold @ 3/10 £287.10.00
	Booksellers	642 sold @ 4/- £128.8.00
	Colonial	289 sold @ 3/- £43.7.00

Fig. 1. Details of printing and sales for *Mortal Coils* and *Self*, 1922

The ‘Colonial’ figures are the only ones for sales beyond Britain. Unwin remarks, ‘[o]f most novels and of some other books, cheap colonial editions are published. The theory is that people overseas *buy* new novels, whereas we at home borrow them’ (italics in the original).²¹ It was often more advantageous to sell a cheap colonial edition than to offer the book at the London price (for fiction) of 7s. 6d. In Chatto’s case they appear to be offering the standard text at colonial prices. Unwin reckons the price of a colonial edition ‘at from 3s. 3d. to 6s.’, but gloomily asserts that ‘[t]hey yield little direct profit to anyone save the bookseller’. The only benefit is the ability to ‘print rather larger editions, which is, of course, an economy.’ The logic was:

²⁰ See CW B/3/1, 1920-1927, 157 and 153.

²¹ Unwin, p. 187.

that at 7s. 6d. (or rather at the increased price over 10s. at which a 7s. 6d. book would probably be sold in some dominions) the sale would be negligible, whereas at a lower figure it might well be substantial.²²

Sales would be undertaken by a representative in the country concerned, who, in return for procuring orders, would be paid ‘a commission, usually of 10 per cent., on all orders’.²³ The print figures for both books are unexceptional and suggest Chatto and Windus were expecting little more than moderate sales, at least initially, despite intending *Self* to achieve sales more in line with a popular title. Compare both titles with the initial print run of 6000 for the well-known Harry Johnston’s *The Veneerings* of the same year.²⁴

□ **The Dust Jacket and the Physical Book**

Leslie Howsam in her overview of book history remarks that ‘it is [...] useful to think of the book (and the periodical) as a text, an object, a transaction and an experience.’²⁵ It is essential to consider it as a ‘material object’ since, in 1922, this is what Chatto and Windus were distributing. Technology intrudes upon the decision-making process and influences what binding is used and, separately, the book jacket. Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker describe the historical process as one where ‘[t]he dust jacket, which began simply as a protective cover for the book and the elegant decorative binding beneath it [...] evolved into a vital instrument in publicizing and selling the

²² Unwin, p. 187.

²³ Unwin, p. 185.

²⁴ CW B/3/1, 1920-1927, 141.

²⁵ Leslie Howsam, ‘The Study of Book History’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book* ed. by Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-13 (p. 3).

book'.²⁶ In 1922 the jacket was not yet established as a 'vital instrument' with its ability to add both financial and cultural value although some books clearly embodied this idea, such as *Self*. The dust jacket in the early twentieth century now came into its own as something 'eye-catching' with 'instant appeal.' By 1922 the nineteenth-century 'relationship between the ornate cloth cover and the plain paper jacket gradually reversed itself', as Gill Partington has noted.²⁷ This helps explain the plain blue boards of *Mortal Coils* and the moss green of *Self*. However, 1922 can still be formulated as a transitional year. The illustrated boards might have been replaced by the book jacket, but it would still be a few years before it would be taken seriously as an advertising space and as a work of art. As Partington has said, it was only later that 'publishing houses invested in their design and impact.' When Victor Gollancz began, he used 'bright yellow jackets, designed by typographer Stanley Morison' while Faber and Faber commissioned 'emerging artists Rex Whistler, Graham Sutherland, and Ben Nicholson' although 'the jacket design was beyond the creative jurisdiction of the author.'²⁸

Within the books, *Self* and *Mortal Coils* adopt a similar pattern in terms of the full title page and its verso. The title page of both includes title, author and, at the foot of the page, 'LONDON, CHATTO & WINDUS, 1922' (capitals in the original). On the verso *Self* has an advertisement for *Patchwork* (and mentions *Prelude*), Nichols' previous novels. Again, what is clear is the different ways in which Chattos, at least, valued their authors. Where Huxley is concerned there is no need to advertise as such,

²⁶ Thomas R. Adams, and Nicolas Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book' in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society* ed. by Nicolas Barker (London: The British Library, 1993), pp. 5-43 (pp. 20-21).

²⁷ Gill Partington, 'Dust Jackets' in *Book Parts* ed. by Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 13-23 (p. 16).

²⁸ Partington, p. 17.

only to list his titles. Chattos were placing a great deal of faith in his name alone. The Nichols book, though, has two value judgements in play. In the first instance the publishers think that his work needs boosting and offer the advert to readers fresh to his work, suggesting his reputation has yet to be established. It also signals *Self* as a popular title. However, the *Yorkshire Post*'s description of the book as 'analytical', 'subtle' and 'limned' places it in a middle-class cultural frame at a time when it was the middle-classes who tended to buy novels. As Grover has said, 'affluent homes had more books.'²⁹

Self had certainly been carefully designed and printed in colour with the *Glow Herald* review remarking that the 'flaming young lady on the paper wrapping of this novel amply fulfils all the promise that her red hair, green eyes, and other beautiful but baleful attributes offer of the sensations to be had within.'³⁰ No paid design work was done on *Mortal Coils* reflecting the jacket. *Self* is a novel with a full-colour jacket, Huxley's one with an austere, black, white, and cream aspect. The different stylings also relate to the pricing since *Self* was issued at 7/6 while the shorter volume, *Mortal Coils*, commanded just 6/-, partly, perhaps, to attract readers who avoided short stories. It was essential to get the pricing right. As Chapter One has shown, publishers were working on very narrow margins and still suffering the effects of the war. The wrong retail price might make the difference between a small profit and a loss. *Self* was intended for the popular market whose customers would hopefully pick up the novel on the strength of the cover, while Huxley's book is deliberately quieter and more sober, appealing to middle-class readers who knew Huxley by reputation and

²⁹ Mary Grover, *Steel City Readers Reading for Pleasure in Sheffield, 1925-1955* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), p. 41.

³⁰ CW C/24, 1922, 25.

appreciated its discrete styling. It was Huxley who most fitted the requirements of Swinnerton and Chattos who were trying to remake their fiction list with quality writing.

□ Advertising, Marketing and the Texts

The processes of publication overlapped and this would particularly have occurred at the point where the book was in production. It was not yet a finished item but despite this the forces of advertising, publicity and sales needed to begin their work in creating and communicating value. Michael Bhaskar in his theoretical work on publishing has given the term ‘amplification’ to these several functions. It might refer only to the marketing, publicity, and advertising of a text, but inherently includes sales. Bhaskar defines amplification as ‘acting so that more copies of a work or product are distributed or consumed’. He goes on to note that ‘printing a work and letting copies fester in a warehouse isn’t amplification; getting copies out into shops, and more importantly, the hands of readers is amplifying it.’³¹ Even so, it is important to remember that ‘publishers never absolutely control or dictate the amplificatory flow’ even if that will always be their aim.³²

One immediate way to publicise the book was to send out advance copies to critics, publishers, and other interested parties, already entered into the book’s overall costs. The accounts for *Self* list 83 copies sent out while only 77 copies of *Mortal Coils* were dispatched.³³ Unwin implies that most books will most likely be lost in a deluge

³¹ Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), pp. 114-15.

³² Bhaskar, pp. 115 and 121.

³³ CW B/3/1, 1920-1927, pp. 157 and 153.

of titles and that it is only ‘books bearing some imprints’ that will be retrieved, while others ‘can immediately be discarded.’³⁴ The publisher had no control over the value the literary editor placed on the newly published volume and only the imprint might vouchsafe the book as one of merit.³⁵

This was a form of advertising which has always been at the core of the publishers’ activities. Elizabeth Eisenstein has shown how ‘early printers [...] worked aggressively to obtain public recognition’ for their authors, and it has been shown that even in the nineteenth century marketing and advertising were, by choice, a very appreciable part of the publishers’ budget and an important component in their strategy for a book.³⁶ For one, not particularly noteworthy title, ‘[f]ully 21 percent of the budget was for advertising, against 20 percent for literary labour’ (i.e. editing, proofreading etc.).³⁷ However, advertising in 1922 was limited, crude, and often called into question and so it is useful to begin by asking what advertising is. E. H. Kastor, part of what Clarence Moran has called ‘[a] “School of Advertising”’ in and around Chicago,³⁸ offered two useful definitions in his 1918 textbook: ‘Advertising is a mode of education by which knowledge of consumable goods is increased and an effective demand created.’³⁹ He then offers: ‘Advertising is one of the great selling forces which keeps goods moving from seller to buyer.’⁴⁰ In the first definition Kastor suggests that advertising is a distinctly positive force, an ‘education’ whilst being a financial tool

³⁴ Unwin, p. 234.

³⁵ Unwin claims that imprints matter but Giles Clark and Angus Phillips have written more recently that ‘the general public’s recognition of publishers is generally weak, apart from notable exceptions such as Penguin.’ See Giles N. Clark and Angus Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, Sixth edition (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), p. 249.

³⁶ Quoted in Bhaskar, pp. 117-18.

³⁷ Bhaskar, p. 118, n.9.

³⁸ Clarence Moran, *The Business of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 79.

³⁹ E. H. Kastor, *Advertising* (Chicago: La Salle Extension University, 1918), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Kastor, p. 3.

since ‘an effective demand’ is created. His second idea is potentially more interesting since here advertising takes the form of a financial lubricant keeping the goods ‘moving from seller to buyer’ placing advertising decisively within the communications circuit. Publishers did not dissent from the extensive use of advertising but at the same time certain key voices questioned its efficacy.

Mortal Coils and *Self* were both published in May although the advertising campaign for each book began on different dates; Huxley’s stories were, according to the Chatto and Windus records, first advertised on 6 April and Nichols’ book on 18 May. In terms of advertising, they were treated both individually and unequally.⁴¹ Chattos advertising spending was limited in this post-war era of the slump and spending £50 on a single book was too risky so money was channelled towards what might be termed ‘anthology’ advertisements featuring up to ten individual titles in a single column. Occasionally they created advertisements devoted to a single author such as Mark Twain, where Chattos issued what they termed the ‘CHEAP POPULAR EDITION’ of his works (capitalised in the original).⁴² Usually, though, much like a music hall poster, certain titles were put at the top of the bill while others languished closer to the foot.

Frank Swinnerton was not convinced about the merits of advertising despite having a long association with Chattos. In his 1922 pamphlet, *Authors and Advertising*, he gave vent to his frustrations about the practice which formed a chapter in his later work, *Authors and the Book Trade*.⁴³ He begins bullishly by declaring, ‘it will come as

⁴¹ The following discussion is based on the advertising retained in the Chatto and Windus Archive at the University of Reading.

⁴² References to advertisements are to those in the University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Advertisements Book CW D/3, January 1921-December 1922 unless otherwise specified.

⁴³ Frank Swinnerton, *Authors and the Book Trade* 2nd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1935).

incredible that advertising does not sell books. Yet that is the truth. *Advertising does not sell books*' (italics in the original).⁴⁴ His argument is rather more subtle than his opening salvo; he argues that it is secondary to the other strategies publishers mobilise. The foremost of these is the choice of the books they publish since 'the freshest thing in the world, and the most effective, is the publication of good books which are also popular.'⁴⁵ In this instance, the publisher depends on aesthetic value and popularity as the motivation for sales. Secondly, the publisher has to reach a particular social group to which the book will appeal, but again, rather than via advertising, Swinnerton says this is accomplished 'by a grasp of psychology' and that the prospective buyer does not notice advertisements 'until the things they advertise are familiar'.⁴⁶ Swinnerton takes the same line as Stanley Unwin. Advertisements, even for individual titles, 'are advertisements of the publisher. They are the means by which he keeps his own name before the public.'⁴⁷ In Chattos' case there had been a deliberate attempt to create what Andrew Nash calls a 'position of prestige' within the marketplace, noted in the previous chapter.⁴⁸ Publishers in 1922 certainly advertised; the reason for this, besides the fact that 'it is also a convention' appear to be very specific.⁴⁹ Unwin believed that '[s]ome advertising, however, is needed in every case to inform librarians, booksellers, and others of the existence of the book'. Even so, he offers this striking analogy about advertising:

just as whipping will maintain, and even accelerate the speed of a top that is already spinning, but will achieve nothing with one lying

⁴⁴ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 80.

⁴⁵ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 81.

⁴⁶ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 83.

⁴⁷ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 85.

⁴⁸ Andrew Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader on the Verge of Modernity: The Case of Frank Swinnerton', *Book History*, 6.1 (2003), 177.

⁴⁹ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 84.

dormant on the ground, so advertising will maintain and even accelerate the sales of a book which is already talked about, but will do little or nothing for one in which there is otherwise no interest.⁵⁰

Clarence Moran tends to corroborate both Unwin and Swinnerton remarking: ‘no amount of advertising can force an article into popular favour unless backed up by the intrinsic merit of the article itself.’⁵¹ Michael Joseph offers the primary motivation behind the practice: ‘It is becoming increasingly difficult in these mass production days for any novel to attain big sales without the energetic efforts of the publisher behind it’ and that included advertising and marketing.⁵² However, in 1922 publishing houses not only had certain reservations about advertising, they had yet to take up all the methods advocated in the US including considerations of colour, typography, market analysis and ‘advertising words.’⁵³ The issue was the economic situation in the book trade. ‘Advertising rates have increased alarmingly’⁵⁴ while

[t]he gross turnover of a 7s. 6d. novel, of which round about fifteen hundred copies are sold, may not exceed £250, and yet on such a book it is usual for a publisher to spend over £50 - in other words, over 20 per cent. of his gross proceeds - despite the fact that on a first edition of fifteen hundred copies there may be no margin of profit at all.⁵⁵

This helps to explain the largely unimaginative productions from Chatto and Windus in 1922 which did little more than ‘inform librarians, booksellers, and others’.⁵⁶ This was not just an issue for Chatto and Windus; most companies dealt almost exclusively in anthology advertising, including Macmillan (calling their columnar advertisements

⁵⁰ Unwin, p. 253.

⁵¹ Moran, p. 74.

⁵² Joseph, p. 20.

⁵³ Kastor, p. 62.

⁵⁴ Unwin, p. 50.

⁵⁵ Unwin, p. 259.

⁵⁶ Unwin, p. 253.

‘Macmillan’s List’), George Allen and Unwin, Cassell and even a small firm such as William Rider. None of these houses gave real consideration to the design of their advertisements even if Cassell’s located its name in a banner form.⁵⁷ Of the well-known companies publishing in 1922 Grant Richards and Herbert Jenkins were amongst the only firms to try and distinguish their advertisements from their competition. Richards tended to create adverts that were styled as a diary entry or letter so that he could comment: ‘As I write this I hear we have about forty copies left of the first edition of Walter Leaf’s “Little Poems from the Greek” (5s.). We are printing a thousand more.’⁵⁸ Herbert Jenkins maintained the anthology advertisement but often added a humorous cartoon at the top of the copy, as befitted the publishers of P. G. Wodehouse. His list for April 1922 in the *Times Literary Supplement* celebrates the conclusion of ‘The Strike in the Book Trade’ with an illustration of three men labouring, staggering under the weight of books or checking a page under the heading ‘Labour Resumes.’⁵⁹ Handicapped by costs in the book trade, publishers nonetheless made little attempt to add value to their advertising, suggesting a certain conservatism amongst their number but above all a wariness of the cost implications of an advertisement that was designed.

Fredric Warburg in his memoirs described the period before 1928 as ‘[t]he “pony and trap” period of English publishing, virtually unchanged for fifty years or more’.⁶⁰ Moran, writing earlier, gives another reason for unimaginative copy, that until

⁵⁷ For examples of these advertisements see: Anonymous, ‘The House of Cassell’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1046 (1922), 75; Anonymous, ‘Macmillan and Co.’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1078 (1922), 578; Anonymous, ‘Unwin’s Bulletin’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1042 (1922), 8; Anonymous, ‘Rider’s New List’, *Western Mail*, 1 December 1922, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Grant Richards, ‘Grant Richards Ltd.’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1047 (1922), 89.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, ‘Herbert Jenkins Ltd.’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1055 (1922), 223.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Claire Squires, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p. 44.

‘comparatively recent times it was thought beneath the dignity of a newspaper to allow any variety or ingenuity’, an idea that seems to have lingered in 1922.⁶¹ In comparison, as will be shown in Chapter Three, magazine advertising had a greater gift for ingenuity and took a positive attitude to striking graphics to capture their audience. However, magazines often had a greater number of subscribers than a book had sales and could rely on this income to fund more lavish advertising.

Mortal Coils and *Self* were, of course, advertised, despite Swinnerton and Unwin’s demurrals but were never placed at the top of an anthology advert suggesting their relative economic value to the firm. There were a number of reasons why the two books did not find a place at the top of the advertising ranking. Essentially both writers were young, relatively inexperienced, and most importantly, had not yet garnered the kind of audience that those that made it to the top had done. They were writers to be nurtured in the hope they might later join the ranks of Hilaire Belloc, Lytton Strachey, and Harry Johnston as the company’s big sellers and their most valuable commodities.

In the company’s first advertisement for *Mortal Coils* the book was given a respectable third position amongst the ten titles in an advert placed in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 6 April, over three weeks before the publication date. But heading the advert was Sir Harry Johnston’s new novel, and for good reason.⁶² Chattos’ profits on the book were calculated at £190.10.6 on 31 March 1923, far beyond the receipts for either *Self* or *Mortal Coils*.⁶³

⁶¹ Moran, p. 66.

⁶² Roland Oliver, ‘Johnston, Sir Henry Hamilton [Harry] (1858–1927), Explorer and Colonial Administrator’ (Oxford University Press, 2008) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34211>>.

⁶³ CW B/3/1, 1920–1927, 141.

Meanwhile, *Self* was introduced to the world through *The Publishers' Circular*, advertised on the front page in a spread devoted to the publisher's spring novels. *Mortal Coils* is missing from the list, Hilaire Belloc's *The Mercy of Allah* heads the advertisement, while *Self* finds itself at the bottom of the heap. Chatto and Windus possibly believed that both *The Veneerings* and *The Mercy of Allah* were books with the eminence they required but since the books themselves have more or less sunk without trace, and the writers similarly, there is the suggestion that the firm, no more than any other company, could foresee what would remain quality literature in a few decades time.

These advertisements are, besides being a useful form of publicity, a display of the values expressed by the company, and most companies in mainstream publishing even up to the present. Chattos, looking to maintain that 'position of prestige', were determined to offer what John B. Thompson has identified as 'quality books', those which 'can sell well if you get the right ones. They can also sell for much longer than many of the more commercial books' as the work of Lytton Strachey went on to demonstrate, his *Eminent Victorians* still in print after over one hundred years. However, most publishers need 'to develop a balanced list' where popular writing is maintained alongside 'books of a more serious kind', building a 'diversified portfolio of risk.' It seems likely that is the reason why they nurtured Beverley Nichols as a popular writer, even while they were intent on the cultural capital that Lytton Strachey or Clive Bell might bring. As Thompson asserts: 'it is not just a matter of financial success.'⁶⁴

⁶⁴ John B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 141.

Chattos spent their advertising money in a variety of ways; both *Mortal Coils* and *Self* were offered to the public through the pages of the *Times Literary Supplement* and they were charged handsomely for the service, the paper offering a columnar advert at £25. *Self's* introduction to the trade in the *Publishers' Circular* had cost a budget £8.8.0. On 6 May the Huxley title was again advertised, this time in *The Nation and Athenaeum* who charged £14. Chattos were placing their copy in journals with a solid reputation like the *TLS* and ones with considerable cultural capital; *The Nation and Athenaeum* had featured Browning in its pages but under the previous editor, John Middleton Murry, published the modernists including T. S. Eliot and Aldous Huxley, which perhaps encouraged the advert's placement.⁶⁵ Critical assessments of both the *Athenaeum* and the *Times Literary Supplement* indicate publications with ambitions for similar readerships, despite differing circulations.⁶⁶ Michael H. Whitworth has said that '[i]f Murry wished to address [his] journal to intellectuals, it was not those in possession of powers of intellect so much as in the process of acquiring or refining them.' The 'Situations Vacant' advertisements encouraged those writing 'from libraries, and several wrote from British and overseas universities.'⁶⁷ Murry certainly saw his smaller journal in direct competition with the *Times Literary Supplement* at one point describing a 'decisive struggle' between the *Athenaeum* and the *Supplement* for readers.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ 'Athenaeum, The', in *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English* ed. by Jenny Stringer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 32.

⁶⁶ See Michael H. Whitworth, 'Enemies of Cant: *The Athenaeum* (1919 -1921) and *The Adelphi* (1923-48)' in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines Volume 1: Britain and Ireland 1880-1955* ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1, 365-388 (pp. 367-368).

⁶⁷ Whitworth, pp. 369 and 370.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Whitworth, p. 374.

In his survey of the *Times Literary Supplement* F. W. Bateson suggested that on the demise of the *Athenaeum* the *Supplement* had gained a ‘new seriousness and assumption of authority’ from the former journal’s ethos.⁶⁹ These titles with their solid, middle-class cultural image form the backbone of Chatto and Windus’s advertising and Moran encouraged this kind of project, noting that the advertiser has an advantage when confining ‘himself to the good papers’ and paying ‘a reasonable price for them.’⁷⁰ However, Chattos were in the business of selling so that taking space in *John O’ London’s Weekly* on 20 May to promote books including Huxley’s was a way to engage with a different class segment, thus increasing their potential sales. The newspaper was aimed at those lower-middle-class readers looking to improve their situation through education; Jonathan Wild has described the audience as those ‘whose formal education had incorporated only a tantalizing glimpse of literary study’.⁷¹

Both books took a final bow in an advertisement in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 10 August 1922, relegated to the lower reaches of the copy since they had now been in the public eye since, in the case of *Mortal Coils*, the beginning of April. The titles would only be revived in advertisements for the Christmas market late in the year. Chattos did not expend very much on *Self* since it advertises for *Mortal Coils* that predominate with Nichols’ book coming in a very poor second. Their original distaste for the volume, noted in Chapter One, seems to have led them to

⁶⁹ F. W. Bateson, ‘Organs of Critical Opinion: IV, The Times Literary Supplement’, *Essays in Criticism*, VII.4 (1957), 352.

⁷⁰ Moran, p. 72.

⁷¹ Jonathan Wild, “A Strongly Felt Need”: Wilfred Whitten/John O’ London and the Rise of the New Reading Public’ in *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920-1960* ed. by Erica Brown and Mary Grover (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 98-114 (pp. 98-9).

make decisions about its advertising which ran counter to their own requirements for a decent return on their outlay. They even took some distinctly uncomplimentary prose from a *Manchester Guardian* review to accompany their details of the book; they begin by describing the novel as '[c]lever, if unpleasant...'.⁷² There is, of course, the possibility that they were using the power of negative publicity. Even so, it appears as if the views of the senior staff about *Self*, outlined in the previous chapter, are being borne out in the newspaper's pages, but in using those particular words they are only aiding and abetting this negative impression. As it was, despite decent, if uninspiring sales, Nichols never published with Chatto again and, after a hiatus, found a more congenial home with Jonathan Cape.⁷³

In Britain book advertising was still in its infancy in 1922 and it had none of the optimism in tone and delivery that characterised US examples, nor its use of graphics.⁷⁴ The economic situation in the book industry only encouraged simple, uncluttered advertising copy. Nonetheless, publishers did, in some respects, follow in the wake of the American industry and absorbed many of its tenets. E. H. Kastor wrote that '[m]arket analysis may take many different forms and necessarily must vary with different products.' It is clear that Chatto and Windus were well aware of this, differentiated between their titles, and took care over the placement of their advertisements generally, going against Kastor's other maxim that the 'advertiser must speak to the prospective buyers in mass.'⁷⁵ By choosing to use newspaper advertising

⁷² CW C/24, 1922, 110.

⁷³ His first book with Cape was *25* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926).

⁷⁴ For examples of US advertising at around this time see Catherine Turner, *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003) and E. K. Castor, *Advertising* (Chicago: LaSalle Extension University, 1918).

⁷⁵ Kastor, p. 15.

they reached a mass of readers but they were able to differentiate between them by the careful choice of publication following Kastor's insight that 'buyers are divided into classes or groups'.⁷⁶ Mac Martin believed the 'best and cheapest way to tell the public is thru the newspaper', but nothing about Chattos' work indicates a cheapness, either in aesthetic or economic terms.⁷⁷ They do advertise in the *Observer* and in doing so follow Moran's stricture that '[n]o advertiser of to-day [...] can afford to neglect the periodical Press' but their preference is to reach a very specific public, particularly by using the *Times Literary Supplement* at significant cost.⁷⁸

With the launch of press advertising, at this point in the publishing cycle the publishers found the control they had over their product and its value was beginning to loosen, as Adams and Barker surmise. Having put a great deal of effort into publicity and marketing, the book now passed to the libraries and booksellers both of whom had different priorities and ways of valuing, both aesthetic and financial. Here, a certain paradox enters into the publishing model. The publisher's role has been to individuate the book, to make it both unique and desirable and to ensure that it stands out. However, in discussing Chattos' advertising strategy it becomes obvious that its financial constraints meant the title never achieved the sort of autonomy necessary, since, whatever the book, it would always find itself crowded in with other titles and be presented in a very similar fashion. Once the title reached the bookseller, however, their intention was always to treat a text as utterly singular. As Basil Blackwell put it, '[e]ach book is individual.'⁷⁹ Even so, now both *Self* and *Mortal Coils*

⁷⁶ Kastor, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Mac Martin, *Advertising Campaigns*, rev. ed. (New York: Alexander Hamilton Institute, 1922), p. 195.

⁷⁸ Moran, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Basil Blackwell, 'Provincial Bookselling' in *The Book World* ed. by John Hampden (London: Nelson, 1935), pp. 134-149 (p. 137).

largely disappear from view in the publishing cycle, just two of the 10,842 books published and for sale in 1922.⁸⁰

□ Publishers, Booksellers, and Libraries

As the initial sales figures for *Mortal Coils* showed, over twice as many copies of the book were sold to the library trade as to the booksellers of Britain and Ireland who therefore would have been less valued in trade terms. Unwin and others in the twenties continued to declare that the British public did not buy books although the nation's booksellers persisted and sometimes thrived as Arthur Mumby has shown.⁸¹

In *The British Book Trade* Sue Bradley records the voices of some of those booksellers who found satisfaction in the inter-war business like Frank Stoakley and Tommy Joy.⁸² However, it was not always pleasurable to be in the trade.⁸³ At this time bookseller's assistants had to suffer an apprenticeship which was called by Basil Blackwell, 'long and difficult'.⁸⁴ It suggests specialist booksellers were consistently undervalued in terms of pay, even while they could offer exceptional knowledge about titles.

Within the Darnton model of the communications circuit an ovoid form makes a smooth transit between publisher, printer, shipper, and the aforementioned bookseller, then onward to the reader. Studying the book trade in this period shows that the transitions between elements were never neat and in terms of value there

⁸⁰ Anonymous, *The English Catalogue of Books for 1922* (London: The Publishers' Circular, 1923).

⁸¹ For example, he recorded that in Birmingham in 1913 *Kelly's Directory* listed 79 booksellers and by 1939 'approximately 100 booksellers were recorded'. See Frank Arthur Mumby and Ian Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling: Part One from the Earliest Times to 1870: Part Two: 1870-1970*, 5th ed. (London: J. Cape, 1974), p. 382.

⁸² See Sue Bradley, *The British Book Trade: An Oral History* (London: British library, 2008), chapter 4, 'my son wants to be a bookseller'.

⁸³ When one assistant called 'Chambers asked for a 5s. increase in wages' his employer replied that 'the shop cannot afford it. Your reward will be in the hereafter.' See Mumby and Norrie, p. 377.

⁸⁴ Blackwell, 'Provincial Bookselling', p. 137.

might be friction between the author and the publisher and more significantly between the publisher and the bookseller. If the two models cited encompass a communications circuit, J. G. Wilson for the bookselling trade could still claim that 'the chief problem of the trade' was 'one of communication.'⁸⁵ The publisher's concern was that their message reached through the circuit to every part intact. They needed both booksellers and readers to accept the values claimed for *Self* and *Mortal Coils* and buy the work unrestrained by doubt or competing value judgements. Geoffrey Faber called publishers and booksellers 'allies in a common cause', but, in the same speech, he condemned establishments that refused to take risks and were 'increasingly a prey to standardization.'⁸⁶ He is referring here to those bookshops refusing to take the more specialist publications that were Faber's stock in trade. Nevertheless, publishers did not make life easy for booksellers who 'operated on small overheads, paid starvation wages and took on apprentices', partly because they were cheaper to employ.⁸⁷ The same publishers who complained about what J. G. Wilson called a 'quick and safe return'⁸⁸ also claimed to offer 'a plain 33 1/3 per cent discount upon all books.'⁸⁹ But as Frank Swinnerton pointed out, the publisher was, on closer inspection, not being quite so generous:

The bookseller has a different figure. He says that over *his* whole stock his trade discount works out at an average of under 30 per cent. This is because he is unable to avail himself of special discounts, is forced to buy single copies at only 25 per cent discount, and sometimes gets no more than a flat twopence in the shilling. (*italics in the original*).⁹⁰

⁸⁵ J. G. Wilson, 'Bookselling in London' in *The Book World* ed. by John Hampden (London: Nelson, 1935), pp. 120-33 (p. 127).

⁸⁶ Geoffrey Faber, *A Publisher Speaking* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), pp. 17 and 28.

⁸⁷ Mumby and Norrie, p. 372.

⁸⁸ J. G. Wilson, 'Bookselling in London', p. 125.

⁸⁹ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 92.

⁹⁰ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 92.

Swinnerton says that it is '[n]o wonder booksellers turn to side lines in order to make money'.⁹¹ In the end Swinnerton comes to the inevitable conclusion that

[t]he bookseller appears to the publisher chiefly as a person clamouring for increased discounts; while the publisher appears to the bookseller as a person who does not know and does not care about the difficulties of the bookselling trade.⁹²

It is here that the value chain begins to break down since the two parties conceive of value differently, whether it is Geoffrey Faber wanting booksellers to value his output more generously or hard-pressed booksellers urging greater discounts from publishers working on equally narrow margins.⁹³ This made a great difference to what texts shops would value and stock when in English towns 'the chief trade in books is a trade in cheap editions of popular novels'. It would often fall to the publisher's traveller to disentangle the different values, both aesthetic and financial, and reconcile the two parties. Swinnerton remarks that 'travellers are the friends of booksellers' but this was not always the truth of the matter.⁹⁴ On the one hand they were able to dispense the greatest discounts but on the other, as Basil Blackwell writing about the provincial book trade noted, the traveller visits just 'two or three times a year'.⁹⁵ This was despite the best efforts of a traveller like Frank Ward (for Chatto).⁹⁶ Frank S.

⁹¹ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 94.

⁹² Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 99.

⁹³ Basil Blackwell notes that, for booksellers, '[i]t is by no means unusual to find that 25 per cent. of the money he receives from the sale of new books is consumed by the expenses incurred in selling them.' See Blackwell, pp. 143-44.

⁹⁴ Swinnerton, *Authors*, pp. 96 and 95.

⁹⁵ Blackwell, p. 140.

⁹⁶ At the start of January 1922 Ward was in Bristol. On 27 January he was in Cheltenham, and he had been in Sale on 26 January. It was a very busy, and quite possibly lonely life on the road. See University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Letters Book CW A/102, 497, 520 and 586.

Ward was the Country Traveller for Chatto and Windus, criss-crossing Britain and Ireland, promoting and selling Chattos stock, and whose travails can be followed in Chatto and Windus's Letter Books. The Town Traveller was essentially the publisher's representative in London since this was where most publishing activity was centred, from distribution to bookselling. In the case of Chattos their Town representative and 'senior traveller' was W. H. Archibold who Swinnerton describes as 'the booksellers' friend'.⁹⁷ As Unwin says, this representative is 'in the happy position that practically all his customers, [...] are within a fairly small area' and it is to these that they would show 'an actual copy of each new book'. This meant carrying 'several advance copies' of each new title and additionally copies would be lodged with the biggest wholesaler (in 1922 and after) Simpkin, Marshall, occupying 31 and 32 Paternoster Row.⁹⁸ The Country Traveller performed much the same function, but their resources were more stretched. The traveller might have to deal with 'travellers' samples', usually 'the first thirty-two pages of the book bound up in the correct binding'.⁹⁹

It was partly because of these infrequent visitations by the publisher's representative that booksellers pushed back. Stanley Unwin makes the case that orders taken by travellers (subscription orders) should enjoy the maximum discount but if

a publisher were unwise enough to make a general practice of conceding his subscription terms after subscription, he would soon find himself confronted with the necessity of granting some new concession on subscription orders, and the whole trouble would begin again.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Swinnerton, *Swinnerton*, p. 189.

⁹⁸ Unwin, p. 168.

⁹⁹ Unwin, p. 183.

¹⁰⁰ Unwin, p. 175.

It appears that while the bookselling and publishing trades could get by, their relationship would never be entirely harmonious because they espoused different values derived as much as anything from their financial positions. If Geoffrey Faber yielded to 'no one' in his 'admiration for the booksellers of this country' it was not to be entirely reciprocated.¹⁰¹

Booksellers who found their lives circumscribed by low wages and bad conditions might have found a better home in the circulating library system where subscribers were treated to a more salubrious atmosphere as photos from the W. H. Smith archive show. Libraries included artwork, padded chairs, and pot plants in light and airy rooms.¹⁰² The circulating libraries made their mark in the nineteenth century and continued unabated into the early part of the twentieth and beyond, but the public library system still had a lot of ground to make up. As John Minto noted, the Great War and its financial stringencies had left some public libraries barely able to function, while some closed. The previous situation had no doubt precipitated matters. Before 1914 some library authorities were 'unable to spend as much as £10 per annum on the purchase of books' while 'thirty-eight were spending under £20'.¹⁰³ This was due to legal constraints on library finances: 'very little money was left for the essential purposes of a library, viz. the supply of new books'.¹⁰⁴ This led to a sense of endemic frustration amongst librarians and administrators and to the Public Libraries Act of 1919 which covered England and Wales. Some legislation had already been

¹⁰¹ Faber, p. 15.

¹⁰² University of Reading Special Collections, W H Smith Archive, 'Photos: Circulating Library; 1914-54 (1-5)', WHS A 79/3.

¹⁰³ See John Minto and James Hutt, *A History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. and the Library Association, 1932), p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ Minto and Hutt, p. 126.

enacted in Scotland and was improved in an act of 1920.¹⁰⁵ Fiscal restrictions limiting the creation of new libraries or the stocking of older ones were lifted, although for some time the situation in cities had been more benign. From 1922 onward progress faltered as the financial crash impacted, at least briefly, ‘but by 1923 the forward movement had been resumed’.¹⁰⁶ The act cannot, though, be seen as a universal panacea. Frank Pacy, reporting in 1926, still felt that ‘the libraries of this country have not yet recovered’ from the Great War and ‘[t]he altered economic conditions will deeply affect them for many years.’¹⁰⁷

At the higher end of the circulating library market surroundings were congenial and the libraries had a head start on the faltering public library system in terms of innovation and service.¹⁰⁸ Circulating libraries, however, skated on thin ice because they had to do several things at once to maintain their cash flow and their viability; importantly, they needed an increasing number of subscribers in order to provide a long-term income. They required a large discount from their suppliers to buy stock and needed a large number of books on the shelves that could be borrowed. This meant submitting themselves to a system where, as Simon Eliot has said, a ‘high proportion of books [...] was, at any given time, not earning its keep by being loaned out.’ Where Mudie’s Library and most others were concerned, a book on loan was

¹⁰⁵ See Thomas Kelly, *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, 1845-1975*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Library Association, 1977), pp. 216 and 217.

¹⁰⁶ Kelly, p. 220.

¹⁰⁷ Frank Pacy, ‘Public Libraries in England’, *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, 20.10 (1926), 221.

¹⁰⁸ At Boots Bookloversce Library, ‘[e]ach branch library had two counters. One was designated solely for Class A subscribers, who paid top rates and the other for Class B. New staff weren’t allowed anywhere near the elite readers, until they had received thorough training on customer service. Affluence bought Class A subscribers respectful and personal service and they were never expected to choose their own books.’ See Jackie Winter, *Lipsticks and Library Books: The Story of Boots Booklovers Library*. (Dorset: Chantry Press, 2016), p. 47.

earning them comparatively little: 0.69d. per day.¹⁰⁹ He further comments that, ‘it seems to have been difficult [...] for the circulating libraries to generate sufficient profits to be stand-alone enterprises’,¹¹⁰ and of course Mudie’s folded in 1937 with its stock taken on by Boots.¹¹¹ The other big subscription libraries maintained a presence in the market for far longer but their libraries were ‘never more than a minor adjunct’ to their core business.¹¹² That circulating libraries personalised their services is unsurprising since this was the ideal way to maintain a subscriber. But it also differentiates them from the public library which could be cold and unwelcoming. As Hill puts it:

At this period, public libraries were often held in dreary or forbiddingly official buildings with staff who were either untrained, or were so well trained that they inhibited readers from asking for help in their book selection.¹¹³

It might seem after the individual selling in bookshops, that the vast tumult of the circulating libraries, books constantly on the move from warehouse to shop to customer, that neither *Self* nor *Mortal Coils* could receive individualised treatment. No librarian could hope to keep the information about so many books in their head; instead their work was largely guided by what consumers wanted. Boots, though, created readers’ guides to recent publications and ‘each branch displayed lists of new accessions in a fixed stand outside the library.’¹¹⁴ So there was an attempt to guide

¹⁰⁹ Simon Eliot, ‘Circulating Libraries in the Victorian Age and After’ in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland: Volume 3, 1850-2000* ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 125-46 (p. 129).

¹¹⁰ Eliot, ‘Circulating Libraries in the Victorian Age and After’, p. 126.

¹¹¹ Nicola Wilson, ‘Boots Book-Lovers’ Library and the Novel: The Impact of a Circulating Library Market On Twentieth-Century Fiction’, *Information and Culture*, 49.4 (2014), 429.

¹¹² Simon Eliot, ‘Circulating Libraries in the Victorian Age and After’, p. 141.

¹¹³ Hall, p. 39.

¹¹⁴ Hall, p. 39.

readers but it would be invidious to disagree with Hall who concludes that ‘Boots was important in that it introduced a public to the idea of libraries with a fairly high standard of service, but once it had secured its subscribers, it did not attempt to mould the public’s taste’, and this was probably the case with the other major companies. Aesthetic value, therefore, was less important at this point for circulating libraries who had to prioritise getting the books off the shelves. Lower down the scale it is doubtful that such libraries concerned themselves with making readers rather than serving them. The Boots Literary Course, created for their librarians ‘stated unequivocally, detective stories and thrillers were ‘perhaps the most popular type of fiction in demand by our subscribers.’¹¹⁵ Despite the attempts by the circulating libraries to differentiate themselves from the burgeoning public libraries, Thomas Kelly points out that ‘[i]n the North of Scotland in 1917, the most popular authors were Marie Corelli, Ethel M. Dell, Rider Haggard, W. W. Jacobs, Jack London and Baroness Orczy’, aligning them with many Boots subscribers.¹¹⁶

In conclusion, the use of the rates to maintain a public library service was probably a more stable economic model where margins and reader numbers were not so much of an issue. In the end this is what allowed these institutions to outlast their commercial rivals.

□ **Reviewing and the Issue of Value**

Reviewing is a strange, often unpredictable occupation and was much the same in 1922 when so numerous were reviewers that ‘the active propagandists of the London

¹¹⁵ Hall, pp. 69 and 68.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Kelly, p. 215.

coteries' were a minority even while they held positions of power.¹¹⁷ Beyond them was a hinterland of talent such that a diligent, thoughtful piece could be as likely published by the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* as by the *Daily Chronicle*.

Gerald Gould believed that reviewing was 'criticism, with the frequent but unnecessary reservation that the sphere of its application is limited to contemporary work.'¹¹⁸ In writing about the subject Gould neglects the messy realities Frank Swinnerton is apt to dwell upon. London reviewers have a 'good deal of prejudice' and while no reviewer would ever 'slate another man, unless he slated me'¹¹⁹, as a friend confides, Swinnerton leans towards a code of conduct where reviewers would not be allowed to 'lunch with publishers, or to accept presents from publishers'.¹²⁰

Despite Swinnerton's concerns both he and Stanley Unwin agreed on one point. As Unwin puts it:

Two things are quite certain, viz. that good reviews do not necessarily mean good sales, nor the absence of reviews bad sales. The amount of space devoted to a book is sometimes more important than what is said about it [...]¹²¹

Despite all the ink spilled, sometimes in anger, over individual texts, reviews have little in the way of value to the publisher and probably to the reader. As noted previously readers often encountered texts in 'acts of serendipity'. They also indicate the possibility that the models of both Darnton and Adams and Barker have their limits, particularly that of Darnton, based as it is on eighteenth-century practices.

¹¹⁷ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 106.

¹¹⁸ Gerald Gould, 'Reviewing' in *The Book World* ed. by John Hampden (London: Nelson, 1935), pp. 109-19 (p. 109).

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Swinnerton, *Authors*, pp. 109-10.

¹²⁰ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 121.

¹²¹ Unwin, p. 237.

They assume that the cycle of communication makes a smooth transition from the publisher, through to the bookseller and onwards to the critic, but this is far from certain as Swinnerton, and others, demonstrate. This can easily be shown with reference to review copies. These books point to the way the publisher effectively bypasses the bookseller and associated trades while Swinnerton's voluminous description of the reviewer places them not after the bookseller in the chain of value but intimately connected with publishing. As he says:

a reviewer must dine somewhere; he often dines with friends. These friends live in the same social world as himself, and it is the world of minor (sometimes major) authors. Indeed, most London reviewers are writers of books.¹²²

Theories of any kind inevitably result in the smoothing away of certain difficulties, but arguably critics fed largely at the table of the publishing and periodical industries and inculcated its values.

A whole tranche of reviews cannot be summarised yet the reviews of *Mortal Coils* often find common ground where the critic does not actively dislike the work. The *Westminster Gazette* talks about Huxley's 'ingenuity' and *To-Day* effusively remarks on his 'versatile genius'.¹²³ For some of the reviewers this element was finally grounds for dismissing the work. The *Weekly Westminster Gazette*, for example, while calling Huxley 'supremely skilful' ends by calling the volume a 'disappointment'. The *Daily Express* comments that Huxley is 'clever, artistic, and detached' appearing to place him alongside Joyce's high modernist artist, 'refined out of existence, indifferent,

¹²² Swinnerton, *Authors*, pp. 109-110.

¹²³ All the references above and those following are taken from reviews collected in the University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus Cuttings Album number 24, CW C/26, 1922 (*Mortal Coils*) and CW C/24, 1922 (*Self*).

paring his fingernails'.¹²⁴ If his attitude places him alongside Joyce, some of the reviews clearly see the connection; Horace Wyndham in *The Bookman* calls him 'ultra-modern.' There is, however, a corollary to remarks about Huxley's cleverness and skill. The concern is that all this cleverness amounts to nothing more than 'newness and brightness', as the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* puts it. Edward Shanks in *The Queen* even wonders if he is 'no better than a fraud.' The critics find the humour easier to grasp. Louis J. McQuilland in *John O'London's Weekly* makes the very valid point that his 'bizarre humour' is the only thing 'which prevents his incredible pessimism from being intolerable.'

It is perhaps surprising that the values the critics see in Huxley's work are not far removed from those that originally led Chatto and Windus to place such store in the author. Not only that, these values emerge in the later reviews showing that the aesthetic worth they set on the book had been successfully reproduced through the communications circuit. The firm was intent on books of quality that would grant them 'the position of prestige' to which they aspired in the inter-war years.¹²⁵ It was this that led them to publish volumes of Chekhov and to shed the Edwardian writers that brought little in the way of prestige. As Nash says, '[t]he firm clearly saw itself as representing a higher literary standard'¹²⁶ and the adjectives used in the reviews only reflect back on the publishers who Nash says, possessed 'distinction' and 'flair'.¹²⁷ It is impossible to be certain that the image the publishers cultivated of Huxley's work directly influenced his reception but when words like 'sophistication', 'distinguished'

¹²⁴ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Granada, 1977), p. 195.

¹²⁵ Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader', 177.

¹²⁶ Nash, 'A Publisher's Reader', pp. 182 and 184.

¹²⁷ Andrew Nash, 'Literary Culture and Literary Publishing', p. 326.

and 'genius' are used it seems likely that the values that Chattos wanted to communicate remained partially intact at this juncture.

Beverley Nichols wrote in the Penguin reissue of *Self*: 'The whole story, of course, owes a heavy debt, (which is happily uncollectable), to *Vanity Fair*' and the reviews are all wise to Nichols' borrowing.¹²⁸ They are relatively independent in their views, however. The *Observer* declared that his heroine Nancy Worth, 'all but deserved what she got' when she is effectively thrown out into the gutter at the novel's close. The *Times Literary Supplement* sees the same conclusion as an attempt to 'squeeze out a tear at the end'¹²⁹ while the *Manchester Guardian* sees in the entire book, 'a rigorous moral purpose.' There are no references to style in the reviews of *Self*, except to bemoan its lack, although the *Manchester Guardian* admits the novel is 'clever'.¹³⁰ *The Times* calls the book 'a rattling study of an adventuress', indicating its popular pedigree.¹³¹ This is echoed in Orlo Williams' remark that the book has 'many entertaining qualities', although he sees the writing as 'slapdash'¹³² while suggesting it should not be viewed as serious literature, something backed up by *The Times* which remarks that '[t]here is nothing at all serious about this extravaganza'.¹³³ It appears from this that Chattos has achieved what it first intended, to publish a popular hit. The book is certainly being reviewed as such although the initial sales do not match this expectation. Both *Mortal Coils* and *Self* contain abundant humour of differing sorts and it is the humour that dominates the Nichols reviews and proves most

¹²⁸ Beverley Nichols, *Self* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938), p. 7.

¹²⁹ CW C/24, 1922, 'Orlo Williams, "Self"', *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 May 1922, 28.

¹³⁰ CW C/24, 1922, 'F. R., "New Novels: The Combative Novel"', *Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1922, 28.

¹³¹ CW C/24, 1922, 'Anonymous, "New Novels"', *The Times*, 18 May 1922, 30.

¹³² CW C/24, 1922, 'Orlo Williams, "Self"', *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 May 1922, 28.

¹³³ CW C/24, 1922, 'Anonymous, "New Novels"', *The Times*, 18 May 1922, 30.

divisive. The singular episode of the novel is when the ‘heroine’ blackmails the lascivious vicar, Mr Jackson, and it is here that reviewers diverge. F. R. in the *Guardian* believes it to be the point at which Nichols ‘alienates our sympathies from her for ever’.¹³⁴ *The Times* finds it ‘a little too much to swallow’ and Louis J. McQuilland in *The Bookman* simply calls Malcolm Jackson, ‘unlucky’.¹³⁵ What most of the reviews do, though, is to hint that the stories of *Mortal Coils* and the saga of Nancy Worth have some commonalities. The reviewers’ prose gives a useful indication of the success of Chattos’ marketing strategies for both texts, suggesting the company’s initial valuation of both books was partially translated into the public sphere.

If *Mortal Coils* is called ‘a stunt so clever as to win applause’¹³⁶ (*Times Literary Supplement*), that is not so far from the *Observer*’s comment that *Self* is audaciously amusing¹³⁷ and *The Times*’ comment that it ‘moves very briskly in the realm of farce’.¹³⁸ Huxley’s stories too, indulge in farce, as Henry Hutton’s conviction for his wife’s murder in ‘The Gioconda Smile’ only demonstrates, although this is humour of the darkest hue. The atmosphere of ‘The Gioconda Smile’ is made even more stygian with the knowledge that its circumstances reflected two sensational murder trials, one ending just weeks before *Mortal Coils* was published.¹³⁹ The darkness (and humour) are only echoed in Nichols’ novel where blackmail and adultery are treated with lightness and, as the *Observer* notes, with ‘effective irony’, the motor force of many of

¹³⁴ CW C/24, 1922, ‘F. R., “New Novels: The Combative Novel”, *Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1922, 28.

¹³⁵ CW C/24, 1922, ‘Louis J. McQuilland, “An Uncommon Lot”’, *The Bookman*, 62.370 (1922), 32.

¹³⁶ CW C/26, 1922, ‘New Novels’ *Times Literary Supplement*, 27 April 1922, 69.

¹³⁷ CW C/24, 1922, ‘Anonymous, “New Novels”’, *The Observer*, 11 June 1922, 27.

¹³⁸ CW C/24, 1922, Anonymous, *The Times*, 18 May 1922, 30.

¹³⁹ The details of the Greenwood Case and the Armstrong Poisoning filled newspapers at the time. See ‘Armstrong Guilty’ *The Times*, 15 April 1922, p. 7, ‘The Kidwelly Mystery’ *The Times*, 16 June 1920, p. 16, and ‘Greenwood Not Guilty’, *The Times*, 10 November 1920, p. 12.

Huxley's early works.¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the *Manchester Guardian* believes that *Self* is not just an entertainment but a 'satire of provincial society'.¹⁴¹ Critics such as Maria Schubert point to Huxley's work as 'Menippean' satire, dealing as it does with '[p]edants, bigots, cranks, parvenus' and other types.¹⁴² Arguably, Nichols does the same, suggesting more similarities between the writers than points of conflict.

From the reviews there comes the distinct impression that *Mortal Coils* and *Self* were not considered significantly different. They traded in the same terms of irony, farce, and satire even if ultimately Nichols' book works with types normally seen in stage farce rather than boldly delineated characters like Huxley. As Ken Gelder has noted, 'with popular fiction, generic identities are always visible.'¹⁴³ These two novels, understood quite differently by the senior staff at Chatto and Windus, one as a popular text, the other as a more prestigious piece of writing, were judged in the reviews to be related in content if not style. In effect, it was an issue of genre. As John Frow has written: 'Genre is one of the ways in which texts seek to control the uncertainty of communication' suggesting it has a place in Darnton's circuit.¹⁴⁴ Frow has commented that 'all texts are strongly shaped by their relation to one or more genres' so that accepting this 'literature' and 'popular writing' simply become categories of genre even if they may be 'looser, fuzzier, and more open-ended than say

¹⁴⁰ CW C/24, 1922, Anonymous, "New Novels", *The Observer*, 11 June 1922, 27.

¹⁴¹ CW C/24, 1922, 'F. R.', "New Novels: The Combative Novel", *Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1922, 28.

¹⁴² Maria Schubert, 'The Use of Irony in Aldous Huxley's Short Fiction,' in *Short Story Criticism*, vol. 39 ed. by Jenny Cromie (Detroit: Gale, 2000). *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/H1420032414/GLS?u=rdg&sid=bookmark-GLS&xid=681fao6b. [Accessed 13 Sept. 2023]. Originally published in *On Poets and Poetry*, edited by James Hogg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1984, pp. 181-214.

¹⁴³ Ken Gelder quoted in Bernice M. Murphy, *Key Concepts in Contemporary Popular Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ John Frow, *Genre*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 4.

a mathematical set'.¹⁴⁵ Although Chatto and Windus's management would not consider either book in these terms, they had effectively failed sufficiently to define their genres in the way they framed and amplified the texts (framing, incidentally, is one of the important ways in which genres are created). Even if there are some subjective points of reference between both books, marketing could have put clear water between the two titles. That *Self* is strikingly similar to Huxley's work suggests that the difference between popular writing and 'literature' is often very slight and the rudimentary marketing strategies employed by Chatto and Windus were insufficient to differentiate between the two books, which often shared the same advertising space. The values the company had assigned these two titles failed to translate entirely into the wider public sphere, certainly amongst reviewers, and in terms of economic value; by March 1923 just £40 in profits separated the two texts. In the end *Self* proved its popularity when a different publishing and marketing strategy was applied. In 1938 Penguin Books reissued *Self* as one of their first paperbacks. In a letter to Allen Lane, Nichols said that 'some of it is quite good!'¹⁴⁶ Like all those early Penguins it went on to sell thousands.

□ The Book and the Communications Circuit

This chapter began with some reflections on Darnton's 'communications circuit' which might also be seen as a diagram of values that circulate within and beyond the sphere of publishing. What has been demonstrated is that, as mentioned previously, the values the publisher assigned to their texts did not always translate into the public

¹⁴⁵ Frow, *Genre*, pp. 1 and 11.

¹⁴⁶ University of Bristol Archives, DM1294 - Penguin Archive: Penguin Books Ltd. Historical Files, DM662/14/6, 'Letter from Beverley Nichols to Allen Lane Dated 12th April 1938'.

sphere. As Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker have said, ‘One of the frequently neglected results of a decision to publish is the loss of control over what happens next’, and it could be added that this is true both for the writer and the publisher. Reviewers generally took an independent view of the works they appraised so that despite coming to a form of consensus on both books some could still offer strongly differing views. Of Huxley’s work the *Westminster Gazette* could say it was ‘more ingenious than interesting’ while *The Outlook* could call the stories ‘really beautiful comedy’.¹⁴⁷ Vitiating this view of the reviewer, though, is Swinnerton’s understanding that London reviewing at least ‘reflects a good deal of prejudice’, the competing coteries noted in the introduction can lead to ‘gang warfare’¹⁴⁸, and that contemporary reviewing has ‘little authority.’¹⁴⁹ Values, then, are complex, and if the reviewer writes what seems to be an unprejudiced review, there are still the wider values of the coterie and the reviewing culture that can influence the words that appear on the page.

The circulating libraries might have seemed to offer a disinterested approach to borrowing but it is clear that the values they espoused were entirely those of the customer and thrillers and detective stories were what these customers demanded most often, even if D. H. Lawrence or Joseph Conrad were similarly available. Although this suggests that these companies were supine in their relationship to readers, from the huge amount of stock they bought they were also able to construct a hegemony of values that caused publishers to temper their publications to the needs of the libraries, given their financial power, as evidenced by the sales figures for *Self*

¹⁴⁷ CW C/26, 1922, ‘Mortal Coils’, *The Outlook*, 29 April 1922 and ‘A Sheaf of Short Stories’ *Westminster Gazette*, 19 April 1922, 69-70.

¹⁴⁸ Swinnerton, *Authors*, pp. 109 and 111.

¹⁴⁹ Swinnerton, *Authors*, p. 109.

and *Mortal Coils*. It has been observed that it ‘was ultimately the publishing industry’s investment in, and financial dependence on, the circulating libraries which forced publishing houses to be risk-averse’, hence the changes Nichols made to *Self*.¹⁵⁰ But it was a useful precaution since although the circulating libraries did not often label a book ‘Class C’ or objectionable, and theirs was often a light-touch censorship, over the decades writers such as ‘Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett – were banned or withdrawn from library stock’.¹⁵¹ This hegemonic control showed the circulating libraries values at their rawest and it was difficult not to consider these since it could otherwise cause substantial damage to a title’s prospects.

While the bookselling trade did not enforce an encompassing censorship, otherwise their situation was comparable to that of the circulating library. J. G. Wilson adumbrates the virtues of the bookseller, ‘to prevent the “mass confusion” caused by unnecessary books from impinging on the book-buyer’ and ‘organizing the approaches to knowledge.’¹⁵² This suggests a trade that could direct the customer, finding that book on relativity, or the gift book required for a birthday. Wilson, however, is over and above this forced to recognise that, like the circulating library, ‘the bookseller [...] is obliged [...] to concentrate upon those lines of stock which are most likely to bring a quick return’ and that category is most likely filled by Freeman Wills Crofts’s *The Pit-Prop Syndicate* or Nat Gould’s *Sold for a Song* than the nascent modernism of Joyce or even the work of John Galsworthy.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Nicola Wilson, ‘Libraries, Reading Patterns, and Censorship’, p. 41.

¹⁵¹ Nicola Wilson, ‘Libraries, Reading Patterns, and Censorship’, pp. 43 and 42.

¹⁵² Wilson, J. G., ‘Bookselling in London’, p. 121.

¹⁵³ Wilson, J. G., ‘Bookselling in London’, p. 122.

The public library, in similar fashion to its commercial rivals, was now more directed towards what their users wanted, with the ‘Great Fiction Question’ largely resolved. The 1927 Kenyon Report would admit that ‘a library should aim to “relieve the tedium of idle hours quite irrespective of intellectual profit or educational gain.”’ In one survey of urban libraries novels accounted for 80% of loans,¹⁵⁴ and Mary Grover has shown how libraries began to stock long runs of particular authors, like ‘Orczy, Edgar Wallace and Mazo de la Roche.’¹⁵⁵ Valuing the popular was beginning to underpin the institutions that many of the public dealt with such as libraries and high street booksellers, which renders more comprehensible the observations on readership in Q. D. Leavis’s *Fiction and the Reading Public* a decade later.

The values that Chatto and Windus attached to the two novels under discussion passed through a communications circuit but in doing so they encountered a series of valuing communities, much like those described by Barbara Herrnstein Smith, although her focus remains on the reader.¹⁵⁶ This agglomeration of valuing groups is not always in consonance with each other and will promote their values over those of other bodies, shown, for example, in the friction between publishers and booksellers over pricing and discounts. The values that Chatto and Windus tried to instill into their books come into conflict with the coterie values and the aspiration to independent thought of the reviewer, complicated further when that reviewer is also a published writer or has editorial responsibilities. Critic Arthur Waugh, for example,

¹⁵⁴ See Robert Snape, ‘Libraries for Leisure Time’ in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland: Volume 3 1850-2000* ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 40-55 (p.51).

¹⁵⁵ Grover, *Steel City Readers*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ See Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 182. Further information can be found in the Introduction to this thesis.

was at various times managing director and chairman of publishers Chapman and Hall.

Chatto and Windus could not trust that the intangible values they assigned to their books would not be re-shaped or even rejected by other valuing communities, but using their travelling representative, the distribution of review copies and the book's design, their objective was that at least some of this reached the general public who would be able to discern a book they would wish to borrow, buy or even cherish.

❖ Chapter 3. Death and the Publisher: Crime Writing, Humour, and Play

‘Under the head of “mental relaxation” may be included detective stories’

Q. D. Leavis¹

In her survey of writers Q. D. Leavis classed bestselling writers as category D, and amongst the responses she received from this group was one from ‘a writer of detective fiction’; as a whole Leavis believed ‘they had no illusions about their work, which, they said, they knew didn’t merit serious scrutiny’.² This was often the response to genre fiction at the time from those adjacent to academia, or from modernists for whom popular art forms were anathema, yet from the previous chapter it is clear that, in many libraries, there was a tremendous enthusiasm for crime writing.

After *Self* and *Mortal Coils*, the crime genre seems a very different prospect with Golden Age crime writing increasingly predicated upon a set of rules but focused especially on the idea of ‘fair-play.’ However, both books have a peripheral relationship with crime writing. *Self* with its affinities to farce can be linked to some aspects of the crime novel, and later Nichols would create his own short-lived detective, Horatio Green.³ In turn the most celebrated of Huxley’s stories, ‘The Gioconda Smile’, bears a passing resemblance to the events that formed the backdrop to the 1922 Armstrong murder trial (discussed later). Crime began to colonise the pages of many types of writing in the inter-war years from T. S. Eliot’s ‘Sweeney Erect’ (1920) to *Rebecca* (1938).

¹ Leavis, Q. D, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Pimlico, 2000), p. 50.

² Leavis, p. 45.

³ Horatio Green’s first appearance was in a novel of 1954. Somerset Maugham was moved to write that Nichols was one of the “big five” British mystery writers’. See Bryan Connon, *Beverley Nichols: A Life* (London: Constable, 1991), p. 244.

What follows is an interrogation of crime writing in 1922 and those novels that were bestselling or popular in their exposition, with an exploration of their publishing history and the differing fortunes of the writers concerned. The intention is to seek to understand why, in post-war writing and certainly in 1922, there was a growth in the crime novel and an expansion of humour and play within the form, and how this related to the historical situation and its function within the individual texts. Despite their varying levels of popularity, most of these novels have largely disappeared from cultural visibility. Titles published in 1922 often had a significant reputation but have not remained in the public consciousness. As Franco Moretti asks, ‘who could distinguish equally surely the lasting from the ephemeral?’⁴

As Chris Baldick has written, there was a ‘knowing flippancy’ to crime writing which became a ‘pervasive feature of Golden Age detection’, a form that was ‘a sprightly modern game of wits.’⁵ This was true even in 1922. An *Observer* reviewer, critical of Cyril Alington’s novel *Mr. Evans*, remarked that the ‘humour does not provoke laughter quite loud enough.’⁶ The texts here rarely allow outright comedy to overtake the narrative. In what follows humour is taken to mean discourse provoking a reaction short of actual laughter, whereas the term comedy defines episodes that provoke laughter but encompasses both humour and joking.

The main form of comedy in general usage is a type of incongruity, although other forms, dependent on a sense of superiority, or on psychological relief similarly

⁴ Moretti, ‘The Slaughterhouse of Literature’ *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000), 226.

⁵ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford English Literary History Volume 10: 1910-1940, The Modern Movement*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, 13 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), X, 277.

⁶ Anonymous, ‘Strained Relations’, *Observer*, 21 May 1922, p. 4.

exist.⁷ In Agatha Christie's *The Secret Adversary* Tuppence tells her partner, Tommy, that 'one young man is much like another' and he responds that 'my pleasing features and distinguished appearance would single me out from any crowd.'⁸ Here the incongruity, and humour, arise from the gap between the real Tommy and the vainglorious image he uses to present himself. Although humour is not always generated verbally it is related to irony, understood as a disparity or incongruity which is at the core of this type of comedy. Jerry Palmer points out that '[f]or Schopenhauer incongruity consists in a mismatch between a concept and some empirical entity in the world' and can therefore encapsulate speech, objects, and people. Palmer submits that '[h]umour then arises in the discrepant relationship between the two parts of the perception.' It should be added that when dealing with humour in these novels it cannot be known whether a particular reader will recognise key elements as humour. Palmer makes clear that '[a]ll meaning resides in an interaction between the mind, culture and the empirical world' including humour.⁹ Importantly, if the mind of the individual finds the joke unamusing, the humour will fail.

□ 1922 and the Golden Age

In many ways 1922 was a year of transition. Most crime writing had yet to conform to all the strictures of 'the Golden Age', a period of writing about crime that variously stretched from 1918 to 1930 or straddled the inter-war years, as Stephen Knight has suggested.¹⁰ If the chronology has been fairly fixed, the elements that make up the

⁷ See Jerry Palmer, *Taking Humour Seriously* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 94.

⁸ Agatha Christie, *The Secret Adversary* (London: J. Lane, 1922), p. 30.

⁹ Palmer, pp. 95 and 93.

¹⁰ Stephen Knight, 'The Golden Age' in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) ed. by Martin Priestman, pp. 77-94 (p. 77).

formula are in debate, as are the reasons why the inter-war years incubated such fierce talents in Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers or Freeman Wills Crofts. What can be said is that there was an ‘inordinate demand’ for tales like these in the years following the Great War.¹¹ H. Douglas Thomson has written that, at the time, the form could be regarded as ‘a tonic for jaded nerves, or a means for dispelling the tediousness of a railway journey.’¹² In this are two reasons the crime genre expanded in these years. As will become clear, an increasing amount of leisure time for the population required activities to fill that time, while the idea of crime writing as a tonic for the nerves is a reminder that many in Britain had suffered tremendous trauma in the war, and some remained prisoners of its effects (see Chapter Five). Crime writing in its way attempted to mitigate these stresses. Thomson clearly regards mass-market publishing as both the source of the Golden Age but also its nemesis since the detective novel is ‘badly written because it is popular’; writers have no time to polish their work as there is always a sense of urgency and ‘the desperate attempt on the part of the author and his publisher to meet the inordinate demand.’¹³ If Golden Age titles were not well written there existed the very real possibility that not writing to the kind of formula developed at the time could also count against a novel.

Maurizio Ascari sees the definitions of the Golden Age beginning in the later 1920s when anthologies collected together the best specimens of the form such as *The Great Detective Stories* (1927) and Dorothy L. Sayers’ *Great Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror* (1928) with an introduction by the editor setting out the limits of

¹¹ H. Douglas Thomson, *Masters of Mystery: A Study of the Detective Novel* (London: W. Collins, 1931), p. 17.

¹² Thomson, p. 16.

¹³ Thomson, p. 17.

the form.¹⁴ Even then, if '[e]lements that were randomly present in earlier crime fictions suddenly became a norm' the idea of a Golden Age has been criticised as 'unduly homogenous' if it is to capture the variety of writing, some of it by authors who had come of age before the Great War such as R. Austin Freeman and J. S. Fletcher, while the Sherlock Holmes stories only concluded in 1927.¹⁵ There are, despite this, a reasonably reliable set of criteria to define this new wave of crime writing. Murder had become an essential feature of the plot, the setting is enclosed in some manner (the country house being the classic example), the detective can be either an amateur or a professional, but their class status puts them above the ordinary 'run-of-the-mill police.'¹⁶ There should be a range of suspects and with the murderer's unmasking, the story concludes. Knight highlights two other features of importance, that the narrative should be based upon what he has called the clue-puzzle, something previously outlined by Thomson at the time although he wrote that 'the author should play the game with [the reader]' and work with the idea of 'fair-play'.¹⁷ This was the concept that the story must pivot on a mystery (or in Knight's terms a puzzle) dependent on the clues that lead to its solution. The 'fair-play' aspect required that the author play the game which involved the reader being put 'on an equal footing with the detective himself [sic], as regards clues and discoveries.' The writer, meanwhile, in attempting to contrive an audacious conclusion must 'legitimately obfuscate' the meaning of the clues that are given.¹⁸ Knight further insists

¹⁴ Maurizio Ascari, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 167-168.

¹⁵ Knight, 'The Golden Age', p. 77; Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), p. 85.

¹⁶ Knight, 'The Golden Age', pp. 77-94.

¹⁷ Thomson, p. 54.

¹⁸ Dorothy L. Sayers, 'The Omnibus of Crime' in *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980) ed. by Robin W. Winks, pp. 53-83 (p. 73).

that neither the ‘authorial voice nor characters [are] given any elaboration.’¹⁹ This insistence on writing that has simplicity and a lack of perceived depth offers reasons why critics like Edmund Wilson disparaged the form, but further suggests the genre’s distance from modernism.²⁰ Marjorie Nicolson, writing in 1929 called the crime story ‘a return to the novel of plot and incident – that genre despised these many years by *litterateurs*’ and the antidote to reading for those who have reached the limit of their ‘endurance of characteristically “contemporary” literature.’²¹

The connections between modernism and crime writing are often debated but have yet to be concluded decisively. In his survey of inter-war crime writing, Stephen Knight remarks that the chronology of the Golden Age demands that the critic ask ‘to what extent it is a version of modernism’ while some have called it ‘a refuge from modernism’.²² There certainly appears to be a significant divide between the resolutely conservative form of the crime novel, which Franco Moretti sees as concerned with ‘prudence, conservation, and stasis’, distancing it from the more radical literary experiments of ‘The Waste Land’ and *Ulysses*.²³ David I. Grossvogel, analysing Agatha Christie’s Poirot novels writes:

The Lovers are reunited, the upper-middle class ritual is once again resumed. Law, order, and property are secure, and, in a universe that is forever threatening to escape from our rational grasp, a single little man

¹⁹ Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, p. 78.

²⁰ See Edmund Wilson, ‘Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?’ in *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Howard Haycraft (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946) pp. 390-397.

²¹ See Marjorie Nicolson, ‘The Professor and the Detective’ in Howard Haycraft, ed., *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946) pp. 110-127 (pp. 116 and 113).

²² Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, p. 90.

²³ Franco Moretti, ‘Clues’ in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 139.

[...] leaves us the gift of a tidy world, a closed book in which all questions have been answered.²⁴

This is a view that encompasses the majority of the books discussed here and it is only the oddity of *Mr. Evans* that might question this particular formula, although in this novel there is the knowledge that law, order, and property were never under threat in the first instance. While the works of Eliot and Joyce might leave only questions, very few crime writers set out to radically critique the form. Ones that did include John Dickson Carr's 'lecture' that forms the centrepiece of his novel *The Hollow Man* (1935) in which the detective declares, 'we're in a detective story and we don't fool the reader by pretending we're not'²⁵, or 'Cameron McCabe's *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor* (1937) which attempts to bankrupt the very idea of the crime novel.²⁶ But these works looked back on the Golden Age of crime writing, now largely fixed in form, whereas in 1922 there were no such certainties and writers were more wary of breaching Hans Robert Jauss's 'horizon of expectations' except perhaps for Cyril Alington and A. A. Milne whose novels generate humour out of their transgressions.²⁷

Before attending to the various novels in more detail, it is necessary to define the term 'crime fiction' which concerns itself with both the thriller and the detective novel. Critics tend to favour a separation of the two forms, but H. Douglas Thomson says that 'the thriller (species) belonging to detective fiction (genus) must contain

²⁴ David I. Grossvogel, *Mystery and Its Fictions: From Oedipus to Agatha Christie* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 52.

²⁵ Quoted in Christopher Pittard, 'The English Detective Story' in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 213- 241 (p. 225).

²⁶ Cameron McCabe was the pseudonym of the German intellectual Ernest Borneman.

²⁷ Hans Robert Jauss, 'History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', *New Literary History*, 2.1 (1970), 12.

some detection in it.' Thomson demands three things of the form: 'careful attention must be paid to create the nerve-racking atmosphere', while there should be 'a brisk simple narrative (unvarnished save with horror)' and 'the exploitation of dramatic effect.' This should involve '[f]orlorn hopes, narrow shaves, last-minute rescues' and 'Guy Fawkes conspiracies.'²⁸ The detective story, by contrast, must be 'a feather to tickle the intellect' which suggests the lightness of some forms of play whilst puzzling the mind.²⁹ A murder was not at first a necessity (as Cyril Alington's novel, *Mr. Evans* shows) but, as E. M. Wrong declares, '[t]ime has in fact exalted murder'.³⁰ The detective novel also differs in terms of timescale suffering from 'systematic chronological disorder' since it constantly switches backwards and forwards in time between the events of the murder and that of the later investigation which forms a separate narrative.³¹ The thriller tends towards the single chronology since its protagonist is always moving forward, both temporally and in geographical terms. Because genres are always hybrid, permeable creations the exact formula of the thriller or detective novel cannot easily be prescribed.

□ The Historical Context and Theories of Play

Colin Watson has commented that readers 'read for pleasure rather than education'.³² Watson says this in the context of the crime novel, but the remark surely extends to a very large number of readers, although by no means all. In his remark Watson

²⁸ Thomson, pp. 212-14.

²⁹ Quoted in Thomson, p. 34. The quotation is from Charles Lamb.

³⁰ E. M. Wrong, 'Crime and Detection', in *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Howard Haycraft (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 18-32 (p. 25).

³¹ Quoted in William Nelles and Linda Williams, 'Doing Hard Time: Narrative Order in Detective Fiction', *Style*, 55.2 (2021), 191.

³² Colin Watson, *Snobbery with Violence: Crime Stories and Their Audience* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971), p. 29.

concerns himself with that post-war world in which leisure time was increasing for some, and ideas of play like dancing, hiking or record breaking became common within the culture. And this certainly included reading as a leisure activity.

If play was a growing category, the post-war years also saw the gradual dissolution of the body in post-war crime fiction. At first much of European culture had been taken up with the idea of the body, the corpse laid to rest near the battlefield. There followed arguments over whether those remains should then be repatriated and in 1920 an unknown soldier was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey in a very literal attempt to put to rest the idea of the wartime body.³³

The failure to detail the damage done to the bodies in crime writing distances the reader from 'mortality, and therefore the corpse must be made unreal and "fun"'.³⁴ Edmund Crispin commented that bodies in Agatha Christie are not real cadavers 'but merely the pretext for a puzzle', a belief for many other post-war crime writers.³⁵ Behind this again lies the aftermath of the war. Bertram Pollard, the military veteran in Philip Gibbs' *Middle of the Road*, walking through Marylebone turns 'his eyes away from a blinded man playing a piano organ' in the street.³⁶ Mutilated bodies could still be seen on Britain's streets every day and crime writing fought shy of representing more.³⁷ The dissolution of the body allowed for the use and release of humour in these novels.

³³ See J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 23-28.

³⁴ Quoted in J. C. Bernthal, "If Not Yourself Who Would You Be?": Writing the Female Body in Agatha Christie's Second World War Detective Fiction', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 26.1-2 (2015), 43.

³⁵ Quoted in Bernthal, 42.

³⁶ Philip Gibbs, *The Middle of the Road* (London: Hutchinson, 1922), p. 35.

³⁷ Gill Plain has argued that the corpses in detective writing of this time, despite their marginal appearance, would have offered 'the full significance of ritual death' but a body neatly dispatched in a library would not have had the same force as a battlefield littered with corpses. Quoted in Bernthal, 43.

An important part of the Golden Age story was the idea of play, that the crime story was a ‘grown-up nonsense’ and that, fundamentally for the genre, ‘it does not take crime seriously.’³⁸ Even so, if the crime novel is playful it must adhere to Thomson’s idea of ‘the rules of the game.’³⁹ As he says, ‘the reader expects the writer to co-operate with him to some extent.’⁴⁰ The Golden Age meant formulating rules by which play might take place; for Marjorie Nicolson it was ‘an enthralling game’.⁴¹

Play and humour were in part an antidote to war and the restrictions of DORA (the Defence of the Realm Acts). Men and women swam the Channel and record-breaking became the vogue. There was hiking and dancing and ‘[a]lmost all sports [...] gained in popularity during this period.’⁴² Play shaded into recreation in the era, and expanded substantially. The crossword appeared as the ‘crossword square’ in 1924 but would retrospectively be linked to the rise of the detective novel and its analogous puzzle structure.⁴³

Leisure had more space in the inter-war years. A ‘million-and-a-half wage and salary earners’ in the 1920s were entitled to ‘holidays with pay’ giving them time for play, enjoyment and with it, light-heartedness, and humour.⁴⁴ Play extended from dancing to the fantasies that could be indulged through reading. In 1920 there were ‘five million daily readers and thirteen million readers of the Sunday press’ while periodicals, often featuring fiction, had similarly expanded.⁴⁵ This enlargement of the

³⁸ Thomson, p. 16.

³⁹ Thomson, pp. 21 and 22.

⁴⁰ Thomson, p. 53.

⁴¹ Marjorie Nicolson, ‘The Professor and the Detective’, p. 118.

⁴² Robert Graves, and Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939* (London: Folio Society, 2009), p. 199.

⁴³ Graves and Hodge, pp. 109-110.

⁴⁴ Watson, p. 29.

⁴⁵ On Lord Northcliffe’s death in 1922 the newspaper magnate’s company had also owned over one hundred periodical titles. See Watson, p. 28.

newspaper and magazine market brought crime to the people and in 1922 the crimes of three people captivated readers. Herbert Armstrong was tried for poisoning his wife while Frederick Bywaters and Edith Thompson were in the dock for murdering Edith's husband. At Armstrong's trial the judge summed up the case as 'deeply interesting' and the press agreed.⁴⁶ Murder sold newspapers and in turn stimulated the trade for the crime novel.

Nor should the cinema as a leisure activity be neglected. If crime writing had begun to nurture its humorous aspect it was simply working in tandem with a film industry whose greatest stars, like Charlie Chaplin, were comedians; he had become 'the world's most famous screen person in the 1920s'.⁴⁷ It had led him to return to London in 1921 which began a semi-riot, an event described in his 1922 book *My Wonderful Visit*.⁴⁸ In reviewing the book Edmund Blunden indicated that in the future 'platoon commanders' could use Chaplin's films to 'restore their good spirits', suggesting that comedy had helped to ease the burden of the war and was now doing so in peacetime.⁴⁹

Play is something bound up in many forms of activity but it is something, as Johan Huizinga outlined, 'which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action.' Huizinga comments that 'play is non-serious' but observes that 'for some play can be very serious indeed.'⁵⁰ A game of chess can be of infinite

⁴⁶ See From Our Special Correspondent, 'Armstrong "Guilty"', *The Times*, 15 April 1922, p. 7. Beverley Nichols as a newspaperman was the individual who sought out Edith Thompson's family and reported on the final days before her execution. He remarks on the events in his autobiography. See Beverley Nichols, *Twenty-Five* (London: Penguin, 1935), Chapter XVI, 'Hanged by the Neck.'

⁴⁷ Simon Louvish, *Chaplin: The Tramp's Odyssey* (London: Faber, 2009), p. xvi.

⁴⁸ Charlie Chaplin, *My Wonderful Visit* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1922).

⁴⁹ Edmund Blunden, 'A Poet on Charlie Chaplin', *Daily News*, 25 May 1922, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 1 and 5.

importance to the players while an evening of snakes and ladders may be anything but. Thomson extends the concept of play to the detective novel which was noted previously. Marty Roth writing about adventure fiction says that ‘you must grow up before you can play the game; you have to grow up before you can be a child.’⁵¹ In 1922 the idea of play must in some ways have appeared childish but it allowed individuals to abdicate their responsibilities after a war in which they had been onerous and unwanted.

Later commentators have enlarged upon this idea that play is in part absurdity, a breaking with sense, calling it carnivalesque and finding, an ‘equilibrium between creation and destruction in the embodied laughter.’⁵² This has a particular relevance to crime writing where the destruction of human life is counterbalanced by the creation of a narrative designed to uncover the crime, but it usefully explains the irruption of humour in the novel.

This tension between death, play and humour is on display in a book that dominated post-war crime writing: the publication in 1913 of E. C. Bentley’s first novel, *Trent’s Last Case*, sought to upend many of the narrative devices that had underpinned the detective novel. Thomson summarises the tale:

The detective Philip Trent - who falls in love with one of the suspects - fails to solve the problem, and the solution is tendered gratis. For this violation of the rules the staggering dénouement is for once ample compensation.⁵³

The novel developed out of some play between Trent and G. K. Chesterton, ‘the outcome of a wager’, and its light-hearted tone betrays those origins. The book may

⁵¹ Marty Roth, *Foul & Fair Play: Reading Genre in Classic Detective Fiction* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1995), p. 49.

⁵² Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2014), p. 11.

⁵³ Thomson, p. 149.

have remained an outlier if the war had not intervened and given later writers a means of changing the nature of the crime novel. It has been argued that ‘Bentley’s novel anticipates and heavily influenced [...] works of classic Golden Age writers such as Agatha Christie’.⁵⁴

□ Narrative, Humour, and Games

Agatha Miller was born to an English mother and an American father who died when she was just eleven. His financial affairs having been mishandled, money was relatively short in the household he left behind. It was only a few years later that the shy Agatha married at the start of the Great War and became Agatha Christie, soon after beginning a career as a novelist.⁵⁵ When her childhood home looked set to be sold, Christie’s husband Archie suggested another novel to raise the funds to save it. As she records it, he remarked that “[i]t might make a lot of money”.⁵⁶ If the intention was to raise some cash in short order, then a carefully plotted detective novel was less attractive than the more free-form shape of the thriller.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Nathan Ashman, “‘The Impotence of Human Reason’: E. C. Bentley’s *Trent’s Last Case* and the Antidetective Text’, *Clues*, 35.2 (2017), 7.

⁵⁵ Janet Morgan, *Christie [Née Miller; Other Married Name Mallowan], Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa (1890–1976), Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2017) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30926>>.

⁵⁶ Agatha Christie, *An Autobiography* (London: Collins, 1977) p. 266.

⁵⁷ There is some dispute over the genesis of Christie’s *The Secret Adversary* since in a letter dated 19 October of 1920 enquiring about the publication of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* the writer says, ‘I’ve nearly finished a second one.’ Charles Osborne, surveying the novels suggests that Christie must therefore have forgotten the events surrounding the novel since in her *Autobiography* she says that after her first novel she felt ‘I would probably write stories from time to time’ giving no indication that another novel was imminent. I think that the answer lies in the syntax of the original letter that Osborne relies upon. It is a letter from a first-time novelist impatient to see their book in print and is notable for its terseness:

Dear Mr Willett

What about my book? I am beginning to wonder if it is ever coming out- I’ve nearly finished a second one by this time?

Being new to the trade Christie had originally signed an invidious contract with John Lane, set out as follows:

She was to receive a small royalty, but only after the first 2,000 copies had been sold. All subsidiary rights, such as serialization and film rights, would be shared fifty-fifty between author and publisher, and there was a clause binding the author to offer the Bodley Head [Lane's publishing house] her next five novels, at an only slightly increased royalty rate.⁵⁸

The first part of the contract would not have been too onerous for an author whose work had been refused by several other publishers. What was less welcome was for Lane to take a share in the serialization and film rights, holding Christie to this contract for a further five novels. After the publication of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), the '£25 which Agatha Christie earned from her first book came, not from royalties [...] but from a half share of the serial rights which had been sold for £50'.⁵⁹ J. B. Priestley, who briefly worked for John Lane, described him as being 'capable of reconciling immense generosity at the lunch table with publishing terms which any successful author would regard as shocking.'⁶⁰ Christie was not yet a 'successful author'.

Letters to the publisher tend to focus on Christie's desire to retain as much control over her output as possible, given that the contract could not be altered. Before hardback publication *The Secret Adversary* was serialised in the *Weekly Times*.

I believe that what Christie is intending to say is 'I could have finished a second one by this time' to indicate the time elapsed between the receipt of the manuscript and its publication. This then makes the account in the *Autobiography* more reliable and may make sense of the form of the new novel. See University of Reading Special Collections, Bodley Head Ltd., JL 3/34, 'Letter Dated Oct. 19th on notepaper headed "Ashfield, Torquay", to Mr. Willett from Agatha Christie', and Agatha Christie, *An Autobiography*, p. 263.

⁵⁸ Charles Osborne, *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* (London: Collins, 1982), p. 13.

⁵⁹ Osborne, p. 13.

⁶⁰ Vincent Brome, *J.B. Priestley* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), p. 67.

A letter of 17 September highlights the paper's carelessness since the name Peel-Edgerton had been transposed as 'Peel-Matthews' and there are hopes this will be rectified since the writer does not want it to damage US serialisation.⁶¹ Behind this is the issue of money. US serialisation might well have realised even more than she had earned in Britain for her first book. As she says in the letter, she wants it serialised 'where I can get most money for it!'⁶² Further letters from the author interest themselves in the cover design of *The Secret Adversary*; her concern is that the book makes an impact to earn her as much as possible.

The issue of the cover is another means by which Christie is trying to assert control over her intellectual property. The design she sees 'has nothing whatever to do with the story'.⁶³ In the end John Lane had more leverage and as long-time publishers they probably cared little for the advice of a relatively new writer. The cover has as its centrepiece neither of the central characters, Tommy and Tuppence, but a bear removing the mask of a man presumably meant to be that of the villain, Peel-Edgerton.

The exuberant opening to *The Secret Adversary* is set, according to Charles Osborne, in 1920.⁶⁴ Two old friends, Tuppence and Tommy, meet and the young woman Tuppence, asks Tommy if he too has been demobbed. His response is '[t]wo months ago' while the gratuity he received has already been spent.⁶⁵ However, issues of unemployment and alienation after the war with which the novel deals are as

⁶¹ JL 3/34, 'Letter Dated 17th September on Notepaper Headed "Ashfield, Torquay" to Mr. Willett from Agatha Christie.'

⁶² JL 3/34, 'Letter Dated 21st November on Notepaper Headed "8. Addison Mansions, Blythe Road, W14", To Mr. Willett from Agatha Christie.'

⁶³ JL 3/34, 'Letter Dated 13th October and with the Address "8 Addison Mansions, W14" to [addressee illegible] from Agatha Christie.'

⁶⁴ Osborne, p. 19.

⁶⁵ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 10.

naturally a part of 1922 as 1920 when the slump had once again created mass joblessness.

It is the first chapter that is most important in establishing the novel's humour.

The protagonists meet outside Dover Street tube station.⁶⁶

'TOMMY OLD THING!'

'Tuppence, old bean!'

The two young people greeted each other affectionately, and momentarily blocked the Dover Street Tube exit in doing so. The adjective 'old' was misleading. Their united ages would certainly not have totalled forty-five.

'Not seen you for simply centuries,' continued the young man. 'Where are you off to? Come and chew a bun with me. We're getting a bit unpopular here - blocking the gangway as it were. Let's get out of it.'

[...]

'Now then,' said Tommy, where shall we go?'

The very faint anxiety which underlay his tone did not escape the astute ears of Miss Prudence Cowley, known to her intimate friends for some mysterious reason as 'Tuppence.' She pounced at once.

'Tommy, you're stony!'⁶⁷

After Tuppence outlines her war career, '[a]bridged biography of Miss Prudence Cowley', first in the hospital where Tommy was recovering in 1916 then later in the war as driver to a general, 'the last was the pleasantest', it appears that she has done her bit. She has emerged into a world where (some) women have the vote and her

⁶⁶ The fictional worlds of 1922 seem to have collided unexpectedly on occasion. In the opening chapter to *The Secret Adversary* Tommy and Tuppence bump into one another at the exit to Dover Street tube station. It is in the same location that Christine and John Dryden meet in *Greensea Island*. It could also be added that Tommy and Tuppence end up staying in the Ritz for much of *The Secret Adversary*, and might have bumped into Carl Peterson and Irma, staying in a suite at the same location in *The Black Gang*. The tube station was eventually superseded by Green Park. See: <https://www.mylondon.news/news/nostalgia/abandoned-london-underground-station-became-21349696> [Accessed 8/10/24].

⁶⁷ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 9.

forthrightness of speech reflects these things, as well as a certain class privilege since her father is 'Archdeacon Cowley of Little Missendell, Suffolk.'⁶⁸ Stephen Knight tends to confirm this when he says that Tuppence is 'the more effective of the pair.'⁶⁹ In fact, this first exchange is of significance: Tommy is 'old thing' and Tuppence is 'old bean'; they are already in a playful mode since they are not communicating as such (they could just have said 'hello') but indulging in what David Crystal calls 'ludic behaviour.'⁷⁰ Their whole encounter might come partially under Crystal's idea of 'ping-pong punning'; although they are not actively using puns, the conversation 'bounces back and forth between them, in an almost competitive spirit' in a similar manner to the conversation between Bill and Gillingham in *The Red House Mystery*.⁷¹ For Tuppence and Tommy the exchange is marked by levity, and the reader might well see it as humorous, the line between the two being extremely narrow.

C. F. G. Masterman described unemployed life after the war as individuals 'scrambling in the deepening darkness for the bare means of sustenance.'⁷² Christie's approach is a refutation of this view and an indication of the type of light, untroubling narrative she is offering the reader. Tommy and Tuppence use humorous metaphor to discriminate between each other, 'old thing' and 'old bean', setting up the levity that continues through the scene. The two phrases have a deeper meaning for the time and place. To begin with, the phrase 'old thing' as it is used here had only recently come into being as a contemporary phrase of endearment. Interestingly, references to the phrase in *Green's Dictionary of Slang* are from 'Sapper', Dorothy L. Sayers and two

⁶⁸ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 11.

⁶⁹ Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 112.

⁷⁰ David Crystal, *Language Play* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 2.

⁷¹ Crystal, p. 4.

⁷² C.F.G. Masterman, *England After War: A Study* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), p. 3.

further citations of Agatha Christie.⁷³ Despite roots in the nineteenth century the phrase had become modern and as the *OED* points out, the phrase is '[f]requently [rendered] as **dear old thing** (emphasis in the original).'⁷⁴ Tuppence, keeping to clipped sentences fitting the notion of 'ping-pong', has no doubt dropped the 'dear' but implies it. The two are long-standing friends allowing Tommy to use 'old bean' just as readily. Cited first in the *OED* from 1917 when it appeared in an article called 'Contact' in *Airman's Outings*, it emerged directly from the war, referenced in the *OED* as slang.⁷⁵ Tommy and Tuppence are working with phrases that are shiny and newly coined, designating both the characters' modernity and their wartime service. The humour in the scene is reiterated by exaggeration and verbal play: 'Not seen you for simply centuries', and '[c]ome and chew a bun with me', a phrase that becomes humorous when the reader realises that Tommy is unable to afford the bun. The scene establishes the level of wry humour that never rises to outright comedy. Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin sought to understand comedy as a subversive form through his concentration on the work of Rabelais and consideration of the medieval practice of carnival in which he saw official culture momentarily displaced by what Andrew Stott has called 'the culture of the marketplace, the popular and boisterous voice of the people.'⁷⁶ Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist in their explication of Bakhtin's carnival say that 'the coordinates of the carnival world conduce to freedom and

⁷³ 'old thing' in Green, Jonathon, *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, New ed. with citations, 3 vols (London: Chambers, 2010), II, 1949-1950.

⁷⁴ Old Thing, n., *OED: Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press) <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/258552?redirectedFrom=old+thing&>>.

⁷⁵ "Bean", n., *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/16527?rskey=i9hBBh&result=1#eid>>.

⁷⁶ Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (Routledge, 2005), p. 33.

fearlessness'.⁷⁷ It might be objected that the opening scene of the novel, dealing with the wrecking of the *Lusitania* and the (unseen) deaths of over a thousand souls does not allow for this carnival sense. However, if carnival is a 'festive celebration of the other' then it interpellates Tommy and Tuppence. Both find themselves beyond the 'legal codes' and 'normative poetics' of society.⁷⁸ They are unemployed, granting them peripheral status, and no longer under the interdiction of the state. It is in this position that Tuppence can suggest that 'people might hire us to commit crimes for them.'⁷⁹ Both characters find themselves in a situation beyond their own class confines, Tommy because he is effectively an orphan. They are both reintegrated into their class at the novel's end when their class-bound relatives claim them once again.⁸⁰

Another thriller was published in the same month (January 1922) as *The Secret Adversary*, Victor Bridge's *Greensea Island*. Although tonally it is quite different from the former novel there is still the class emphasis of Christie's book and the same brand of humour to unite them. Almost all the consequential characters in the book are middle class in some form or another and it is only the servant and former boxer Bascomb who is clearly from a working-class background, but he is soon murdered in furtherance of the plot. The novel in the writer's obituary was described as 'his greatest success' and sold 'well over 300,000 copies.'⁸¹ Victor George De Freyne Bridges (1878-1972) was born in Bristol and began writing in 1911 while suffering illness, resulting in his first novel, *The Man from Nowhere* (1913). Certainly, after this first

⁷⁷ Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 302.

⁷⁸ Clark and Holquist, p. 300.

⁷⁹ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ See Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 244.

⁸¹ Anonymous, 'Mr Victor Bridges', *The Times*, 1 December 1972, p. 18.

novel Bridges soon took up the mantle of professional writer, the early novels all published by Mills and Boon, besides which he worked on short-form dramas.

Greensea Island was a text the *Daily Mail* said was ‘written in a manner which need offend not eve[n] the most fastidious as to style.’⁸² It is a marker of the book’s value that when the writer moved to Hodder and Stoughton in 1929 the publisher’s first instinct was to republish the novel. Bridges was a very able writer, although he sometimes had recourse to other people’s plots.⁸³ The *Daily Mail* once reckoned Bridges to be ‘a fortunate man, for he can always rely on a ten thousand sale, and when a cheap edition is issued the 40,000 mark is touched.’⁸⁴

The humour that opens *Greensea Island* is of a similar nature to that in *The Secret Adversary* and is very much related to notions of play. Ross, the ship’s doctor, and John Dryden, the second officer on the *Neptune* talk on deck after five hours of unloading cargo. Ross opens with: ‘Hello, Dryden [...] Busy as usual?’ Knowing that Dryden has spent the last few hours working hard his delivery is deliberately playful and ironically humorous, suggesting the men have adopted a shared language of play. Ross insists there is nothing to see in Oporto, the dock’s nearest town but Dryden says, ‘I want to stretch my legs.’ Ross’s reply is that ‘I should have thought they were quite long enough already’, raising humour from his deliberate misconstrual of the stock phrase.⁸⁵ Bridges is quick to show that since there is no misunderstanding between the two men, because they are long-time friends, Ross’s accusations of

⁸² By Our Reviewers, ‘Books and Their Writers’, *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1921, p. 2.

⁸³ A 1930 novel involves a man being offered, by his double, ‘£3,000 to become king for a few weeks’ only to discover ‘that his claim to the throne was contested.’ John Dryden in *Greensea Island* talks about ‘reading one of Anthony Hope’s books.’ See, Anonymous, ‘What Would You Do’, *Daily Mail*, 23 October 1930, p. 9 and *Greensea Island*, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, ‘About Books and Authors’, *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 7 October 1924, p. 13.

⁸⁵ Bridges, p. 11.

shirking are simply play. Having established this close connection between Dryden and Ross by Chapter Six the doctor exits the narrative permanently. At first it is difficult to make sense of the doctor's absence unless there is an understanding of the function of humour here. It is a way of establishing and explaining character relations but it also has a larger part to play in the text's structure. The opening is just off the Atlantic coast, close to Oporto and so these scenes play out in the warm light of the Portuguese shore; the comedy goes to support the idea of light as moderating against any grimness in the novel. The humour contributes to a sense of well-being and the atmosphere it creates enables Dryden to reach out to the distant and elusive Miss de Roda. Their encounter begins, after all, when he treads heavily on a tram conductor's toe, an episode of comedy that breaches the psychological barrier the woman has set up.⁸⁶ This atmosphere is effectively ended with the departure of Ross from the novel in Chapter Five, accomplished to remove the most obvious source of comedy. From that point onwards the novel descends into darkness reaching its later bloody conclusion off the Essex coast which takes place 'in the fitful light of the moon.'⁸⁷ This symbolic dark of evil intentions would otherwise be diluted by the presence of Ross's joking, ironic character.

Most of the novels here usually had a significant reputation at the time but no longer figure in what Franco Moretti has called the 'social canon', works that have remained current among a general readership.⁸⁸ A. A. Milne's *The Red House Mystery* surely counts amongst this number, something that might appear paradoxical given the ubiquity of the writer, even at the present time.

⁸⁶ Bridges, p. 17.

⁸⁷ Bridges, pp. 62 and 310.

⁸⁸ Moretti, 'The Slaughterhouse of Literature', p. 209.

Alan Alexander Milne was born at Henley House, Mortimer Road, Kilburn on 18th January 1882, a small school run by his father, John.⁸⁹ The family was undistinguished by wealth, and it was A. A. Milne's intellect that gained him a scholarship place at Westminster followed by a second to Trinity College, Cambridge.⁹⁰ However, an indifferent schooling at Westminster led him into writing and the Cambridge journal *Granta*. His biographer has said that Milne 'started bombarding *Granta* with verse from the moment he arrived in Cambridge' and he soon became the magazine's editor, a publication that had a reputation for being 'the Cambridge *Punch*.'⁹¹ Ann Thwaite has written that college life had 'confirmed in him a belief in play, in pleasure, in making people smile and laugh.'⁹² It was these qualities that launched Milne as a contributor to *Punch* soon after he left Cambridge and by 1914 he was its deputy editor. The outbreak of war interrupted the lives of countless men including Edmund Blunden and Milne himself. Towards the end of his life, though, he wrote 'I have been an ardent pacifist since 1910 and still am' but by 1915 he was a commissioned officer and saw service on the Somme.⁹³ On demobilisation in 1919 he found himself a reluctant freelance, but one able to pursue his metier as a successful playwright. Thwaite records that in 1924 he was earning £2000 a year from the amateur rights to his dramas.⁹⁴ However, for all his success as a dramatist, and the author of *The Red House Mystery*, he would be remembered only for four children's

⁸⁹ See Ann Thwaite, *A. A. Milne: His Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 3. Ann Thwaite, 'Milne, Alan Alexander [A. A. Milne] (1882–1956), Writer' (Oxford University Press, 2023), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/35031.

⁹⁰ Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, pp. 49 and 73.

⁹¹ Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 91.

⁹² Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 82.

⁹³ Quoted in Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 146.

⁹⁴ See Thwaite, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/35031.

books, including *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926). He would comment rather mournfully on the situation in 1952 when he wrote the lines:

All my years of pen-and-inking
Would be almost lost among
Those four trifles for the young.⁹⁵

It was in summer 1903 that Milne was free of Cambridge, and it was just two years later that his first book was published by Alston Rivers, *Lovers in London* (1905).⁹⁶ It would be five years before his next book, this time with Methuen and Co. begun by Algernon Methuen Marshall Stedman in 1889, a man who was, at that time, the headmaster of a private school near Godalming.⁹⁷ Writing his own textbooks set him on the course of publishing them himself and he eventually became a full-time publisher in 1895. In 1899 the businessman settled on the shorter Algernon Methuen (Methuen's was already the name of his company) but otherwise business continued as usual drawing in a wide range of authors such as Rudyard Kipling and Marie Corelli.⁹⁸ The company, like others previously mentioned, suffered various hardships during the war years and at one point 'twenty-one of the forty-seven staff were in the forces'.⁹⁹ By 1920 the company was looking to the future with a list that has been called catholic but can be seen as opportunistic with Einstein's work on relativity finding itself on the same list as Edgar Rice Burrough's bestselling Tarzan stories.

Milne's first book for the company was *The Day's Play: Sketches and Verses from Punch* (1910). Milne had probably been recruited to the publishers by E. V. Lucas, the

⁹⁵ Quoted in Thwaite, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/35031.

⁹⁶ Milne was not pleased with the work and according to Thwaite, 'eventually bought back his copyright for £5 to prevent a reprint' (Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 115).

⁹⁷ E. V. Lucas and Clare L. Taylor, 'Methuen [Formerly Stedman], Sir Algernon Methuen Marshall, Baronet (1856–1924), Publisher' (Oxford University Press, 2014), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/35002.

⁹⁸ Lucas and Taylor.

⁹⁹ Maureen Duffy, *A Thousand Capricious Chances: A History of the Methuen List 1889 - 1989* (London: Methuen, 1989), p. 54.

firm's reader and an editor himself who was already a fixture at *Punch* and would become a director of Methuen in 1910.¹⁰⁰ Milne was a safe bet, since his work had already found a ready audience in the pages of *Punch* under his initials 'A. A. M.'; he would remain with the firm for the rest of his lengthy career. Lucas wrote of Milne's contributions to *Punch* that '[a] new kind of nonsense was his [...] carried out with apparent effortless ease and the utmost gaiety.'¹⁰¹

In 1921 the *Daily News* began serialisation of Milne's story, *The Red House Mystery* and in April 1922 it was published between hard covers by Methuen.¹⁰² Milne's publishers had a regular anthology advertisement published in the *Times Literary Supplement* entitled 'Methuen's New Books' and on 20th April under 'New Novels' it listed the book while in the same issue the volume was reviewed, according to the *TLS* archive, by E. E. Mavrogordato.¹⁰³ The copy that Methuen's appended to the book's details described it as '[a] brilliant detective story, full of adventure, surprise, and what is very rare – humour without burlesque.'¹⁰⁴ Sales were undoubtedly helped by Methuen's decision to sell the novel at the bargain price of 6s. in anticipation of extensive sales, especially as Maureen Duffy suggests that '[b]y 1920 new novels cost, at eight shillings and sixpence, the equivalent of the average industrial wage'.¹⁰⁵ An advertisement from the *Times Literary Supplement* of 1st June 1922 included the information that the book was now embarked on its second edition, and for Methuen's

¹⁰⁰ Duffy, p. 41.

¹⁰¹ E. V. Lucas, *Reading, Writing and Remembering: A Literary Record* (London: Methuen, 1933), p. 319.

¹⁰² The serial began in the newspaper on Wednesday 3 August 1921.

¹⁰³ E. E. Mavrogordato, 'The Red House Mystery', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1057, 1922, 259.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, 'Messrs. Methuen's New Books', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1057, 1922, 258.

¹⁰⁵ Duffy, p. 76. Methuen's list tended towards cheaper books, including 'The Sixpenny Library' of popular novels like *Ben Hur* (1880). Duffy, p. 15.

this meant large sales since the publisher would not condone the practice of other publishers: ‘To print say 750 copies of a novel and to divide this into five “editions” of

Quire Stock	Ordered to Bind	Wrappers
1 st ed. 13/12/21 5425	5495	1922 20825
2 nd ed. 13/4/22 2500	2220	
3 rd ed. 25/6/22 1500	1150	
4 th ed. 22/9/22 1000	600	
5 th ed. 1/11/22 10500	10513	
6 th ed. 20/4/23 3000	3013	1923 8030
7 th ed. 10/11/23 5000	4046	
8 th ed. 25/3/25 5000	4816	1925 2525
		1926 2020
TOTAL 33,925	31,853	33,400

Fig. 2. Quire stock, binding figures and wrapper statistics for *The Red House Mystery*¹⁰⁶

150 each [...] is ridiculous, and perhaps immoral.¹⁰⁷ By 1925 the book was on its eighth edition according to Methuen’s own records.¹⁰⁸ The company had understood the potential sales of the novel early on and had 5425 copies printed on 13th December 1921 even though the title would not be published until 6th April 1922 according to their

¹⁰⁶ Based on figures from ‘Methuen Mss.’ (1892-1944), Stock Book VIII, pp. 89 and 105.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Duffy, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Methuen Mss.’ (1892-1944) Stock Book VIII, p. 105.

records.¹⁰⁹ They were perhaps hoping to capitalise on the Easter market since in 1922 Good Friday was celebrated on 14th April giving Methuen's a week of sales before the holiday began. Over the next three years each month would see around one thousand extra copies bound ready for sale, suggesting a continued interest in the book, culminating in two thousand more being bound in April 1925. Over this period, 31,853 copies of Milne's book were bound, and the conclusion can only be that the work was selling extremely well.¹¹⁰ It is uneconomic for publishers to spend money on binding books unless there is an evident demand and clearly, this continued. The information on wrappers printed (the publishers' term for the dust jacket) only confirms the binding figures, showing that dust jackets were being printed at around the same time new books were bound (33,400 by July 1926), and in roughly the same quantities. This indicates these were books being readied for sale, not to linger in the publisher's warehouse. In 1944 Raymond Chandler told readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1944 that the work 'ran thirteen editions and seems to have been in print, in the original format, for about sixteen years', sufficient evidence of its popularity.¹¹¹

The Red House Mystery is a pivotal work, since, while other of the novels in this chapter embody certain forms from the Golden Age of crime writing, this is the only book which wholly embraces the type and is, moreover, a detective novel in the truest sense. As it will become clear, J. S. Fletcher's *The Mazaroff Murder* falls short in some respects, despite employing a police officer in the role. Milne called Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* 'the model detective story' and one that has been cited

¹⁰⁹ Recorded in 'Methuen Mss.' (1892-1944) Stock Book VI, p. 486.

¹¹⁰ 'Methuen Mss.' (1892-1944) Stock Book VIII, p. 89.

¹¹¹ Raymond Chandler, 'The Simple Art of Murder', *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Howard Haycraft (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946) pp. 222-31 (p. 226).

as marking the beginning of the Golden Age.¹¹² Martin Priestman cites her as ‘the originator of a “pattern of extraordinary resilience.”’¹¹³ Of course, as it has already been noted, behind Christie was *Trent’s Last Case*, ‘the major instance of [Christie] to write at all’ as Stephen Knight has put it.¹¹⁴ In the novel the journalist, Trent, called to his employer’s office, is offered a new assignment:

‘Trent’, said Sir James impressively, ‘it is important. I want you to do some work for us.’

Some play you mean,’ replied the voice.¹¹⁵

There is no sense in which an origin should resolve itself into a single point in time and space, but these few words form the basis of Milne’s novel. It has already been established that after the Great War the idea of leisure expanded in Britain, something which included games and play. As Johan Huizinga explains:

It adorns life, amplifies it and is to that extent a necessity both for the individual – as a life function – and for society by reason of the meaning it contains, its significance, its expressive value [...]¹¹⁶

Whether it has a particular significance other than to intrude upon and solve a crime is not quite clear in *The Red House Mystery* but for the wider population dancing, sports and other games amplified the lives of those seen trudging across London Bridge by T. S. Eliot and made them more bearable. Brian Upton believes that narrative itself is a ludic form and that it ‘can be shown to be grounded in the meta-

¹¹² Quoted in Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 109. See Christopher Pittard, ‘The English Detective Story’ in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940*, ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 213-41 (p. 213).

¹¹³ Stephen Knight, ‘The Golden Age’, p. 81.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800*, p. 88.

¹¹⁵ E. C. Bentley, *Trent’s Last Case* (London: Penguin, 1937), p. 19.

¹¹⁶ Huizinga, p. 9.

rules for successful play spaces; stories work as stories because they are structured to accommodate particular sorts of reader play.¹¹⁷ In some respects this is a radical concept, allowing play to encompass the biography or even the narrative poem. For the Golden Age novel, though, this conception is entirely appropriate. In Milne's work the idea of play, humour and the Golden Age converge in an exceptional formal symmetry and the volume, in its exposition, shows why humour and crime in the interwar years became perfectly aligned.

Thomson noted the prevalence of the fair-play model in the Golden Age text, while Knight talks about the 'clue-puzzle' as mentioned previously. Susan Rowland, in turn, has shown how these features reached out to the reader and drew them into the work, all concepts that appear in *The Red House Mystery*; these and others show the work to fall entirely within the boundaries of the Golden Age.

As it was noted earlier, the idea that the writer should play the game with the reader becomes ubiquitous in the Golden Age novel; Thomson, elaborating on this theme, said that 'the reader expects the writer to co-operate with him to some extent' and Milne is more than obliging.¹¹⁸ The itinerant Antony Gillingham arrives at the mansion known as the Red House just as a shot is fired in the study and soon after, the owner's long-lost brother is found dead. Using a big, enclosed setting conforms to all the rules of the Golden Age and follows Christie's example in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. No further evidence is necessary to show that the text pivots on a clue-puzzle since the brother, Robert Ablett, is murdered in the Red House's office with no evidence

¹¹⁷ Brian Upton, *The Aesthetic of Play* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2015), pp. 10-11.

¹¹⁸ Thomson, p. 53.

of who committed the crime, although the absence of his brother, Mark, is particularly telling.

This mysterious occurrence excites Gillingham's intelligence. Determined to play the part to the fullest he assumes the posture of Sherlock Holmes and, with his old friend Bill Beverley, whom he requires to be 'the complete Watson', they set out to solve the crime.¹¹⁹ This ensures that Gillingham's numerous reflections on the mystery are shared with both 'Watson' and hence the reader. In following this formula Milne creates much of his humour out of discrepancy, between Gillingham's idea of himself and Bill as Holmes and Watson, and their more mundane reality. There follows only further discrepancy since Bill, as the less perceptive sidekick, always finds himself in the shadow of Gillingham's greater intuition. In setting out the nature of the 'Watson' figure it is useful to turn to Ronald A. Knox's 'A Detective Story Decalogue', his humorous set of rules designed to systematise the genre. He warns that

*[t]he stupid friend of the detective [...] must not conceal any thoughts which pass through his mind; his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader [italics in the original].*¹²⁰

This is made clear early on as Gillingham focuses on the key to the office where the body was discovered:

For a moment Bill did not understand.
 "Key of the office?" he said vaguely.
 "You don't mean – Tony! What do you mean?"¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 69.

¹²⁰ Ronald A. Knox, 'A Detective Story Decalogue', in Haycraft, pp. 194-96 (p. 196).

¹²¹ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 71.

This form of dialogue ensures the reader remains fully informed of the investigation. Although the writer had only lately become a playwright his work for *Punch* was always characterised by volubility, and this extends to the conversations between Bill and Tony here. The two men engage in comedic cross-talk which further confirms humour as ‘a divided and doubled experience’ which is ‘embodied for us in the double act’ but also in the idea of discrepancy.¹²² There is an adjunct to the fair-play method observed here, since the text also indulges in Rowland’s self-referentiality, of the variety present in both *The Secret Adversary* and *Mr. Evans*.

Rowland uses the term ‘metafictional’ to describe the phenomenon which appears as two distinct but related concepts.¹²³ In the novel, for example, Milne writes of Gillingham that ‘[h]e is an important person to this story, so it is well you should know something about him before letting him loose in it.’¹²⁴ On the one hand this kind of discourse helps to emphasise that we are reading a story; it confirms us as readers and the book as a fiction but by directly speaking to the putative reader it further functions to draw them into the narrative, suggesting they too have a part to play as befits a text constructed in terms of fair play. Rowland believes this ‘democratizes the form’, as well as creating an atmosphere of humour.¹²⁵ Gillingham is wise enough to know he is acting in a detective fiction, remarking to Bill that ‘[p]roperly speaking, I oughtn’t to explain till the last chapter, but I always think that’s so unfair.’¹²⁶

¹²² Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 9.

¹²³ Susan Rowland, ‘The “Classical” Model of the Golden Age’ in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 117-27 (p. 118).

¹²⁴ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 16.

¹²⁵ Rowland in Rzepka and Horsley, p. 119.

¹²⁶ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, pp. 71-72. Milne wrings further humour from the remark since the solution to the puzzle comes in the form of a letter that takes up the penultimate chapter in the novel, rather than concluding it.

This method has a further use in the context of the book, since it prevents the reader becoming too involved in the action which hopefully spares them from closely identifying with the bloody violence that sets the narrative in train. Certainly, in these novels written close to the Great War's end many seem to have opted not to engage with further trauma by offering less descriptive detail of the crime than might be expected. In *The Red House Mystery* there is just one brief moment when Milne writes: 'Robert Ablett had been shot between the eyes. It was not a pleasant sight'.¹²⁷ This short description can hardly be said to comprehend what must have been a great deal of blood, brain and bone, since the victim would have been shot at close range. As Edmund Crispin might have observed, it is not really a cadaver but further demonstrates the dissolution of the body in post-war crime.

Milne had seen death close-up since he was a veteran of the Great War. Commissioned into the Warwickshire Regiment in 1915 he reached the frontline as a signals officer, one of the most dangerous occupations in the battalion, at the moment that the allied powers launched the Somme offensive. For Richard Holmes it was the British Army's 'most costly battle ever' and Gary Sheffield has placed the losses on the first day at '60,000 men killed, wounded, missing and taken prisoner, about 20,000 of them fatalities'.¹²⁸ Although Milne spent just four months on the frontline as Thwaite says, 'no one who spent any time on the Somme can be said to have had a quiet war.'¹²⁹ Milne himself said that 'it makes me almost physically sick to think of that nightmare of mental and moral degradation'.¹³⁰ *The Red House Mystery* should not be regarded as

¹²⁷ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 22.

¹²⁸ Gary Sheffield, *The Somme* (London: Cassell, 2003), pp. ix, xii-xiii.

¹²⁹ Thwaite, *A. A. Milne*, p. 180.

¹³⁰ A. A. Milne, *Autobiography* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1939), p. 249.

a simple reflexive action intent on deflecting the cultural and personal impact the war had wrought on Milne himself. Its first importance is as entertainment, although it is telling that the novel elides all mention of the war. That is, apart from a single mention of Bill Beverley's army service in which he learnt morse code, much as Milne himself must have done.¹³¹ In a profile of the author in 1921 Robert Lynd wrote that he 'made the world bright as a second sun, and banished wicked men and misery from it by laughing at something else'.¹³² Milne is foremost a comic writer and in maintaining his style in the aftermath of the war offers this bright second sun as an alternative to Kipling's sombre response, 'their name liveth evermore.'

In these comments *The Red House Mystery* becomes clearly defined as a Golden Age text, but such is Milne's confidence in the form that he allows himself to deviate from its norms in some important ways. However, as Brian Upton has noted regarding games, their restrictions have a 'fluid, shifting nature' and to think of a game or genre as a "rigid structure" would restrict its possibilities.¹³³ In the first place by Chapter IV the house guests have all departed leaving just two suspects, Matthew Cayley, Mark Ablett who is now inexplicably missing. Of course, Milne has been more audacious than this, although it only becomes clear at the novel's close. The author has offered us only a single suspect, since Mark Ablett is already dead. Ronald A. Knox, makes a further complaint against the narrative in his 'Detective Story Decalogue' insisting: '*Not more than one secret room or passage is allowable*' (italics in the original) and singling out *The Red House Mystery* for his dispraise calling it 'hardly fair' that it includes a passage

¹³¹ See A. A. Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 126.

¹³² Robert Lynd, 'Mr. A. A. Milne.', *Daily News*, 3 August 1921, p. 4.

¹³³ Upton, p. 16.

although in doing so he believes the house itself to be ‘modern’.¹³⁴ This is unlikely to be the case; despite the book offering little in the way of detail about the property it is described as ‘big low-roofed’ and ‘oak-beamed’ with ‘diamond-paned windows’ while its frontage is described as ‘old red-brick’ suggesting a Tudorbethan hall rather than a contemporary pastiche.¹³⁵ The point though, is that in manipulating the form of the Golden Age text writers like Agatha Christie were able to subvert its ideas and shock and delight readers in the process whilst broadening the Jaussian horizon (see Introduction).

Having established the credentials of the book as a Golden Age narrative it remains to show how humour and play structures and operates within the text and how it relates to the detective genre. Whilst other of the novels in this chapter use humour as an antidote to seriousness Milne here pushes beyond this to outright comedy. Describing Audrey, the maid, Milne says of her: ‘you could have knocked her down with a feather. Feathers, indeed, were a perpetual menace to Audrey’.¹³⁶ This is very funny in itself, although it is necessary to remain cognisant of the stricture that if the mind of the individual finds the joke unamusing, the comedy will fail. From Palmer comes the concept of humour (and comedy) as a moment of incongruity and here, retooling the old saying about feathers still retains enough of this to provide the humour.

Huizinga too, considers comedy part of a ‘loosely connected group of ideas – play, laughter, folly, wit, jest, joke, the comic etc.’¹³⁷ However we characterise play and

¹³⁴ Ronald A. Knox, ‘A Detective Story Decalogue’ p. 195.

¹³⁵ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 4. Two English great houses have some of the features Milne describes, such as Moseley Old Hall, Staffordshire and Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk. See the National Trust website, ‘Places to Find Priest Holes’: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/houses-buildings/places-to-find-priest-holes> [Accessed 1/10/24].

¹³⁶ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 6.

¹³⁷ Huizinga, p. 6.

humour it becomes evident that the terms continually breach their conceptual limits which creates a formal tension. Andrew Stott writes that comedy has ‘identifiable structural qualities’ before commenting in opposition to this that it is ‘a relatively permeable form’ that works to disrupt other categories.¹³⁸ Huizinga, on the subject of play, further resolves that it ‘is the direct opposite of seriousness’ whilst later affirming that it can proceed ‘with the utmost seriousness’.¹³⁹ Gillingham has sufficient intellect to understand this friction between the two positions, and Milne remarks that ‘he was taking himself seriously as a detective; indeed he took himself seriously (while getting all the fun out of it which was possible)’.¹⁴⁰ In *The Black Gang*, discussed later, this juxtaposition of terms reaches its extreme. What this seeks to demonstrate is that humour and its more acute form, comedy, has its basis in ‘inverting, or abandoning dominant norms’ leading to a form of ‘comic subversion’.¹⁴¹ In *The Red House Mystery* late at night Gillingham sends Beverley into the mansion’s lake to retrieve a parcel Cayley has secreted there. Surveying the scene the detective remarks: “I feel that if I threw you a sardine,” said Antony with a smile, “you’d catch it in your mouth quite prettily.”¹⁴² This captures what is essential in humour, that ‘real life’ is for a moment subverted and made incongruous just as Bill is turned from a detective’s sodden accomplice into a (possible) sea lion. It also located humour as a form of doubling since the reader sees both Bill and the sea lion in what has been called a ‘bifurcated vision.’ As Stott puts it: ‘normality has been momentarily decentred for pleasurable ends.’ Humour though, can reach farther than this. Freud insisted humour opened up the

¹³⁸ Stott, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Huizinga, pp. 5 and 8.

¹⁴⁰ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 63.

¹⁴¹ Stott, p. 8.

¹⁴² Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, pp. 159-60.

space of the subconscious while at its extremity it can generate ‘transformations of different kinds, investigations of alternative identities, or a relaxation of social codes and a suspension of laws governing the body.’¹⁴³ Mikhail Bakhtin, studying humour through the idea of the medieval carnival claimed it was ‘organized on the basis of laughter’ believing that it celebrated ‘temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order’.¹⁴⁴ If this is to be believed the contagion of humour has the ability to cause a rupture in the social order, however briefly. For Bahktin’s biographers, the corollary to this is that carnival celebrates ‘the gaps and holes in all the mappings of the world’.¹⁴⁵ If *The Red House Mystery* is a light entertainment, it hardly seems necessary to force upon it this weighty superstructure of social and bodily disorder. What will become clear, in discussing ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ later, is that crime and humour, have, from the beginning, found themselves intertwined in strange and extreme ways.

It is clear how humour functions in Milne’s novel, as it did in *The Secret Adversary*, using a template of incongruity or discrepancy which often functions as irony in the text. What, though, is the function of humour taken as a whole? This question has partly been answered earlier since it is used to create a distance between the reader and some of the uglier situations in the narrative so that Bill can muse, ‘this was not real tragedy, but merely a jolly kind of detective game that he and Antony were playing’.¹⁴⁶ Comedy, as it punctuates the story, maintains its fictionality: that this is a ‘detective game.’

¹⁴³ Stott, pp. 14, 10, and 2.

¹⁴⁴ M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 8 and 10.

¹⁴⁵ Clark and Holquist, p. 300.

¹⁴⁶ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 103.

With the murder in the Red House the social order is upset, opening it up to deformation and inversion. This allows the possibility of comedy to insert itself into the situation and even to achieve an ascendancy as Milne proves. As Stott puts it: 'each concept culturally established as orthodox simultaneously presents itself for the possibility of comic subversion'. He goes on to say that 'all jokes are necessarily produced in a relative relationship to the dominant structures of understanding' which then come under stress from the comedic.¹⁴⁷ With Antony Gillingham's arrival the prevailing discourse is put under interrogation, and another asserts itself. The master of the Red House, initially seen as a genial host and something of a philanthropist becomes a more complex and contradictory figure. The reader discovers that Mark is a writer, though his 'thoughts were not of any great value' and that for playing fives in The Temple, an ornamental structure close to the house, some of his guests 'were never asked to the Red House again.' Bill further diminishes the man, commenting that "He's rather vain and childish" and noting his "self-importance".¹⁴⁸ At least the reader can rely on Matthew Cayley, Mark's Cambridge-educated cousin and business manager. Mark regarded him as 'above all, dependable; a big heavy-jawed, solid fellow, who didn't bother you with unnecessary talk'. Except the social order is further unsettled when it becomes possible that he is the murderer. Intentionally or not, the humour is a means to upend the novel's ordered world and allow its parts to be held up to inspection by the detective. When Bill considers the possibility of Cayley as a murderer, his limited mind can only think: 'not a murderer; not Cayley. That was rot, anyway. Why, they had played tennis together.'¹⁴⁹ The comedy here is plain but it also challenges the social

¹⁴⁷ Stott, pp. 8 and 10.

¹⁴⁸ Milne, *The Red House Mystery* pp. 6, 7, 61 and 63.

¹⁴⁹ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, pp. 12 and 73.

norms which depend on games of tennis on the lawn, a big house and servants who know their place, like the cook Mrs Stevens.

It was suggested earlier that a comic novel like *The Red House Mystery* need not invoke the ‘weighty superstructure’ previously alluded to, but the Golden Age novel, in settling on murder as the motivating factor, opens itself up to disturbing theoretical readings centred on the abject. This condition of life is what Barbara Creed calls “a state of being cast off” or ‘feeling in low or debased condition’ but recognises that this ‘has long been associated with the degradation of the body’ and ‘bodily wastes’ with the corpse as the body’s most degraded (and hence abject) form. Creed further cites Georges Bataille whose 1920s work on taboo and the abject body led him to ‘the importance of transgression and the blurring of boundaries’, something that has already been explored in terms of humour and play.¹⁵⁰ In this case, the boundaries between life and its other are seen to be permeable, unfixed, leading to ‘[t]he in-between, the ambiguous, the composite’ as Julia Kristeva frames it. The corpse, as she goes on to say, is ‘the utmost of abjection’. It would seem initially that no humour could be wrought from this abjection, but the critic insists that ‘laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection.’¹⁵¹ In this instance, then, humour is a mechanism to keep the darkness at bay, and one that Gillingham recognises, realising ‘into what deep waters they were getting’.¹⁵² The dead body, shot between the eyes, engenders abjection and causes a tear in the social fabric, one that was always fragile, as Kristeva goes on to say:

Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime [like Cayley’s], cunning murder, hypocritical

¹⁵⁰ Barbara Creed, ‘Abject’ (Oxford University Press, 2014), doi:10.1093/acref/9780199747108.013.0002.

¹⁵¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 4 and 8.

¹⁵² Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 121.

revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility.¹⁵³

This goes some way to explaining the disturbing atmosphere of *The Black Gang* where both sides, the vigilantes supporting Bulldog Drummond and Carl Peterson's henchmen, signal the law's frailty. What also connects the two novels is the abjection of particular bodies. In *The Black Gang* several of the most villainous characters are forged out of abjection and the grotesque, signifiers of their compromised morality. These grotesque bodies, as David Cruickshank says, 'make confusion and uncertainty visible by marking them on physical forms'.¹⁵⁴ Cayley lines up alongside these men, despite seemingly having been drawn from a more genteel narrative. Nevertheless, Milne sees him as a man with '[a]n attractive smile on that big ugly face'; As Audrey, the maid, passes him she thinks, "Such a gentleman, Mr. Cayley". Inscribed in Cayley is the confusion and uncertainty Cruickshank outlines and if he possesses the ugliness that signals moral turpitude his status as a 'gentleman' causes considerable problems for Gillingham and Bill. Beverley thinks that '[i]f it were a question of Cayley or the Law, he was quite decided as to which side he was taking', while Gillingham feels considerable ambiguity: "Damn it," said Antony to himself, "why do I like the fellow?"¹⁵⁵ And concluding the novel, Gillingham gives Cayley the chance to escape or to kill himself such are his conflicted feelings for the man.

It has already been established that the Great War and its conclusion played a large part in shaping the form of the crime novel in the inter-war years, particularly the

¹⁵³ Kristeva, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ David Cruickshank, *The Grotesque Modernist Body: Gothic Horror and Carnival Satire in Art and Writing* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, pp. 109 and 179.

way in which the dead were portrayed. Crime novels multiplied at this time as leisure began to feature much larger in the life of the nation, but the prevalence of murder mitigated by humour is still not entirely accounted for. Certainly, Julian Symons placed Milne's work in the category of the 'Farceurs' and Cyril Alington's *Mr. Evans* should fall into the same category. Symons said of *The Red House Mystery* that it was '[p]robably the most entertaining book of this kind written during the twenties'.¹⁵⁶ One other reason for this turn to humour was surely generational. Although the Sherlock Holmes stories were still being published, they were a Victorian relic and new writers were set to overhaul this model of detection, seen particularly in Agatha Christie. Knight sees in her work that 'she had obviously read Doyle, from which comes the initial model of detective and narrator' whilst she seems to have drawn from *Trent's Last Case* which Knight calls her 'prime source'. However, younger writers felt the need to distance themselves from Holmes and one way was to create a detective who was his opposite such as Hercule Poirot, the 'plump fussy person clearly the reverse of the masculine and English Holmes'.¹⁵⁷ Poirot is inherently ridiculous, even if he solves the case and this allowed humour into the post-war crime novel to distinguish it from a previous Victorian seriousness. Holmes was even being made fun of in *The Red House Mystery* and would be again in Alington's *Mr. Evans*.

The other point, often overlooked, is that crime writing, and humour and play share many commonalities which inevitably draw the two forms together. Henri Bergson, in thinking about humour, saw a 'division between the perceived and the actual, and the possibility of reading situations in a number of different ways' and it 'was

¹⁵⁶ Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel; a History*, 4. ed. (London: Pan Books, 1994), p. 130.

¹⁵⁷ Knight, *Crime Fiction Since 1800*, pp. 88-89.

a phenomenon he isolated as one of the principal triggers of laughter.¹⁵⁸ Bergson is referring back to the idea of incongruity but the perspective he takes is similar to that of Gillingham who has to see the crime in myriad ways, taking in the views of servants, a relative and friends of the dead man until the murder becomes clear in his mind. Above all his investigation is beset by ambiguity.

Huizinga, concerning himself with play, claims that ‘play is not “ordinary” or “real” life’ and *The Red House Mystery* fits this definition for the most-part, making murder playful. Huizinga goes on to consider the “differentness and secrecy’ that can accompany play which he sees as ‘most vividly expressed in “dressing up”’.¹⁵⁹ And, of course, the whole murder plot in the novel could not have been accomplished if Mark Ablett had not been intent on dressing up; the theme features in *The Secret Adversary* and *Mr. Evans* where play-acting is central to the mystery.

Miguel Sicart has said that ‘[p]lay is contextual’ and that it takes place in a ‘formally bound space’ allying it to the Golden Age form where murder often takes place in a confined location (the Red House), limiting the suspects and increasing the tension. One other factor in the Golden Age is the detective who also shares aspects of the comic, and not necessarily through their demeanour. Detectives, whether amateur or professional, have, by necessity, to be outsiders in the case they investigate, even if it concerns friends or colleagues. Without a distant, dispassionate stance she or he cannot hope to solve the crime. It is, though, a stance the comedian was alleged to take at the very start of the recorded tradition of humour. The word comedy is derived from the Greek although its roots are disputed. Aristotle felt that the word derived from ‘*kômai*’

¹⁵⁸ See Stott, p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Huizinga, pp. 8 and 13.

meaning village and this was because comedians ‘toured the villages when expelled from the town in disgrace.’¹⁶⁰ This sees them as outcasts or at best outsiders, much like the detective. In form Gillingham embodies the comedian and the detective. His arrival at the Red House is humorous in itself since he alights at Woodham station ‘because he had liked the look of the station’. His whole life is a kind of joke played on those he works for since he has some independent wealth. ‘He never stayed long in one job, and generally closed his connexion with it by telling his employer [...] exactly what he thought of him’ and in his time appears to have been both valet and shop assistant.¹⁶¹

Holistically, the detective novel like comedy, ‘reveals the practical limits of cultural structures’, those which become precarious and questionable when murder undermines their wholeness, or in the thriller, asks questions of their reliability.¹⁶² In J. S. Fletcher’s *The Mazaroff Murder* the culture that the wealthy Mazaroff engenders, comes to seem like a house of cards on his death but despite working much like comedy in this respect, the narrative contains little in the way of humour.

Instead, a certain earnestness characterises the novel. Joseph Smith Fletcher (1863-1935) was born in Halifax on 7 February 1863. Fletcher might have died in Dorking, Surrey in 1935 but for the entirety of his life it was Yorkshire that had remained his touchstone.¹⁶³ Fletcher took early to journalism but ‘[b]y 1898 he had decided to forsake journalism and devote himself to books.’¹⁶⁴ He became a prolific writer and in ‘the decade following 1898 he published thirty-seven books’ including

¹⁶⁰ Stott, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 17.

¹⁶² Stott, p. 11.

¹⁶³ Gerald H. Strauss, ‘J. S. Fletcher’, *Critical Survey of Mystery and Detective Fiction*, rev. ed., ed. by Carl Rollyson, 5 vols (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2008) II, 638-643 (p. 638).

¹⁶⁴ Strauss, p. 639.

biography, history, and poetry.¹⁶⁵ Fletcher himself declared that he did not know how much he had published.¹⁶⁶ By 1922 he had more or less settled on crime writing although he continued to publish far less popular histories of Yorkshire and ‘was made a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.’¹⁶⁷

Fletcher was constantly concerned about money despite his output and his relations with publishers Allen and Unwin suffered. In January 1922 Fletcher told Stanley Unwin that due to ‘the fact that I sold you the copyrights [on novels published in the US] for a very small amount, [...] you would see your way to giving me something out of your American profits’.¹⁶⁸ This might explain why none of his crime novels of 1922 were published by the company. His US profile had risen dramatically when in 1919, ‘an alert White House reporter saw Woodrow Wilson reading J. S. Fletcher’s *The Middle Temple Murder* (1919) [...] transforming the minor mystery into a popular book.’¹⁶⁹

The Mazaroff Murder’s refusal of levity is indicated in moments of humour which are never elaborated upon. When Holt, the detective Maythorne, and Mazaroff’s solicitor Crole visit the nouveau riche Leekes, ‘Crole [mutters] sarcastically that the chairs were much too grand to sit upon’.¹⁷⁰ Here, although sarcasm is

¹⁶⁵ Roger Ellis, ‘J. S. Fletcher: Man of Many Mysteries’, in *Mysteries Unlocked: Essays in Honor of Douglas G. Greene* ed. by Curtis J. Evans (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2014), pp. 43-59 (p. 46).

¹⁶⁶ Ellis, p. 55, n1.

¹⁶⁷ Strauss, p. 639.

¹⁶⁸ University of Reading Special Collections, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., AUC 2/19, 1919-1922, Letters to and from J. S. Fletcher, ‘Letter to Stanley Unwin from J. S. Fletcher dated 7th January 1922 and headed The Crossways, Hambrook nr. Emsworth, Hampshire’. The argument had been going on for some time. In 1920 Unwin had already made clear the company would not be ‘acting stingily towards you’: AUC 2/19, 1919-1922, Letters to and from J. S. Fletcher, ‘Letter from Stanley Unwin to J. S. Fletcher dated 10th September 1920.’

¹⁶⁹ Marvin Lachman, ‘Readers, Distinguished’ in *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing* ed. by Rosemary Herbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 374 (p. 374).

¹⁷⁰ Fletcher, J. S., *The Mazaroff Murder* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1922), p. 162.

indicated, without the individual voice any humour is merely reported. This is a pattern repeated through the novel: “So I owe Mr. Holt one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds,” said Armintrade with a laugh.¹⁷¹ This is the only novel with a first-person narrator, and it may be that Holt’s seriousness means he cannot participate in the joke. As Palmer puts it: ‘nothing, in short, is naturally funny’.¹⁷²

Retrospectively Julian Symons placed Fletcher amongst the ‘Humdrum school of detective novelists’ alongside Freeman Wills Crofts and others.¹⁷³ Although it is unfair to accept posthumous labels, reading the novel in 1922 it would still have appeared different in tone and intent from the adventures of Tommy and Tuppence. One of the reasons for this is that Fletcher is essentially a Victorian writer who came of age in the Edwardian era and, in this book he never entirely takes up the tropes of the Golden Age, at this point still emerging. The reader is not put ‘on an equal footing with the detective himself’;¹⁷⁴ in the book Maythorne pockets evidence that the reader is not made aware of until much later, violating Ronald Knox’s rule that ‘*the detective must not light on any clues which are not instantly produced for the inspection of the reader*’ (italics in the original).¹⁷⁵ It is worth mentioning S.S. Van Dine’s rule that ‘[t]he culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story’ since in Fletcher’s work the two culprits, Alison Murdoch and Mrs Musgrave, are barely mentioned, Murdoch only making an appearance in Chapter

¹⁷¹ Fletcher, p. 221.

¹⁷² Palmer, p. 12.

¹⁷³ Symons, p. 128.

¹⁷⁴ Dorothy L. Sayers, ‘The Omnibus of Crime’, pp. 53-83 (p. 73).

¹⁷⁵ Ronald A. Knox, ‘A Detective Story Decalogue’, p. 196.

XXIV.¹⁷⁶ Both rules were formulated later but they correspond to the tenets evolving in 1922.

Many of the tropes of humour can be mapped onto the structures of the crime text and this has been true from the genre's beginnings. One of the epigraphs to the first chapter of Howard Haycraft's *Murder for Pleasure* declares, '[t]he history of the detective story begins with the publication of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"'.¹⁷⁷ Yet the structures that make up the tale are also those of the comic. Thomson termed crime writing 'nonsense' and Palmer, paraphrasing Freud, regards humour as having 'a single semiotic mechanism in common - the mixture of sense and nonsense'.¹⁷⁸ The tale comes laced with both. The narrator talks convincingly of 'the analytic power'¹⁷⁹ that uncovers the crime's perpetrator whilst the solution is at the same time nonsense since the villain is a 'large fulvous Ourang-Outang of the East Indian Islands'.¹⁸⁰ As in the concept of the joke, 'the demands of common-sense rationality are suspended'.¹⁸¹ None of these points in the story are meant as comic and the reader is not invited to laugh, but laughter 'has to be negotiated on each and every occasion' which does not exclude the comedic possibility.¹⁸² Even if it is not there, the significance is that the mechanisms of the comic are all embedded in the text. One category of comedy is the grotesque, based upon moments that are 'gross or mildly frightening', seemingly much

¹⁷⁶ S.S. Van Dine, 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories' in *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Howard Haycraft (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 189-193 (p. 191).

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Howard Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1941), p. 1. The remark is attributed to Brander Matthews.

¹⁷⁸ Palmer, p. 148.

¹⁷⁹ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' in Edgar Allan Poe, *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (New York: Penguin, 2006), p. 323.

¹⁸⁰ Poe, p. 352.

¹⁸¹ Palmer, p. 97.

¹⁸² Palmer, p. 20.

removed from the comic ideal.¹⁸³ The grotesquerie surrounding the bodies in the story is self-evident with one woman shoved up into the chimney and the other with her throat cut so convincingly that ‘the head fell off.’¹⁸⁴ This indicates that a significant power dwells within the comic form, its use of incongruity and disparity creating fault-lines within language and culture that become evident in *The Red House Mystery* and in what follows.

The extremes of the grotesque that Poe applies to ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ find some echo in the work of Cyril McNeile (1888-1937). Born Herman Cyril McNeile, he was educated at Cheltenham College and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich and joined the Royal Engineers in 1907. As a regular soldier he saw service in the Great War, beginning as a Captain and leaving the army in 1919 with a Military Cross and the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Just a year later Bulldog Drummond stepped up in his eponymous first novel.¹⁸⁵ This was not, however, McNeile’s first foray into fiction, because he had already accumulated a considerable body of work, writing as ‘Sapper’ during the war, a pseudonym ‘created by Lord Northcliffe of the *Daily Mail*’.¹⁸⁶ ‘Sapper’ ‘knew and understood; he was saved by the human touch.’¹⁸⁷ He represented what Jessica Meyer has called ‘nondisillusioned’ war writing, sympathetic to the British soldier but in no way part of the school of Robert Graves or Siegfried Sassoon.¹⁸⁸ However, with the debut of *Bulldog Drummond* in 1920 ‘Sapper’ seemed to

¹⁸³ Palmer, p. 157.

¹⁸⁴ Poe, p. 343.

¹⁸⁵ Jonathon Green, ‘McNeile, (Herman) Cyril [Pseud. Sapper] (1888–1937), (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34810>>.

¹⁸⁶ Hans Bertens, ‘A Society of Murderers Run on Sound Conservative Lines: The Life and Times of Sapper’s Bulldog Drummond’ in *Twentieth-Century Suspense: The Thriller Comes of Age* ed. by Clive Bloom (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 51–68 (p. 51).

¹⁸⁷ David Hodge, ‘Sapper’, *The Bookman*, 56.334 (1919), 126.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Lise Jaillant, ‘Sapper, Hodder & Stoughton, and the Popular Literature of the Great War’, *Book History*, 14.1 (2011), 139.

be offering the obverse of the 'human touch'. While the books make frequent links to the years of conflict they are disillusioned with the peace. 'Sapper' wrote that before the war most men 'sank into the torpid pool of utter mediocrity and sleep enwrapped them.'¹⁸⁹ War was the means to shake them out of that torpor but for Drummond, the peace has not delivered such benefits.

Published in September 1922 by Hodder and Stoughton, expectations must have been high for 'Sapper's second Bulldog Drummond novel, *The Black Gang*. The first went on to sell over 140,000 copies and 39,052 were published in 1922 alone.¹⁹⁰ However, *The Black Gang* failed to sell as well, under the 140,000 copies of *Bulldog Drummond*, even though 20,938 copies of the 7/6d book were sold suggesting an initial enthusiasm for the work. *The Sovereign Magazine* had already serialised the story earlier in 1922,¹⁹¹ while Gerald Du Maurier took the title role in the theatrical version of *Bulldog Drummond* in 1921 and again in December 1922 in the same month that the film of the novel was 'shown privately'.¹⁹² *The Black Gang*, therefore, had everything in its favour including reviews such as that in the *Pall Mall Gazette* proclaiming that 'good as the earlier book was, this is better: its thrills are more thrilling, its general construction tighter.'¹⁹³ Nevertheless, despite an increased

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Jessica Meyer, 'The Tuition of Manhood: 'Sapper's War Stories and the Literature of War' in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* ed. by Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (Basingstoke: Palgrave; Published in association with the Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007), pp. 113-128 (p. 120).

¹⁹⁰ See Lise Jaillant, 162 and Jessica Meyer, p. 122-3.

¹⁹¹ Anonymous, 'Advertising', *The Times* 28 February 1922, p. 17.

¹⁹² Anonymous, 'Bull-Dog Drummond', *The Times*, 27 December 1922, p. 8; Anonymous, 'The Film World', *The Times*, 4 December 1922, p. 1.

¹⁹³ Anonymous, 'New Novels', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 October 1922, p. 6.

advertising budget, the novel is the most disappointing in the series in terms of sales, though not in terms of plot.¹⁹⁴

The Black Gang is a novel of much darker hues than those formerly discussed but its form is very close to that of *The Secret Adversary*. In that novel Tommy and Tuppence become other, pushed to the boundaries of society by their unemployed status, their lack of cash and their descent into the criminal by-ways of society. In *The Black Gang*, like Tuppence and Tommy, Bulldog Drummond is an incongruous figure. On the one hand he exists at the margins of society, the head of a secret organisation dealing out extra-judicial justice, whilst otherwise located in the upper ranks of the middle class. It might also be added that he is an outsider in much the same way as the comedian.

There is humour in the novel's opening, but it is sardonic and ill-tempered. In his essay 'The Guilty Vicarage', W. H. Auden writes that '[t]he job of the detective is to restore the state of grace in which the aesthetic and the ethical are as one.'¹⁹⁵ Its religious overtones suggest that the opening to a crime novel is situated in a prelapsarian moment that is quickly overcome by murder or some other crime. In acknowledging this state of grace the novel's determination is usually upon restoring that ideal moment and thus returning the society to order and the status quo, as was noted earlier. In *The Black Gang*, though, unlike the other novels here, the reader is plunged into a world already discreditable: 'The wind howled dismally round a house

¹⁹⁴ As Lise Jaillant shows, the two following novels, *The Third Round* (1925) and *The Final Count* (1926) were both more successful and with comparatively smaller advertising budgets. See Lise Jaillant, 162.

¹⁹⁵ W. H. Auden, 'The Guilty Vicarage' in Robin W. Winks, ed., *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 15-24 (p. 21).

standing almost by itself on the shores of Barking Creek.¹⁹⁶ This does not encourage the visitor but to call it dismal is to suggest a day that is unlucky. The garden is ‘uncared for’, illustrative perhaps of the days after the Fall but also T. S. Eliot’s vision of a waste land bordering the Thames.

Having set the scene, ‘Sapper’ introduces the central theme of this chapter: physical or bodily comedy. As Andrew Stott says, ‘comedy strategically bypasses civility to return us to our body’ and pits it against ‘ideals of beauty and manners’. Stott in turn references John Limon who describes ‘aspects of oneself that one cannot be rid of [...] for example [...] the corpse.’¹⁹⁷ It is unsurprising that the miserable dwelling is immediately linked with a death:

folks did say that about twelve years ago some prying explorer had found the bones of a skeleton lying on the floor of one of the upstairs [sic] rooms with a mildewed rope fixed to one of the beams [...]

Rumours are that sometimes if you ventured into that same room you would see ‘no skeleton, but a body with purple face and staring eyes swinging gently to and fro, and tied by the neck to a beam’.¹⁹⁸ It is an image that has the ambiguity of a joke but is ‘death infecting life’, as Julia Kristeva has framed it, resonating through a book in which life and death are always on a knife edge.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ ‘Sapper’, *The Black Gang* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1922), p. 7. It is an interesting coincidence that the opening words are also used by Charles Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge* who writes ‘[t]he wind howled dismally among the bare branches of the trees.’ “dismally, adv.”. OED Online. June 2022. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/54735?redirectedFrom=dismally> [Accessed June 16, 2022].

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in Stott, p. 86.

¹⁹⁸ ‘Sapper’, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Stott, p. 86. It can also relate back to T.S. Eliot and his own ‘hanged man’ in ‘The Waste Land’ although strictly speaking the hanged man of the Tarot is a different figure, something probably unknown to most of the poem’s original audience.

Of all the novels here *The Black Gang* is the one least shy of the body. Most of the men gathered in the house are described in bodily terms like the three clerks, ‘representative of the poorer type’, ‘the type which Woodbines its fingers to a brilliant orange’ and is ‘greedy, hungry’. The Jews seated with them are equally defined by their bodies, having ‘the keen, searching look of their race.’²⁰⁰ The body here encapsulates all that these men are, it displays the distinctions of their class, encompasses ‘Sapper’²⁰¹’s casual anti-semitism, and their deviation from what the novelist deems to be the norm. Ironically, of course, Bulldog Drummond both participates in this deviation, having a face described as ‘phenomenally ugly’, whilst potentially being superior to the conspirators with his Olympian physique, since ‘of muscle he possessed about five ordinary men’s share’ while ‘his quickness on his feet was astounding’.²⁰¹ The two Jewish men, later identified as conducting ‘White Slave Traffic’²⁰², are flogged with ‘[t]he cat’.²⁰³ It is a punishment that descends on Count Zadowa later in the book when the importance of the bodily is only restated,²⁰⁴ particularly since the Count is deliberately sketched as a ‘hunchback, and the effect it gave was that of a huge bird of prey.’²⁰⁵

Sapper’ thus further articulates ideas of the body as an issue of moral worth, much like the orange fingers of the clerks. If none of this seems akin to humour it is undoubtedly because these images sit on the very outer edges of the comic, in that space Julia Kristeva reserves for the abject, ‘outside, beyond the set’. Certainly in this

²⁰⁰ ‘Sapper’, p. 11.

²⁰¹ ‘Sapper’, p. 35.

²⁰² ‘Sapper’, p. 34.

²⁰³ ‘Sapper’, p. 18.

²⁰⁴ ‘Sapper’, p. 186.

²⁰⁵ ‘Sapper’, p. 62.

scene, and in much of the novel, the concept of abjection gives unconscious meaning to Drummond's actions. If the abject is what the individual casts off, it also lives at the border of the self 'as radically separate, loathsome.'²⁰⁶ The men that Drummond so despises in this scene, the workers and the Jews, are effectively part of the 'vortex of summons and repulsion' that Kristeva marks as essential to abjection.²⁰⁷ Despite the hero's loathing for these individuals he seeks them out, summoned by the evil he sees in them, which is also partly his own, since his face participates in the ugliness he finds in the men but there is, mirroring Kristeva, 'a failure to recognise [his] kin'.²⁰⁸ It points to the realisation that Drummond is not much removed from these people and that they could almost be said to be a part of him. He lives like them on society's margins, as he carries out his acts of vigilantism. Kristeva classifies abjection as 'immoral, sinister, scheming and shady', all of which goes to describe Drummond.²⁰⁹ Not only that, he exists in what might be termed Kristeva's 'corpse-space', 'the place where I am not, and which permits me to be, the corpse'.²¹⁰ Drummond is often caught between life and death, such as when Carl Peterson's thugs try to murder him in his own car and they believe him to have drowned. As Franz says, 'he's dead for a certainty',²¹¹ and, as Kristeva says, the abject 'cannot help taking the risk', as Hugh Drummond always does.²¹²

This opening chapter is far beyond the boundaries of humour. It is a passage that nonetheless contains the comic in a few low-key moments in a scene predicated

²⁰⁶ Kristeva, p. 2.

²⁰⁷ Kristeva, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ Kristeva, p. 5.

²⁰⁹ Kristeva, p. 4.

²¹⁰ Kristeva, p. 3.

²¹¹ 'Sapper', p. 239.

²¹² Kristeva, p. 8.

on play. When Drummond calls the men he has captured ‘specimens’ and ‘shivering insects’²¹³ he is offering humour at their expense and fulfilling John Morreall’s idea of comedy as a ‘sensation of superiority.’²¹⁴ When another of his men announces of the clerks that ‘[w]e helped them on their way’ there is irony in the phrase, since the reader has been alerted to the ‘boot being used with skill and strength’ upon them.²¹⁵ Tension is evident in the scene but Drummond signifies the humour present with one of his last actions: ‘The big man laughed.’²¹⁶ If it sometimes seems doubtful that it can be a game it is worth noting Miguel Sicart’s observation that play ‘can be pleasurable when it hurts, offends, challenges us’ and that it is ‘a fragile, tense activity’.²¹⁷ Drummond himself calls the hooded men ‘jolly old masked sportsmen’.²¹⁸

Later Drummond penetrates the security of Maybrick Hall to rescue Phyllis who has been abducted by Carl Peterson but is confronted by a man with ‘muscles standing out like steel bars’, and it seems inevitable he will lose the contest until he remembers his clasp knife: ‘[i]t went against his grain to use it; never before had he fought an unarmed man with a weapon’. If it is a sport or game to fight to the death, for Drummond it has to be done within the rules. But, like Count Zadowa, this is another man whose stature is a metonym for his moral depravity: ‘the man was almost deformed, so enormous were the length of his arms. They must have been six inches longer than those of an average man’.²¹⁹ When Drummond is inevitably caught by Peterson it is clear, once again, that the nature of the comedic is being pressed to its

²¹³ ‘Sapper’, pp. 16 and 17.

²¹⁴ Quoted in Palmer, p. 94.

²¹⁵ ‘Sapper’, pp. 17.

²¹⁶ ‘Sapper’, p. 24.

²¹⁷ Sicart, p. 3.

²¹⁸ ‘Sapper’, p. 45.

²¹⁹ ‘Sapper’, pp. 246 and 247.

very limits. Peterson asks what has become of one of his men and another of them answers that '[h]e's dead. This guy threw him on the live wires.' Drummond, lighting a cigarette responds: 'Is that little Franz? [...] Yes, I regret to state that he and I had words'.²²⁰ His understatement is designed as a joke, but it seems unlikely that Carl Peterson or his associates will greet it as such. Can it then be a joke? Palmer writes that 'a joke must not only be *recognised* as such, but also *permitted*' (emphasis in the original).²²¹ This suggests that a joke has to allow for a sender and receiver but a few moments earlier outside the hall Drummond has shot a man 'through the fleshy part of the leg' and as he howls with pain, 'Drummond's raucous bellow of laughter broke the silence'.²²² Later Peterson will comment to Drummond that 'your humour appeals to some people; it does not to me.'²²³ There is no receiver for this and later 'jokes' that Drummond plays on Peterson's men, yet it is nonetheless a moment of comedy to the hero. As Palmer puts it, 'acts of symbolic aggression are enjoyed in the form of humour' and it is black comedy as a weapon,²²⁴ 'where the borderline between humour and suffering is consistently blurred'.²²⁵ As Elizabeth Gross notes, the body is 'the central object over and through which relations of power and resistance are played out'.²²⁶ Kristeva, in her theory of abjection, sees the abject individual using laughter as a tool as it was noted earlier, 'since laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection', an abjection Drummond is not wholly conscious of.²²⁷

²²⁰ 'Sapper', p. 278.

²²¹ Palmer, p. 12.

²²² 'Sapper', p. 273.

²²³ 'Sapper', p. 287.

²²⁴ Palmer, p. 103.

²²⁵ Palmer, p. 118.

²²⁶ Elizabeth Gross, 'The Body of Signification' in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* ed. by John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 80-103 (p. 81).

²²⁷ Kristeva, p. 8.

It is useful to conclude the discussion on *The Black Gang* with a final word from Palmer about whether a joke must be allowed if it is to be a joke. Palmer writes:

a joke must be permitted: clearly it does not have to be permitted by everybody, since the victim's incomprehension may be what produces it in the first place [...] at the border established by the divide between comprehension and its opposite is a process of inclusion and exclusion [...] ²²⁸

For Drummond, a joke or a piece of humour is a way to assert his social position over those he regards as being on society's grubbier margins. His actions are always towards re-formulating the status quo in this novel so that revolutionaries and hirelings do not succeed in fracturing the class society in which he maintains a significant stake. Yet drawing on the work of Kristeva offers the view that the villains he opposes are in some sense his other, the abject that 'has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I* (italics in the original). ²²⁹

If 'Sapper' challenges the idea of what humour can be then Cyril Alington challenges preconceived ideas of what the novel might be. Alington (1872-1955) was headmaster of Shrewsbury and Eton and was himself the product of Marlborough College and Oxford. Resigning from Eton in 1933 he became Dean of Durham Cathedral. It was at this point that he also resigned as chaplain to the King, a post he had held since 1921. ²³⁰ He was a prolific writer on various subjects particularly in Christian apologetics and crime writing and was on the panel of the Crime Club. ²³¹ He often wrote several volumes a year, producing three books in 1922. *Strained Relations*, published in May, was a farce, dependent on impersonation, spiritualism, and a

²²⁸ Palmer, p. 153.

²²⁹ Kristeva, p. 1.

²³⁰ Anonymous, 'Obituary: Dr. C. A. Alington', *The Birmingham Post*, 17 May 1955, p. 17.

²³¹ Thomson, p. 12. This was not, as the title implied, a club. The full title was the Collins Crime Club and it consisted of titles published under that imprint, chosen by a panel headed by Alington.

Captain called England, giving opportunities for several puns.²³² This was followed by *Mr. Evans* in December, a work that is both farce and crime novel.

If *Mr. Evans* is a detective story of the loosest variety Alington's later novels dispensed with the structures of this type of book for the more freeform thriller format.²³³ However, Tim Card summarises his work as 'clever, witty, but quickly perishable.'²³⁴ This stemmed from Alington's astonishing work rate. *The Times*' obituary noted that 'it was this speed which makes his novels and more serious works [...] lack in lasting power'.²³⁵ Baldick notes how '[i]n its relish for household secrets and their exposure, the detective genre betrays [...] its affinities with comedy, even with bedroom farce'.²³⁶ It often uses a single, defining location in which the narrative plays out, and is dependent on the withholding of a secret which creates the sometimes frenetic activity leading to a denouement. This might explain why Julian Symons devised the category of the 'Farceurs', for whom the 'business of fictional murder was endlessly amusing', despite not mentioning Alington.²³⁷ And although Milne was also labelled a 'Farceur' his novel tends to the comedic rather than the farcical. Farce can seem like a chaotic form, but it has to be as tightly plotted as a detective novel and resorts to character types. In the same way, figures in a detective novel have been called '[m]arionettes' who have been 'provided to play out the extraordinarily complicated action'.²³⁸ Farce, though, is the form with which some commentators feel

²³² The Reviewers, 'Books and Their Writers', *Daily Mail*, 15 May 1922, p. 13.

²³³ At one point in his career, he even opted for short-lived pseudonym as S. C. Westerham publishing, *Mixed Bags* (1929).

²³⁴ Tim Card, 'Alington, Cyril Argentine (1872–1955), Headmaster and Dean of Durham' (Oxford University Press, 2011) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30379>>.

²³⁵ Anonymous, 'Dr. Alington: Divine, Teacher, and Author', *The Times*, 17 May 1955, p. 13.

²³⁶ Chris Baldick, *The Modern Movement*, p. 281.

²³⁷ Symons, p. 129.

²³⁸ Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, p. 124.

least at ease. Stott relegates farce to a glossary,²³⁹ while Palmer says that ‘comedy becomes distinct from farce and validates itself as a feature of polite society by excluding its uncouth brother’, with comedy having a ‘greater claim to aesthetic value’.²⁴⁰ Palmer perhaps underestimates farce and the way it illuminates critical, social and ethical debates at a given moment within a culture.

Mr. Evans is central to the debates in this chapter, because, despite its narrative which exists in a realm bereft of historical context, play is the defining feature of the book. This is play as sport, play as a game of chess, and play as that which defines the younger generation against an established one. Now a more youthful cohort within society began to question the values it had inherited from this older order. It might be argued that this has been an issue perpetually confronted, but it became particularly acute in the years after the Great War and the disillusion it occasioned amongst the young, often those who had seen service.²⁴¹

Play is central to the narrative, since its motive force is that ‘the last Test Match begins on Monday’, a form of game that defines the lives of both Jack Winterton and his friend Reggie Courthope.²⁴² Winterton, ‘pretty near the best slow bowler in the country’, is intending to take time off from Jasper Merivale’s office to bowl in the test and save England from collapse.²⁴³ However, he has previously had to promise never to take time off for his passion, since Jasper Merivale ‘hates every game’ (*italics in the*

²³⁹ Stott, p. 150.

²⁴⁰ Palmer, pp. 126 and 120.

²⁴¹ See for example C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922).

²⁴² Cyril Alington, *Mr. Evans; a Cricketo-Detective Story* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 8.

²⁴³ Alington, pp. 15-16.

original).²⁴⁴ It becomes the employment of his two wards, Kitty and Reggie Courthope, who live with him, to prevent him noting Winterton's absence.

The novel develops a playful attitude to narrative whilst taking pleasure in its own fictionality. It begins as if the curtain has just risen upon a play:

The place is the Musgrave's drawing-room in Onslow Square: the date is the first Saturday in August: the time half-past two. Enter, to Miss Courthope [...]²⁴⁵

The narrator, quickly announces their grip on the text, already bored with the idea of theatre. Looking upon Kitty as she goes to the phone the narrator remarks: 'Observe her well, reader, as she goes to the telephone. You behold in her the moving goddess of the drama.'²⁴⁶ This opening only confirms Nicolson's remarks on the crime novel's 'utter unreality',²⁴⁷ but it does something more interesting, which is to validate Susan Rowland's observation that '[t]he first and most significant characteristic of golden age fiction is its self-referential or metafictional quality' already noted in *The Red House Mystery*.²⁴⁸ At first glance her remark appears counter-intuitive since the idea is seldom mentioned in most surveys of the era, except perhaps in passing. However, she provides some evidence for her assertion and the concept draws us back to the idea of the crime novel as a game. On the one hand games usually require, at a minimum, two players, whilst the artificiality of its genre's rules are what led Thomson to remark on the narrative's 'separation from reality'.²⁴⁹ In the game of crime there are always two players, since through the notion of 'fair-play', readers take on the writer in solving the

²⁴⁴ Alington, p. 12.

²⁴⁵ Alington, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ Alington, p. 2.

²⁴⁷ Nicolson, 'The Professor and the Detective', p. 117-8.

²⁴⁸ Rowland, p. 118.

²⁴⁹ Thomson, p. 21.

crime. As Rowland puts it: '[r]ather than simply being asked to admire the cleverness of the detective, golden age writers reach out beyond the page to incorporate the reader's own detecting prowess.'²⁵⁰ She gives suitable examples of the metafictionality of the Golden Age novel but in demonstrating the point it is only necessary to cite Alington's book (an exceptional and early example of the type) but also *The Secret Adversary*.

Whilst less bold than Alington's treatment of the crime novel, Christie's book continually alludes to its own fictionality. After Tommy and Tuppence encounter the villain, Whittington, Tuppence decides he must be followed but Tommy is less enthusiastic remarking, 'Sort of thing one reads about in books', acknowledging the situation's unreality.²⁵¹ Later, questioning the millionaire Hersheimer about his missing cousin, Jane Finn, Tuppence begins inappropriately: 'When did you last see the dece – your cousin'. It is inappropriate since it assumes her death but given Tommy and Tuppence's lack of experience in the field it is all she can come up with, what the narrator calls, 'a reminiscence culled from detective fiction.'²⁵² If Tuppence is momentarily confused, the hapless Albert, the lift-boy, is never quite sure which side of the fact/fiction dividing line he inhabits. Living on a diet of threepenny detective novels he is easily duped by Tuppence into believing her to be a member of the 'American Detective Force' in an early moment of humour so that he comments, '[i]t sounds more like the pictures every minute.' Determined to get involved, Albert wants to do '[a] bit of shadowing', already demonstrating a command of the police

²⁵⁰ Rowland, p. 119.

²⁵¹ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 31.

²⁵² Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 46.

vocabulary.²⁵³ Soon after Tuppence begins reading *Barnaby Williams, The Boy Detective* to help further obfuscate things with the lift-boy.²⁵⁴

The opening to *Mr. Evans* is confirmation, if any were needed, that this is indeed a novel peopled by ‘marionettes’ at the narrator’s disposal.²⁵⁵ More than that, this is to be a novel that does not take itself seriously as adduced by the remark that Kitty is ‘the moving goddess of the drama.’ This is less than accurate since she more often finds herself reacting to the mischief Reggie has created in the household. The point this opening scene is making, however, is that this is ‘play-acting’, defined as

To act in or as if in a play; esp. to behave theatrically or insincerely; to pretend, make-believe. Also (rare): to be suitable for acting in a play.²⁵⁶

What follows in the novel is very much theatrical behaviour with Jasper as the stage villain and much of the action removed from any idea of realism; as, for example, the cook Mrs Waltham finds ever more outrageous reasons for receiving the large number of telegrams that Reggie needs to keep in touch with the test match. It is a novel in which almost everyone overacts.

Rowland believes this to be one of the integral parts of the era’s detective novels saying that ‘[r]ole-playing is at one level rooted in the self-referential “fictional” quality of the golden age’, not least because the guilty party has to act the innocent in the story, but it is also a function of a wider form of play-acting that takes in so many characters and novels and includes Antony Gillingham and Bill Beverley.²⁵⁷ Rowland

²⁵³ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, pp. 72-73.

²⁵⁴ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 75.

²⁵⁵ This is the term used by Nicolson in her essay on crime writing. See Nicolson, ‘The Professor and the Detective’, p. 116.

²⁵⁶ ‘Play-act’, in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], https://www.oed.com/dictionary/play-act_v?tab=meaning_and_use#10445989 [Accessed 25/10/23].

²⁵⁷ Rowland, p. 124.

cites Margery Allingham's *Campion*, an amateur detective and 'a superb actor of multiple roles (including deceiving the reader)'²⁵⁸ but it is worth citing Carl Peterson who can transform himself utterly, while Tuppence declares to Tommy that she 'ought to be on stage!', later taking up a role as a maid while their 'secret adversary' takes on any number of roles as the shape-shifting villain.²⁵⁹ In *Greensea Island* it is to John Dryden's credit that he is always himself as a mark of his honesty when most of the other characters play a part to hide some dark secrets.

In Chapter One of *Mr. Evans* the narrative form switches from the stage to the novel as Reggie Courthope finds himself scrutinised by Holmes and Watson. This detective pairing is slightly more like the original than the wayward Bill and Tony in *The Red House Mystery*. Watson begins: 'I am trying to apply your methods Holmes. He is clearly an undergraduate, I should say in his second or third year [...]'. Watson is sadly routed by Holmes who has to correct the majority of his misapprehensions: 'You began well, Watson, but you have the inherent vices of the amateur'.²⁶⁰ This narrative play suggests an attitude that runs through the book. What follows is a series of actions intended to divert or disable Merivale, including a fake telegram and carelessly placed orange peel that snags not Jasper but 'the boot-boy, who had twisted his ankle'.²⁶¹ It is possibly these shifting narrative frames that have hampered the book's reputation but the work also suffers from a superfluity of detectives. When, fairly late in the story, dirty footprints are found outside the library, Jasper declares: 'it is clear that some one was prowling outside the house'.²⁶² Merivale takes up the mantle of

²⁵⁸ Rowland, p. 118.

²⁵⁹ Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, p. 33.

²⁶⁰ Alington, pp. 6 and 8.

²⁶¹ Alington, p. 34.

²⁶² Alington, p. 80.

detective and terrorises the household until finally, nearly ninety pages later, Mr Boyle from Scotland Yard with eyes that are ‘grey and keen’ takes up the case.²⁶³ The sole mystery is whether anything has been stolen from the house. The story only enters familiar crime territory when the gardener, Rawson, notes that the poison he had bought to deal with the wasps in the garden was ‘stolen that very same day’ and that it was cyanide.²⁶⁴ In a final flourish of narrative play, three epilogues give the conclusion to the various mysteries and the reader discovers that the deadly cyanide was in fact still ‘in the tool-shed; it had slipped down out of sight a bit’.²⁶⁵ The novel has less sting to it than that of the wasps in the garden and revels in its status as fictional artefact and game. The form of the farce that dominates the book has the effect of showing the ignorance and absurdity of humanity, something that certainly traps Jasper Merivale.

Humour is a central component of being human, and hence has a place in the novels, dramas and even poetry that issue from the culture. What occurred in crime writing in the aftermath of the Great War was, however, exceptional. It did not just include humour and play, it embraced it, sometimes wholeheartedly as an important feature of the genre. It would be easy to assume that this was in reaction to the war, and this certainly tells part of the story. However, it has already been shown that one of the founding texts of the post-war movement was *Trent’s Last Case* published before the conflict. To an extent this shift towards play and humour is a defensive one. Even the first English language study of the genre, Thomson’s *Masters of Mystery* refuses to take the form too seriously:

²⁶³ Alington, p. 170.

²⁶⁴ Alington, p. 191.

²⁶⁵ Alington, p. 255.

During a recess Prime Ministers do not as of old hie themselves to the Classics and thank their God for Virgil. They batten instead on the works of Mr. Edgar Wallace.²⁶⁶

Thomson's playful interjections reproduce the humour and play that the genre largely settles upon, and as he says the novel, 'does not take crime seriously' removing it 'from the morbid and revolting.'²⁶⁷

Since Thomson sees crime writing as only tangentially interested in real life, he seems to believe he should not make any great claims for the form except as entertainment. Making itself unserious it is then able to ward off the hostile salvos from modernism which disliked the novels' 'institutionalization as "respectable" and their formal and thematic conservatism.'²⁶⁸ Martin Hipsky remarks that 'much modernist fiction explicitly rejects the nostalgic, retrograde ideologies' often embodied in crime writing.²⁶⁹

Each of these novels is unified only by their differences despite performing within a similar genre.²⁷⁰ Two of the writers here (Christie and Fletcher) found themselves in dispute with their publishers while A. A. Milne's relations with Methuen seem to have been exceptionally harmonious. All of these titles were bestsellers, even *Mr. Evans*, doing good business despite being Alington's first detective novel. They all of them garnered significant cultural capital but have subsequently fallen into

²⁶⁶ Thomson, p. 11.

²⁶⁷ Thomson, p. 21.

²⁶⁸ Martin Hipsky, *Modernism and the Women's Popular Romance in Britain, 1885-1925* (Athens, Ga: Ohio University Press, 2011), p. 252. In this context Hipsky is discussing the genre of the popular romance.

²⁶⁹ Hipsky, p. 264.

²⁷⁰ For the idea of genre as performative see John Frow, *Genre*, Second edition (Routledge, 2015), p. 11.

obscurity suggesting Bernice M. Murphy's belief that popular writing is only ever ephemeral has some merit.²⁷¹

Despite all the works being written in the opening years of the Golden Age few of them conform to all the identifiable tropes that consolidated the form since even *The Mystery of the Red House* tests the limits of this categorisation. Despite Stephen Knight's claim that 'neither authorial voice nor characters [are] given any elaboration'²⁷² in these works, they are conceptually complex narratives in which the limits of those concepts are often enlarged, breached or rendered permeable by the demands of the plot. John Frow pronouncing on genre as a whole notes that 'it flourishes at the thresholds of communities of discourse' where conceptual limits are more likely to break down and ideas about laughter, play and violence are drawn together in unpredictable ways.²⁷³ The breaking down of conceptual limits not only points to the fragility of the ideas themselves, but more widely signals the social frailty that the novels map out. London in *The Secret Adversary*, the muscular centre of Empire is quickly shown to be incubating a plot that threatens the nation's social coherence while the rural idyll in *The Red House Mystery* is quickly perceived to be a sham, built on hidden jealousies, snobbery and unearned capital.

One other way in which certain conceptual limits are breached is in the treatment of the body in these novels. While 'Sapper' still relishes the idea of the body in *The Black Gang* where it is distorted, shot or bayoneted, in most other of these

²⁷¹ Bernice M. Murphy, *Key Concepts in Contemporary Popular Fiction* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 8.

²⁷² Knight, 'The Golden Age', p. 78

²⁷³ Frow, p. 13.

narratives the body shrinks away and becomes almost fleshless. This is the body in dissolution, distancing it from the war's mutilated corpses.

What, though, is the function of humour within these texts? It is not possible to formulate an answer to this without drawing on ideas of abjection, violence and play since the concepts are not so much entangled as interpenetrated; it becomes easier to discuss these forms in conjunction. If abjection, according to Barbara Creed, is 'feeling in a low or debased condition' then this characterised much of British life at the conclusion of the war.²⁷⁴ In 1922 C. F. G. Masterman could still write about a 'deepening darkness' and a 'profound disturbance in the minds' of the war's 'surviving citizens' and in the novels under discussion here the tendency is to use humour to displace the abject that arose or, in *The Black Gang*, to further enforce abjection upon its victims such as 'little Franz'.²⁷⁵ Laughter, as Kristeva has argued is a way of fixing abjection in place or lifting its conceptual burden so that humour and abjection are drawn inexorably closer, operating in consort. This brings the narrative within the terms of the grotesque, as comedy and the body intersect and the misshapen integuments of Drummond, Cayley or Zadowa become part of what Wolfgang Kayser has called a 'comically, and partly satirically, drawn world' which 'finally altogether vanishe[s]' leaving the reader surprised and horrified.²⁷⁶ It is further evidence of how the comic disrupts the novel's delineated order and why humour and the crime novel find in each other a perfect partner. It is the criminal enquiry that finally brings some stability to the fragmented and disordered world the detective or investigator stumbles into.

²⁷⁴ Creed.

²⁷⁵ Masterman, p. 3.

²⁷⁶ Quoted in Cruickshank, p. 5.

The carnivalesque is another function of humour within the texts' confines. Bakhtin's work on this aspect of humour and play has been distilled by later critics into the idea of 'comedy as a potential site of social disruption' and its inclusion in most of these books points to its importance for their fragile social systems.²⁷⁷ The death of Mark Ablett both disrupts the cultural order and opens up this disorder to comedy in the same instant. In *The Secret Adversary* the societal disruption at the war's conclusion leads almost inexorably to the work's discrepancy between the grim reality of unemployment and the humour it generates from Tommy and Tuppence.

These are all sub-texts to these novels, but it should not be forgotten that the primary motive of these books was as entertainments, writing that was enjoyable, humorous and was one of the ways in which Britons could fill their expanding leisure time. As such, the crime novel had to compete with Charlie Chaplin on the big screen, theatre-going, described by Robert Graves and Adrian Hodges as 'now again a social obligation', and 'the rapid growth of nightclubs'.²⁷⁸ Leisure, of course, was another antidote to the traumas of war but real crime too, mediated to the public through a resurgent media, further drove the popularity of the crime novel.

The metafictional aspect to some of these novels, such as *The Secret Adversary* or *The Red House Mystery* has been considered critical to the Golden Age by Susan Rowland, although not similarly highlighted by other authorities. Here it serves two functions, often accessing further humour, for example when Bill thinks to himself: 'People were always doing that sort of thing in books' as he shadows Cayley in the

²⁷⁷ See Stott, p. 35.

²⁷⁸ Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939* (Folio Society, 2009), pp. 120 and 100.

grounds of the Red House.²⁷⁹ But this brief flash of humour signifies for the reader that ‘bifurcated vision’ that encompasses irony and comedy but communicates to the reader the knowledge that what they are reading is a fiction, distancing them from the work’s reliance on violent death. It further allows for the greater participation of the reader in the narrative since these metafictional intervals are also moments of interpellation. They serve to highlight ‘the notion of role-playing in relation to *fictions*’ (italics in the original) which ‘becomes an important aspect of criticizing social role-playing’ in a novel like *Mr. Evans* where Uncle Jasper’s pose of uprightness and fiscal prudence is undermined by his previously falling victim to fraud.²⁸⁰

Humour implying laughter, comedy, joking and many allied forms found its perfect partner in the crime writing of 1922 and after. It functioned in a multiplicity of ways, usually interacting with other concepts, often in odd and contradictory ways. Humour can attenuate the more distressing aspects of a violent killing while its grotesque aspect, viewed in ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ only emphasises the horrific nature of the crime. Humour can entertain and offer critique; it can fracture the imagined wholeness of a social structure whilst offering jokes to ameliorate what it has sought to engender. It is these tensions that both threaten the discourse of the crime text and bind it closer together, offering the reader the thrills of the chase in the process.

²⁷⁹ Milne, *The Red House Mystery*, p. 120.

²⁸⁰ Rowland, p. 118.

❖ Chapter 4. 'I love you with all my soul': History, Value, and the Popular Romance

'do we really think that there is nothing for us to learn in what ordinary people were reading in the years we study?'

Patrick Collier¹

In 1922 the writer Elinor Glyn found herself in Hollywood. An often headstrong and independent woman she seems to have little in common with Ethel M. Dell and Ruby M. Ayres, the other writers who are the subject of this chapter. Arriving in the US in 1919 she had unintentionally sidestepped the societal changes that the armistice and the post-war era initially wrought on Britain. In 1918 8,479,156 women obtained the vote, although this was against 12,913,166 new male votes and most women's rights were still tied to their husband's.² Glyn, despite her seeming difference from Dell and Ayres, was in many ways similar to them in her conservatism and concern with home. She had eschewed women's suffrage as a particular issue and despite her penchant for travel a part of her was constantly in search of home.³ These contradictions are central to these three women who took refuge in home and the domestic yet as bestselling writers in 1922 found themselves independently wealthy and with some significant power within the publishing industry. They embodied in their work and lives all of

¹ Patrick Collier, *Modern Print Artefacts: Textual Materiality and Literary Value in British Print Culture, 1890-1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 235.

² Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 34.

³ In terms of suffrage Glyn was probably indifferent to the changes, influenced in her politics by Lord Curzon who had been chair of the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage. See 'Lord Curzon on Woman Suffrage' *The Times*, 2 November 1912, p. 8; also, Anthony Glyn, *Elinor Glyn: A Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), p. 175. Seemingly always in search of home on her arrival at her rooms in Hollywood she tried to 'create the kind of ambience she felt at home in.' See Joan Hardwick, *Addicted to Romance: The Life and Adventures of Elinor Glyn* (London: André Deutsch, 1994), p. 224.

that which Virginia Woolf thought a female novelist required which was, ‘money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction’.⁴

I.

□ Women Writers, Publishing, and the Domestic Sphere

These writers’ contribution to the literary culture of 1922 can be confirmed from detailed sales figures for most of their novels and this research benefits from access to the Elinor Glyn Archive held in the University of Reading. What follows shows how their novels, written by women with a broadly conservative outlook, mediated some aspects of the changing post-war society and came into conflict with the less progressive narratives their books promoted. It will demonstrate how these writers worked within the publishing industry and appraises four novels, Elinor Glyn’s *Man and Maid*, Ethel M. Dell’s *Charles Rex* and Ruby M. Ayres’ *The Matherson Marriage* and *A Gamble with Love*.

These women were professional writers, able to produce one novel after another with little pause between each one. It is necessary to name them as female writers since even in 1922 their evolution as authors seems to have been quite different from that of their male contemporaries, and still much like that of nineteenth century women novelists. They had been protected from commercial considerations by virtue of wealth and class (often that of a father or husband) and would go on to write professionally because, as Bessie Raynes Parke said of nineteenth-century writers, they

⁴ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (London: Triad Grafton, 1987), p. 6.

‘demanded work such as they could perform at home.’⁵ These writers were at the centre of their own lives, homes and domestic arrangements, even if this only meant instructing the servants. Nancy Armstrong has said that domestic fiction created a new form of power emerging ‘with the rise of the domestic woman and established its hold over British culture through her dominance over all those objects and practices we associate with private life.’⁶ Jay Dixon affirms this view commenting that ‘home [...] is the women’s sphere - standing for stability, safety, peace and strength.’⁷ For these conservative writers home was the space that allowed them to compose their fantasies of love and conflict and offered them a protection from, and a way to bypass, those male institutions that derided or ignored the romance. It might be argued that these women had little choice in the matter, but Elinor Glyn had proved that women, particularly those with wealth, had much greater control over their lives. This was significant since masculine values were seen to be under threat from the romance and it was held that escapism was ‘positively dangerous’ and ‘destructive to anything like masculine vigour of thought’, as Francis Hitchman had written at the end of the nineteenth century.⁸ Despite this, readers committed to the form, understood its value. Janice A. Radway’s survey of romance readers at the end of the century seems consonant with their needs at its start: ‘Everyone is under so much pressure. They like books that let them escape.’⁹ Billie Melman offers some insight into the issue when

⁵ Quoted in Joanne Shattock, ‘Becoming a Professional Writer’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women’s Writing* ed. by Linda H. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 29-42 (p. 30).

⁶ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 3.

⁷ Jay Dixon, *The Romance Fiction of Mills and Boon 1909-1990s* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 9.

⁸ Quoted in Christopher Hilliard, ‘Popular Reading and Social Investigation in Britain 1850s-1940s’, *The Historical Journal*, 57.1 (2014), 256.

⁹ Quoted in Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (London: Verso, 1987), p. 88.

she says that ‘the increasing complexity of *real life* after the First World War is, I think, the main explanation for the mass escape into the uncomplicated world of romantic fiction’ (italics in the original).¹⁰

Novels set in large houses with copious servants and obliging chauffeurs definitely served as fantasies for many readers, and an escape from their often impoverished situations. If these fictional homes in some sense represented an ideal, they stood against the actuality of people’s lives which might include ‘back-to-back houses [...] with one outside toilet to every three or four houses.’¹¹ It is no coincidence that in this year novelist Leonora Eyles published her study of poor housing, *The Woman in the Little House*, that further defined the gap between government aspirations and the slums, and which, like much romance writing, had originally been serialised, although in *Time and Tide*. A Paris apartment or an ancestral castle must have made for ‘*compensatory literature*’ in Janice A. Radway’s words (italics in the original).¹²

Elaine Showalter’s idea of a ‘crisis of masculinity’ after 1918 acknowledges the difficulties of these post-war years when as Irene Clephane noted, ‘women in employment were degraded in the public press to a position of ruthless self-seekers depriving men and their dependants of a living’; this was despite both government and business making redundant those women who had temporarily taken on male roles. It was seen as ‘essential for the reestablishment of male self-respect’, as Sue Bruley has

¹⁰ Billie Melman, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 8.

¹¹ Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989), p. 91.

¹² Radway, p. 95.

said.¹³ If there was a move to return women to the domestic, particularly middle-class women, the three novelists under discussion had never entirely left and if the inter-war years were ‘dominated by conservatism’, this was likely of some comfort to Ayres, Dell, and Glyn.¹⁴ Ayres remarked that, ‘[i]t is a pity for women to take up work which keeps them out of the home all day. The home is apt to suffer’.¹⁵ And home is where Ruby M. Ayres began. Married in 1909 to an insurance broker, ‘she wrote [...] to pass the time while her husband was at work.’¹⁶

Alison Light has written that not only was home ‘the place where women were, after 1919 [...] and where women writers were coming into their own’, but in consequence of this, ‘women’s history, lived, as it were, in a different place, need not run parallel to that of men’.¹⁷ All three of these novelists follow this maxim even as, in a contrary movement, the employment of women in the workplace was growing in some areas.¹⁸ If home, though, was attached to ‘feelings of belonging’ as Light has surmised, it also became, for all these writers, a contested space which could lead to extraordinary violence, as Ruby M. Ayres ably showed. It is in these moments of contestation that the reader finds a facsimile of the shifting power relations between women who now had the vote and had often tasted independence in the war years,

¹³ Irene Clephane quoted in Sue Bruley, *Women in Britain since 1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 61.

¹⁴ Bruley, p. 59.

¹⁵ Anonymous, ‘If All Women Stayed Single!’, *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 16 April 1925, p. 19.

¹⁶ C. M. P. Taylor, ‘Ayres, Ruby Mildred (1881–1955), Romantic Novelist’ (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45542>>. The information given is dependent on this slightly inaccurate profile in the *ODNB*.

¹⁷ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 7 and 9.

¹⁸ Martin Pugh’s figures show a slow but incremental increase in the female workforce throughout the inter-war years. See Pugh, *Women and the Women’s Movement in Britain, 1914–1959*, p. 91.

and men who sometimes appeared impotent and sometimes emasculated, at least in the literature of the era.¹⁹

Ruby M. Ayres' earnings would have placed her in a position of considerable influence within the house. These earnings were extremely large for the time. And Allen Andrews says that Ayres 'set her income at an annual level of £20,000 which she kept up for a long time.'²⁰ Today this figure could be put in the millions and would have placed Ayres far beyond her husband's earnings in the city. Both Dell and Ayres eventually had their own large houses, formal spaces in which they could write uninterrupted. Ayres eventually moved to one of the most exclusive areas of Surrey, St. George's Hill, Weybridge, and to a house formerly owned by theatre producer J. E. Vedrenne.²¹ With a husband at work there would only have been dogs and presumably servants to disturb her since she and her husband remained childless. She even took the trouble to answer all her mail herself, possibly to avoid having others around her, even though she enjoyed time in London.²² Ethel M. Dell lived a similar life in a series of big houses run under 'a strict regimen' which she continued throughout her life.²³ As Bart Verschaffel has acknowledged, '[t]he house is the place where order is protected and restored [...] and life can go on'.²⁴ Verschaffel is clear-eyed about his comments: 'linking woman and house could be a means to simplify and control the

¹⁹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830 - 1980* (Virago, 2011), pp. 172-73.

²⁰ Allen Andrews, 'She Wrote Ten Million Words on Love', *Daily Herald*, 15 November 1955, p. 4.

²¹ See Gilbert Harding, "'Money for Jam" Says Miss Ayres About Her Stories', *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 3 November 1953, p. 3 and Anonymous, 'Novelist Leaves £29, 326', *Belfast Telegraph*, 20 February 1956, p. 5.

²² Mawnon Smith, 'A Trinity of Talent', *Britannia and Eve*, September 1952, 60.

²³ So organised was her day that her biographer was apparently able to reconstruct it years after her death. See Penelope Dell, *Nettie and Sissie: The Biography of Ethel M. Dell and Her Sister Ella* (London: Hamilton, 1977), pp. 132-34.

²⁴ Bart Verschaffel, 'The Meanings of Domesticity' in *The Domestic Space Reader* ed. by (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 153-56 (p. 153).

feminine', however it should be acknowledged that there is a great difference between the idea of the 'private sphere' which was used to confine women, and ideas of privacy which allowed women control over their intimate lives.²⁵ For Ayres and Dell, though, and even for Elinor Glyn, home was a choice.²⁶ The problem for Glyn was that her husband, Clayton, for many years held the money in the marriage. It was through this that Glyn was allowed to build and decorate her own annexe, 'joined to the main house by a glass-roofed passage', and 'she was able to give her artistic taste full rein in their decoration.'²⁷ It served a threefold function, giving her space away from a husband with whom she was increasingly disenchanted, enabling her to find an artistic outlet, but most of all giving her control over a space (that Dell and Ayres took for granted), where the rest of the house and estate was emphatically her husband's. As Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei have pointed out, 'novels *and* houses furnish a dwelling place that invites the exploration and expression of private and intimate relations and thoughts' (italics in the original). Not only that but writing also used 'private domestic space as frame and metonym of inner psychological space'.²⁸ In *The Matherson Marriage* home corresponds too exactly to Young's idea of the private sphere as a place of confinement. In *Charles Rex* Lord Burchester's castle is a representation of the man and in *Man and Maid* Thormonde's apartment is a place of friction and disputed power, sometimes a prison but also a place where he can withdraw from the world. But Elinor Glyn's trajectory took her very far from

²⁵ See Allison Weir, *Identities and Freedom: Feminist Theory between Power and Connection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 53.

²⁶ Verschaffel, p. 153.

²⁷ Anthony Glyn, *Elinor Glyn: A Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), p. 105.

²⁸ Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei, 'House Haunting: The Domestic Novel of the Interwar Years' in *The Domestic Space Reader* ed. by Kathy Mezei, and Chiara Briganti (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 325-30 (p. 325).

domesticity to the Western Front and latterly, Hollywood. Despite this it seems that she was often trying to remake a sense of home. In Hollywood, to create that sense of home, 'she put a tigerskin on the floor', emblematic of her earlier novel *Three Weeks* but also an item that lent a space a sense of the domestic, as a 1935 photograph of her London flat showed.²⁹

□ Mass-Market Publishing

Glyn, Ayres, and Dell developed the work ethic that defined the life of a mass-market novelist. Ruby M. Ayres was the most outspoken about her methods: 'First I fix the price. Then I fix the title. Then I write the book.'³⁰ Andrews said that Ayres could write '12,000 words a day' but, like much concerning the writer, this figure was probably an exaggeration.³¹ The *Telegraph's* obituary of the writer said that '[h]er average was four books a year', which is largely accurate.³² She could offer a sharp commentary on her literary exertions remarking that 'I only write for money', and later in life explained, 'I haven't changed the formula for 50 years.'³³ Attack being the best form of defence, it seems likely that these comments were designed to head off the critical brickbats of those reviewers who deigned to notice her work. Even Elizabeth Harvey's largely positive profile of the writer in 1956 includes the remark that her books 'contain

²⁹ See <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/british-romantic-novelist-elinor-glyn-relaxing-in-her-home-news-photo/3378353> [Accessed 26 March 2024]. The image shows one of her tigerskin rugs against the fireplace. Also, Hardwick, p. 224.

³⁰ Quoted in Elizabeth Harvey, 'Ruby M. Ayres & Her Public', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 13 March 1956, p. 3.

³¹ Andrews, p. 4. In the *Daily Telegraph's* obituary of the novelist, it inflated the figure telling its readers she could write '20,000 words in an afternoon.' See Anonymous, 'Ruby M. Ayres', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 November 1955, p. 8.

³² Anonymous, 'Ruby M. Ayres', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 November 1955, p. 8.

³³ Quoted in Vincent Mulchrone, 'Ruby Won Riches from Romance', *Daily Mail*, 15 November 1955, p. 3.

nothing to offend and are probably as beneficial as the chemist's sedatives, and equally habit-forming.³⁴

Ethel M. Dell regarded her privacy very highly and took significant steps to protect it allowing little to reach the press. Her success meant she acquired a large house of her own in which to work and, as David Tanner says, 'Ethel was known to shut herself away and write during anti-social hours'.³⁵ Her biographer said that '[n]o one really knew how long she worked' but she wrote 'unhesitatingly, rarely correcting herself'.³⁶ This gives some indication of the diffidence that governed her life. While Ruby M. Ayres could happily involve herself in society, Dell was a desperate introvert.³⁷ This might have been a distinct disadvantage for a popular writer, although the fantasy of the novels themselves seems to have drawn readers in without the necessity of a relationship with the writer herself.³⁸ In this respect she finds herself in sympathy with an older cohort of writers. Showalter considers the words of novelist Mary Brunton that 'I would rather, as you well know, glide through the world unknown, than [...] be noticed and commented upon'. This earlier generation saw writing 'as a vocation in direct conflict with their status as women', whereas Dell did not.³⁹ She did not resort to a pseudonym but asserted herself in the way she kept strict

³⁴ Harvey, p. 3.

³⁵ David Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse: Ethel M. Dell, A Written Life* (Bath: Brown Dog Books, 2024), p.

34.

³⁶ Penelope Dell, p. 134.

³⁷ Ayres' activities were very varied but included literary lunches at the Dorchester, opening bazaars and a branch of W. H. Smith's and helping out with an NSPCC flag day. See: Anonymous, 'The "Love Will Find a Way" Luncheon', *The Sphere*, 15 November 1952, p. 280; Anonymous, 'Untitled', *Sydenham, Forest Hill and Penge Gazette*, 7 December 1951, p. 7; Anonymous, 'Store Opened by Ruby M. Ayres', *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 7 December 1951, p. 2; Anonymous, 'Children's Society Flag Day', *The Times*, 8 June 1920, p. 18.

³⁸ Penelope Dell, p. 36.

³⁹ Quoted in Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing*, rev. and expanded ed. (London: Virago, 2009), pp. 14 and 15.

control over her image and her relations with the world beyond the domestic. Although her day would usually involve a drive out in her chauffeured car; it 'had special blinds so that if she did not wish to be seen she could draw them very quickly'.⁴⁰

Elinor Glyn, similarly, had a tremendous work ethic and her early biographer notes that 'she was almost always writing', although '[s]he did not in any sense regard herself as a professional author. She was merely a society lady who wrote books to amuse herself, as her grandson has put it.⁴¹ These kind of claims by women writers were often used to divert any critical opprobrium but in Glyn's case it was partly to do with her own sense of herself as connected to the minor aristocracy and to a class that disdained the idea of work. Married to a wealthy landowner, Clayton Glyn, at the beginning of her career writing was a pastime enabled by her husband's money.⁴² It was only when her husband found himself on the verge of bankruptcy that Glyn began writing in earnest when '[h]er pen alone stood between them all and starvation.'⁴³ As Showalter has said of writers, '[f]inancial crises [...] justified their work, or pushed secret scribblers over the brink into print.'⁴⁴ After her husband's death in 1915 she was still under pressure to write, despite securing a contract for 'ten thousand dollars plus travelling expenses' with Famous Players-Lasky in Hollywood.⁴⁵ She made phenomenal sums of money in the US (the film of *Three Weeks*, released in 1924, netted her

⁴⁰ Penelope Dell, pp. 132-33.

⁴¹ Anthony Glyn, p. 106.

⁴² Anthony Glyn, p. 105.

⁴³ Anthony Glyn, p. 164. On one well-attested occasion, Glyn found herself urgently needing to pay off a debt of her husband's. In desperation she called on R. D. Blumenfeld, editor of the *Daily Express* to ask how she could earn such a sum quickly. Blumenfeld said he would pay that amount to serialise a new Elinor Glyn novel and she finished it in eighteen days. See Anthony Glyn, p. 197.

⁴⁴ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 45.

⁴⁵ Anthony Glyn, p. 273.

\$65,130.09 alone)⁴⁶ but contractual obligations and, no doubt, the bitter experience of near poverty, kept her writing.⁴⁷ She described her working day to a reporter in 1926:

Mme. Glyn arises at 5.30am every day of the year. She never sleeps more than five hours and frequently less. She begins writing immediately upon arising [...] Before she arrives at the studio at 8.30 she has already accomplished her stint of writing her syndicated newspaper articles, cleaned up her correspondence and written a few chapters of her next novel [...] her evenings are spent alone in her apartment planning and organizing the next day.⁴⁸

However, Glyn never balanced the books and, as her biographer Joan Hardwick has said, 'her family was gradually beginning to understand her total inability to manage her money.'⁴⁹ Later, her daughter and son-in-law felt it prudent to step in and create a 'limited liability company' into which Glyn's profits would be paid, in the hope of reducing 'the commitments into which she might rashly enter.'⁵⁰ But, as Hardwick surmises, the company 'had not really changed Elinor's way of thinking about money. She still assumed there was 'always plenty on hand' and 'that she could easily make more', something that would lead to her impecunious final years.⁵¹

□ The Agents and their Clients

Albert Curtis Brown, the acclaimed literary agent, wrote that 'literary properties now command so many widely varied markets and such intricate contracts, that the happy owner of such properties would be quite mad to spend the time to muddle through

⁴⁶ Vincent L. Barnett and Alexis Weedon, *Elinor Glyn as Novelist, Moviemaker, Glamour Icon and Businesswoman* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p. 115, table 5.3.

⁴⁷ While in Hollywood she still had obligations to Duckworth in Britain and her agent Hughes Massie sent her a letter when she sailed to the US 'reminding her of all of her literary commitments.' See Anthony Glyn, p. 274.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Alexis Weedon, 'Elinor Glyn's System of Writing', *Publishing History*, 60 (2006), 39.

⁴⁹ Hardwick, p. 249.

⁵⁰ Anthony Glyn, p. 295.

⁵¹ Hardwick, p. 268.

with marketing them himself.⁵² One of the architects of professionalisation, Walter Besant, for a time head of the Society of Authors, confirmed this, referring despondently to the ‘intolerable trouble of haggling and bargaining’ that working without an agent involved.⁵³ Of all three writers only Ayres eschewed the professional agent. As Allen Andrews wrote of her, ‘She was a great business woman, a hard bargainer who begrudged the agent’s ten-percent and never used an intermediary except for foreign rights.’⁵⁴ As she wrote to Leonard Moore, ‘I do not employ a regular agent, as I am in with most editors and publishers, but am always pleased to consider or accept commissions’.⁵⁵ This indicates that despite living beyond the confines of the London literary bubble Ayres could operate just as professionally as male writers inured to Grub Street.

Ethel M. Dell had signalled her professional ambitions early on by retaining James B. Pinker to sell her stories, but soon switched her allegiance to A. P. Watt who became Dell’s mentor and friend and went on to inherit her literary estate on her death.⁵⁶ Dell had, as Tanner has described, ‘a very shrewd business mind’, and was able to negotiate Watt’s fee from ‘10% to 7.5%’.⁵⁷ He took up her first novel, *The Way of an Eagle* (1914), and turned it into a bestseller so that ‘auditors reported that [her sales] were responsible for half of the then very large turnover’ of her publisher T.

⁵² Quoted in Barnett and Weedon, p. 37.

⁵³ Marris Joseph, *Victorian Literary Businesses: The Management and Practices of the British Publishing Industry* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2019), p. 89.

⁵⁴ Andrews, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, Ruby M. Ayres Letters, MS-919, Box 1, 1913-1923. ‘Typewritten letter to Leonard Moore from 51, Radnor Road, Harrow dated August 9th, 1913.’ Moore was the agent who looked after her overseas contracts.

⁵⁶ David Tanner, ‘Literary Success and Popular Romantic Fiction: Ethel M. Dell, a case study’ in *The Book World: Selling and Distributing British Literature, 1900-1940* ed. by Nicola Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 83-94 (p. 87).

⁵⁷ Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse*, pp. 21 and 42.

Fisher Unwin.⁵⁸ It is possibly due to A. P. Watt's commercial diligence that so many of Dell's novels became lucrative film propositions. In Britain, the Stoll Picture Company produced eighteen versions of Dell's works between 1919-1922 but Dell had no interest in writing for the screen and instead 'sought creative control of the end product.' She understood the worth of such ventures and acquired shares in the Stoll Picture Company even though she was obtaining a 10% commission on box office takings' making clear her commercial acumen, despite being a shy, unconfident woman bolstered by a preference for domesticity.⁵⁹ Her undertakings are in marked contrast to those of Ayres who, without an agent, seemed unable or unwilling to negotiate what Alexis Weedon has called the 'intermodal networks' that created connections between 'print, sound and screen cultures' and, it should be added, theatrical adaptations.⁶⁰ Much less of her income came from these sources but often producing four novels a year must have compensated for this. Ten of her titles were made into films according to the IMDb while Dell's work led her to profit from twenty-four film adaptations.⁶¹ Only Elinor Glyn, who worked in Hollywood, was involved in more.

Glyn herself, who suffered difficulties with money, did employ an agent, Hughes Massie, who had once been Albert Curtis Brown's partner, and who went on to become an agent for Glyn and Agatha Christie.⁶² Massie also employed agents in

⁵⁸ Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 83.

⁵⁹ Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 89. It was theatre that she seems to have enjoyed rather than suffered, making a public appearance at the opening night of the theatrical version of *The Way of the Eagle* despite her evident shyness. See Hannen Swaffer, 'Plays and Players', *The Sunday Times*, 11 June 1922, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Alexis Weedon, 'An Introduction to Elinor Glyn: Her Life and Legacy', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 29.2 (2018), 145.

⁶¹ It might have been said that Ayres averaged four novels a year but in 1921 she completely surpassed this, publishing at least eight titles according to copyright library catalogues although at least two of these are not even novella length.

⁶² See <https://amheath.com/history/> [Accessed 11/10/22].

the US to seek out contracts within the publishing and film businesses,⁶³ useful after Glyn's 1920 departure for Hollywood which he had engineered.⁶⁴ Glyn even recommended using an agent for film contracts in her book of 1922, *The Elinor Glyn System of Writing*, and Massie was certainly some use despite being unable to curb her more wayward business practices.⁶⁵

□ Magazine Rights and Book Sales

The romance novel often began as magazine fiction. As was noted in the Introduction, a magazine or newspaper was frequently consumed by readers, books far less.

Billie Melman offers figures for the post-war newspaper and magazine market:

there were in Britain 16 national newspapers, 21 Sundays and about 130 provincial papers [...] In 1924 the number of popular magazines was, according to the Newspaper Press Directory and Advertiser's Guide, about 14 times this figure.⁶⁶

The Strand Magazine, template for almost every other fiction magazine and later home to 'Sapper', early on showed sales of around 500,000 which book publishers could only dream of.⁶⁷ Mike Ashley has said that 'if anything, fiction dominated these magazines more than before the War', and women's general interest periodicals included fiction as a matter of course.⁶⁸ They furthermore used full colour covers which were hardly universal in the publishing trade and often used better paper.

⁶³ Barnett and Weedon, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Anthony Glyn, p. 273.

⁶⁵ *The Elinor Glyn System of Writing* was a four-volume distillation of Glyn's knowledge of how to write. Alexis Weedon sees in the volume a degree of 'over-simplification, hyperbole, hubris' but admits that Glyn shows 'a considerable depth of understanding of the technical aspects of writing'; see Alexis Weedon, 'Elinor Glyn's System of Writing', *Publishing History*, 60 (2006), 31.

⁶⁶ Melman, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Mike Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines, 1880-1950* (London: British Library, 2006), p. 197.

⁶⁸ Ashley, p. 14.

In addition, serialisation put the name of the author in front of an audience for weeks at a time and could generate trade for the book. An 1883 story in a Christmas annual was reprinted as a book and sold '350,000 copies in four years.'⁶⁹ There was also a market for the second serial rights to stories: 'the use of material after publication, whether in book or previous serial form.'⁷⁰ Serialisation made romance writers' reputations since their work in magazines usually existed beyond the hostile pen of the male critic. The importance of the romance serial becomes clear when it is noted that *The Red Magazine*, originally allocated to the 'boy's magazine department', eventually had an output including 30% romantic fiction and '16% for adventure stories and general slice-of-life dramas.'⁷¹ Once newspaper stories were published second serial rights meant a serial from a London paper, for example, might find its way into a regional title months later offering writers a second payment. Michael Joseph estimates that, '[f]or the serial rights of a published novel [...] which prior to publication might have realised about £200, a fair price for serial rights would be about £75.'⁷² The opportunities for serialisation, and the rewards, were significant, especially if this included US rights.⁷³ As Ashley notes, '[a]fter 1914, the big money, and the big magazines, were in the States'.⁷⁴ If the top price paid for a serial in this country was £1,000, 'in the United States the sum of \$10,000 has more than once been paid', something Elinor Glyn capitalised on.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Ashley, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁰ Michael Joseph, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925), p. 206.

⁷¹ Ashley, pp. 175-76.

⁷² Michael Joseph, p. 206.

⁷³ See Mary Hammond, *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 4.

⁷⁴ Ashley, p. 13.

⁷⁵ Michael Joseph, pp. 204-5.

Glyn had a close relationship with the periodical and newspaper press, her work published in *Nash's Magazine* and the *Daily Express*, and she willingly wrote a weekly column for *Ladies Field* and offered advice and beauty tips elsewhere.⁷⁶ Her biggest coup, though, was securing a US contract with Randolph Hearst's International News Company for three novels including the important magazine rights. Each of the novels alone would earn her \$12,000.⁷⁷

Ruby M. Ayres maintained a long association with the *Daily Mirror* and *The Matherson Marriage* and *A Gamble with Love* were serialised there. Even so Ayres would similarly collaborate with the *Daily Mail*, *Modern Woman* and many others, although the relationship with the *Daily Mirror* sustained her for many years.⁷⁸ Ayres maintained this close connection with magazines becoming, for a time, an 'agony aunt' in *Home Chat*.⁷⁹

Like Ayres, Ethel M. Dell began her career in the magazine market and early on sold the copyright to twenty-eight titles.⁸⁰ Her first agent, J. B. Pinker, was secured after she had rejected one publisher 'since I did not consider their terms sufficiently tempting.'⁸¹ This sound business sense eventually led her to A. P. Watt who 'aggressively sold Dell's works into magazines.'⁸² In 1922 *The Red Magazine* published

⁷⁶ See Anthony Glyn, p. 238; Anonymous, 'New Novel by Elinor Glyn', *Westminster Gazette*, 29 June 1911, p. 4; Anonymous, 'The Reflections of Elinor Glyn', *The Sphere*, 28 June 1919, p. 31.

⁷⁷ Weedon, 'Elinor Glyn's System of Writing' 'pp. 40 and 41.

⁷⁸ Dixon Scott, 'At Home with the Woman Who Won a Ruby M. Ayres Award for a Romantic Novel', *Daily Mirror*, 7 September 1963, p. 7. In 1963 Marie Garrett won the Ruby M. Ayres romantic novel award for her book *Where No Fire Burns* which suggests how important Ayres had been to the newspaper.

⁷⁹ Mary Cadogan, *And Then Their Hearts Stood Still: An Exuberant Look at Romantic Fiction Past and Present* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 229.

⁸⁰ Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 87.

⁸¹ Penelope Dell, p. 23.

⁸² Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 88.

the opening chapters to Dell's *Charles Rex*, a journal with which Dell would have a prolonged association.⁸³ However, her stories and serials were placed in many contrasting publications such as *The Storyteller* which published a 'Long Complete Love Story' in 1922.⁸⁴ Tanner further lists '*Peg's Companion* [...] and *Strand* magazine' and such titles advertised more impactfully than publishing houses using large, often illustrated spreads.⁸⁵ The range of titles form a spectrum from *The Strand*, which retailed in the 1920s at one shilling, to *The Red Magazine* at 7d. and *Peg's Companion* at 2d. Tanner says that out of the ninety-eight titles Dell published, both stories and novels, '73% were supported by magazine exposure' which gives some idea of the importance of periodicals to her writing.⁸⁶ In this way Dell reached across the class divide to a working-class and a middle-class readership, yet her stories became forever associated with an audience of 'unmarried manual workers, shop assistants, domestic servants and office workers.'⁸⁷ Certainly, Dell appears to have understood the business sense in publishing across a range of titles. As Nickianne Moody has said: 'For a text to become genuinely popular [...] it must be accessible to multiple cultural identities. Popular texts are always polysemic'.⁸⁸

⁸³ Anonymous, 'Ethel M. Dell: Charles Rex', *Daily News*, 17 February 1922, p. 2. See also, Anonymous, 'The Bars of Iron', *Daily Mail*, 16 October 1915, p. 6. Dell's writing career was boosted by *The Red Magazine* since a short story of hers won second place in a magazine competition in 1909. See Ashley, p. 176.

⁸⁴ The following advertisements show the range of publications that took Dell's work: Anonymous, 'For Easter', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 March 1923, p. 5; Anonymous, 'Ethel M. Dell's Great Novel: "The Obstacle Race"', *Liverpool Echo*, 11 February 1922, p. 5; Anonymous, 'Story-Teller', *The Sunday Times*, 14 May 1922, p. 17.

⁸⁵ Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 89.

⁸⁶ Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse*, p. 215.

⁸⁷ Melman, p. 113.

⁸⁸ Nickianne Moody, 'Feminism and Popular Culture' in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory* ed. by Ellen Rooney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 172-91 (p. 174).

Given the claims made regarding their popular and financial success it is useful to look at the sales figures for Glyn and Ayres' novels to quantify what this meant. Ayres was published by the popular imprint Hodder and Stoughton and the figures can be startling. *The Matherson Marriage*, her first novel of 1922, had first been published in a cheap 2/- edition, a figure that encouraged immediate sales; a price of 7/6 undoubtedly put off all but economically secure middle-class readers and those who borrowed it from a library.⁸⁹ In the first year of publication sales for both books were slow. This might indicate that the original readers for the titles were able to obtain the novels through a library but after the initial year sales were extremely high. There were sales of around 24,000 in the 1924 financial year while *A Gamble with Love* sold just 16,380 copies, although this was still a large figure. It suggests that the initial

Fig. 3. Sales and Accounting Details for *The Matherson Marriage**

Date	Year Ending 31 March 1923	Year Ending 31 March 1924
Price	2/-	2/-
Print Run/Stock	25,000 printed 5025 bound 19,975 unbound	5000 printed 24,237 bound
Royalty	None	£214
Sales	4990	24,000
Profit	£46.80	£384.00

⁸⁹ London Metropolitan Archives, Hodder and Stoughton Archive, CLC/3/119/MS 16312/002, 'Ayres. The Matherson Marriage, Year ending March 31, 1923'.

Fig. 4. Sales and Accounting Details for *A Gamble with Love*

Date	Year Ending 31 March 1923	Year Ending 31 March 1924
Price	7/6 2/-	7/6 sales £36.8.8
Print Run/Stock	Printed 6,000 Bound 5408 Unsold 842	Stock 842 Printed 20,000 Bound 17,252
Royalty	£200	£119.09
Sales	£961.14	16380 @ 2/- Sales £1077.61
Profit	£226.20	£300.84

*All figures taken from the account books of Hodder and Stoughton publishers, the London Metropolitan Archives and decimalised (CLC/B/119/MS16312/102).

idea to sell the book at two prices failed to pay off since it simply divided the market to no advantage. Sales of the 7/6 edition only amounted to £36.8.8. Interestingly, *The Matherson Marriage*, according to the records, did not pay a royalty in its first year. This is probably because selling at such a low price meant profitability occurred later in the publishing cycle than with a 7/6 edition. *A Gamble with Love* paid out a royalty almost immediately. However, setting the price for one of the editions rather higher they decided on printing and binding fewer copies suggesting they were aware the higher price would restrict the overall trade. It is only in the second year when they pushed the cheaper, 2/- edition that they felt warranted in printing large numbers of the title.

The archives of the publishers Hutchinson's have not survived so records concerning Dell are unavailable but what is known is that the company, who published *Charles Rex*, were able to announce that by 1929 they had printed 190,000 copies of the book.⁹⁰ Dell was known as a major writer in the US from which much of her large income must have derived. For example, her 1918 novel *Greatheart* was amongst the top twelve bestsellers in America.⁹¹ It is difficult to make absolute comparisons between the three novelists' sales. With regard to Glyn, initially Gerald Duckworth had published her novels at 7/6 and as Barnett and Weedon say, this 'gave Glyn the highest royalties, but appealed to a smaller market segment.' However, soon after the war Duckworth's adapted their policy on her novels and 'she sold five times the number of copies, although mostly in cheaper editions, and the royalty income was over two and a half times its pre-war level.' This is an indicator of her novels' huge popularity with what has been called 'the cheaper segment of the market', little different from Ayres' audience.⁹² Duckworth's, in taking this line with her novels, aligned itself with the cheaper popular fiction of Hodder and Stoughton. It would only be towards the end of the decade that publishers began to regularly issue cheaper editions of books regarded as more literary in editions such as Jonathan Cape's Traveller's Library series.⁹³ The published figures do not offer sufficient clarity regarding *Man and Maid*. Instead, figures are given for total sales, including this novel, over the two-year period from 1921-23 covering editions of her novels selling from 6/-

⁹⁰ Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse*, p. 317.

⁹¹ Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse*, p. 13.

⁹² Barnett and Weedon, p. 35.

⁹³ 'Traveller's Library' (Oxford University Press, 2010)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-4941> [Accessed 11 April 2024]

to 1/-. The most popular by a small margin was the 2/- edition of which sales were at 25.9%. Sales for the two years amounted to 66,908 of all books sold, well down on the 1920 figures of 294,689 which possibly relied on the cheap reprints. In monetary terms though, her royalties amounted to little less than the 1920 figures at £1,136 (figures given in decimal currency).⁹⁴ In comparison to Ruby M. Ayres it seems likely Glyn never quite achieved the former's income. In 1924, from the two novels indicated, her income was £333.09, and the publishers listed several other novels for sale in 1922, some new, some reprints, which would only have added to her income. What can be said is that both novelists were ultimately most attractive to the 'cheaper segment of the market', whose low-priced titles could provide writers with a significant income.⁹⁵

II.

□ History and Its Relationship with the Romance

The romance is often considered to stand outside of history (or perhaps more specifically social history) even if there can be no point outside of history itself.

However, there has been good reason for the romance to seem unconnected to chronological time. Billie Melman has concluded that 'of all the popular genres it was the least susceptible to changes in fashion or fluctuations of the market.'⁹⁶ This only accords with Rachel Anderson's observation that 'romantic novelists are further kept alive by the publishers' tendency to re-issue the novels in "revised" editions'. For example, *Weekend Woman* by Ruby M. Ayres, first published in 1939 [...] reappeared in its revised edition thirty years later.⁹⁷ Mary Cadogan, in a similar vein, comments that

⁹⁴ See Barnett and Weedon, p. 34.

⁹⁵ See Barnett and Weedon, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Melman, p. 110.

⁹⁷ Rachel Anderson, *The Purple Heart Throbs: The Sub-Literature of Love* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), pp. 197 and 198.

‘[r]omantic fiction is not, of course, expected to reflect or comment on [...] historical events, and it generally ignored the shake-up of values in the early years of the twentieth-century’.⁹⁸ The remark has significant bearing on these authors without necessarily speaking for romance more widely in 1922. Ruby M. Ayres made her name with *Richard Chatterton V.C.* (1915), a war novel, but later books conspicuously avoided the historical moment. As Michael Stanford has observed, though, ‘[t]ime and space are the inescapable dimensions of human life and hence history’.⁹⁹ These writers made an ordered space in which to write (Elinor Glyn certainly did early on), one largely created through their own success which places them alongside Virginia Woolf’s imagined writer noted at the start. The writer relished the idea of ‘two thousand women capable of earning over five hundred a year’, clearly making their mark on the world, although her ideal room is partly a place to withdraw from society. There exists a specific disjunction here; on the one hand these writers find themselves exemplars of Woolf’s ideal. She says women need to ‘escape a little from the common sitting-room’.¹⁰⁰ However, on the other hand Ayres and Dell’s conservatism apparently allows them to remain content that their work and lives exist on the margins, excluded from an historiography constructed largely by men. Glyn is more inclined to inscribe herself into this narrative, using her image and reputation to make herself into a public figure the ‘brand’ that Barnett and Weedon discuss: ‘the famous British novelist and acknowledged expert on romance and social etiquette.’¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, her biographers agree that she remained right-wing, and her own autobiography

⁹⁸ Cadogan, p. 89.

⁹⁹ Michael Stanford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Woolf, p. 108.

¹⁰¹ Barnett and Weedon, p. 4.

reinforces the notion so that she becomes a figure who can be associated with Ayres and Dell.¹⁰² In effect, all three women made independent by their income from writing and the control they were able to maintain over their lives participate in Woolf's more radical agenda for women whilst they would, no doubt, have refused its tenets. On walking down Whitehall at the heart of government, says Woolf, a woman falls 'outside of it, alien and critical' since women have been made extraneous to history.¹⁰³ After all, Professor Albert Pollard claimed, '[h]istory deals with what *man* has done and how he has done it' (my italics).¹⁰⁴

The novels scrutinised here appear implicitly to acknowledge their existence outside of the history Woolf outlines. It might be thought that Glyn's *Man and Maid* is the exception, especially since Glyn tried, in her life, to write herself into history as a memorable, glamorous figure. Although Nicholas Thormonde has been badly wounded in the war, for Miss Sharp, his secretary, and the book's love interest, poverty has a far greater claim on her existence and the war is only peripheral to her life. These fictions try to find a space for themselves by stepping outside the bounds of male history, that history which Virginia Woolf would have characterised as patriarchal. Despite their intentions these works are never entirely able to set aside the societal pressures impinging upon them, which in the end form the threads from which history is woven.

In *A Gamble with Love*, it is very easy to point to those tropes that place the novel in the post-war world, but the war goes almost unmentioned. At the end of *The*

¹⁰² See Elinor Glyn, *Romantic Adventure* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1936), pp. 337-39.

¹⁰³ Woolf, p.93.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Henry Lambert, *The Nature of History* (London: Oxford University Press; Humphrey Milford, 1933), p. 23.

Matherson Marriage, when the grotesque Basil Matherson shoots himself, there is the suspicion that he does so with his wartime side-arm, although this remains unproven. The novel eschews history apart from a very brief mention of Lyn Ramsden's war service.¹⁰⁵ Ethel M. Dell also readily dispenses with contemporary history in *Charles Rex*; the title character is of an age to have fought in the trenches but makes no such claims, except to idleness and boredom. The war goes unmentioned and instead the reader enters a fantasy world somehow immune, knowingly at least, to conflagration and social change. If Elinor Glyn's *Man and Maid* appears to be a significant exception, featuring a disabled ex-serviceman struggling with life in his Parisian apartment, it is something of a departure for Glyn since her scandalous novel *Three Weeks* (1907), for example, tends towards the Ruritanian in its portrayal of a queen from an obscure European kingdom seducing a young Englishman. Its subject was extra-marital sex for which Glyn was 'called an immoral woman and a glorifier of adultery.'¹⁰⁶ Given that Sir Nicholas Thormonde in *Man and Maid* has been crippled during the war, losing an eye and a leg, there is an assumption this is a novel shaped out of contemporary history. Opposing this view is the knowledge that the disabled male is a second or third-hand trope, regularly employed by Dell who 'favoured the dilution of male dominance by disability'.¹⁰⁷

In *Man and Maid* there are references to events of just four or five years previously, but a text could equally be based on ideas developed many years previously. Jay Dixon has remarked that '[all] genre fiction has its own characteristic plot [...]. Thus to decry romance fiction on the grounds that the plot is always the same

¹⁰⁵ Ruby M. Ayres, *The Matherson Marriage* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Glyn, p. 127.

¹⁰⁷ Cadogan, p. 93.

betrays an ignorance of a fundamental element of all genre fiction - the familiarity of the plot.¹⁰⁸

These romances have a complex relationship to contemporary history, often trying to elide it from their pages even as, retrospectively, the style and subject matter give themselves to a certain era. In other respects these books derive from a much deeper history and have their counterparts in the 'aristocratic and idealized world entirely peopled with kings and queens' that took up the pages of the medieval romance.¹⁰⁹ Even in 1922 the romance still drew on ideas of monarchy and the landed and wealthy to create elements of fantasy.¹¹⁰ This can often be one of the functions of the romance, stripping away history to create a universalised world,¹¹¹ one that Tania Modleski has called 'the fantasy embodied in romantic fiction' which the reader encounters in the houses, castles and immense affluence of these stories.¹¹² Gillian Beer suggests that 'combat is still the test of the romance hero', something Mallory and Rutland in *A Gamble with Love* can attest to. In *Charles Rex* the title refers to the protagonist Charles Burchester, otherwise Lord Saltash, who probably has 'a strain of royal blood' in him.¹¹³ Saltash even possesses his own castle, 'ancient, battlemented, starkly splendid'.¹¹⁴ These three writers provide the modern equivalent of royalty and aristocracy, Saltash with his castle, Sir Nicholas Thormonde V.C. (educated at Eton),

¹⁰⁸ Dixon, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Gillian Beer, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Not that this is the case for every romance in 1922. Sophie Cole's *Passing Footsteps*, entangles its characters in the aftermath of the war much like *Man and Maid*: 'the heroine discovers, on the eve of her engagement to the doctor hero, that her husband, presumed dead at the Front, was a deserter and is alive.' However, the depiction is more quotidian than that offered by Glyn. See Dixon, p. 69.

¹¹¹ Beer, p. 3.

¹¹² Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Methuen, 1984), p. 29.

¹¹³ Ethel M. Dell, *Charles Rex* (New York; London: G. P. Putnam, 1922), p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 112.

Basil Matherson as the autocratic ruler of his big house, 'Green Gables', and Bill and Chloe Tenant, owners of a large house with servants in Derbyshire in *A Gamble with Love*. Ethel M. Dell's work was said to bring 'romance to the kitchen, romance to the underlings of life', and fantasies of prosperity would have been part of that.¹¹⁵

The novels at the centre of this chapter mostly try to sidestep recent history but their failure to do so lies in cultural indicators that are more difficult to erase. These novels will always be deeply ambiguous in their need to set history aside, creating for the critic a constant sense of doubleness. Setting aside the deeply historical *Man and Maid* for a moment, it has already been noted that Ruby M. Ayres tried to write history out of her novels, for example in her wartime book *Rosemary for Forgetting* (1941), in which there is no mention of a war.¹¹⁶ Neither is there in *A Gamble with Love*. The two significant men in the book, Giles Mallory and John Rutland, appear to have no war record, but other features place the book within contemporary history.¹¹⁷

Giles ruminates on Georgie Dean, a girl who 'isn't even a lady'.¹¹⁸ This is due to her employment in 'an insurance office' as a typist.¹¹⁹ This locates her, significantly, as a contemporary figure within modernity. Typists had been the subject matter of novels since at least 1893; Lawrence Rainey notes that between this date and 1923 sixty-five novels with a typist as the principal subject had been published.¹²⁰ By now, then, Georgie Dean is thus a genre figure, one of any number of fictional typists who

¹¹⁵ Patrick Braybrooke, *Some Goddesses of the Pen* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1966), p. 63.

¹¹⁶ See Anderson, p. 213.

¹¹⁷ Their names seem symbolic, Mallory named after the bard of Arthurian legend, Sir Thomas Malory, and Rutland for a kind of sexual enthusiasm but neither man behaves well in the novel, both often consumed by anger and jealousy.

¹¹⁸ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 16.

¹²⁰ Lawrence Rainey, 'With Automatic Hand: *The Waste Land*' in *The New Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 71-88 (p. 77).

lived, according to Lawrence Rainey, with ‘poor food, a single room with cramped conditions [...] and threadbare garments or undergarments.’¹²¹ The novel admits as much, as does Dean who tells Giles Mallory that ‘she herself had been educated at Board School’ and that she lived in something approaching poverty; she says: ‘I know it’s a poor sort of neighbourhood, but beggars can’t be choosers.’¹²² Georgie is a metonym for the romance itself which was earlier described as a form of repetition and is central to her profession as typist. As Rainey has said: ‘The typist, after all, is repetition personified’.¹²³

Office mechanisation required a large number of mostly female typists. These positions were only growing in 1922 and offered both economic advantage and work leading to ‘[a] wider and more independent social life.’¹²⁴ In the post-war era they were part of the so-called ‘white blouse revolution’ and ‘the expansion of the clerical, retail and leisure indust[r]ies’¹²⁵ exemplified in the 1922 Business Efficiency Exhibition which included demonstrations ‘by Miss Millicent Woodward, the champion speed typist of Europe’.¹²⁶ It is therefore not unexpected to meet the character of the typist in ‘The Waste Land’, already a stock figure and there denigrated as ‘the figure of the unashamedly promiscuous woman’.¹²⁷

The typist was a precarious figure as the employment advertisements in the newspapers showed. Although, on one estimate, ‘the number of women filling clerical

¹²¹ Rainey, p. 78.

¹²² Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, pp. 7 and 15.

¹²³ Rainey, p. 76.

¹²⁴ Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women’s Movement in Britain since 1914*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2015), p. 15.

¹²⁵ Bruley, p. 68.

¹²⁶ Anonymous, ‘Ingenious Business Machines’, *The Times*, 13 February 1922, p. 5

¹²⁷ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford English Literary History Volume 10: 1910-1940, The Modern Movement*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, 13 vols (Oxford University Press, 2002), x, 242.

jobs multiplied more than 80 times between 1850 and 1914', the demand for typists also meant they were easily replaced.¹²⁸ Nor was their situation without ambiguity. Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell describe the secretary as existing between 'inspired minds and automatic hands', the position Miss Sharp occupies in *Man and Maid*. They go on to say that 'the secretary does not securely personify one of these two poles so much as negotiate between the two' making life more precarious.¹²⁹ This is the case with Alatheia Sharp although she turns out to be a much stronger character than Nicholas Thormonde expects and overcomes the stereotype forced upon her. Writing his book on interior decor Thormonde comes to a surprising realisation asking: 'How could little Miss Sharp, a poverty-stricken typist, be familiar with William and Mary furniture?'¹³⁰ There is more to her than he imagines. Georgie Dean conforms to one of the types Price and Thurschwell describe, 'the economically depressed drudge'; entering a largely male workplace these women could become prey for men, as Georgie Dean discovers.¹³¹ She is portrayed as sweet and principled accepting 'no presents' from Giles and even refusing to allow him to kiss her since she does not think it 'fair [...] unless you mean to marry the man who kisses you.'¹³² Eventually she becomes little more than an object to be fought over by Mallory and Rutland where jealousy elides the least note of love. As Price and Thurschwell point out, a secretary's value, and their value as a human being, dropped as their numbers increased.

¹²⁸ Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell, 'Introduction: Invisible Hands' in *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture* ed. by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 4.

¹²⁹ Price and Thurschwell, p. 1.

¹³⁰ Glyn, Elinor, *Man and Maid* (J. B. Lippincott, 1922), p. 108.

¹³¹ Price and Thurschwell, p. 7.

¹³² Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, pp. 15 and 19.

The single working woman damaged by men was a real prospect. The *Daily Mail* reported on Julie Wagner, a Swiss typist in London and aged only 20, who had become pregnant by a man who would not marry her and died soon after whilst trying to bring on an abortion.¹³³

Another figure that both T. S. Eliot and Ayres have in common is the clairvoyant. Like the typist, the clairvoyant was a figure of importance to modernity, becoming increasingly consequential in the post-war years. It is another indication that Ayres, despite herself, writes the contemporary scene into her novel. Spiritualism, after falling out of fashion since its Victorian heyday was once more gaining popularity. Dealing in the supernatural now took on several forms such as ‘spontaneous occult experiments at cocktail parties and as a business enterprise. Professional mediums found it profitable to set up in most cities’. There was a need for such individuals to assuage the grief of those who had lost loved ones in the war. Margaret Hobhouse wrote that ‘most people who look into it are more or less converted to the spiritualist hypothesis.’¹³⁴ There was a need to believe but fraudulence and doubt sat alongside this. In Ayres’s *A Gamble with Love*, Mrs Sheerman is introduced as a clairvoyant although the reader is later told that ‘[s]he posed as a clairvoyant’, much like Eliot’s Madame Sosostris, even if Mrs Sheerman does without the paraphernalia of cards and horoscopes. She is given an appearance of malevolence from the beginning, one of her rings gleaming ‘like an evil eye’.¹³⁵ Her real talent for evil is more commonplace. Once she hears Giles tell his fiancée Nelly that he dislikes Mrs Sheerman ‘exceedingly’, she does what she can to revenge herself on Giles, stirring

¹³³ Anonymous, ‘Death After Illegal Operation’, *Daily Mail*, 12 April 1922, p. 12.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Ruth Adam, *A Woman’s Place, 1910-1975* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), p. 84.

¹³⁵ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 167.

dissent in the house.¹³⁶ This is not difficult when John Rutland is neurotically jealous and, as the narrator says, '[s]he was a vindictive woman.'¹³⁷

Chloe Tenant in *A Gamble with Love* is a hostess both in Derbyshire and at her London parties, and she belongs to another literary type. This was a figure born before the war but someone who came into their own in the inter-war years, partly through literature, and linked to the distinctly modernist party or salon. The expansion of leisure time noted in Chapter Three meant that, while the upper middle classes had always indulged in festivities, greater numbers of the middle classes were able to expend time and effort on parties. F. Scott Fitzgerald held that 'the 1920s were inaugurated with 'a general decision to be amused that began with the cocktail parties of 1921' and it is no coincidence that 1922 saw the launch of the British edition of *Good Housekeeping* as part of a literature with a renewed emphasis on the party and the home and domesticity.¹³⁸ The most important hostess for certain writers and artists was Ottoline Morrell, whose Garsington Manor held every variety of cultural gatherings. She appeared, often comically, in novels including Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow* (1921) and D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1921).¹³⁹ Chloe Tenant, though, largely avoids the slights of her guests since despite having 'an erratic [...] band of satellites' she is fully aware of her failings.¹⁴⁰ Giles comes upon Chloe first in her rooms painting, 'in a peacock blue overall splashed with yellow ochre', working on a canvas

¹³⁶ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 173.

¹³⁷ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 184.

¹³⁸ Quoted in *The Modernist Party* ed. by Catherine Mary McLoughlin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 16.

¹³⁹ There were other hostesses too, Maud (or Emerald) Cunard, the fictional Mrs Dalloway, and Edith Sitwell who tried to create a coterie around her family and the poetry anthology, *Wheels*. Society hostesses, though, were the butt of misogyny and Sitwell was satirised as Hernia Whittlebot while Morrell contemplated suing over D. H. Lawrence's portrait of her. See Baldick, pp. 53 and 55.

¹⁴⁰ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 55.

called 'Portrait of a Child' but 'which to Giles looked like nothing on earth.'¹⁴¹ This flirtation with modernism is the real Chloe but she is able to recognise, 'I'm a crank, on the wrong side of forty by a long way, and trying hard to disguise the fact.' She asks Giles, 'aren't my portraits just - awful?'¹⁴² In turn Giles sees in her those elements that describe the Modernist hostess: 'her queer clothes, and the bizarre colours she affected [...] the strange way in which she wore her sleek black hair'.¹⁴³ But reunited with her estranged husband Bill she changes her appearance to please him and is 'plainly dressed, in a frock of some dark material, and her face was innocent of all make-up', becoming in the process a 'rather worn-looking woman.'¹⁴⁴ It is her decision to create 'a real story-book Christmas' that occasions her husband's death, since she draws together the book's protagonists but does not see the obvious danger.¹⁴⁵ By the novel's close and with Bill dead, 'Chloe had taken up her painting again and gone back to her old clothes'.¹⁴⁶ She does not, perhaps, take the character of the hostess much beyond the stereotype but she is a smaller figure, older than most of the characters and more sympathetic and clearer about her defects, probably because she was an individual written by a woman. This makes her a less likely target for malicious writers and the self-righteous and avoids the misogynistic tendencies that gather around the hostess. She certainly appears more real than an Edith Sitwell or an Ottoline Morrell whose great flamboyance sometimes made them seem unreal.

¹⁴¹ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 23.

¹⁴² Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, pp. 27 and 28.

¹⁴³ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁴⁵ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 144.

¹⁴⁶ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 312.

For a reader of popular fiction in 1922 the disappearance of Giles Mallory during a game of hide-and-seek brings with it an uneasy feeling, given the hostilities between him and Rutland, who is just mad enough to kill. When Giles's 'huddled figure' is found at the bottom of the old back staircase it seems like it might be murder. There is a bruise on his forehead and yet, as Bill says, '[y]ou were lying on your back when we found you.'¹⁴⁷ The fall was anything but accidental and it hints at the Golden Age of detective fiction which as was noted in Chapter Three, was probably inaugurated by *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in which a big house provides a setting for murder, as it would in countless novels through the period. In a sense, murder (or attempted murder) in a big house was a striking image of the worm in the bud, since many large houses were being sold as taxes rose and staff became unobtainable.¹⁴⁸ There is a certain timeliness to what happens at the party, including Bill's drowning, since the literature of parties at this time seems to have been avid for death. 'The Waste Land' sets the tone when it begins with an epigraph from Petronius's first century work, *The Satyricon*, in which the sibyl declares that her only wish is to die.¹⁴⁹ The central episode of this Latin novel is a party and the behaviour, as described by Mary McLoughlin, is of 'over-eating, over-drinking', and 'casual cruelty.' Importantly, though, the feast ends with an appearance by death in the form of a 'skeleton of silver', and it seems that the party novels of the era could not help but peel back the thin skin of pleasure to glimpse the skull beneath.¹⁵⁰ Clarissa Dalloway hears of the death of

¹⁴⁷ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, pp. 243 and 250.

¹⁴⁸ In 1922 *The Times* would encapsulate the problem in an article, 'England Changing Hands'. They had been charting the changes in land ownership since 1919. See Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 203.

¹⁴⁹ See T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T.S. Eliot. Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), pp. 593-94.

¹⁵⁰ See McLoughlin, p. 12.

Septimus Smith and Laura in 'The Garden Party' ends her day observing a dead body; these events are both *memento mori* but also an acknowledgement that what pleasures the twenties brought were built on the heaped corpses of the Great War and a reminder that history will always intrude.

In *A Gamble with Love*, intimations of the historical context, not unexpectedly, show through the narrative repeatedly. When Nelly has another fit of jealousy she condemns the young boy Phil for dancing so often with Mrs Rutland. Giles simply laughs at her and says that he 'thought it was the fashion nowadays for married women to flirt.'¹⁵¹ He is, on the one hand, trying to brush off Nelly's growing jealousy but his words acknowledge that the moral universe is shifting. Ayres's *The Matherson Marriage* admits no such thing. *Charles Rex* meanwhile, depends on Saltash's castle walls to hold back the advances of modernity, forming a bulwark against the contemporary world.

If, as John Frow believes, the wide category 'genre' 'creates effects of reality and truth' and helps explain 'the way we understand the world', then those categories were beginning to break down and this becomes centred around Toby in *Charles Rex*.¹⁵² In the book there seems to be just the unwavering masculinity of Lord Saltash and that of the race-horse trainer Jake Bolton. Saltash has 'bulldog instincts'¹⁵³ and an odd temperament allowing him to laugh at 'deadly things' while Bolton is a man of integrity 'with a rugged exterior' and he and Saltash 'never spoke of abstracts things', including, presumably, their emotional lives.¹⁵⁴ In some ways Saltash is the romantic

¹⁵¹ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 203.

¹⁵² John Frow, *Genre* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 2.

¹⁵³ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Dell, *Charles Rex*, pp. 55 and 56.

doppelganger of Hugh Drummond, just as stoical and with a similar inner strength. The Great War caused psychological and physical damage to a generation and returned home men who were damaged and might well have harboured what Showalter describes as 'general but intense anxieties about masculinity, fears of acting effeminate'; this could be disputed but she goes on to say that '[s]exual impotence was a widespread symptom' and one that could be physically attested to.¹⁵⁵ Enmeshed with these feelings would have been the peculiarity of a world where women were now undertaking men's employment and ideas of domesticity were changing. This attitude surely underlies the later scene when Jake contends with Saltash in his hotel room after his elopement, when, in place of discussion, the Lord stands 'on the verge of violence.'¹⁵⁶

At the book's start, Toby, a young boy working at a hotel, saved from violence by Lord Saltash, stows away on his yacht, becoming his obedient servant and telling Saltash, 'I'll pay you back somehow - that I will sir.'¹⁵⁷ It is Toby who provides the atmosphere of peculiarity that threads its way through the book, from the moment 'he' stows away on Burchester's yacht. It is discovered later that Toby is, in fact, Antoinette and she becomes governess and playmate to the four young children of Saltash's old friends, Maud and Jake Bolton. As Saltash says, 'she'll come to no harm with you.' The short-haired girl proceeds to breach all the proprieties of femininity, using certain prohibited language on her arrival and as a finale the 'athletic little figure' proceeds to leap over the garden rose-tree, 'a sweeping Dorothy Perkins just

¹⁵⁵ Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 72.

¹⁵⁶ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁷ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 27.

coming into bloom'.¹⁵⁸ Later she leads the children climbing 'to a high bough of the old beech tree' so that Jake requires a ladder to rescue them.¹⁵⁹ Confounded by her behaviour he asks, 'Are you a boy or a girl?' She replies, 'mostly boy, sir.'¹⁶⁰ A past in which she was a Californian circus-rider is later uncovered, explaining much of her impetuous, conventionally masculine behaviour but the importance of this figure is in disrupting the narrative and ideas of masculinity, even if ultimately she succumbs to the norms of love and marriage. Despite this, Toby is always perceived as a fragile thing in the novel, easily forced into fleeing with the malign sculptor Spentoli in Paris, until Jake sends him 'buzzing forth upon the platform' at the station.¹⁶¹ If she is easily overpowered by men, both physically and psychologically, her conduct still asks questions about masculinity and identity.

As Billie Melman has argued, '[t]he rise of the androgyne motif can be fully comprehended only in relation to, or against the break from, the ideology of separate spheres.'¹⁶² For women or girls to impinge upon the male sphere was to call masculinity into question, something further complicated in the aftermath of war. Melman describes a 'popular tranvestite sub-plot' in publications of the time but declares that 'the break from the notion of a defined feminine sphere and the aesthetic conventions of domestic fiction was incomplete, because largely confined to fantasy.'¹⁶³ This is visible in the fashion of 1922 which saw women's wear becoming, as far as some were concerned, less feminine, since 'they themselves had to survive

¹⁵⁸ Dell, *Charles Rex*, pp. 72 and 85.

¹⁵⁹ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 202.

¹⁶⁰ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 98.

¹⁶¹ Dell, *Charles Rex*, p. 261.

¹⁶² Melman, p. 150. Lord Curzon, one of Elinor Glyn's lovers, was still expatiating on the subject in 1909 as a member of the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage, a body of which he was later to become chair. See Anonymous, 'Lord Curzon on Woman Suffrage', *The Times*, 19 May 1909, p. 8.

¹⁶³ Melman, pp. 140 and 150.

without men' and so 'the women of the Twenties began to look masculine.'¹⁶⁴ As Collier and Lang put it, 'the modern girl had nothing to show, she was "unsexed"-breastless, hipless and hairless'.¹⁶⁵

In this age of more flexible gender identities there were occasions when some women went much further, seen in the case of 'Colonel' Barker. The Colonel married a pharmacist's daughter and the couple 'lived for five years' in "conjugal happiness." It was only after court proceedings that the Colonel, a married woman called Lilia Arkell-Smith, was exposed, although his 'wife', Miss Haward, 'did not know, until she read it in the newspapers [...] that her husband was a woman.'¹⁶⁶ On the ragged edge of society, gender roles were being more profoundly questioned.

Neither *The Matherson Marriage* nor *A Gamble with Love* engages with the debates over divorce current in 1922. This might seem entirely reasonable in a romance novel that has to prioritise love and marriage, however, in both Ayres' novels divorce is a word so explicit by its absence that it intrudes bodily into the text. Roderick Philips has said, that '[m]ost countries [...] either legalized or liberalized divorce' with Britain moving in the same direction.¹⁶⁷ Before the Great War divorces annually had 'averaged 701 between 1910 and 1913' but in 1921 that number had risen to 3956. Philips reasons that 'had it not been for the war many of these couples would not have married', that 'the marriages were for this reason fragile to begin with and were certainly not strong enough to survive the hardship of years of separation'.¹⁶⁸ It

¹⁶⁴ Adam, p. 96.

¹⁶⁵ John Collier and Iain Lang, *Just the Other Day; An Informal History of Great Britain Since the War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1932), p. 156.

¹⁶⁶ Collier and Lang, pp. 222 and 225.

¹⁶⁷ Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 516.

¹⁶⁸ Phillips, pp. 517 and 519.

might be argued that romance novels could not allow the reality of divorce to materialize since it would abruptly terminate the fantasy. In these books, though, there are specific circumstances relating to wealth and class that allow predatory men to exert pressure on the heroines and raise questions about divorce. Pansy, in *The Matherson Marriage*, highlights that she lived in poverty as a vicar's daughter in a small village where there was no one to marry; Basil's offer of marriage and 'more jewellery than I can wear' keeps her close.¹⁶⁹ In the same way, although Georgie Dean is less enamoured of wealth, she is poor and thinks Rutland will be 'easy to live with [...] she had not believed him capable of jealousy'.¹⁷⁰ As Modleski says, 'the novels are always about a poor girl finally marrying a rich man'.¹⁷¹ When it is too late for Georgie she realises she 'would have given anything she possessed [...] to jump up and run away'.¹⁷² Pansy's difficulties are worsened because she has had Basil's child, Buster, someone her husband uses to keep her in check: 'I thought I'd cured you of this nonsense. Any more of it, and I'll keep my threat of sending Buster to school'.¹⁷³ These are the ties that bind and they are only loosened when tragedy intervenes.

In the 1920s there was a church-sanctioned alternative to divorce, the judicial separation called by some 'a most odious form of punishment'¹⁷⁴ but the focus in the early twenties was on the private members' bills which tried to regularise the idea of divorce. In some ways both books only add to the debate over the divorce bill, said to have been 'practically universally demanded by the women of this country'.¹⁷⁵ This

¹⁶⁹ Ayres, *The Matherson Marriage*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 72.

¹⁷¹ Modleski, p. 48.

¹⁷² Ayres, *A Gamble with Love*, p. 198.

¹⁷³ Ayres, *The Matherson Marriage*, p. 143.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 391.

¹⁷⁵ Stone, pp. 395 and 396.

confuses the idea that the books try to abandon history since they are in dialogue with the current preoccupations of the nation but these texts are inevitably Janus-faced. Even as they strive to exist beyond the bounds of history they are inevitably marked by its presence and can only ever situate themselves in a liminal zone between history and an unknown, impossible, other. It seems unlikely that either *The Matherson Marriage* or *A Gamble with Love* intentionally confronts issues of divorce, but they do deal with coercion, violence and abuse that elements of a contemporary audience, restive over issues of marital law, would have identified as part of the debate. If these books deal in a conservative philosophy, it is noteworthy that romances did not always fight shy of issues. In *Stormlight* (1910), a Mills and Boon romance, its heroine is on the brink of divorce. Of the plot Jay Dixon says:

The argument that a woman who finds herself married to a man who does not keep his wedding vows, nor treat his wife with respect should be able to obtain a divorce [...] is in Mills and Boon's philosophy, unanswerable.¹⁷⁶

□ *Man and Maid* and Veridical History

Glyn's *Man and Maid* written from the perspective of the crippled veteran Sir Nicholas Thormonde, is essentially a *bildungsroman*. However, it takes as its focus, not childhood and adolescence, but those months when Thormonde lives isolated in his Paris apartment, awaiting the fitting of a false eye and leg, which the novel claims, will make him whole again. This diaristic account examines the last months of the war, beginning in February 1918 and ending with the Armistice. Meanwhile, Thormonde's encounters with various women and men allow him to assess whether love is possible

¹⁷⁶ Dixon, p. 50.

and what it might look like: 'Love? - did I say love? Is there such a thing?'¹⁷⁷ The background of the war continually encroaches on the narrative, often derived from Glyn's recollections of wartime Paris. Having visited the city earlier in the war she returned to find that 'Parisians were behaving as if there was no war' and a 'vicious gaiety' existed. Unlike London there was no rationing and '[t]here was a disturbing sexuality in the air emphasised by the [...] numbers of women from the demi-monde', according to Hardwick, represented in the novel by Suzette. One of the few individuals to inspire Glyn was the Duchess de Rohan, 'who had turned her house into a hospital', someone whom the writer remakes as the stately Duchesse de Courville-Hautevine in the text.¹⁷⁸ Otherwise the French and most women (called 'parasites' at one point) are represented unsympathetically.¹⁷⁹ After a bombing raid Madame de Clerté gleefully suggests going down 'to see who is killed, and where the explosion occurred - the sight is quite interesting you know'.¹⁸⁰

Several passages in Glyn's autobiography follow the events of the novel, suggesting that she used her diary to recreate instances in the book.¹⁸¹ Connor is sympathetic to this view, arguing that '[n]ovels seem to have some of the authority of the eye-witness account, in providing the historian with enactment, particularity and individual testimony', which Elinor Glyn achieves.¹⁸² Connor's view has something in common with that of Paul Ricoeur who demands a history that is 'veridical' which is

¹⁷⁷ Glyn, *Man and Maid*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁸ Hardwick, pp. 202-3

¹⁷⁹ Glyn, *Man and Maid*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁰ Glyn, *Man and Maid*, p. 47.

¹⁸¹ For example, the original Duchesse is referred to on p. 253. Her fictional counterpart has also lost a son at Verdun. On p. 260 she refers to events she herself heard about which are reproduced almost exactly on p.28 of *Man and Maid*.

¹⁸² Steven Connor, *The English Novel in History, 1950-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1.

how it ‘distinguishes itself from other forms of writing’.¹⁸³ In using the term writing it indicates that ‘[h]istory is indeed situated on the plane of writing’, and unfolds as a form of narrative.¹⁸⁴ This takes *Man and Maid* closer to Connor’s vision but contrasting with these late-century perspectives is the one Glyn took of her writing. In a synopsis for *Man and Maid*, titled only ‘Renaissance’, she wrote that her work ‘is not a war story, - it merely has the background of Paris during the last days of 1918.’¹⁸⁵ She ends by commenting that ‘the interest does not lie in the plot - but in the style and the human emotion woven into it all.’¹⁸⁶ This seems disingenuous when the anger in the text is a genuine response to conditions during wartime. But Glyn’s remarks highlight what is important to the romance, not the inflections of history, but the emotional dilemmas.

Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own* writes of women’s history that there is a ‘scarcity of facts’ and that ‘[h]istory scarcely mentions her.’¹⁸⁷ *Man and Maid* appears to be a history including a woman’s experiences but is rather a novel that colludes in its erasure of women’s history, or in this case the history of a single woman, Alatheia Sharp. Underlying the novel is the realisation that the enigma surrounding Thormonde’s secretary is that she is burdened by a certain history she cannot seem to shake off. She is the daughter of Bobby Bulteel and Lady Hilda Farwell, whose affair with Bulteel resulted in her divorce. It is not the scandal that causes them to flee to the continent, however; it is Bulteel’s being caught cheating at cards that has damaged

¹⁸³ François Dosse, ‘Ricoeur and History: The Ricoeurian Moment of Historiographical Work’, in *Ricoeur across the Disciplines* ed. by Scott Davidson (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 65-83 (p. 68).

¹⁸⁴ Dosse, p. 69.

¹⁸⁵ University of Reading Special Collections, Elinor Glyn Archive, MS 4059, Box 16, *The Journal of Nicholas Thormonde* (pub. As ‘Man and Maid’, 1922) MSS. ‘Synopsis: ‘Renaissance’ by Elinor Glyn (16pp.), p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ MS 4059, Box 16, *The Journal of Nicholas Thormonde* (pub. As ‘Man and Maid’, 1922) MSS. ‘Synopsis: ‘Renaissance’ by Elinor Glyn (16pp.), p. 16.

¹⁸⁷ Woolf, p. 44.

the family irreparably. Thormonde muses that it would be accepted that '[t]he daughter of a man who cheated at cards should go into a convent.'¹⁸⁸ Instead, his marriage to Alatheia effectively removes her surname of Bulteel Sharp from the record and cuts the cords that tied her to a feckless father and a mother with a misplaced sense of love. It also effectively erases her history, something the novels here seem to have strived for.

These stories can all be described as conservative in their form, offering the reader little in the way of alteration to the pattern of the romance as established by countless previous writers even if, as Frow describes, there is an 'open-endedness' to 'generic forms' that does not preclude shifts in values.¹⁸⁹ Rosemary Auchmuty has described Mills and Boon novels as 'an apparently reactionary genre'.¹⁹⁰ It is necessary, however, to bear in mind Alison Light's cautionary remarks that 'conservatism, of the lower case variety, has been even more unaccounted for; as one of the great unexamined assumptions of British cultural life'. She is also clear that Conservatism as a party ideology and conservatism 'as a set of attitudes and beliefs' are not effectively identical.¹⁹¹ It is therefore more prudent to discuss 'conservatism', although its more politicised form will remain disconcertingly close. Ruby M. Ayres for example, belonged at one point to 'the Ladies' Carlton Club', an adjunct to the all-male centre of Conservatism in Britain.¹⁹² The reasons behind the genre's relative conservatism are connected to the reader who is involved, as Janice Radway has put it, in 'repetitive

¹⁸⁸ Glyn, *Man and Maid*, p. 215.

¹⁸⁹ Frow, *Genre*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Rosemary Auchmuty, 'Foreword', in Jay Dixon, *The Romance Fiction of Mills and Boon 1909-1990s* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. x.

¹⁹¹ Light, pp. 14 and 15.

¹⁹² C. M. P. Taylor, 'Ayres, Ruby Mildred (1881-1955), Romantic Novelist' (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45542>>.

consumption'.¹⁹³ Tania Modleski has said: 'the reader who reads the story *already knows the story*, at least in its essentials' (italics in the original).¹⁹⁴ These novels' readers do not want the 'essentials' to change, forcing the texts into a conservatism that might sometimes be unintended. Steven Connor believes that novels 'represent a meeting point between the individual and the general, bridging isolated subjectivity and the peopled world'.¹⁹⁵ Romances deliberately keep that connection as limited as possible and the genre's form, by pursuing a fantasy of love, tries to exclude the outward flux of society; Radway's readers exemplify this 'unwillingness to read about ugliness, despair, or serious human problems'.¹⁹⁶

Conservatism as an ideology refuses its own description, seeing itself not in any theoretical terms but as 'experiential, concrete, and delimited'.¹⁹⁷ The conservative philosopher, Michael Oakeshott, deals in fragments; since conservatism is concerned only with the 'concrete and particular', there is nothing useful to be gained from 'utilizing fragments of experience to recombine them in a different, exhortatory pattern.' It therefore becomes evident why these novels draw back from history since it teaches nothing, has no particular force, and anyway, 'conservatism is primarily concerned with the status quo'.¹⁹⁸ Conservatism instead validates the 'spontaneity, diffusiveness and pragmatism' of individual action, that of the enigmatic hero, or the embattled heroine making on-the-spot decisions and dealing with emotional crises.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ Radway, p. 103.

¹⁹⁴ Modleski, p. 32.

¹⁹⁵ Connor, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Radway, p. 98.

¹⁹⁷ Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 317.

¹⁹⁸ Freeden, pp. 323 and 329.

¹⁹⁹ Freeden, p. 320.

This view is distinctly ambivalent because when Charles Burchester makes his own, idiosyncratic decisions, he is following the tenets of a particular novelistic tradition.

III.

□ The Romance and the Dispute Over Value

Rosie M. Banks, author of *Only a Factory Girl* and *The Courtship of Lord Strathmorlick*, is less well-known than she once was, largely because she was the invention of P. G. Wodehouse. She made her debut in the short story 'Bingo and the Little Woman' (1922) which was later incorporated into *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923).²⁰⁰ She is significant because, according to Wodehouse, 'I did have Ruby M. Ayres in mind for Rosie M. Banks', but there is also a hint of Ethel M. Dell.²⁰¹ In *Carry on Jeeves* (1925) Wodehouse pronounces her 'author of some of the most pronounced and widely-read tripe ever put on the market,' neatly summarising the critical disdain endured by the romance novel at the time.²⁰²

It has already been shown how the serialisation of romance kept certain authors in the public eye but reviews for the books were extremely rare in the national or local press, and they usually disparaged the material. *Man and Maid*, reviewed in the *Daily Telegraph*, was hardly praised; fault was found with Glyn's French since there were 'several oddities of expression', while the motive force in the novel is said to have been taken from the work of Charlotte Maria Tucker (or A.L.O.E., as she signed herself), diminishing Glyn's own achievement.²⁰³ *Charles Rex*, by Ethel M. Dell, was treated less severely by *The Sunday Times*

²⁰⁰ Daniel H. Garrison, 'Rosie M. Banks' in *Who's Who in Wodehouse*, 2nd rev. ed (New York: International Polygonics, 1989), pp. 7-8.

²⁰¹ P. G. Wodehouse, *A Life in Letters* ed. by Sophie Ratcliffe (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), p. 477.

²⁰² Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 85.

²⁰³ Anonymous, 'New Novels', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1922, p. 15. Despite this less than enthusiastic review the newspaper was one of Glyn's great supporters, publishing notices of most of her novels where other outlets ignored them.

although there was no extended review of the book. Instead, it was noted in Brodie Fraser's 'Books and Writers' column as having sold 'about 50,000 copies' and being 'one of her best.'²⁰⁴ Ayres' work was rarely given column space and even her breakthrough novel, *Richard Chatterton V.C.*, was dismissed with faint praise: 'It is good of its kind' and '[t]he working out of the plot and the character-drawing are adequate'.²⁰⁵ This did not prevent it selling 52,000 copies up to 1932.²⁰⁶

Reviews and publishers' advertising could be dispiriting for women writers. David Tanner has said that 'only four areas of Britain (the East Midlands, South West England, Yorkshire and Humber, and Tayside) accounted for nearly 90% of the advertising volume supporting [Dell's] work' which, he suggests, 'would also indicate targeting for a lowbrow readership.'²⁰⁷ Meanwhile, a hostile press sniped at women romance writers and, in the case of the *Daily Mail*, all women writers. An article, 'Women Form a Phalanx', asks the reader to believe in the militancy of the female writer, hard to credit to Dell, Ayres or Glyn. The writer (probably male) writes that 'literary clubs, coteries and circles of present-day London' are 'largely dominated by feminine influences'²⁰⁸ in an age when J. C. Squire and his male associates commanded much of literary London and Frank Swinnerton could remark that '[a] journal is likely to reflect in its reviews as in its political columns the views of a group of *men*' (my emphasis).²⁰⁹ One of the writers given more leeway in the article is Rebecca West who would pen the article 'The Tosh Horse' on the demerits of *Charles Rex* amongst others. Her most telling remark is that '[i]n trying to understand the appeal of bestsellers, it is well

²⁰⁴ Brodie Fraser, 'Books & Writers', *The Sunday Times*, 27 August 1922, p. 5.

²⁰⁵ Anonymous, 'Richard Chatterton V.C. by Ruby M. Ayres', *The Athenaeum*, 4579, 1915, 77.

²⁰⁶ *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*: Ruby M. Ayres <https://orlando-cambridge-org.eu.proxy.openathens.net/profiles/ayreru> [Accessed 8/12/23].

²⁰⁷ Tanner, 'Literary Success', p. 90.

²⁰⁸ A Literary Critic, 'Women Form a Phalanx', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 29 September 1923, p. 17.

²⁰⁹ Frank Swinnerton, *Authors and the Book Trade*, 2nd ed. (Hutchinson, 1935), p. 107.

to remember that whistles can be made sounding certain notes which are clearly audible to dogs and other lower animals, though man is incapable of hearing them.²¹⁰ In the article Ethel M. Dell becomes a metonym for the collective of romantic novelists.²¹¹ In September 1922 the Library Association conference's keynote speaker was dramatist and critic St John Ervine whose address on 'Libraries and Bookmen' noted that the 'public library was not mainly concerned with [...] books that passed a certain test.' He went on to describe the 'great librarian' as one 'who could say, "there are the works of Thomas Hardy and there are the works of Ethel M. Dell." (Laughter.)' He said that '[t]he function of public libraries was not only to show how good good literature was, but how bad bad literature could be.'²¹²

The romance novel in 1922 held very little in the way of critical value. Even a friend of Ayres remarked that they 'couldn't possibly read Ruby's rubbish'.²¹³ This might have mattered little since, for the publisher of magazines or novels, there was significant financial advantage independent of the reviewer's response. Beyond this, for the publishers and often the writers, there was little cultural capital to be accrued from romance writing, although Pierre Bourdieu has written, 'among their public, success is in itself a guarantee of value'.²¹⁴ The romance, and popular fiction more widely, are important categories because this is what a very large public valued and was at the centre of their consumption of the written word. While the novel, often hampered by the high cost of publishing, reached a few thousand readers, the stories of the romance writers, the staple of magazines like *The Story-Teller* or *The Novel*, were circulated in their hundreds of thousands through the year.

²¹⁰ Rebecca West, 'The Tosh Horse' in Rebecca West, *The Strange Necessity: Essays and Reviews* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), p. 323.

²¹¹ A profile in the *Halifax Evening Courier* noted that 'the literary critics have always disparaged her work'. See Anonymous, 'Ethel M. Dell to Wed', *Halifax Evening Courier*, 21 January 1922, p. 2.

²¹² Anonymous, 'Libraries - Public and Private', *Daily Telegraph* (London, 22 September 1922), p. 13.

²¹³ Quoted in Andrews, p.4.

²¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 147.

Popular writing had been marked down as an inferior form of literature, and this included the romance. Q. D. Leavis only affirmed this, remarking that ‘the book-borrowing public has acquired the reading habit while somehow failing to exercise any critical intelligence about its reading.’²¹⁵ However, Karl Mannheim’s intervention in the debate in *Ideology and Utopia*, discussed in the Introduction, was an intellectual sleight of hand but also a way of dismantling a hierarchy of values with a form of democratisation that would have been anathema to Leavis. It is easy to appeal to relativism to defend the romance, but Mannheim instead offers knowledge as ‘relational’, that which ‘can only be formulated with reference to the position of the observer’ and we must be aware of their identity. The ‘vain hope of discovering truth in a form which is independent of an historically and socially determined set of means’ needs to be discarded, but a comparative measure of value emerges from this position.²¹⁶ If one romance is set against another derived from a similar socio-economic and political moment then the critic has the opportunity to decide on issues of value, and the romance, in turn, is saved from the ignominy granted to it by reviewers who related it only to the so-called ‘literary’ novel. As Jay Dixon has said: ‘The way to deduce the merit of a romance novel is not to compare it with *War and Peace* but to compare it with another romance.’²¹⁷ This is not to charge *War and Peace* with a particular value, only to note that it is a different form of novel from the romance.

²¹⁵ Leavis, p. 7.

²¹⁶ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936), p. 71.

²¹⁷ Dixon, p. 10.

□ Axiology, the Past, and the Romance

The novelists under scrutiny related differently to the publishing world of 1922. These writers had not begun in journalism or taken the university route; their background was a domestic world in which there was a sense of continuity and well-being beyond the demands of editors and readers and where, as Alison Light has indicated, ‘women writers were coming into their own.’²¹⁸ These conservative women remained closely aligned to a prevalent masculine ideology that valorised women’s domesticity and their withdrawal from a male sphere of action and political consequence. If they were sometimes exiled from home, they were always seeking a return.²¹⁹

In the analysis of this chapter, it has been shown these romances offered a wider perspective on the conditions of 1922 despite attempts to set aside contemporary concerns. When a novel like *The Matherson Marriage* refuses to contemplate the issue of divorce in an era still very much concerned with divorce reform, the issue finds itself central to the novel. Both *Man and Maid* and *A Gamble with Love* confront the issue of larger numbers of women entering the workforce, or considering the move, after the war. The precarity of their lives as a consequence is seen in the predicaments of both Georgie Dean and Alatheia Sharp. Marriage remains the ideal with ‘single’ women like Chloe Tenant or the clairvoyant Mrs Sheerman seen as eccentric or sinister while Ethel M. Dell in portraying ‘Toby’ in *Charles Rex* engages with the post-war debates around sexuality and the disruptive effects of women not behaving as women were intended to.

²¹⁸ Light, p. 7.

²¹⁹ For Elinor Glyn, as her Hollywood career drew to its conclusion she moved to Washington and bought a house in Georgetown, decorating it lavishly, intending to settle down there. Instead, with the interior finally finished she visited England, and abandoned the house in her wake. See Anthony Glyn, p. 310.

These women are part of an era when the woman worker was under threat but beginning to form a larger proportion of the workforce and when fraudulent mediums still plied their trade with some impunity. What is surprising in this research is how close to the surface anger and violence existed reflecting back on the Great War but also onto the ideological imperatives of patriarchy which were disturbed by the events of 1914-18. Not only that but these writings begin to seem not as the worst excrescences of mass-market publishing but as companion pieces to the tortured world of 'The Waste Land'. They demand due diligence on the part of the researcher and a proper place in literary history. That said, all these novels whilst disturbing the male social sphere, sometimes greatly so, end by reaffirming a heterosexual world, governed by male diktat.

Novels like *Charles Rex*, *The Matherson Marriage* or *Man and Maid* were devalued and disdained by a caste of largely male reviewers and editors. If masculine novels like *Bulldog Drummond* gained a grudging acceptance, so did the detective novel for its intellectual pretensions, but the romance offered none of this. Instead, it offered emotion and domesticity and as such educated women like Rebecca West preferred to condemn the form rather than show solidarity with it. However, the romance did have a value based entirely on its readership who bought or borrowed these novels in their thousands and gave the novelists their only validation. In reading these books women were participating in Raymond Williams' idea of the 'knowable community', one that exists only 'in the shared space of the literary text.' These readers, 'through the material practice of the texts [...] find the feelings and values lived and shared in the social experience of the group.'²²⁰ These are texts that show 'relationships in essentially knowable communicable ways'. However, it

²²⁰ *About Raymond Williams* ed. by Lawrence Grossberg, Roman Horak, and Monika Seidl (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 167.

might be argued that the violence in the novels, both physical and psychological, directed largely against women, upsets this idea. Williams, though, expresses the belief that when there is increased scepticism in a society, of the kind West articulated, 'knowable relationships [...] are the positive experience that has to be *contrasted* with ordinary negative experience of the society as a whole' (italics in the original).²²¹ The fantasies of the romance are what bound a community of women together. It is this largely female audience that should be scrutinised in order to understand the value that these books had, both as physical artefacts and as adjuncts to their rather ordinary lives.

²²¹ Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 14 and 15.

❖ Chapter 5: Mourning and Memorialisation in Post-War Popular Poetry

‘Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it.’

A. E. Housman¹

Amongst the books published in 1922 were several works of popular poetry. This was despite the general decline in the fortunes of verse in the immediate post-war years after what Edward Shanks has termed ‘the boom in poetry’. This boom had largely been a response to the years of conflict and Samuel Hynes estimates that the war generated ‘three thousand volumes’ of verse.² Besides the war there had also been the rise of the ‘Georgian Poets’, represented in a series of anthologies that had begun in 1912, spanned the war years and concluded with the final volume of 1922. These books had been immensely popular but their commercial success too, was on the wane.³ And if there had been a ‘boom’, volumes of verse were always a more precarious form than the novel. This chapter considers three poets who published poetry collections in 1922, collections which were likely to be popular: Edmund Blunden, Thomas Hardy, and A. E. Housman.⁴ These poets proved tremendously well-liked and this alone makes them central to a study of popular writing at a time when volumes of poetry sold in relatively small numbers. However, they also embody the contradictions of the period.

¹ A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 35.

² Edward Shanks, *Second Essays on Literature* (London: Collins, 1927), p. 106; see also Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990), p. 189.

³ The Georgian Poets, named after the new King, George V, were a diverse group of young and talented writers who included Rupert Brooke, D. H. Lawrence and later, Robert Graves. The initial 1912 volume sold 19,000 copies while *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922* sold just 8,000. See Robert H. Ross, *The Georgian Revolt* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), p. 128.

⁴ Popular poetry was not yet consigned just to the little magazines like *Life and Letters* or *The Owl* and was still an accepted part of mainstream culture. Poems from Thomas Hardy could be found in *The Shipley Times and Express* and *Good Housekeeping*. See Thomas Hardy, ‘A Spring Song’ in *The Shipley Times and Express*, 26 May 1922, p. 2; see also the advertisement for *Good Housekeeping*, *Daily Mail*, 28 April 1922, p. 12.

Their work is enmeshed in the aftermath of the war even while the origins of their verse and imagery are often not rooted in belligerence but lie further back in time, certainly in Hardy's case.

The intention of this chapter is to ask how popular verse was disseminated, in what ways writers and publishers worked to create bestselling poetry, and just as importantly, how verse of this kind can be defined. This will include new research on publishing Hardy's verse using documentation from the Macmillan Archive. The three volumes of poetry, Blunden's *The Shepherd and Other Poems of Peace and War*, Hardy's *Late Lyrics and Earlier* and Housman's *Last Poems* all feature elements of the metaphysical or supernatural and a part of the analysis of the poetry will be to question how far these concerns related to a post-war culture caught up in the need for mourning, memorialisation, and a continuing relationship with the dead. It is worth noting that Sigmund Freud's essay of 1917 on mourning began with the realisation that mourning was not just an individual process but could encompass 'one's country, liberty, an ideal', and British society reflected this, most of the nation caught up in mourning after the armistice.⁵

This account will offer a new reading of the tower as image and symbol which seems to have taken on a renewed significance in post-war poetry, and considers its association with other verse and the continuing atmosphere of societal grief and the need for remembrance. A subsidiary intention is to contemplate issues of the liminal and its significance. It is the argument of this chapter that poetry was caught between

⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' in Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud/Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud; Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson: Vol. 14 (1914-1916)*, ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 243.

war and peace, life and death, between living memories of the dead and their memorialisation. If the war had been fought along lines (trench lines, front lines), those lines were now blurred or subject to question. The archetypal phantom exists in this same space. As Julian Wolfreys has said: "What we name "ghost" acknowledges no boundaries, other than to mark their porosity".⁶ Cristina Pividori has remarked that, '[o]ne reason why Great War soldiers had access to the ghostly was their proximity to death'; the line between life and dissolution on the frontline must have appeared infinitely permeable and it remained so in the post-war world.⁷ These volumes cannot be wholly about the war since both Hardy and Housman had made death and what followed their subject for many years.⁸ What can be said is that this strange moment caught between war and its aftermath played a significant part in what was written and thought about in their published work of this time.

This is largely a narrative of men's poetry in 1922. Some important female poets did not publish in this year but there is some evidence that women's poetry was struggling to maintain a public foothold. In reviewing J. C. Squire's *An Anthology of Women's Verse* (1921), Rebecca West wrote that 'poetic talent comes very rarely to any effective expression among women.'⁹ Certainly William Kean Seymour's *A Miscellany of Poetry 1920-1922*, features Sylvia Lynd, Rose Macaulay, Alice Meynell, and Phyllis Megroz alongside Charlotte Mew and Edith Sitwell. Of these Macaulay became a well-known

⁶ Julian Wolfreys, 'Ghosts: Of Ourselves or, Drifting with Hardy, Heidegger, James, and Woolf' in *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture* ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 3-18 (p. 5).

⁷ Cristina Pividori, 'Of Heroes, Ghosts, and Witnesses: The Construction of Masculine Identity in the War Poets' Narratives', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 7.2, 168.

⁸ Hardy, for example, included the ghost poem, 'Her Immortality' in his very first collection, *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* (1898) which predates the more personal poems on Emma Hardy of *Satires of Circumstance* (1914).

⁹ See Rebecca West, 'Women Poets' in *The Bookman*, 62.368 (1922), 93.

novelist, Meynell died in this year, Megroz (despite publishing a little poetry) became known as a translator and Sylvia Lynd published some poetry but her final volume of verse was in 1934 nearly twenty years before her death.¹⁰ West's suggestion that poetic talent is rare among women goes on to say they were hampered by domesticity, and as poetry did not pay the bills, it proved unsustainable for a lot of women.

In 1922 C. F. G. Masterman characterised the nation as '[b]led white by the loss of the flower of the nation, oppressed by enormous indebtedness [...] and with profound disturbance in the mind of their surviving citizens'.¹¹ The government was attempting to draw a line under the events of the war, not least by sending King George V on a tour of the newly organised war cemeteries in France,¹² where he encountered the words Rudyard Kipling composed to memorialise the dead, 'their name liveth evermore.'¹³ Those in positions of power had ended the search for further victims of the war in the previous year, 'in view of the thoroughness with which the work had been done', according to *The Times*.¹⁴ Yet the publication in this year of John McGregor's collection *Victory and Other Poems* issued by Routledge suggested the conflict was yet to be concluded. The title poem raged: 'What virgins were marred and

¹⁰ Although this anthology included some of the foremost women writers it did not feature either Ruth Manning-Sanders or Fredegond Shove, both of whom published volumes with the Hogarth Press in 1922. Shove's volume was her second, but she published no more after this point. Manning-Sanders long narrative poem was not the conclusion of her poetic career, but she published little after this and is now primarily known as a collector of folk-tales.

¹¹ C. F. G. Masterman, *England After War: A Study* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), p. 3.

¹² Anonymous, 'Royal Visit to Belgium', *The Times*, 1 April 1922, p. 12.

¹³ Quoted in J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 72.

¹⁴ Anonymous, 'Royal Visit to Belgium', p. 12. The government was being less than frank with the nation. Even in 2012 reports 'estimated that over 165,000 Commonwealth soldiers are still unaccounted for on the Western Front'. Quoted in Peter Lowe, "'Exploring Sunken Ruinous Roads": The First World War Poet as Archaeologist', *English Studies*, 97.1 (2016), 44.

defiled!!!/What wailing, sad widows were left without mates!!!!/How many a fatherless child!!!!"¹⁵ The nation was only just beginning to come to terms with the war.

□ Publishing Popular Poetry: Hardy, Housman, and Blunden

The poets at the centre of this chapter were driven to respond to the war in some measure or other. Thomas Hardy's was an immediate reaction, publishing 'Men Who March Away' dated 5 September 1914.¹⁶ Housman was a writer who rarely responded to circumstances and yet he allowed publication of his thoroughly ambiguous 'Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries' on Armistice Day.¹⁷ His ambivalence towards war matches that of Hardy whose poems on the Boer War in *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901) show the beginnings of his evident discomfort with the subject matter. Blunden, who had endured the war on the front line, took time to make his fullest response to the conflagration with the first poetic responses really only appearing in *The Shepherd*.

The question of how their poetry can be defined as 'popular' rests on three straightforward propositions, already rehearsed in the earlier discussion of prose. In the first instance the verse requires, as Katharine Cooke has said, 'the eradication of the poetical and obscure in the interests of greater clarity'.¹⁸ Hardy's poetry merited this description, at least according to Ezra Pound who said of his work: '[n]ow *there* is a clarity' (italics in the original).¹⁹ Although Cooke writes about the Georgian poets it

¹⁵ John MacGregor, *Through Death to Victory And Other Poems* (London: Routledge, 1922), p. 10.

¹⁶ Thomas Hardy, *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries with Miscellaneous Pieces*, Pocket Edition (London: Macmillan, 1925), pp. 229-30.

¹⁷ A. E. Housman, 'Armistice Day. (11 November, 1918.) "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries"', *Westminster Gazette*, 11 November 1922, p. 1.

¹⁸ Katharine Cooke, 'The Georgian Poets: A Critical Examination of Their Poetry and Poetic Theory' (unpublished M.Phil., University of London, Royal Holloway College, 1973), p. 149.

¹⁹ Mark Ford, *Woman Much Missed: Thomas Hardy, Emma Hardy, and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 201.

is as relevant to Hardy and the other poets since to offer obscurity and linguistic difficulty was to push the verse beyond the realms of popularity. On the poet's part there should be a consideration of the poem's subject matter since abstruse concerns could be seen to alienate a popular audience. Verse needed the 'important quality known as "readability"', as recognised by Bernice M. Murphy in her study of popular fiction.²⁰ With these two conditions met, the final point is that the work should enjoy substantial sales, reaching the largest possible audience. It is difficult to draw detailed conclusions about popular poetry in reviewing a small sample of the verse published in 1922, despite these three volumes being bestsellers, particularly Housman's collection. Yet the question remains of how each of these writers was able to draw together those three elements that made their poetry popular. What is obvious is that a close working relationship with their publishers was essential.

Hardy began writing poetry in 1886-7 when he was still in London working in architecture but the poems provided what Edmund Blunden called 'his freedom'.²¹ However, when he was eventually taken on by Macmillan it was as a novelist and the firm were wary of authors in general, keeping them at arm's length and not using contracts that offered full royalties.²² Like many Victorian writers, Hardy was not well-served by his publishers (specifically Alexander Macmillan), and when he turned to poetry *Wessex Poems* (1898) was offered to Harper and Brothers.²³ But in 1902 he

²⁰ Bernice M. Murphy, *Key Concepts in Contemporary Popular Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 4.

²¹ Edmund Blunden, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1942), p. 26.

²² Michael Millgate, 'Thomas Hardy and the House of Macmillan: A Comedy in Chapters' in *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition* ed. by Elizabeth James (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 74.

²³ After some consideration Hardy's first novel was rejected by the firm and when he passed them another he suspected their long silence meant a further rejection and took the novel elsewhere. At one point Alexander Macmillan and Hardy were near neighbours and there might have been a form of friendship but according to Michael Millgate, 'the Macmillans continued to keep their distance.' They were also a firm that issued contracts with only a limited element of royalty. While Macmillan's wanted

moved all his British rights to Macmillan, and when he considered publishing *Late Lyrics and Earlier* it was to Frederick Macmillan that he first turned.²⁴ Now Hardy was a pre-eminent man of letters but also, as Michael Millgate has described him, an ‘elderly Victorian’, nearly eighty-two years old and one who had suffered severe illness in the weeks leading up to the publication of this new collection.²⁵

In a letter to Frederick Macmillan dated 8 November 1921, Hardy was concerned that his uncollected verse put him at ‘the mercy of curious collectors, and people who print things privately and coolly sell them.’ Not only was he proposing a new book but he also suggested a reprint of his *Collected Poems* and *The Dynasts* ‘on thinner paper so as to be available for travelling,’ hoping to open a new income stream for the verse.²⁶ Hardy was acting with considerable commercial acumen, probably having learnt from his earlier vicissitudes, ‘managing his own business affairs without the assistance of an agent or accountant.’²⁷ When he wrote to J. C. Squire claiming he had never had ‘much enterprize [sic] in business’, his modesty hid the truth and Macmillan soon took up his ideas.²⁸ Hardy’s transfer of all the British rights to

to serialise Hardy’s novels in their magazine, their editor Mowbray Morris on two occasions intervened to either censor Hardy’s material or, with *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* to reject the novel outright. Later there would be some concerns over royalty payments and it was probably Frederick Macmillan’s professionalism that brought Hardy into the fold. See Millgate, ‘Thomas Hardy and the House of Macmillan: A Comedy in Chapters’, pp. 72-77; see also, Norman Page, ‘Macmillan, Frederick’ (Oxford University Press, 2011)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0191> [Accessed 27 March 2024].

²⁴ Norman Page, ‘Macmillan, Frederick’ (Oxford University Press, 2011)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0191> [Accessed 27 March 2024].

²⁵ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1982), pp. 541-42.

²⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 6: 1920 - 1925*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), VI, 104.

²⁷ Norman Page, ‘Macmillan, Frederick’ (Oxford University Press, 2011)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0191> [Accessed 17 February 2024].

²⁸ Hardy, *The Collected Letters* v.6, p. 113.

Macmillan was probably down to the ‘professional and personal qualities’ of Frederick Macmillan who had taken on the business as his uncle Alexander ‘gradually withdrew’.²⁹ Frederick Macmillan’s willingness to work with Hardy becomes apparent in their correspondence leading up to the publication of *Late Lyrics*. This collaboration was to some extent enforced since, as Millgate has affirmed, Hardy was ‘one of Macmillan’s ‘best- and certainly most consistent-selling authors.’³⁰ Hardy used this to his advantage in his communications with Macmillan’s but he equally understood the market sufficiently well to know his suggestions regarding the poetry were financially astute and Frederick Macmillan was quick to see their merit. The new collection was published on 23 May.³¹ All that remained was to wait on the reviews which were almost uniformly warm.

The Times said Hardy’s verse contained ‘sudden suggestions of immeasurable greatness’.³² *The Times Literary Supplement* advertised the work from 25 May until 17 August in anthology advertisements,³³ while other news outlets, like the *Daily Telegraph*, were reduced to including two such adverts. The advertising generally was thorough though sometimes limited.³⁴ This was probably just a formality, though. As Patrick Collier has said, Hardy had ‘the distinction of having both cachet among

²⁹ Norman Page, ‘Macmillan, Frederick’ (Oxford University Press, 2011) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0191> [Accessed 17 February 2024].

³⁰ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 540.

³¹ Hardy, *The Collected Letters* v.6, p. 128.

³² Anonymous, ‘Mr. Hardy’s New Volume’, *The Times*, 23 May 1922, p. 16.

³³ See for example Anonymous, ‘Macmillan’s List’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1062 (1922), 334.

³⁴ See Anonymous, ‘Macmillan’s List’, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 May 1922, p. 4 and Anonymous, ‘Macmillan’s List’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 June 1922, p. 14.

intellectual readers and the kind of popular currency enacted by frequent mentions in the daily papers.³⁵

The new work enjoyed steady orders through 1922 and 1923 as shown from new research conducted in the Macmillan archive. Macmillan's by 1922 now published six volumes of Hardy's verse (including *The Dynasts*) so they knew their market, and although their edition book does not give sales information, only production figures, it is obvious that they printed only what they believed could be sold. They did not produce too many extra copies for the Christmas market, suggesting caution and a slowdown in sales at that point. Macmillan's exploited Hardy's work by publishing the same titles in different formats and at different price points. It is the 1923 pocket edition that would have been more valuable since its portability and lower price meant further large sales even if they were slow and steady. By including a leather-bound option, they were playing not only to readers' pockets but to their sense of aesthetics. Finally, there was the 'uniform edition', usually the cheapest format and a smaller but still significant market. The figures suggest Macmillan expected sales of around 10,590 books over the next two or three years, providing an indication of what popular poetry meant in sales terms. A. E. Housman, though, would greatly surpass this figure.

Housman and Hardy had a mutual respect for one another, and even a friendship of sorts; Housman stayed with Hardy in the summer of 1900.³⁶ John Bayley has written that 'Hardy [...] was clearly a poet for whom Housman felt a respect',³⁷ and

³⁵ Patrick Collier, 'John O' London's *Weekly* and the Modern Author' in Ann L. Ardis, and Patrick Collier, eds, *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 98-113 (p. 109).

³⁶ See Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 406.

³⁷ John Bayley, *Housman's Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 13.

Fig. 5. Thomas Hardy - *Late Lyrics and Earlier* production figures³⁸

Date	Title	No. of Copies	Notes
12.4.22	<i>Late Lyrics and Earlier</i> ³⁹	3250*	Type to be kept up for Wessex edition
22.5.22	<i>Late Lyrics and Earlier</i> ⁴⁰	2340†	Bibliography not to be altered
7.11.22	<i>Late Lyrics and Earlier</i> ⁴¹	1000	
7.2.23	<i>Late Lyrics and Earlier</i> (Pocket edition) ⁴²	3000	2000 cloth bound 1000 leather bound
12.7.23	<i>Late Lyrics and Earlier</i> (uniform edition) ⁴³	1000	

*Macmillan's edition book has been altered. The original order was set at 2000 but then corrected upwards to the present number.

† This number was also increased by the publisher from 2000 copies.

in 1922 Housman had begun to compile an edition of Hardy's selected poems (never completed).⁴⁴ His first volume of poetry, *A Shropshire Lad*, had been published in 1896

³⁸ All references are to the British Library Macmillan Archives ADD MSS 55925 vol. MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924.

³⁹ Macmillan Archives ADD MSS 55925 vol. MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924, 21.

⁴⁰ MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924, 30.

⁴¹ MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924, 65.

⁴² MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924, 80.

⁴³ MCXL Edition Book 22 Nov. 1921- 14 April 1924, 112.

⁴⁴ A. E. Housman, *Letters of A.E. Housman* ed. by Archie Burnett 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007) I, 492.

but Housman had to pay £30 to have 500 copies printed.⁴⁵ The manuscript had been rejected by Macmillan (a situation Hardy knew well) and went instead to Kegan Paul; two years later six copies of the original printing remained unsold.⁴⁶ Only moving to another publisher, Grant Richards Ltd, ensured the poems reached a popular audience so that from 1906 to 1912 annual sales were more than 13,500 copies.⁴⁷ Richards was the right publisher for Housman since he had a good instinct when it came to writers, and, as William S. Brockman has said, liked to ‘take chances on unknown authors’, often encouraging the careers of fledgling writers such as James Joyce and Robert Tressell.⁴⁸ He was very energetic as a publisher; having begun the firm in 1897 by the following year Richards was issuing the work of both George Bernard Shaw and Housman.⁴⁹

If popular poetry is dependent on a clarity of style, subject matter and extensive sales, Housman’s poetry could not be taken as popular in 1896. Instead, it was a minor collection since the collaboration with Kegan Paul had been Housman’s only way to ensure the volume’s publication. It was with the intervention of Grant Richards that a collaboration in more than name was established uniting the publisher with Housman’s intelligent understanding of the poetry market. Housman wrote that:

‘I am not a poet by trade; I am a professor of Latin. I do not wish to make profit out of my poetry’ [...] [h]e added: ‘if the book proves the success you anticipate then use what you would normally pay to me to reduce the price of subsequent editions.’⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Richard Perceval Graves, *A. E. Housman: The Scholar-Poet* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979), p. 111.

⁴⁶ Richard Perceval Graves, pp. 113 and 111.

⁴⁷ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 119.

⁴⁸ See William S. Brockman, ‘Grant Richards’, in *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1881-1965* ed. by Jonathan Rose and Patricia J. Anderson (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991), pp. 272-79 (pp. 275-76).

⁴⁹ William S. Brockman, ‘Richards, (Franklin Thomas) Grant (1872-1948), Publisher and Writer’ (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47450>>.

⁵⁰ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 115.

Housman denies being interested in the monetary aspect of publishing and his immediate concern is for the poetry's widest circulation and making it popular, a decision that will impact on the publication of *Last Poems* over twenty years later. Richards' ability to lower the price of the book, alongside his own decision to offer the poems as a cheaper pocket edition, contributed to increasing sales.⁵¹

Richards and Housman formed a close partnership, with Richards bringing the poet into his circle and entertaining him at his house in Cookham on several occasions.⁵² The Great War led to an upsurge in the already favourable sales of *A Shropshire Lad* and brought it an even wider circulation amongst military personnel.⁵³ Although Housman continued writing, his output fell to virtually nothing after 1918 due to his busy life as a Professor of Latin. Then, on 5 September 1920, he wrote to Richards enquiring how quickly a new volume of verse could be published,⁵⁴ but in reply to his publisher in January 1921 he wrote despondently that '[m]y "new book" does not exist, and possibly never may.'⁵⁵ However, events of the following year caused him to publish *Last Poems*. The man he had fallen in love with years earlier was dying in Canada and any new book would be for him. As Martin Blocksidge has said, 'these were the Last Poems [sic] that Moses Jackson [the man Housman loved] would see'.⁵⁶ The book was announced in the *Times Literary Supplement* and there was very little further publicity from Richards, who seemed to believe that the first volume in

⁵¹ A. E. Housman, *Letters*, I, 114.

⁵² Grant Richards, *Author Hunting by an Old Literary Sports Man: Memories of Years Spent Mainly in Publishing 1897-1925* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1934), p. 270.

⁵³ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 188.

⁵⁴ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 223.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Richards, p. 268.

⁵⁶ Martin Blocksidge, *A.E. Housman: A Single Life* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2016), p. 188.

twenty-six years from a hugely popular poet would make its own way.⁵⁷ Despite this Richards wrote that booksellers had dissuaded him from printing even 5,000 copies.⁵⁸ On publication the poet Margaret Woods wrote to Housman that it was the book ‘which everyone is *running to get*’⁵⁹ (italics in the original) and it ‘was sold out in Cambridge by 11.00am on the day of publication’, as Housman told Jackson;⁶⁰ by the end of 1922 sales had reached twenty-one thousand.⁶¹ The decades long collaboration between Richards and the poet surely led to Housman’s decision in 1922 to take a royalty on *Last Poems*, knowing it would be worth taking.⁶² The reviews of the book were almost all positive with the *Daily News* calling Housman ‘the unchallenged laureate’, but Housman had never written in the hope of accolades and he would publish no further collection in his lifetime.⁶³

Edmund Blunden, unlike Housman, published prolifically and his first poem appeared in the school magazine of Christ’s Hospital in 1913,⁶⁴ while a scholarship won him a place at Oxford.⁶⁵ By 1915 with his exams done, he chose not Oxford but the Royal Sussex Regiment and war service, by this point having had forty-four poems privately published.⁶⁶ He took up his Oxford scholarship after the war, only to abandon it for literary journalism, living in Oxford, then London, before moving to live in his wife’s home county of Suffolk in 1921.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Anonymous, ‘Grant Richards Ltd.’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1922, 597.

⁵⁸ Richards, p. 270.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Richard Perceval Graves, p. 229.

⁶⁰ Blocksidge, p. 189.

⁶¹ Richards, pp. 271.

⁶² See Richard Perceval Graves, p. 234-35.

⁶³ R. Ellis Roberts, ‘Poems of Genius’, *Daily News*, 24 October 1922, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Barry Webb, *Edmund Blunden: A Biography* (Yale University Press, 1990), p. 39.

⁶⁵ Webb, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Webb, p. 39.

⁶⁷ Webb, p. 128.

It was in October 1921 that Blunden wrote to his close friend Siegfried Sassoon that '[m]y collection of poems has been ready for the press for some weeks'.⁶⁸ He had submitted the verse to the publishers of *The Waggoner* (1920), Sidgwick and Jackson, but they recoiled at a volume of poetry likely to fill one hundred typeset pages and asked that the number be reduced. Blunden wrote that the poems had 'gone immediately to Cobden-Sanderson, and Knopf promised separate publication in America.'⁶⁹ Richard Cobden-Sanderson had set up to produce fine editions, a decision which was to lead to financial misfortune, but the poet and the publisher found common cause in their love of cricket and Blunden remained with Cobden-Sanderson for the next decade.⁷⁰ *The Shepherd* was a book of 'predominantly East Anglian scenes', as Barry Webb has said.⁷¹ In another letter to Sassoon, Blunden disclosed the new book's title saying the shepherd in question 'exists in this parish, and with that mentality.'⁷² After 1928 the figure would, in many people's minds, have been related to Blunden himself, who in *Undertones of War* (1928), referred to himself as 'a harmless young shepherd in a soldier's coat.'⁷³

Sales figures for Edmund Blunden's early books do not survive. The poet therefore becomes a test case for what constitutes 'popularity' without resorting to the pages of an accounts book. One review of Blunden's 1922 work, *The Shepherd*, called the poet 'one of the three or four most interesting younger poets now writing', suggesting he was well-known at least amongst critics.⁷⁴ His collection winning the

⁶⁸ Sassoon, Siegfried and Edmund Blunden, *Selected Letters of Siegfried Sassoon and Edmund Blunden, 1919-1967* ed. by Carol Zeman Rothkopf, 2 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), I, 22.

⁶⁹ Rothkopf, I, p. 26.

⁷⁰ Webb, p. 127.

⁷¹ Webb, p. 130.

⁷² Rothkopf, I, p. 30.

⁷³ Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War*, ed. by Hew Strachan (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 191.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, 'Georgian Poetry', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 10 January 1923, p. 4.

Hawthornden Prize in 1922 raised his profile considerably. The critic Zoë Chatfield has demonstrated how the impact of literary prizes can be formulated using Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of economic, symbolic and cultural capital. She also discusses James F. English's concept of 'journalistic capital' created around a prize win, leading to 'visibility, scandal, and celebrity', clearly to be seen in the way most of the major newspapers included notice of Blunden's win.⁷⁵ The *Daily Mirror* even featured him in their gossip column.⁷⁶ Publishing a scattering of poems in publications across the year gave him a considerable audience while his literary journalism, including 1922 articles on Charlie Chaplin and Shelley, kept his name in the public eye.⁷⁷

A working collaboration with Cobden-Sanderson certainly contributed to Blunden's 1922 success although it is more difficult to quantify this aspect of his publishing career since the Cobden-Sanderson papers are lost. But Blunden was an individual who enjoyed and encouraged friendships. Much like the previous writers Blunden was a poet of clarity and plain style but it was his relationships with authors and editors that crucially established his popularity.⁷⁸ This was only confirmed by his inclusion in *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922* as one of the newer poets, there to bolster the list of older writers who had featured previously, and to maintain the anthology's

⁷⁵ Quoted in Zoë Chatfield, 'The Role of Literary Prizes in Inciting Change: The Women's Prize for Fiction and the Booker Prize', *Logos*, 30.2 (2019), 20.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, 'To-Day's Gossip', *Daily Mirror*, 6 July 1922, p. 9.

⁷⁷ Edmund Blunden, 'A Poet on Charlie Chaplin', *Daily News*, 25 May 1922, p. 4; Edmund Blunden, 'Shelley After a Hundred Years', *Daily News*, 7 July 1922, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Although J. C. Squire and the *London Mercury* would be a significant influence in his early years of journalism a reviewer stands and falls on their connections and Blunden quickly acquired many friends and colleagues in the trade. There was first and foremost Siegfried Sassoon, literary editor of the *Daily Herald*, on their first acquaintance (see Webb, p. 106) but he was soon drawn into the orbit of two publications, *The Nation* and *The Athenaeum* which were eventually to amalgamate. He contributed two hundred items to both journals between 1920 and 1924 (see Webb, p. 123) but crucially came to know the editors of both, H. W. Massingham and John Middleton Murry of *The Athenaeum* who gave him a job and was, by coincidence, an old boy from Blunden's school (see Webb, p. 108). He was on friendly terms with the encouraging Bruce Richmond, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, and got to know Philip Tomlinson who held posts at Richmond's journal as well as *The Nation* and *The Times* (see Webb, p. 124).

topicality.⁷⁹ For Blunden these channels were his making. Those who reviewed his work were colleagues or acquaintances, for instance, Robert Nichols,⁸⁰ and Robert Lynd who had suggested in *The Shepherd*, ‘there is promise here of a permanent contribution to English Literature’; he had been on the judging panel for the prize.⁸¹ His friend J. C. Squire had great influence over the awards panel for the Hawthornden Prize and furthermore wrote a positive review of the book.⁸² *The Shepherd* winning the prize led to headlines such as ‘Year’s Best Book’.⁸³ It would certainly have boosted sales; this was useful since Cobden-Sanderson spent very little on advertising; only a single advertisement appeared in *The Times* in 1922 to acknowledge the book’s prize-winning status and to announce a second edition.⁸⁴

□ The Poetry of Ghosts

The poet Richard Le Gallienne moved to New York before the Great War and in 1922 published his first substantial book of verse in the US including ‘The Overworked Ghost.’ It is written from the perspective of the spirit who ‘had no thought of coming back’. However, ‘scarcely had I laid me down,/When comes a voice: “Is that you Joe?”’, and he is drawn back to the world of the living. Increasingly involved in séances he is soon complaining that ‘[a]live, some fourteen hours a day/I worked, but now I work them all.’⁸⁵ Le Gallienne perfectly captures a certain atmosphere prevalent in Britain,

⁷⁹ It has been shown earlier how these anthologies boosted the reputations of a group of largely younger, talented poets like Rupert Brooke. To be included in the anthology was an indication that you had ‘arrived’ as a poet but helped the editor, Eddie Marsh, maintain its relevance over its ten-year lifespan.

⁸⁰ Robert Nichols, ‘The Conscious and the Self-Conscious’, *Daily Herald*, 3 May 1922, p. 7.

⁸¹ Robert Lynd, ‘Mr. Edmund Blunden’, *Daily News*, 2 May 1922, p. 7.

⁸² J. C. Squire, ‘Books of the Day: Mr. Blunden’s Poems’, *Observer*, 14 May 1922, p. 4.

⁸³ Anonymous, ‘Year’s Best Book’, *Daily News*, 30 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, ‘Advertising’, *The Times*, 14 July 1922, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Richard Le Gallienne, *A Jongleur Strayed: Verses on Love and Other Matters Sacred and Profane* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1922), pp. 158 and 160.

even if séances in the country after the war were considered with less amusement. The spirits were perhaps worked just as hard even so, as the bereaved tried to contact their loved ones in the afterlife as a way to assuage their loss. Experiments in spiritualism at this time were not always forms of entertainment, as seen in *A Gamble with Love*; they were necessary rituals of grief and mourning. Poetry that dealt in death and the supernatural and published in the wake of the armistice inevitably fell under the shadow of the war and poems on death had their meaning and significance transformed by readers who had been affected by the conflict. Hardy could still write poems that found in death a kind of cosmic joke like Le Gallienne's skit, but narratives in which a phantom reaches out to the writer must have appeared painfully immediate for readers who had suffered the loss of loved ones. Blunden's poems in their dealings with ghosts are usually more serious since he had close-up experience of violent death, and his verses remember the departed with far less ambiguity than either Housman or Hardy. It is useful to be reminded of Mark Ford's comment that '[g]hosts, sui generis are unpredictable': no two are alike.⁸⁶ Much of Blunden's writing in *The Shepherd* is a memorial to the dead, sometimes as solid as anything set in stone after the war.

The war caused a renaissance in spiritualism. Jenny Hazelgrove's figures confirm this concern with life and death: 'In 1914, there were 145 societies affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU); by 1919 there were 309.'⁸⁷ Hereward Carrington's study of *Psychical Phenomena and the War* (1919) showed just how much the war had stirred up, and writers like Robert Graves went on to chronicle encounters

⁸⁶ Ford, p. 190.

⁸⁷ Jenny Hazelgrove, *Spiritualism and British Society Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 14.

with ghosts, and with séances conducted in the midst of conflict.⁸⁸ It was, though, the peace that allowed spiritualism to flourish. As John Collier and Iain Lang have written: ‘Since the Empire’s death-roll in the war was 946,203, necromancy had never had a more fertile field’, something reflected in the literature.⁸⁹ Eliot had his Madame Sosostris, *Ulysses* was suffused with ghosts and it was noted in Chapter Four that the psychic, real or bogus, became ubiquitous in the writing of 1922.⁹⁰ It would not be true to say that spirits and séances developed entirely in reaction to wartime deaths, as Jay Winter points out:

we must accept that many individuals [...] earnestly believed in the paranormal or in communication with the dead, and did so because they had taken psychical phenomena seriously before the war.⁹¹

Winter’s remarks have similar importance for the literature that pre-dated the conflict. Thomas Hardy’s first collection of verse, *Wessex Poems*, included the uncanny ‘Her Immortality’ with its unhappy spectre rising continually from the grave.⁹² Meanwhile, in *A Shropshire Lad*, death is always close at hand, and with it ghosts, or as Housman calls them in ‘XIX To an Athlete Dying Young’, ‘the strengthless dead’ who gather around the sportsman to hear of his exploits.⁹³ The phrase is doubly important when considering Housman’s corpus since it is a direct translation of words from *The Odyssey*; in Book Eleven ghosts gather around the boat’s

⁸⁸ See Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp. 102; 191-92.

⁸⁹ John Collier and Iain Lang, *Just the Other Day; An Informal History of Great Britain Since the War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1932), p. 29.

⁹⁰ See Luke Gibbons, *Joyce’s Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

⁹¹ Winter, p. 57.

⁹² Thomas Hardy, *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*, new ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 143-46.

⁹³ A. E., Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906), p. 28.

crew and drink blood from the ditch there, as Geoffrey Hill notes, ‘in order that they may speak.’⁹⁴ As a classical scholar the allusion from Housman might be expected but his work is suffused with a Latin style, what Richard Perceval Graves calls a ‘classical purity’, a plain direct style borrowed partly from John Milton but also from the 1700s; Eliot called him an ‘eighteenth-century wit’.⁹⁵ This creates a certain effect of distance in the verse. As Archie Burnett puts it:

Housman well knew that judicious classical restraint in form and phrase could work both psychologically and aesthetically, sublimating emotion and making it sublime.⁹⁶

In 1922 there were groups who fervently believed in spirits, even if that very notion did not go uncontested. *Raymond* (1916), was one of the most important documents of the movement; written by renowned physicist and former president of the Society for Psychical Research, Oliver Lodge, the document concerned the scientist’s attempts to contact his son who had died at the front in 1915.⁹⁷ Amongst frontline troops the book ‘provoked a mixed reaction’⁹⁸, while the *Daily Mail* headlined its review, ‘Half a Guinea’s Worth of Rubbish’, and followed this up with letters from discomfited readers.⁹⁹ The book, though, was sufficiently popular to spawn a 1922 abridgement with new material, *Raymond Revisited*, and Lodge offered no recantation, still lecturing on spiritualism in December of the same year.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Geoffrey Hill, ‘Tacit Pledges’ in *A.E. Housman: A Reassessment* ed. by Alan W. Holden and J. Roy Birch (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 53-75 (p. 66).

⁹⁵ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 107; T. S. Eliot, ‘The Name and Nature of Poetry’, *The Criterion*, XIII.50 (1933), 151-54, (p.152).

⁹⁶ Archie Burnett, ‘A. E. Housman’s “Level Tones”’ in Holden and Birch, pp. 1-19 (p. 2).

⁹⁷ Peter Rowlands, *Lodge, Sir Oliver Joseph (1851-1940), Physicist* (Oxford University Press, 2011) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34583>>.

⁹⁸ Winter, p. 64.

⁹⁹ Charles Dean and Annie S. Swan, ‘Sir Oliver Lodge’s Spook Book’, *Daily Mail*, 26 January 1917, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous, ‘Sir Oliver Lodge and Psychic Research.’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 13 December 1922, p. 2.

Gladys Leonard, one of the spiritualists through whom Lodge believed he had contacted his son, described, 'a spirit manifestation at a seance':

First participants felt a chill in the room. Then appeared an apparition of a woman who looked "exactly like a lovely statue of marble or alabaster". She seemed "to glide over the floor without moving her legs or feet", and she passed through their linked hands. The "cold became a hundred times more intense".¹⁰¹

The description does not entirely complement Thomas Hardy's ghosts but they, like spiritualist manifestations, put on many guises in *Late Lyrics and Earlier*. In 'The Garden Seat' the spectres 'are as light as upper air', much like Leonard's,¹⁰² while in 'The West-of-Wessex Girl' Hardy finds a 'phantom draws me by the hand' (*Late Lyrics*, p. 24), suggesting something more substantial, like the spirit William Crookes encountered at a séance, a 'luminous hand' which took 'the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper' then 'threw the pencil down'.¹⁰³ This is something like the ghostly fingers that take up their former musical instruments in the poet's 'Haunting Fingers.' What becomes clear is that time and the supernatural are adjacent concepts in Hardy's work:

Then we looked closelier at Time,
And saw his ghostly arms revolving
To sweep off woeful things with prime,
Things sinister with things sublime
Alike dissolving.

Going and Staying' (*Late Lyrics*, p. 26)

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Hazelgrove, p. 29.

¹⁰² Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 11; Further references to this volume are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Brian Inglis, *Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal from Earliest Times to 1914* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p. 264. Crookes was not only a physical investigator but a Fellow of the Royal Society and the discoverer of Thallium (Inglis, p. 253).

Often, the poems in the book use ghosts to draw out memories until it is not entirely clear whether this is a memory or some spectre bringing the past with it. Hardy in the poem, 'She Opened the Door', says of Emma, his wife, that '[s]he opens the door of the Past to me', and it appears that the poems here attempt just that.¹⁰⁴ Hardy's ghosts not only grasp hands and float on air, they also frequently speak and sing as in 'Her Song' where the speaker observes her living lover, 'in some dim land afar' (*Late Lyrics*, p. 34). The ghosts in *Late Lyrics* are usually not the spontaneous eruptions of the dead, at least for the poet, but artful literary reconstructions.

Relating these highly literary forms to the post-war world and to the rise of spiritualism might initially appear to be a vexed issue. Poetry, as Housman said, 'seems to me more physical than intellectual', dependent on an individual's reaction to a highly circumscribed set of conditions, such as Hardy's grief on his wife's death, and more rarely takes on larger issues of politics or (even more unlikely) economics.¹⁰⁵ This implies that the relationship between contemporary culture and poetry will remain indirect, even obscure, especially in a situation where Hardy was himself retreating from the present. However, what can be found in his ghost poems is an intimacy that makes a direct connection with all the paraphernalia of spiritualism in the present and takes in poems as diverse as 'Going and Staying', 'Haunting Fingers' or 'A Night in November' and extends to Housman's 'XIX.' In 'Going and Staying', the poem's bleakness is formed around Time which sweeps all before it but notice too his 'ghostly arms revolving' and everything 'Alike dissolving' (*Late Lyrics*, p. 26). In the art of the

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Ford, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ A. E., Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 45.

séance, arms, hands, fingers and dissolution are key elements. Where else could a man and woman, not married, hold hands in public except in the intimacy of the spiritualist circle? One séance, described in detail, told of ‘a bracelet [which] unclasped itself from the arm of Mrs. Milner-Gibson’, while the witness said that ‘[h]ands touched my knees and laid themselves in my hands; and when I sought to retain one *it dissolved in my grasp*’ (italics in the original).¹⁰⁶ The detail is almost sexual but the need for touch is a verification of the reality of the occurrence; hands deal in both intimacy and vouchsafe the truth of spiritualism, that loved ones do survive beyond the grave. This helps to explain the words of Hardy’s ‘Haunting Fingers’: ‘My keys white shine,/Now fallow, met a hand/Even whiter...Tones of hers fell/forth with mine’ (*Late Lyrics*, p. 60). The delicacy of hands making music entwines with a deathly eroticism.

Late Lyrics is a volume of several parts, which Hardy acknowledged to be something of a jumble, but both ghosts and Hardy’s wife occur as themes on numerous occasions, often overlapping.¹⁰⁷ The contents had been ‘written quite lately’, although some had ‘been held over in MS’, and Hardy called them ‘discordant’.¹⁰⁸ Hardy said that ‘no harmonious philosophy is attempted in these pages’ and that his poems were ‘*seemings, provisional impressions only*’ (italics in the original), suggesting that he began afresh with each poem, uncertain of the outcome, although specific patterns emerge.¹⁰⁹ Hardy was a restless innovator as Edmund

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Inglis, p. 230.

¹⁰⁷ Approximately 47 poems feature Emma, based on J. O. Bailey’s reading of the verses, while ghosts are apparent in around nineteen out of a book of one hundred and fifty-two lyrics.

¹⁰⁸ Hardy, *Late Lyrics*, pp. v and xii.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Sven Bäckman, *The Manners of Ghosts: A Study of the Supernatural in Thomas Hardy’s Short Poems*, (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2001), pp. 14 and 15.

Blunden has said, calling his poetry ‘ever on the road’, part of a shifting, changeable philosophy which the verses accommodated.¹¹⁰ This restlessness can, after Emma’s death, be construed in terms of both Freud’s uncanny and Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology; according to the psychoanalyst, the uncanny or ‘unheimlich’ is the opposite of ‘belonging to the house’ and it is neither ‘intimate’ nor ‘friendly’.¹¹¹ This idea exists in ironic contrast to the fact that on many occasions the ghost is intimately known to Hardy since he is re-encountering his first wife. Even so the loss he feels in the poems seems to unmoor him, to cast him out from home, drawing him towards questions about ‘the relation of one’s being in relation to dwelling’, in the Heideggerian formulation.¹¹² In the poem ‘Where Three Roads Joined’, for example, Hardy seems to want to re-visit a place he and Emma knew well, but at the poem’s close the narrator admits to his exile: ‘It is where I never again would be’ (*Late Lyrics*, p. 54).

‘A Night in November’ manifests Hardy’s late wife, partially invoking her ghost. The poem is deliberately subdued, mostly eschewing alliteration. Hardy’s poems lack the theatricality of the séance, where ‘an accordion [might] float in the air’, whilst still creating a certain atmosphere using weather and time of day as a background to the events.¹¹³ The ‘Emma’ poems stem immediately from Emma Hardy’s death in 1912 and resulted in a sequence in *Satires of Circumstance* entitled ‘Poems of 1912-13’, but in

¹¹⁰ Blunden, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 244.

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, “The ‘Uncanny’” in Freud Sigmund, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud/Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud; Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson: Vol.17 (1917-1919) An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 222.

¹¹² Wolfreys, p. 14.

¹¹³ See Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 227.

Late Lyrics there are further poems that appear to concern Emma.¹¹⁴ Freud's view was that mourning created a 'loss of interest in the outside world' and a 'turning away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of [her]'; given the amount of poetry he wrote concerning his first wife, Hardy seems never to have relented in his mourning.¹¹⁵ 'A Night in November' is a vital poem since it helps describe the complications in Hardy's approach to ghosts. The spectre is a very slight thing in these verses, its presence qualified until it achieves both presence and disintegration at the last like the *séance* described previously. In the first line, 'the weather changed' (*Late Lyrics*, p. 50), and it is in a liminal moment like this that Hardy's ghosts manifest themselves. Here, the poet is caught between at least two countervailing situations, between good and ill weather, and between sleep and waking. Imposing further on the poem is the understanding that the poet is situated between one year and the next, between autumn and winter; as Dennis Taylor shows, Hardy's poetry 'reflects the ancient theme that the cycle of human life matches the cycles of the year'.¹¹⁶ Whatever the case, a dead leaf touching the poet is all it takes: 'And I thought that it was you'. The use of 'thought' suggests a degree of doubt, even as he describes his wife standing there 'as you used to stand/And saying at last you knew!' (*Late Lyrics*, p.50). That final exclamation mark does not, though, confine the poem to its four stanzas, because, unlike with A. E. Housman, there is a demand that the reader stray beyond the poem's borders and speculate upon what this figure has finally understood. It is certainly not clear what that is, although Bailey speculates that 'her spirit at last understands his abiding love'; the lines were written to evoke the anniversary of Emma's death on 27

¹¹⁴ Ford estimates that one fifth of Hardy's poems would eventually concern his first wife. See Ford, p. xiii.

¹¹⁵ See Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', p. 244.

¹¹⁶ Dennis Taylor, *Hardy's Poetry: 1860-1928*, 2. Ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. xix.

November 1912.¹¹⁷ Even if this manifestation of Emma is considered a ghost, though, that modifier ‘thought’ suggests instead the possibility of a memory. Hardy wanted to reclaim the past, but he also intends to rectify its unhappiness so that in ‘A Night in November’, in Bailey’s reading at least, he puts words into his late wife’s mouth allowing her to know his love at last, a desperate and perhaps cynical undertaking. Here it is possible to see the image of Emma as something manufactured in the mind, a psychological ghost, drawn, as Bäckman has it, from ‘hallucinations produced by an overburdened guilty conscience.’¹¹⁸ This would be the scientific, even Freudian analysis, but in this poem Hardy unknowingly draws the reader back to the idea of the séance since the leaf ‘touched my hand’ and this moment of intimacy, the gentle caress, suggest both his relationship with his wife and the ghostly.

‘Vagg Hollow’ is another kind of ghost poem, full of ‘men’s souls’ which appear to the boy narrating the tale who travels through the titular landscape while the dead appear, ‘white faces speaking’. This includes his own father, although the boy is ‘not afraid at all’ (*Late Lyrics*, pp. 184-85). The poem derives from a tale Hardy committed to his journal in April 1902;¹¹⁹ it forms another aspect of Hardy’s poetic art, his use of folk tale and half-remembered stories to shape his verse which is similarly to be found in ‘A Sound in the Night’ derived from tales of Woodsford Castle near Dorchester.¹²⁰ Hardy wrote to Rider Haggard in 1902 telling him that ‘ghost tales were attached to particular sites’, as the poems here demonstrate.¹²¹ ‘Vagg Hollow’ creates a sense of

¹¹⁷ J. O. Bailey, *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy: A Handbook and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 447.

¹¹⁸ Bäckman, p. 109.

¹¹⁹ Bäckman, p. 100.

¹²⁰ Bailey, p. 484.

¹²¹ Quoted in Tim Armstrong, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 55.

mischievous rather than terror and this kind of humour infects other of the ghost poems such as 'Haunting Fingers' or 'A Gentleman's Epitaph on Himself and a Lady'. These 'folk' poems form another boundary line in the writer's work, because their ancient provenance sets them against Hardy's own adult instincts, but they also distance him from contemporary culture where, despite Richard Le Gallienne, death was not a matter for humour. Even so, some of the ideas in 'Vagg Hollow' follow the thought of Edmund Blunden. The boy in Hardy's poem is inured to the ghosts, even his father's, and that same familiarity means for Blunden that more recent ghosts cause him no sense of horror but form a bulwark against his trauma in '11th R.S.R.': 'your faith still routs my dread' (*The Shepherd*, p. 9), he writes, and he has a similar experience in 'The Avenue' where the line of marching troops, though dead, are companions rather than embodied fears. Hardy was a man who had made himself modern, growing his agnosticism, in Bäckman's view, with his reading of 'the rationalist views of men such as J. S. Mill, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer' and others.¹²² These were his heroes of old and so the reader cannot expect Hardy's poetry to speak to the moment, and yet, in oblique ways, it still does. Despite this public profile there was still Hardy the writer, less rational and open to the exigencies of chance who greatly felt 'the incidents of life which had anything of the unexpected or peculiar in them'.¹²³ As Bäckman asserts, Hardy needed the supernatural for his 'creative imagination'.¹²⁴ His agnosticism obviously caught him between belief and its opposite but when he sat down to write:

¹²² Bäckman, p. 10.

¹²³ Blunden, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 246.

¹²⁴ Bäckman, p. 51.

“Half my time – particularly when writing verse – I “believe” (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places etc. etc. But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more [...]”¹²⁵

Hardy’s ghosts were drawn from ‘an oral tradition where ghosts, wraiths etc. were taken for granted’, but he treated them with a modern sensibility that had space for Bergson or Darwin, suggesting a tradition that runs deeper than the immediate post-war situation.¹²⁶

There were specific reasons for the phantoms that inhabit *Late Lyrics*, although the book is something of a miscellany of themes and dates. There was the profound psychological disturbance of the Great War, during which Hardy ‘seemed to have aged ten years’, and while he had always kept a foot in the past, his ‘immersion in the past was now so habitual and so intense as to threaten to almost overwhelm the present’.¹²⁷ Since it was his practice to use the spectral as a doorway into his personal history, a profusion of ghosts is not unexpected. But their wellspring was not directly related to the war, nor the post-war world. Hardy’s concept of the ghost did not entirely stem from personal or folkloric precedents, something shown partially in the *Late Lyrics* poem, ‘Jezreel’, which celebrates General Allenby’s victory over the Turkish 7th and 8th armies in September 1918. Taking around 20,000 prisoners Allenby’s deployment of cavalry broke the Turkish retreat in the Biblical territory of the Jezreel Valley close to the city of the same name.¹²⁸ Hardy’s poem does reflect briefly on the present and the

¹²⁵ Bäckman, p. 53.

¹²⁶ Bäckman, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, pp. 498 and 528.

¹²⁸ See W. T. Massey, ‘Cavalry Gallop’, *Daily Mail*, 24 September 1918, p. 3; Anonymous, ‘Allenby’s Victory’, *Leicester Daily Post*, 24 September 1918, p. 1.

‘cavalry [that] smote through the/ancient Esdraelon Plain’, but (as the phrase indicates), the lines are overwhelmed by the Biblical connections that the location stirs up in the poet, including the murder of Jezebel in the city itself (*Late Lyrics*, p. 15). Hardy writes of the ‘[s]pectre-spots of the blood of her body on /some rotten wall’, a visceral image that could easily find room in a poem by Graves or Sassoon (*Late Lyrics*, p. 16). Yet the overall effect is to overwhelm news reports of the present victory in the Middle East with a phantasmal, biblical past so that this becomes a poem both about Hardy’s past (he had been annotating Bibles since he was nine-years old) and ancient history, which helps to distance the poem from present cultural concerns like the séance and the generalised atmosphere of mourning.¹²⁹ By and large, Hardy’s ghosts tend to follow an age-old pattern of phantom encounters, offering little new, although his writing does not fall into stereotype since the type of spirit that manifests itself is always slightly different in behaviour and seriousness. Most of the situations of memorial and mourning that Hardy sets up seem rather commonplace and when he believes he sees a real ghost in Stinsford Churchyard where Emma was buried it is a far more mundane encounter than with any of his poetic ghosts.¹³⁰ In his *Literary Notebooks* he copied words from William James, ‘[w]e live forward, we understand backward’, and the poems of retrospect in *Late Lyrics* were another way to understand.¹³¹

Housman is similarly a poet who explored and relished the ironies of death, much like Hardy. The two were friends of a sort, meeting first in London in June 1899 and in the following year Housman visited Max Gate. Their final meeting, if it may be

¹²⁹ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 40, n.

¹³⁰ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 528.

¹³¹ Quoted in Taylor, p. 41.

called that, was when Housman found himself pallbearer at Hardy's funeral in 1928.¹³² Housman told Maurice Pollet that he felt affection for Hardy and 'high admiration for some of his novels and a few of his poems', while Hardy was 'on record as an admirer of Housman's poetry'.¹³³ Housman was nineteen years Hardy's junior but in 1914 neither man was of an age to fight; both were ambivalent about the conflict.¹³⁴ Housman's poetry might not seem to engage with the war, given his men (or boys) have more in common with Hardy's Sergeant Troy, even if 'VIII' mentions both 'Kesar' and 'King'.¹³⁵ His poetry more generally deals with the finality of death and only a handful of verses, for example, 'VI. Lancer', are encounters with ghosts, and this poem is particularly ambivalent about the glory of death. Richard Perceval Graves characterises most of the poems as describing 'misery within the broad philosophical context of a flawed Universe, in which [...] evils are inescapable'.¹³⁶ This is not unsurprising from a writer whose mother's death from cancer had slowly precipitated his atheism.¹³⁷ Here again there is evidence of the personal, what Housman called the 'physical', that understanding of a poem that is unique and bodily and for Housman not tied to the present but to a more universal misery.

'I. The West' is a poem similar to 'XXXVI. Revolution' since both use the idea of the west and the earth's diurnal round. Edmund Wilson said of Housman's poetry that within it 'we find only the realization of man's smallness on his turning globe [...] and

¹³² Norman Page, 'A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy' in *A.E. Housman: A Reassessment*, ed. by Alan W. Holden, and J. Roy Birch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) pp. 87-105 (p. 89).

¹³³ Quoted in Page, 'A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy', p. 90.

¹³⁴ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, pp. 501-03.

¹³⁵ A. E. Housman, *Last Poems* (London: The Richards Press, 1938), p. 13. Further references to this volume are given after quotations in the text.

¹³⁶ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 125.

¹³⁷ Richard Perceval Graves, pp. 11-15.

of his own basic wrongness to himself, his own inescapable anguish.¹³⁸ Its narrator and a 'comrade', both phantoms, stand at the close of day as the sun sets; for them it signifies disintegration since they must replay the actions that led to their deaths, and the narrator cautions his comrade not to go further towards the shoreline since it was there 'they fished for you and me', so that in reaching it, 'You and I shall drown again.' As such the west is both sinister and devouring since, 'Twill have the heart out of your breast' (*Last Poems* p. 2). These comrades exist, at least for the moment, in a symbolic, liminal landscape, caught between the solidity of the earth and the dissolution of the sea. The 'single pine' is a further signification of their deaths, like a full-stop in the landscape (*Last Poems* p. 1). The imagery is likely to have been taken from the first canto of Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*: 'And mountains, that like giants stand,/To sentinel enchanted land.'¹³⁹ Housman calls this singular place, 'the edge of heaven' (*Last Poems* p. 1). Towards the poem's conclusion the alliteration of earlier dies away, as if the poem itself does not wish to reach its deathly conclusion but redoubles on the 's' sound, suggesting the susurrus of waves drawing the ghosts to their fate (*Last Poems* p. 3). In its way, the poem follows the inevitable repetition that haunts Blunden's waking moments, seeing his dead comrades over and over with a conclusion seemingly beyond reach. Accepting Archie Burnett's date for the poem's composition as 1905 makes little difference in understanding the poem's tendency which bears comparison with Blunden's verse.¹⁴⁰ In 'The Avenue', for example, the soldiers are in their 'thankless graves' (*The Shepherd*, p. 54) and there is no indication

¹³⁸ Edmund Wilson, 'A. E. Housman' in *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Christopher Ricks (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 14-25 (p. 16).

¹³⁹ Walter Scott, *The Lady of the Lake* (New York: T. Y. Crowell, n.d.) Canto I, xiv, p. 36.

¹⁴⁰ See A. E. Housman, *The Poems of A.E. Housman*, ed. by Archie Burnett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. lii.

that they will not rise again to trouble the poet, the images repeating in his mind. F. W. Mott noted in a soldier diagnosed with shell shock that he '[d]reams about the war' and 'he thinks much of war experiences' in the same repetitive pathology that haunts Blunden here and finds its model in the actions of Housman's two apparently military men.¹⁴¹

'XIX' is a poem that would not be out of place in *Late Lyrics* and comes closest to that sense of intimacy the séance sets up with the touch of fingers trying to bring the narrator into their grasp. It is a poem set in the midnight hour when 'Dead Man's Fair is nigh', a reference to the first days of November when the divide between life and death is at its narrowest and 'the dead call the dying/And finger at the doors' (*Last Poems* p. 30).¹⁴² These digits, clawing to be let in, are trying to trap the narrator in their deathly embrace since the word 'train' here suggests treachery or deceit. The speaker, though, will have none of it and with the cock's crow he declares: "I will sort with comrades/That face the beam of day' (*Last Poems* p. 31). The poem resolves itself much like 'XXXVI. Revolution' where '[s]pectres and fears, the nightmare and her foal/Drown in the golden deluge of the morn', the image itself a reversal of the scene in 'I. West' (*Last Poems* p. 58). A. C. Benson called Housman a 'precise, formal, cautious little man', and his verse is precise and formal, not allowing anything to escape beyond the poem's confines.¹⁴³ With such verse seemingly hermetically sealed against the present and the personal, it has little in common with the culture of 1922. In 'XIX' the use of folklore tries to place a distance between the reader and the subject

¹⁴¹ Frederick W. Mott, *War Neuroses and Shell Shock* (London: Joint Committee of Henry Froude and Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), p. 89.

¹⁴² For further details see northumbrian: light: <https://northumbrianlight.com/2018/02/28/dead-mans-fair/> [Accessed 14/4/23].

¹⁴³ Quoted in Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, 'Star Man', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5438 (2007), 3.

matter. Even so, those reading the verse in 1922 would likely not have understood this, given the poetry's preoccupation with soldiery and death.¹⁴⁴

Edmund Blunden had been noted by Housman as a poet he had been admiring 'for some time', something of an accolade when the elder poet seldom had time for other writers in the form.¹⁴⁵ Hardy was more sympathetic to young poets and welcomed both Siegfried Sassoon and Blunden into his home in July of the same year.¹⁴⁶ Blunden certainly has more in common with Hardy than with Housman but what separated him from both poets early on was the need to make a reckoning with the events of the war. He begins *The Shepherd* with '11th R. S. R.', just this kind of war poem, concerning Blunden's old regiment interleaved with ideas of peace as the first line makes clear: a metaphorical dove 'shows against the sky', one 'blackening up in monstrous cloud', inviting thoughts of resurrection. There can be little joy in a poem written by a man 'haunted ever by war's agony', as he says in the second stanza; this deficit is shown by the lack of alliteration, and full-rhymes sometimes substituted for eye-rhymes.¹⁴⁷ These verses, unlike the work of both the previous poets deals directly with the contemporary, with a man still suffering from the effects of his war service and caught between the

¹⁴⁴ When Housman wrote 'XVII. Astronomy', an elegy on his brother's death, he speaks of weeping for the bones in Africa but there is little sense of fraught emotion. In the central stanza of the poem Housman writes that:

For pay and medals, name and rank,
Things that he has not found,
He hove the cross to heaven and sank
The pole-star underground.

If the reader did not already know, it would be difficult to elicit that this spare outline of a man was in reality Housman's brother such is the sense of detachment (see *Last Poems*, p. 27). The use of astronomy to connect the lines makes it reminiscent of Hardy's 'Drummer Hodge' (1902).

¹⁴⁵ Burnett, *Letters*, I, 519.

¹⁴⁶ Webb, p. 134.

¹⁴⁷ Edmund Blunden, *The Shepherd: And Other Poems of Peace and War* (London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1922), p. 9. Further references to this volume are given after quotations in the text.

present moment and the past, looking back unflinchingly to the trenches. By its close the pacific image of the dove is called into question when there are 'rich belfries tolling', presumably for the dead, and even the weathercocks topping the churches are 'turned torches' (*The Shepherd*, p. 10). The bleakness in such lines is comprehensible knowing that Blunden, living in Oxford just after the war, and 'shaking with nerves' had declared: 'No more wars at any price!'¹⁴⁸ Indeed, *The Shepherd* would include his first real war poems. Lines written during the Great War in *The Waggoner* such as 'In Festubert' and 'Mont de Cassel' only start to address the killing. Blunden would spend much of the rest of his life reliving the destruction in poems and dreams; as his biographer Webb writes, Blunden 'never finally exorcised the spectres of the war.'¹⁴⁹ This is why verses ostensibly unconnected to the Great War allow violence unbidden to colonise their syntax. If Hardy and Housman's ghostly verses do not entirely make common cause with the emotions of the post-war era, for Blunden the most ordinary of images become insidious, drawing the war into peaceable poems like the 'Mole Catcher'. They enter into the specific world of 'lob-worms', 'pin and prong' and the 'grand arcanum', a scent devised to draw in the mole. The man's self-effacing generosity sees him save the life of the 'drowning fly' in his beer. Yet, despite this and his assiduous churchgoing, the rendition of his trade draws down the darkness as the man '[g]loats on the opened turnpike through the clay', and the trap is 'ready to shoot/And snatch the death-knot fast around the first mole.' His work is only concluded when he 'finds the prisoners there and takes his toll.' 'Shoot' and 'prisoners' suggests that the subject matter has suddenly cast the writer back into the war, and not unsurprisingly (*The*

¹⁴⁸ Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, p. 240.

¹⁴⁹ Webb, p. 98.

Shepherd, pp. 34-35). In *Undertones of War* Blunden wrote about the tunnellers who undermined the German trenches, setting off vast explosions, working with 'stubborn determination' beneath the front line.¹⁵⁰

Blunden's ghosts are often carelessly drawn, unrealised images, appearing without the Hardy-esque apparatus of seasonal change, thunderous skies, or foggy dawns. In 'The Avenue' there is a concentration on the moment and the column of men within it, leading to four stanzas of mostly ten syllables, the men solid and bunched together like the lines themselves. The poet tries to see the long colonnade of trees as individual growths: 'one's crown/Struck by lightning' and 'one whose boughs stoop down' but finds in the 'night dark' that they become simply 'trees, trees' and as such emblems of the marching men who Blunden seems unable to tell apart. The word 'colonnade' links the poem back to the earlier '11th R.S.R.', but also to classical architecture, like a temple or shrine, suggesting this poem is a memorial. The men are 'brain-cramped, dead though they live' (*The Shepherd*, p. 53). The most obvious interpretation is that these are men who are 'dead tired' marching through the midnight hours to the front, but also that they live in Blunden's mind in the present though dead and as such, ghosts, caught between life in the poet's mind and death in the wider world. The last stanza returns us to the present, and, as with Blunden's return to his village home, 'the men/Are lying in their thankless graves agen' (*The Shepherd*, p. 54). It is the poet's mind that can resurrect these dead and give them a demonstrable life, while the technique follows the Georgians in renouncing ornament in verse. As John Freeman remarked: the 'truest poetry is inevitably unextravagant, among poets there is no such thing as poetic

¹⁵⁰ Blunden, *Undertones*, p. 45.

licence.¹⁵¹ This is not verse particularly aimed at transcendence and its undemonstrative nature is a weapon against the poetic. The work has the literal truth that Freeman aimed for in verse, when, for example, the reader feels the weight of the soldiers' packs which they 'often throw [...] up to ease them, as they go' (*The Shepherd*, p. 53). These are very solid ghosts and work much as ghosts do in Hardy, creating the means to summon up the past, although Hardy's ghosts are sometimes more than just the manifestations of his psyche. Like Hardy Blunden does appear to have seen ghosts, but like the one the novelist saw, they appear to have been brief, mundane encounters. This is despite Blunden's perceived ability to suffer premonitions and sense spirits, such as that of Thomas Hardy, when he was writing his book on the poet.¹⁵² During the war he recalled a number of spectral contacts such as the well-known meeting with the 'ghostly German spy-officer', as Paul Fussell categorises him,¹⁵³ who 'asked me the way to the German lines' and was 'white-faced as a ghost' but is still more real than phantasmal.¹⁵⁴ The processes Blunden uses in 'The Avenue' are described in 'The Troubled Spirit', which forms an invocation: 'come you friends, let necromantic thought/Be our reunion' (*The Shepherd*, p. 63).

Another poem, 'Reunion in War', finds Blunden's narrator in that most Hardy-esque of locations, walking through a churchyard on a moonlit evening.¹⁵⁵ Often Blunden's narrators appear almost identical to the poet himself in a similar way to Hardy in his verse, but it is occasionally worth asking how the two correspond. Hardy must have

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Cooke, p. 157.

¹⁵² See Webb, p. 269.

¹⁵³ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 131.

¹⁵⁴ Blunden, *Undertones*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁵ In 1910, Hardy, being given the freedom of Dorchester once again made clear his close relationship with burial grounds, announcing that '[h]e had now, he said, to go to the cemetery to find 'the Dorchester that I knew best'. Quoted in Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 471.

found useful grounds for his pessimism amongst gravestones and Siegfried Sassoon found startling similarities between the two men, despite their generational differences, as Webb shows: ‘They share an old-fashioned seriousness [...] They both enjoy talking about simple things. It is a sublime freedom from sophistication’, borne out in the verse of *The Shepherd*.¹⁵⁶ Going to visit his love, the poet takes ‘the shortest way’ passing through the graveyard ‘[w]here opiate yew-boughs hung’, the yew a potent symbol of death given its poisonous nature. (*The Shepherd*, p. 55). Reaching his lover’s cottage, he calls her down but the meeting falters and the writer cries out: ‘O cruel time to take away,/And worse to bring agen’. The moment has been stolen away and in its place are memories of war he is unable to set aside: ‘Why slept I not in Flanders clay/With all the murdered men?’ The alliteration on ‘murdered men’ only serves to re-emphasise the horrors he has temporarily abandoned and as the two kiss he finds they become ‘estranged’ since ‘the ghosts of war’ step between them (*The Shepherd*, p. 56). Although Blunden does not use the trope here, in some narratives of the post-war world the returning combatant is more accurately described as a ghost, and for good reason. Discussing *Magnolia Street* (1930) by Louis Golding, Rosa Maria Bracco notes of the returning soldier that he is ‘like a ghost who does not belong to the world that used to be familiar to him.’¹⁵⁷ The ghosts in ‘Reunion in War’ are phantoms barely described and more evanescent for that, and while the setting has all the paraphernalia that Hardy uses, the ghosts do not really emerge out of that; for Blunden it is stage-setting and not integral to the final revelation.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Webb, pp. 133-34.

¹⁵⁷ Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), p. 102.

Interestingly, when the death is very personal to Blunden, ghosts real or psychological fail to make themselves known. ‘The Child’s Grave’ is one of a number written about his first daughter who died of milk poisoning.¹⁵⁸ Hoping that her spirit will attend him as he stands before her resting place, he instead discovers ‘the grave held no answer’ (*The Shepherd*, p. 83). If Blunden wanted ghosts to offer him a response, like the people who attended séances, then the specimens displayed here are insufficient to achieve that.

□ Towers, Real and Imagined

Edmund Blunden was able to recall a moment from his early childhood, when, unable to sleep he turned to his bedroom window and looked out at the brilliant, rural sky, seeing instead ‘a mixture of red brick and white stone, with tall towers’, a vision that was ‘not to fade.’¹⁵⁹ It was a moment that seems to presage the importance of the tower to early twentieth-century culture and particular to those years of its greater prevalence immediately following the Great War; this would include spires, steeples and other vertical forms. Subsequently Blunden would identify this vision as the school buildings comprising his school, Christ’s Hospital, but the generic image is the more important.¹⁶⁰

The focus here is on the tower but as becomes clear very early on, spires, steeples and other upright forms, despite or perhaps because of their fixity, became embodied with a shifting, liminal set of meanings that cannot easily be reconciled. All these images, though, relate very closely to the war and the years immediately after.

¹⁵⁸ See Webb, p. 108.

¹⁵⁹ Webb, p. 16.

¹⁶⁰ Webb, p. 25.

Saying this, some of the towers are very real and personal, especially for Hardy and Blunden. This is an attempt to try and find some common ground between the concepts of the tower in the work of these three poets, with some reflections on the parallels between their work and that of modernism. In the work of Blunden and T. S. Eliot the tower becomes an image of post-war societal changes, although Eliot's towers seem to signal the end of something rather than representing a simple cultural shift. For Hardy and Blunden the tower is a symbol of memorial and remembrance while for Virginia Woolf it represented an elitism and a withdrawal from the commonplace, much as it did for Yeats.

The contextual meaning and significance of the tower in 1922 was born in the years 1914-18, primarily on the Western Front, and was widely reported in the press.¹⁶¹ The coverage began early on with the *Daily Telegraph* describing (on 22 September) 1914, what it titled 'The Infamy of Reims' as the cathedral fell under German bombardment and the town 'saw the twin towers, the high roof, dissolve under the hail of shells'.¹⁶² At the beginning of 1915 the same publication was writing with approval that a 'mitrailleuse placed in the church tower' during the battle of Steinbach

¹⁶¹ The tower though, had a pre-history which came with certain attendant meanings. Towers, despite Blunden's unstable vision, represent not just an idea of stability, but more deeply, are a symbol of the nation, something that can appear ironic given the probable origins of the tower in Britain. H. V. Morton contemplating Durham Cathedral in 1927 wrote: 'It seemed to me, as I stood near the west door of Durham and looked at the vast dim church, whose pillars are like giant oaks, [...] whose sanctuaries are built as if to withstand a siege, that this building is a declaration of Norman policy.' See H. V. Morton *In Search of England*, fourteenth ed. (London: Methuen, 1931), p. 205. Morton emphasises both the building's solid, unchangeable nature but also its alien provenance, its towers and arches imported by Britain's Norman rulers who probably accelerated the number and functions that towers performed in the country. Certainly, the tower as dwelling-place came 'to England at the Norman Conquest' (see 'Tower' in *The Oxford Companion to Architecture* ed. by Patrick Goode (Oxford University Press, 2009) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198605683.001.0001/acref-9780198605683-e-1331> [Accessed 11 April 2024]). Ignoring the pre-history of the tower in Babel and in Ilium, the British tower is the offspring of medieval Europe, but a more important contemporary history of the tower preceded 1922, one that all these poets would have comprehended.

¹⁶² Anonymous, 'The Infamy of Reims', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 1914, p. 6.

swept the German positions in a nearby wood.¹⁶³ It is therefore unsurprising that towers took on a particular meaning during the conflict, particularly for the French and Belgians; postcards were issued showing the destruction of churches and cathedrals as a mark of German infamy and an assault on Christian civilisation.¹⁶⁴ In *Undertones of War*, Edmund Blunden comes under fire from artillery directed from a nearby church spire, noted by Sergeant Worley:

He caught my arm, and pointed out a spire far off, but glittering clearly in the westering light [...] That spire, so cool, so calm, so bright, looked as though it deserved to escape but it would hardly do so: even as we gazed, volumes of smoke began to burst in the air around it.¹⁶⁵

Towers in the literature and culture of 1922 and the years previous to it were, despite the precedents above, left as empty vessels without a constitutive meaning, allowing multiple concepts to gather around them. The towers of 'The Waste Land' are all images of horror or collapse, from Gerard de Nerval's 'la tour abolie' and Ugolino della Gherardesca's hideous incarceration, to the 'falling towers' related to Isaiah 30.25.¹⁶⁶ In contrast, the Martello tower that opens *Ulysses* becomes a symbol of British colonialism, 'built [...] when the French were on the sea.'¹⁶⁷ Stephen Daedalus's exit from the fortification shows Joyce engaged in an impulse entirely contrary to that of W. B. Yeats who in 1922 was still working to renovate his Irish tower, 'a military

¹⁶³ Anonymous, 'Fierce Battle of Steinbach', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 January 1915, p. 9.

¹⁶⁴ For some examples see Darkstar, 'Part of a Collection of World War One Postcards I Found', *Darkstar*, 2014 <<https://chelseaflovers.blogspot.com/2014/04/part-of-collection-of-world-war-one.html>> [accessed 23 February 2024].

¹⁶⁵ Blunden, *Undertones*, p. 171.

¹⁶⁶ T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T.S. Eliot. Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 694.

¹⁶⁷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 17.

redoubt in the countryside erected by the Norman conquerors of Gaelic Ireland'.¹⁶⁸ Rather than Theodore Ziolkowski's anti-modern symbol, the tower, 'Thoor Ballylee', was a way to retreat from 'the reality of the mob' and an affirmation of Yeats' own modernism, a creed that renounced the masses, the same ones Eliot saw on London Bridge. As Ziolkowski himself says, Yeats was exiling himself from the 'rabble-rousers of the lower middle class that he despised'.¹⁶⁹ Virginia Woolf was able to draw the same conclusion several years later; her imaginary tower of the pre-Great War period is one upon which the upper middle classes, those educated, as she says, at 'private schools, public schools, and universities', are raised up, insulated from the wider world by their 'parents' gold'.¹⁷⁰ Many male modernists would have been members of this fraternity.

Towers in popular poetry at this juncture tended to be symbols of the communal or to speak to well-understood tropes within the culture, and it is useful to begin by making a wider point about towers, steeples and spires and their personal significance in the work of Blunden, Hardy and Housman. As Webb notes, '[t]he Blundens had been a country family for several generations'; Blunden grew up in Yalding, to the south of Maidstone, recalled in many of the poems of the 1920s.¹⁷¹ Next to the River Medway 'stood the twelfth-century church of St Peter and St Paul, its tall tower – surmounted by a strange eighteenth-century cupola like a large green onion – looking out over a rambling graveyard' and the local landscape of waterways and

¹⁶⁸ Terence Brown, 'W. B. Yeats: *The Tower*' in *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry* ed. by Neil Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 439.

¹⁶⁹ Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 45.

¹⁷⁰ See Virginia Woolf, 'The Leaning Tower' in Virginia Woolf, *The Moment and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1947), p. 112.

¹⁷¹ Webb, p. 5.

ponds.¹⁷² Blunden would have encountered similar vistas in Suffolk after the war. Not only that but the writer, as Webb has said, enjoyed ‘exploring churchyards’ and at a young age accompanied Mr Longley, the church sexton, ‘who let Edmund climb the tower with him to wind the clock’. It is not surprising that the ‘church bells held a particular fascination for him’, the same bells that sound ‘the threefold knell’ at the close of ‘The Canal’ (*The Shepherd*, p. 79).¹⁷³ This is perhaps why, in *Undertones of War*, so many of the markers Blunden finds amongst the devastation are churches or shrines.

Housman’s early life was dominated by a tower. Not only did the poet attend church services on Sunday morning and evening, largely because his mother was a very religious individual, but his early childhood home, Perry Hall, lay at the foot of a sharp hill so that, as his biographer explains:

From the front lawn, Alfred and his brothers and sisters looked up over the yew, laurel, birch and laburnum to the church tower and its tall spire; and their life was dominated and timed by the sound of the church bells.¹⁷⁴

Housman’s final years were spent ‘in the seclusion of a neo-Gothic tower in a remote corner of Trinity College, Cambridge.’¹⁷⁵ At least symbolically it places him with Yeats and it suited some part of his character. A former colleague on seeing him again in the city described a man ‘with unseeing eyes that recognised none and repelled advance.’¹⁷⁶ There was some part of Housman that was inclined to Yeats’ isolationism,

¹⁷² Webb, p. 11.

¹⁷³ Webb, p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Perceval Graves, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷⁵ Richard Perceval Graves, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Richard Perceval Graves, p. 168.

but he had a close group of friends and his poetry was made for the multitude, not for a select group.

For Hardy, there can be no surprise in his depictions of towers in, for example, in his first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, when Cytherea sees her father fall from the spire of a church, since Hardy's work as an ecclesiastical architect meant considerable time spent with religious buildings.¹⁷⁷ Sven Bächman records Hardy's 'ever-growing habit of visiting the graves of the dead [including] his own relatives in Stinsford Churchyard',¹⁷⁸ and from his final home at Max Gate he looked out across fields to the church and its precincts.¹⁷⁹ The church there, St Michael's, is mostly thirteenth century with an unbuttressed west tower, and it is now the location where Hardy's heart is buried.¹⁸⁰ The blunt and square church tower would have cast a considerable shadow over the graves at certain times of the day.¹⁸¹

Two poems in Blunden's *The Shepherd*, 'The Canal' and 'April Byeway', form a cartography of Blunden's childhood landscapes, those now almost beyond reach as a result of the war. In the first, although Blunden does not labour the point, he finds the rural landscape keeps recalling him to the conflict. The canal's waters are 'never changing' but he has altered, and they become 'tomb-like' providing the graves for barges '[d]rowned in mud [...] Their grey ribs but seen in summer' (*The Shepherd*, pp. 76-77). In *Undertones of War* Blunden passes along a canal towards Givenchy and the front, '[t]he long weedy canal in drowsy summer's yellow haze, with here a diver in his

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Hardy, *Desperate Remedies* Library Edition (London: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁸ Bächman, p. 43.

¹⁷⁹ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 515.

¹⁸⁰ John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Dorset, The Buildings of England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 398.

¹⁸¹ For a photograph of the churchyard see Denys Kay-Robinson, *The Landscape of Thomas Hardy* (Salem: Salem House, 1984), p. 35.

rubber suit exploring a sunken barge' and finds his way to 'another road [...] originating at Givenchy Church.'¹⁸² The canal in *The Shepherd* is a further object of fear because of the 'old dragoon' the poet used to see who finally succumbed to the waters in an act of 'self-murder' (*The Shepherd*, p. 78). This past memory acts upon Blunden, caught up in his own unfinished business with the war, wondering perhaps if he too might be tempted. 'April Byeway' in some ways makes peace with this death-entangled landscape, since death walks at Blunden's side as a 'friend, the best that there has/been'. It is possibly because of this that the 'church-top fowl shall glow' (*The Shepherd*, p. 80-81) rather than find itself engulfed in flames as it did in '11th R. S. R.' when 'weathercocks turned torches' in the midst of battle (*The Shepherd*, p. 10). After the poet's time in the trenches the landscape and its architecture have altered so that 'the round tower' is now 'crumbling down' and 'the old forge and mill are shut and done' and 'all's to chaos hurled' (*The Shepherd*, p. 82). Here the cultural shifts are a more pedestrian iteration of Eliot's 'falling towers', although Blunden's conviction that chaos has ensued hints at a wider pattern. The tower is a reference to the culture but it also indicates the depredations of time, that fundamental force that so confounds Hardy.

These two poems help to clarify most of the themes that will occupy Blunden, Hardy, and Housman in their engagement with the tower as symbol and reality. Certainly in the latter part of his career, Hardy had highlighted the encroachment of modernity upon rural life. In a letter to Rider Haggard, Hardy wrote regretfully that 'village tradition – a vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle,

¹⁸² Blunden, *Undertones*, p. 54.

local topography and nomenclature – is absolutely sinking, has nearly sunk, into eternal oblivion'.¹⁸³ But this was because that culture was shifting, something that Blunden's tower signifies, an ancient structure now imperilled. And neither Blunden nor Hardy were wrong in their diagnosis; setting aside the catastrophic price slump in wheat and oats at about this time, the cities seemed to offer better paid, more stable employment. In Oxfordshire, for example, as W. A. Armstrong has described, 'only a quarter of agricultural labourers' sons were succeeding their fathers' occupations, and here the Morris works at Cowley were a strong attraction.' Meanwhile, those time-honoured activities synonymous with rural life were disappearing: 'Between 1911 and 1931 the number of rural craftsmen was still falling, in the case of Rutland by some 42 per cent' while the women's craft of lacemaking 'was doomed to extinction'.¹⁸⁴

The towers Blunden and Hardy wrote about had acquired disquieting meaning even if their poems had been written before the Great War. Housman more than Hardy would have appreciated the tragic significance.¹⁸⁵ His nephew, Clement, having enlisted, was considerably concerned about his own death and it was for this reason that Housman sent him a copy of what would become 'III' in *Last Poems*. It begins: 'Her strong enchantments failing,/Her towers of fear in wreck,/Her limbecks dried of poisons/And the knife at her neck', suggesting the female figure is death itself defeated at the last, but Clement, alas, would become just one more victim of the war (*Last Poems*, p. 5).¹⁸⁶ Housman already had a habit of associating towers with the

¹⁸³ Quoted in Bächman, p. 34.

¹⁸⁴ Armstrong, W. A. 'The Countryside' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950* ed. by F. M. L. Thompson 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 1, 87-153 (p. 141-42).

¹⁸⁵ It is notable that Housman never distanced himself from the war. Poems from *A Shropshire Lad* found their way into the trenches and 'Housman took a real interest in the welfare of soldiers in general'. See Richard Perceval Graves, p. 174.

¹⁸⁶ Richard Perceval Graves, pp. 139-40.

deathly as the poem 'XXXIV' shows. If Walter Benjamin's truism that '[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism' holds, then it helps to understand why death and the tower stand together.¹⁸⁷ When Francis Bond wrote his study of towers and spires in ecclesiastical architecture, he began not with Christian sentiment but with the thought that '[t]owers have been used for military defence from the earliest times'.¹⁸⁸

If Blunden had first encountered a tower through the ministrations of Mr Longley, his further meetings were often on the continent, for example with the tower at Albert that bore a Virgin and Child, as noted in *The Great War and Modern Memory*. To it adhered a whole series of beliefs but the tower was destroyed by British guns after the German army took possession of the town.¹⁸⁹

'Death of Childhood Beliefs' is a complex poem since it enacts a collision between the visions that inhabited the poet's childhood when "Trees on hill-tops then were Palms,/Closing pilgrims harbours in", and the loss of innocence occasioned by the war. He speaks of 'Spider Dick with cat's green eyes/That could pierce stone walls', at least as far as the juvenile Blunden was concerned. Now though, he sees him differently: 'By some hedge he shakes and cries,/A lost man, half-starved, half-witted', and he appears now like a victim of shell shock. Not only this but the eternal present of childhood, when time has little meaning, has been stolen from the poet so that the towers of his youth now turn traitor: 'Clocks toll time out' (*The Shepherd*, p. 75). The

¹⁸⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History VII' in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 248.

¹⁸⁸ Francis Bond, *An Introduction to English Church Architecture from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols (London: Humphrey Milford/Oxford University Press, 1913), II, 873.

¹⁸⁹ Fussell, pp. 142-146.

towers of the western front come to displace the steeples he once knew so that his vision becomes that of 'flaming spires' collapsing and the final spectacle is of a 'sunset wildfire [...] Crying Armageddon near' as if the war is on the very periphery of his post-war life, threatening to engulf it once more (*The Shepherd*, p. 76).

In 'The Last of Autumn', the significant final poem in *The Shepherd*, the poet prepares himself for winter but there appears to be too great an emphasis on the death of the natural world. From his 'watch-tower' the narrator observes '[s]horn empty fields' and discarded troughs in fields like 'headstones' (*The Shepherd*, p. 84). It is something of an over-reaction since in the last of the poem he confesses that the 'turbulent angers and fierce siege' of winter 'shall die/When newness comes to birth' (*The Shepherd*, p. 86). But the poet is recovering from his war and even this poem forged in peace is haunted by 'headstones' and 'graves' whilst the year is under 'siege' from winter, the war insinuating itself into these blameless fields. But the war had shown how a 'watch-tower' is only of use in looking down upon the devastation and offering new targets. It is with this in mind that the poet pessimistically considers that spring might yet not appear and, if it does, will he? '[A]nd if these eyes/Should then be shut to the brightness of her coming?' (*The Shepherd*, p. 86). It is a disturbing thought that the kinds of landscape that had engendered him might now be incapable of raising him from his misery. His situation contrasts unfavourably with that of 'The Shepherd' who, having spent his lifetime amongst 'the rolling weald', can still summon a Wordsworthian joy: 'His heart leaps up at every steeple vane', where Blunden sees just flames and decay (*The Shepherd*, pp. 11-12). This is not always the situation, since, in 'Behind the Line', seeing a distant 'spire/Miles on miles from our hill' can 'soothe the long-imprisoned sight' by suggesting a place of comfort beyond the confines of the

war (*The Shepherd*, p. 52). In the end, like Hardy, Blunden's poems of this year are 'juxtapositions of unrelated, even discordant, effusions'; some of these verses are both memories of the war and memorials to it and to its dead, while others deal with thoughts personal to the poet as he apprehends a world that is now passing away. These two categories were to become interlocked when, in later life, Blunden took on the post Kipling had once held at the war graves commission.¹⁹⁰ These poems are often written out of emotions and these change and conflict throughout the book.

Francis Bond wrote that towers were built for 'constructional reasons, mainly for artistic effect' and that '[t]ower groups and spires were the one extravagance of Gothic architecture.'¹⁹¹ Hardy's first employer, John Hicks, was often involved in the restoration of Gothic churches and the hero of the novelist's *A Laodicean* (1881) is first introduced 'measuring and drawing a church tower'; as Millgate says, it 'is clearly based on Hardy's own memories'.¹⁹² Hardy understood church architecture and the aesthetics of the tower and their robustness better than most. The writer, despite the towers that sometimes dominate his novels, leaves the same architecture implicit in most of his poems of 1922. Only 'Evelyn G. of Christminster', an elegy for a cousin by marriage who lived in Oxford, is directly concerned with tall structures. It begins: 'I can see the towers/In mind quite clear' and goes on to consider 'the College stones' which are 'smit with the sun', but within the poem they have no more consequence than the other aspects of the city he mentions such as 'the graduates and Dons', all of which remain while Evelyn Gifford is dead. It is tempting to see the poem's tall,

¹⁹⁰ Webb, p. 43-4.

¹⁹¹ Bond, p. 873.

¹⁹² Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, p. 56.

narrow shape as a tower erected in memory of the poet's cousin (*Late Lyrics* p. 124).¹⁹³ Other poems cite churches such as 'The Inscription' or 'The Country Wedding', while 'The Collector Cleans his Picture' chides a laggard William Barnes who has worked all night cleaning a picture, only to realise the bells of the 'adjacent steeple' are calling him to the service he must preside over (*Late Lyrics* p. 116).¹⁹⁴ Bells, the sure indication of a tower, appear in several poems, the most substantial of which is probably 'Drawing Details in an Old Church'. Here the poet, sketching the church interior, hears the bells tolling, realising that one day they will 'sound out for me' (*Late Lyrics* p. 272). It is in Hardy's pessimistic nature that the same bells that play 'Life's a Bumper' in an earlier poem will also sound out his own dissipation.

There was an unforeseen corollary to the focus on towers during the Great War and the poetry that followed on. At least as early as 1917 there was some consideration of how the conflict should be memorialised at its conclusion. Warwick H. Draper in his visionary book, *The Tower*, tried to set a course 'towards a fabric of Society which shall have less failure and baseness of Life than in the days before the War'.¹⁹⁵ Completed in late 1917 it was an attempt at an holistic vision of a new Britain, here characterised, as was usual for the times, as England: 'I behold England as a Tower in the deep, a strong place upon which a banner floats in the breezes that come from an encircling sea'.¹⁹⁶ This is above all a Christian vision of the most inclusive sort and at the book's heart is an imagined memorial chapel, 'The Chapel of Heroic Souls', built in the capital's crowded centre where 'Charing Cross Railway Station was abolished' and

¹⁹³ It should be noted that the first edition of *Late Lyrics* phrases this as 'College stones/Are smit with the sun' while later editions use 'stroked with the sun' which accords with *The Collected Poems* (1930).

¹⁹⁴ See Bailey, p. 459.

¹⁹⁵ Warwick H. Draper, *The Tower* (London: Headley Brothers, 1918), p. v.

¹⁹⁶ Draper, p. 34.

a 'broad new Bridge' had been constructed across the Thames. The chapel is set out with 'the golden names of regimental divisions and territorial battalions' and the interior 'fashioned not for preaching or massed congregation, but for commemoration and reflection.'¹⁹⁷ Draper's vision never came to pass but gives some indication of the concern for memorial as the peace slowly established itself in 1918 and 1919.

In March 1919 the *Harrow Gazette* reported on discussions the public school was having to memorialise its former pupils killed in the war and a 'Church clock and chimes' were suggested, since it had been thought 'a great pity that such a landmark as Harrow Church spire should be without a clock or chimes'.¹⁹⁸ But for many in Britain, the definitive memorial proved to be Edwin Lutyens' cenotaph for its simplicity. As Winter remarks: 'It is a form on which anyone can inscribe his or her own thoughts, reveries, sadnesses', although it did not 'endear Lutyens or his work to traditional Christians.'¹⁹⁹ By 1922 the memorials were beginning to be solemnised; Saltburn near Middlesborough had its memorial to sixty-three of the fallen 'dedicated [...] by the Archbishop of York' in December 1922,²⁰⁰ while in Duddingston, a district of Edinburgh, a new monument had been completed for '29 men belonging to Duddingston Kirk and parish' by October.²⁰¹

Others, perhaps more ambitious, were still a work in progress. At the University College, Reading, a meeting on 7 June 1919 convened to discuss the nature and function of a monument. From this emerged some firm principles: that the memorial should be permanent, visible, on common ground familiar to all and that 'it should

¹⁹⁷ Draper, pp. 22-24.

¹⁹⁸ Anonymous, 'Memorials', *Harrow Gazette*, 14 March 1919, p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ Winter, p. 104.

²⁰⁰ Anonymous, 'In Loving Memory', *Cleveland Standard*, 16 December 1922, p. 5.

²⁰¹ Anonymous, 'War Memorials', *Scotsman*, 9 October 1922, p. 9.

fulfil its original purpose as perfectly 500 years hence as on the day of inauguration'. When a pamphlet publicising the scheme was published it first noted the '128 names' which the memorial had to accommodate and that the project 'should take the form of a lofty Tower, carrying a clock and one great bell' and that 'between £5,000 and £10,000 will be needed.'

The necessity of the works came from a 'feeling amongst us [...] that the memory of these men, their valour, and their sacrifice must be preserved in perpetuity'. Further discussions produced plans for a tower whose 'principal dimensions' would be '120 feet by 20 feet'. In 1922 the project remained incomplete, and it was not until Saturday 7 June 1924 that a much smaller monument was finally dedicated by the principal of the college.²⁰²

Where government funds could be used to support a memorial, the chances of success were greatly improved. In 1925 the town of Dudley already had a war memorial but since the town was constructing a new town hall it was able to incorporate a memorial into the building's fabric. This was to be in the form of a clock tower, the idea of the Mayor, James Smellie, who came up with 'two lines of poetry'. He wrote that 'I am quite satisfied with the first two lines, but not with the last two.' However, he appealed to one of the most popular poets of the era, Thomas Hardy, who in a 'business-like manner' re-wrote the lines as follows:

If you think, have a kindly thought,
If you speak, speak generously
Of those who as heroes fought
And died, to keep you free.

²⁰² University of Reading Special Collections, University College, Reading, War Memorial Fund, MS5508, 1919-1927.

The poem, not quite Hardy, and not all of the Mayor's work, is now set in stone on the face of the town hall.²⁰³ The writer was always ambivalent about the war and it caused



Fig. 6. The University College, Reading War Memorial, revised design, 2023

him great personal pain. In the end though he was willing to help memorialise those who had died and add something to the tower, a particular interest as an architect and as a writer.

Popular poetry was still a living feature of 1922, and Housman's output is dramatic evidence of this. But for it to thrive it required a sympathetic and

²⁰³ William W. Morgan, 'Verses Fitted for a Monument: Hardy's Contribution to the Dudley War Memorial', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 1.1 (1985), 26.

collaborative environment within the industry which all three poets found, although Hardy and Housman suffered at the hands of their publishers early on. When Blunden wrote the powerful invocation, 'let necromantic thought/Be our reunion', his mind was still doubtless on the destruction on the Western Front. Memories of this conflict had quite obviously seeped into the verse of his 1922 volume, even in poems that seemed to long for peace like 'The Shepherd.' Blunden's writing suggests that the war had burrowed deep into the national psyche and that poems unconnected to the violence were tinged with its darkness. However, to focus exclusively on this is to ignore the diverse origins and intentions of these lines on ghosts and towers, mourning and memorial which held such popular appeal. Both Hardy and Housman had poetic roots sunk much deeper in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries so that their ghosts are not entirely sequential with Blunden's own. The poetic output of these three writers forms a series of skeins that interweave without always connecting and tend to refract instead of reflect contemporary culture. Even so, Blunden and Hardy sometimes concur in their use of the tower as memorial and a point of mourning, whether it be for the dead of war or a relative. For Housman, towers, though useful in his work, are little more than points on the landscape like Ludlow tower in 'XXXIV. The First of May' even if, in this poem, it '[s]tands planted on the dead', making implicit connections with the others' work (*Last Poems*, p. 56). As evident from this chapter the popular poetry of this period spoke in the strongest terms to its mass audience even as it sometimes distracted them with stories and images beyond the age and its quotidian concerns.

❖ Conclusion

James Chandler has written about ‘the recent “return to history” in literary studies’ and the need to ‘read texts in representative relation to the dated historical situation’.¹

Although Chandler was addressing his remarks primarily to the year under discussion, 1819, his words have a wider resonance for scholars dealing with a single twelve-month period. It is hopeful that approaching works through their historical context is neither controversial nor unusual today, despite the attempts by the discourse of

postmodernism to complicate or even refute a history that is ‘neither a creation of our minds nor subject to our wills’, as Michael Stanford has phrased it.² If history still

exists as an object for research, issues remain over the study of a single year. Chandler

has asked whether an individual reads differently a text set in ‘a secular literary

history’ from one ‘framed by a single year?’ Does the framing itself ‘necessarily alter

the object framed’?³ Stanford is clear that ‘an objective knowledge of the past can only

be obtained through the subjective experience of the scholar’ who will give their

subject the ‘heuristic framing’ previously discussed in the Introduction.⁴ The answer

to Chandler’s enquiry is that a frame centred on a single year allows for the material to

be organised into a distinctive and telling form which will read differently from one

which takes a whole decade as its focus. Since it will also allow for the granular detail

to make itself known, it becomes more obvious how the cultural context informs and

finds itself in dialogue with the literature. This year was as culturally rich as any, taken

¹ James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 4.

² Michael Stanford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 29.

³ Chandler, p. 77.

⁴ Stanford, p. 27.

up with conspiracy theories, travelling theatre, and innovations in food in *Good Housekeeping*, amongst other matters.⁵

In this thesis the idea of history has taken a number of forms as outlined in the description of the methodology in the Introduction. I have not, throughout this research, attempted to use the term ‘history’ to mean the study of history, but have most prominently used it to describe the events of just over one hundred years ago. This includes the results of the committee work on shell shock which reported in September 1922, or the storms that battered the nation in the New Year. This approach has been essential in re-framing 1922 as not primarily about the achievements of modernism but as a variegated time-span of multiple themes and enthusiasms in literary terms, where a figure like Thomas Hardy, who fancied his most important relations to be with those now buried, could write with the same commitment as Elinor Glyn whose future lay in the emerging technology of film. However, to emphasise the richness apparent in 1922, it has been necessary to set aside much modernist scholarship. It has become an exercise in uncovering what was being read in 1922 rather than succumbing to what Bernard Bergonzi has termed ‘myth of modernism’ which has come to dominate the academic discourse, even as it tries to undertake an undignified land-grab for territory beyond its lines of demarcation. Michael Shallcross sees modernism becoming a ‘gravitational field’ drawing more and more literature into its orbit until the process begins to look ‘suspiciously like a quasi-imperialist process of assimilation.’ He has further expressed surprise that ‘Beatrix

⁵ See ‘Inside and Outside Modernism: An Anatomy of 1922 and Its Cultures’ ed. by Benjamin Bruce and Domonique Davies, *The Modernist Review*, 43, 2022
 <<https://modernistreviewcouk.wordpress.com/2022/11/04/modernist-review-43-inside-and-outside-modernism-an-anatomy-of-1922-and-its-cultures/>>[Accessed 17 February 2024]

Potter and Dorothy L. Sayers' have been inducted into the modernist canon while Laura Frost has stretched the category to include Patrick Hamilton's writing as late modernist work.⁶

On Frank Swinnerton's arrival at the publishing firm of Chatto and Windus he found what he called 'plenty of characters' amongst the staff while he worked 'in a very tiny, dark office' and 'faced a blank wall and worked by artificial light.'⁷ The conditions were probably no different to those in any of the other medium-sized publishers headquartered in and around Covent Garden at the time. Mainstream publishers are important to this study because they were at the centre of the relationships in the trade, mediating between writers and their manuscripts, between bookshops and their firms, and were the connection between their company and their readers. It was they who found themselves the arbiters of taste, publishing what they hoped would find favour with the British public. Part of this work has been to map out the relationships between writers and their publishers, from the cordial but unhelpful association between Beverley Nichols and Chatto and Windus to that of Thomas Hardy and Macmillan's where the power was largely in the hands of the octogenarian novelist. And just as relevant has been establishing how and why writers became bestsellers.

After the war, the situation would have been somewhat different for publishers considered in this study since there had been wartime paper-rationing, loss of staff to the frontline (sometimes permanently) and the damage to a firm's capital since

⁶ See Luke Seaber and Michael Shallcross, 'The Trouble with Modernism: A Dialogue', *The Modernist Review*, 10, 2019 <https://modernistreviewcouk.wordpress.com/2019/06/28/the-trouble-with-modernism/> [Accessed 16/12/20]; Laura Catherine Frost, *The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and Its Discontents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 162.

⁷ Frank Swinnerton, *Swinnerton: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1937), p. 119.

publishing declined overall between 1914-1918. Publishing houses in 1922 were still in transition from their diminished wartime situation to a more prosperous future. As noted in Chapter One, in 1913 12,379 books were published in Britain, but in 1922, this figure was just 10,842, even as circumstances were rapidly improving. By 1923, according to Michael Joseph, publishing had returned to a similar figure to that of 1913 and the industry would continue its expansion with a greater emphasis on commercialisation (the mass-market) as a way to restore their capital after the war.⁸ It led to an upward trend in production through the decade until, by the 1930s, Britain had become what Andrew Nash has called ‘a more book-buying culture’.⁹

The ineluctable nature of contemporary history, or what might more simply be termed context, has been a consequential feature of this study since it has shown itself to be in sustained dialogue with popular writing. This study has indicated the ways in which the novels and poems here related very directly to what was being reported in the press and further to what the nation was debating, condemning, and sympathising with. There are predictable objections to using the press as source material for 1922 since, as Kevin Williams has shown, ‘[n]ewspapers sought to mould opinion in an era when propaganda thrived’.¹⁰ Despite this ideological function, newspapers equally found it necessary to give ‘the earliest possible report of events’ whatever their political implications and often had to speak to ‘as broad a readership as possible’,

⁸ See Michael Joseph, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925), p. 9; Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 42.

⁹ Andrew Nash, ‘Literary Culture and Literary Publishing in Inter-War Britain’ in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* ed. by Simon Eliot, Andrew Nash, and Ian Roy Willison (London: The British Library, 2007), pp. 323-42 (p. 335).

¹⁰ Kevin Williams, *Read All about It! A History of the British Newspaper* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 19.

often against their own political inclinations.¹¹ Now starting to deal in gossip and scandal, a good story was often all that mattered.

The small, disparate band of modernists were arguing for their supreme importance in and around 1922. They argued for their distinctiveness amidst the tide of mass culture which had little issue with genre fiction or poetry that preferred to rhyme. Part of the work here has been to show the ways in which modernism sought to attenuate the achievements of more popular culture. T. S. Eliot wrote several articles condemning the work of the well-liked Georgian poets, whose final anthology, *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922*, had included Edmund Blunden. Eliot called the poetry ‘inbred’ with a ‘quality of pleasantness’, neither term one of approbation.¹² Ezra Pound had challenged Lascelles Abercrombie, one of the key Georgians, to a duel for his continued adherence to Wordsworth. As Pound’s biographer put it, ‘he really did mean to give no quarter to public stupidity’, and the stupidities of popular verse in particular.¹³ In the Introduction it was made clear that as early as 1913 Pound had proclaimed that ‘only the specialist can determine whether certain works of art possess certain sorts of precision.’¹⁴

A consequence of the professionalisation of English criticism that Pound was endorsing was the rise of academic English noted in the Introduction and which included the contribution of Q. D. Leavis who went on to lecture at Cambridge. This well-known pursuit of absolutes by those promoting high culture and scholars alike,

¹¹ Kevin Williams, pp. 11 and 9.

¹² T. S. Eliot, ‘Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant. A Review of *Georgian Poetry, 1916-1917* ed. Edward Marsh, and *Wheels: A Second Cycle*, ed. Edith Sitwell’ in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition Volume 1: Apprentice Years, 1905-1918*, ed. by Ronald Schuchard and Jewel Spears Brooker (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), I, 679.

¹³ A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound, Poet: A Portrait of the Man & His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p. 206.

¹⁴ Quoted in Leonard Diepeveen, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 101.

led to the ideological rhetoric of modernism noted above but eventually, in academic terms, to what Raymond Williams has called ‘the presumption that since Modernism is *here* in this specific phase or period, there is nothing beyond it’ (italics in the original).¹⁵ Yet this view cannot be vouchsafed in 1922 as I have demonstrated. A plurality of voices still prevailed alongside the minority art of modernism, with individuals like J. C. Squire vigorously opposing the new form; even in 1936 Michael Roberts could write in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* that the modernist idiom aroused ‘active animosity’, while ‘ordinary readers believe ‘it is not poetry at all.’¹⁶ It would not be until around 1970 that modernism achieved the kind of hegemony Williams cites, occasioning the remark from George Sampson and R. C. Churchill that 1918-1965 had been the era of Eliot, and presumably modernism more generally.¹⁷ This expansion of modernism has sought, intentionally or otherwise, to diminish and occlude the achievements of popular writing. It was the novels and poems of writers like Ruby M. Ayres, W. H. Davies and J. S. Fletcher that dominated the culture of 1922 and beyond. For this study it has been necessary that the equilibrium of this year be restored in favour of these works if they are to be seen with the necessary clarity. Leonard Diepeveen has written that, ‘in the triumph of modernism, difficulty replaced simplicity’, but a significant part of this thesis has demonstrated that, in 1922, modernist authors were a minority whose writings often distracted from the achievements of mass culture and popular writing. Only through a resetting of the

¹⁵ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. by Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), p. 34.

¹⁶ Quoted in Diepeveen, p. 52.

¹⁷ See George Sampson and R. C. Churchill, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 3rd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 843.

relationship between modernism and popular writing has it been possible to gain the fullest picture of 1922.

This research has achieved one other minor but important task. David E. Chinitz's *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* amongst other works has highlighted the uneasy dialogue between high modernism and popular culture and the way in which the latter has subsumed the former, and, I would argue, altered the material in the process. However, there has been far less study of the obvious commonalities between popular writing and modernism since the traffic has usually been in a single direction. Diepeveen points out that the clear consequence of modernism was 'a distancing between art and the general public.'¹⁸ In some respects this statement is unexceptional, but it fails to account for the several contiguities that exist between these two cultural forms. As Lise Jaillant has written: 'canonical modernist texts did not appear in isolation, safely preserved from the contamination of mainstream culture.'¹⁹ Eliot and Ruby M. Ayres both write on fake spiritualism in their work, there are surprising connections between the opening to *The Black Gang* and 'The Waste Land', and Eliot, Housman, and Blunden indulge in the shared image of the tower. These writers were drawing from a communal culture and often their works diverge only in consideration of the stylistic method employed. It has been claimed by Ben Hutchinson that 'time-honoured forms such as the elegy, the sonnet and the novel were retrospectively revised, "made new", through sheer force of stylistic innovation' by modernism, but this perhaps exaggerates their importance when they shared much

¹⁸ Diepeveen, p. 101.

¹⁹ Lise Jaillant, 'Introduction' in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry* ed. Lise Jaillant (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019) pp. 1-12 (p. 3).

with mainstream culture.²⁰ It is a view which accords with that of Theodor Adorno who suggested that ‘the social processes that give shape to mass culture cannot be kept out of art works of the highest ambition’.²¹ It would require a further thesis to fully investigate these tangled connections.

Another function of this research has been to render more problematic the issue of the reader in 1922, and their relationship to the text. Mary Grover’s admirable *Steel City Readers* has helped to give form and substance to readers often missing from the historical record. Popular writing, such as the work of Ethel M. Dell, was readily dismissed, with Noël Coward remarking that ‘there will always be a public for Miss Ethel M. Dell and the Girls Companion [sic]. In the world of amusement it is essential for someone to cater for the illiterate’.²² Meanwhile, the newspapers sometimes considered the much-maligned flapper as popular fiction’s most ardent advocate. However, Nickianne Moody has made the point that texts do not attain commercial success and popularity unless they are able to appeal beyond facile class distinctions, and the history of reading at this time shows a very complex picture. Grover describes households where reading was actively discouraged and upper-middle class readers who gorged on the popular fiction of ‘Ian Hay, Rider Haggard and John Buchan’ but for whom the public libraries ‘weren’t places that you went’.²³ She remarks more generally that ‘reading was a private pleasure: sometimes even concealed from others, certainly rarely discussed at home, school or work.’²⁴ Despite this, Grover further

²⁰ Ben Hutchinson, *Modernism and Style* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 23-4.

²¹ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. 35.

²² Quoted in David Tanner, *Riding the Tosh Horse: Ethel M. Dell, a Written Life* (Bath: Brown Dog Books, 2024), p. 29.

²³ See Mary Grover, *Steel City Readers Reading for Pleasure in Sheffield, 1925-1955* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), p. 98 and quotation, p. 105.

²⁴ Grover, p. 18.

writes that ‘there was a conspiracy to humiliate the reader of popular fiction’. She felt that she had been researching ‘the rhetoric of cultural disparagement’ which was newly formulated by modernism and academia in the years after the Great War. Her conclusion is that ‘this conspiracy failed.’²⁵ Having interviewed many readers from the inter-war years, Grover’s remarks demand substantial consideration but they should also be tempered with sufficient caution.²⁶ In theoretical terms it is still useful to defer to Barbara Herrnstein Smith’s idea of the reading community which will ‘find satisfactions of certain kinds in the *same* items or types of items and [...] select them accordingly’, while these ‘interests, and resources [...] vary individually within a relatively *narrow* spectrum [and] remain fairly *stable* under a variety of conditions’ (italics in the original).²⁷ In Chapter Four this manifested itself in the idea of Raymond Williams’s ‘knowable community’ but also in the community Janice Radway examined in *Reading the Romance*. Given the nature of these groups it seems likely many readers whose habit was the romance or the western would simply never have encountered the hostile commentaries of modernism and the press, still less a copy of *The Criterion*. They quite possibly remained a part of that ‘unknown public’ Wilkie Collins acknowledged in the nineteenth century. Diepeveen takes the traditional line that there was a distancing between recognised literature and the reading public in the time of modernism but, in some part, it had always existed, as Louis James’s book on working-class literature of the nineteenth century shows.²⁸ And contrary to some of

²⁵ Grover, pp. 228 and 231.

²⁶ It is interesting to note that only one or two of her readers were ‘aware of the ways in which apparently private reading tastes expose a reader to social categorisation’. Grover, p. 95.

²⁷ Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 39.

²⁸ See Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 29-30.

the tangible prejudices against popular fiction at this time, it is useful to note the words of the Kenyon Report in Chapter Two which admitted that a library could be a resource for pleasure not educational gain, a comment that surely endorses the popular text.

What arises out of this supposed dislocation between modernism and popular writing is the difficulty that arises when considering issues of value, and it is useful here to reiterate the significance of Karl Mannheim's work to this thesis and to theories of value more generally. While Terry Eagleton's position that there is no such thing as literature (mentioned in the Introduction) remains the rational position to take, it does not mean that writing does not exist, nor that the forms of writing cannot be organised into contingent categories such as the crime novel or the romance. In Chapter Four, Mannheim's formulation that '[a]ll historical knowledge is relational' and that finding value in a text cannot be achieved 'independent of an historically and socially determined set of meanings' was acknowledged as fundamental to this study.²⁹ With this in mind, modernism as an ideological force is crucially blunted. Its diatribes against mass production and popular culture are dependent on the dubious superiority of their carefully crafted prose and classically derived poetic forms; a comparison between the two types would, in Mannheim's theory, be inappropriate and invidious. His perspective is that forms created from different cultural situations, cannot be compared or valued similarly. It is therefore not only possible but essential to set aside modernist culture in any critical discussion of popular writing in 1922. To compare the relative merits of *The Black Gang* to those of E. Phillip Oppenheim's

²⁹ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936), p. 71.

Nobody's Man is not inconceivable: a comparison between James Joyce and 'Sapper' misses the point.

This study has been insistent that 1922 was a year of transition, although this is something that could be ascribed to any given year, and in the same way it is a year marked by stubborn refusals and retrograde motion. Thomas Hardy, consumed with grief and guilt at the death of his first wife in November 1912, appeared to be more and more wedded to the past, shown in his memories of her in poems such as 'Fetching Her' and 'A Woman Driving'. Meanwhile, in similar fashion A. E. Housman's poetry was steeped in the past, invoking lancers and red-coated infantry despite the poet recognising the horrors of the mechanised warfare that had killed his nephew Clement in 1915.³⁰ But the literature and culture of 1922 was still one in transition from certain forms. On the one hand the women's suffrage campaign bore fruit in the changes after 1918, but in the post-war era there seems to have been what Sue Bruley has called a 'paramount need to reassert gender differences after their apparent blurring' during the war.³¹ From 1917 onwards women who had found greater freedom working in factories and offices were dismissed from their posts, but at the same time women were able to forge careers as typists and in clerical work, and the continued forward momentum of the women's movement was part of the reason that male journalists from the mainstream press now became interested in women since they 'would bring a new perspective to politics'.³² Meanwhile, there was a transition towards greater leisure time from the pre-war years, as shown in Chapter Three, which allowed for a

³⁰ See Richard Perceval Graves, *A. E. Housman: The Scholar-Poet* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979), p. 140.

³¹ Sue Bruley, *Women in Britain since 1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 59.

³² Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 112.

concomitant rise in new pastimes and interests; dance halls grew in popularity, hiking came into increasing vogue and the time available for reading expanded. For example, the *Daily Mail* readership increased from 900,000 in 1910 to 1,845,000 by 1930, while radio continued to draw in listeners from the start of broadcasts in 1922 onwards. In this year 36,000 radio licences were issued but by 1927 this had increased exponentially to 2,395,000.³³

The main issues of transition explored here related partly or wholly to the continued grip the Great War maintained on society. The Golden Age crime novel was beginning to come into its own in 1922. There have been various attempts to locate the origins of this particular form of the crime genre, with Christopher Pittard arguing not for 1918 but for 1920 and the publication of the seminal *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, although Agatha Christie did not immediately follow the pattern she had set in this novel, opting instead for a thriller as her next book, *The Secret Adversary*. It is also possible to see the roots of the post-war thriller in 1920, the year of the first *Bulldog Drummond* adventure. What can be said is that the genre was gathering strength and shaping its form through 1922 and beyond. These kinds of novels were a way to deal with ‘a single murder’ which might stand in ‘for the thousands of bodies whose deaths were not nearly so capable of rationalization’, as Pittard has said.³⁴ The light tone of *The Secret Adversary* and in the following year in the work of Dorothy L. Sayers, signalled a means to move away from the magnitude of the conflict. The narrative used the central death as a way of making death more manageable by giving it a

³³ See Andrew Thorpe, *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars, 1914-45* (London: Longman, 1994), pp. 71 and 72.

³⁴ Christopher Pittard, ‘The English Detective Story’ in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 213-41 (p. 220).

distinctive frame and a conclusion with the ability to defuse the earlier violence. The central idea of play in many of the novels was also a way to put some considerable distance between the reader and death, ultimately controlling their response to the brutality of murder. By 1929 the British crime novel had achieved the kind of certainty that led Ronald A. Knox to publish his 'A Detective Story Decalogue', finally codifying the form, although he wrote his commandments with his tongue firmly in his cheek.³⁵

The concern with romance fiction in Chapter Four might seem to distance the reader from the aftermath of the conflict but the works under discussion there instead show a form once again in transition, trying to free itself from the bonds of war but with only partial success. Elinor Glyn, who had seen conditions on the front line in France, did not shrink from portraying a crippled war veteran struggling with his handicap and showed how it complicated his intimate relationships. Neither Ruby M. Ayres nor Ethel M. Dell seemed to want to approach the culture's ongoing entanglement with the Great War, but their novels deal in a specific sense of menace, whether it is the drunken, wild jealousy of Basil Matherson or the unknowable character of Charles Rex, often teetering on the brink of violent engagement. *A Gamble with Love* has another violent lover in the character of Rutland who tries to kill Giles Mallory and succeeds in engineering the death of Bill Tenant before drowning himself. If, as Tania Modleski would argue, these are mass-produced fantasies, their make-believe is dangerous and retributive, unconsciously replaying wartime emotional states.

³⁵ Ronald A. Knox, 'A Detective Story Decalogue' in *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Howard Haycraft (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 194-96 (pp. 194-96).

The poetry of Chapter Five also engages, sometimes unwillingly, with the aftermath of war. If Housman's poetry mostly looks in the opposite direction towards 'the land of lost content', it is still capable of bringing him into the war's bloody embrace; in 'VIII' there are not only trenches but Kesar and King to make the poem's nature explicit.³⁶ His disturbing and ambiguous 'Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries XXXVII' has as its subject troops who might have come from the battlefields of the Thirty Years War but Housman, in the wake of his nephew Jerry losing an arm in the Great War, sent the poem to *The Times*.³⁷ It was published without comment beneath an editorial on the 'matchless heroism' of British troops in recent battles, suggesting the paper had no idea of its intent.³⁸ Hardy was similarly desperate to abandon the war that had so damaged his health and spirit but he too published one of his war poems in 1922, 'Jezreel', in *Late Lyrics and Earlier*. It can easily be surmised that besides the guilt and heartache at losing his first wife, to spend more time recalling her in poems of memory and phantom presences was easier than confronting the present. Edmund Blunden was trying both to abandon all thought of war whilst engaging with its consequences for the first time in his art. In 'Gleaning', for example, while the activity of picking 'the barley waste' is bucolic and unexceptional, the presence of the farmer at the poem's end, holding a shotgun strung with dead hares, disturbs an otherwise pastoral scene.³⁹ This complicates the vision and suggests the bible verse describing towns laid waste, the populace left 'as the grass of the field', cut down by God's wrath

³⁶ A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906), 'XL', p. 57.

³⁷ See Perceval Graves, p. 141.

³⁸ A. E. Housman, 'Epitaph', *The Times*, 31 October 1917, p. 7.

³⁹ See Edmund Blunden, *The Shepherd: And Other Poems of Peace and War* (London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1922), p. 19.

(Kings II, 19:26).⁴⁰ Even verses intended to reflect on peace bring Blunden back to the war, while his war poems in the volume impede his progress away from the trenches.

Bernice M. Murphy, introducing some of the concepts behind popular fiction, has suggested that it is the duty of popular fiction to disappear, marked as it is by its own ephemerality and sensitive to the changes in the cultural climate. As a concept it has some force to it but fails to explain writers like Agatha Christie who remain immensely popular. Instead, it is surely more useful to argue that any attempt to question the disappearances from the cultural record will prove largely unanswerable since any answer will be multifactorial, varying between writers, and even texts. And in the twentieth century, at least, it is certain that most texts, despite their ephemerality, remain within reach, copies still extant on the shelves of the copyright libraries of the UK and Ireland.

There is sometimes an assumption by commentators on the publishing industry that market forces have pressed the claims of the best work and neglected the poorly written. However, there is no reason to think that readers and consumers follow the line of the publishing companies; they can be emotional and impulsive individuals who do not always respond positively to advertising and reviewing. In the Introduction I reflected on the idea of ‘timeliness’ in publishing, and this too, will be a factor in a work’s survival and revival. Virago reprinted many titles in the 1980s and 1990s from the inter-war years and did well from the enterprise. In doing so they revived the fortunes of titles that had originally not been a success, such as Catherine Carswell’s *The Camomile* published in 1922. Chatto and Windus had initially sold 1531

⁴⁰ Anonymous, *King James Bible* (Champaign: Project Gutenberg, 1992).

copies of the book and passed on 72 copies to the press and reviewers, meaning they had disposed of a very modest 1613 copies.⁴¹ This remained the case in September 1925; marketing and timeliness aided its revival in 1987.⁴²

One of the aims of modernist rhetoric was to reduce the status and importance of mass-produced writing, dismissed by critics such as T. S. Eliot, or Amy Lowell. It is another reason why the more popular and culturally visible literature of 1922 is now rarely glimpsed. These acts of disparagement had a further effect, one comically played out in Ethel M. Dell's novel, *The Juice of the Pomegranate* (1938). Ruby M. Ayres had always disdained her own talent and Dell here does similarly. She gives over much of the story to the 'character assassination of the heroine who is seen to read her works and then hiding them from general view [sic] [...] she is ashamed to let it be known that she is an Ethel reader', as David Tanner puts it.⁴³ It may be that Dell had tired of the literary snobbery that had condescended to her work from the very first. Whatever the case, Dell here is beginning to collude in the devaluation of her own writing, and while this would not have erased it from the public consciousness, it might have helped to bring it closer to that point. Certainly, Dell's work seems to conform to the stereotype of popular fiction as thoroughly ephemeral. Tanner points out that Dell was listed amongst the 'top bestsellers in the United States' in 1920, and by 1940, 'Ethel was off the list completely.'⁴⁴

In a study of even this length there have to be some regrets. I certainly would have liked to have examined a greater number of texts, and it would have given me

⁴¹ University of Reading Special Collections, Chatto and Windus, Profit and Loss Ledger, CW B/3/1, 1920-1927, 151.

⁴² Catherine Carswell, *The Camomile: An Invention* (London: Virago, 1987).

⁴³ Tanner, p. 241.

⁴⁴ Tanner, p. 194.

some satisfaction, for example, to have helped to recover the reputation of more writers, for example, D. K. Broster who published a novel in 1922 and whose output included gothic tales, poems, and historical adventures. However, too often this kind of work depends on the availability of publishers' records and writers generous enough to the researcher to have left an autobiography. One further misfortune is that the large amount of research I undertook into the Georgian poets has not found space in this final document, although the work has informed my discussion of numerous elements here. This is especially important given the lapse of interest in what is still an important body of work. Finally, if space had not been an issue I would have preferred to give greater emphasis to the continuities between the literature of 1922 and its pre-war antecedents, but I hope that they are at least implicit in what I have written.

The first two chapters of this thesis began, by necessity, with a consideration of the mechanisms of publishing in 1922, with an emphasis on the work of Chatto and Windus and Stanley Unwin's extensive analysis of the business. It becomes clear that value in several forms is central to the enterprise, embodied in publisher Cass Canfield's declaration that he was 'a hybrid creature: one part star gazer, one part gambler'.⁴⁵ Here is an idea of publishing as aesthetics in a symbiotic relationship with commerce, an idea played out through both chapters. Valuing the work of Aldous Huxley and Beverley Nichols quite separately, Huxley found validation as a Chatto's author while Nichols' work was eventually rejected by the firm and the senior staff who strongly disliked it, even as they believed the work might be popular. Their doubts over Nichols offers an insight into their motivations and personal antipathies,

⁴⁵ Quoted in Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), p.1.

and their extensive correspondence with Nichols exposes the workings of the publisher in the marketplace. With the book printed and bound, Chapter Two continued the emphasis on value and followed the text through the communications circuit. Although primarily concerned with communication it is an important transmitter of values, predominantly those of the publishers. Their belief in the commercial and aesthetic value of the title is the one necessarily pressed upon the other nodes in the circuit, the booksellers, critics, and the public, although their espoused values can break down at any point where they come into conflict with those of the bookseller, the critic, or a public indifferent to the book they are being offered. With the public libraries' concern over 'the Fiction Question' having largely abated, popular titles found their way onto the shelves while in the circulating libraries, despite staff guidance on how to develop readers' tastes, it was more important that books not remain on their shelves since they lost money when they did so. Evidence from Boots indicates that the romance and the crime novel predominated in the public's pattern of borrowing. Looking at the reviews of both *Self* and *Mortal Coils*, it is clear that the novels were often seen to be similar in their dark humour and wit. It indicates both that Chattos had probably underestimated the worth of Nichols' novel, and more substantially, that the divide between some forms of modernist writing and popular fiction was of no perceptible width.

Chapter Three moves on from concerns with value, although it notes that while Q. D. Leavis was eager to censure the crime novel, the books themselves often foregrounded their own limited ambitions and had been described as 'grown-up nonsense'. Nevertheless, the form's exponential growth and development as a type of entertainment showed it to be one that helped to mitigate the extraordinary pain of

the war and the violent deaths it had entailed. This is achieved through humour and play, tropes successfully developed in *Trent's Last Case* (1913).

If crime writing had a certain cachet, since it offered a mystery and a puzzle as well as entertainment, to the misogynist culture of 1922 the romance offered very little apart from the crimes of escapism, sentimentality, and silliness which has led to their later invisibility to literary history. Chapter Four discussed three romance novelists all of whom were conservatives of a sort and wedded their writing to a certain domesticity. It is their lack of visibility within the historical record that is a part of their importance. They enable the discussion of value, patriarchy, and Virginia Woolf's idea of the female writer within the publishing industry expressed in *A Room of One's Own*. The chapter shows how, using the magazine and newspaper cultures of the time, they were able to bypass the strictures of the largely male critical establishment which proved both lucrative and useful, advertising their work before it was issued between hardcovers and providing them a second income from the same material. The chapter is equally a study of how a genre, often eliding contemporary themes and events from its novels, found itself engaged with women's issues that were gathering in cultural importance in 1922: these included divorce, issues of masculinity, and ideas about women in the workplace.

The poets of Chapter Five do not always offer a sense of hope or consolation since their subject matter often refers the reader back to the events of the recent war, even in poems unconnected to its events. They were writing as the post-war poetry boom was drawing to a close and all three poets can claim popularity in some measure, particularly A. E. Housman. Often these poems evoke liminal states, between life and death, war and peace, between seasons or forms of weather. The poets, or

Housman and Hardy at least, both suffered under their publishers at one time or another and even Edmund Blunden found his second volume of verse rejected by Sidgwick and Jackson, the firm who had originally taken up his post-war poetry. They were all saved by publishers who were sympathetic to their work. Their subject matter was various but their writing on ghosts and towers spoke particularly to the context of 1922 at a time when Britain's war memorials were beginning to be dedicated. Even if the roots of these poems were often in events unconnected to the war, they invited a particular reading and created a certain force in 1922.

It would be useful to believe that the impasse between modernism and popular writing resolved itself in the years following 1922. John Baxendale in his study of these countervailing forces ends his piece by remarking that in the 1930s, 'social and political novels [...] sold extremely well'.⁴⁶ This is his description of works that once again foregrounded plot and character after the years of modernism. In Baxendale's view, more salutary forces had won the day, but in the present, modernist studies' newly expanded fiefdom signals otherwise. There is the possibility that a contrasting critical perspective rather than the vicissitudes of history offer a solution. J. B. Priestley spoke for the ordinary reader when he asked why Virginia Woolf 'should want to bully us all into writing and reading the same kind of novel'.⁴⁷ He held out against such obvious pressures and, in his short, polemical essay, 'High, Low, Broad', he announced the 'Broadbrow', a category of readers 'who do not denounce a piece of art because it belongs to a certain category', but appreciate the human scene and are willing to enjoy

⁴⁶ John Baxendale, 'Popular Fiction and the Critique of Mass Culture' in *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940* ed. by Andrzej Gąsiorek and Patrick Parrinder, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV, 555-70 (p. 569).

⁴⁷ Baxendale, p. 569.

‘variety shows, football matches, epic poems, grand opera, race meetings, old churches [...] and literary parties.’⁴⁸ Certain critics have rallied to this position within the relatively new field of middlebrow criticism (one Priestley elaborated on in the years following).⁴⁹ Caroline Pollentier called it a ‘valuable cultural positioning, enacting an ethical revaluation of mass culture’, but there are a number of issues with Priestley’s rhetorical grumbling.⁵⁰ In order to reach his conclusions it requires that he condemn both the highbrow and popular reader: ‘both High and Low are not people with real taste and capable of exercising independent judgment, but are the mere slaves of fashion, moving in herds to decry this and praise that.’⁵¹ Those Grover documents in the twenties and thirties simply wanted to read without the intervention of unsettled parents, judgemental librarians, or peers. As she says: ‘[t]hey relished their own resourcefulness in tracking down authors who met their needs and in establishing a domain defined by these purely private pleasures’ but were not part of Priestley’s herd.⁵² On the other hand, his belief that epic poems, grand opera and football matches were all one to the broadbrow belies the intervention of education (or its lack) in the lives of readers at this period. Often, readers of popular writing would have been those whose education had not prepared them for more complex texts, requiring knowledge they did not possess such as the Latin or Greek that seems to be behind what T. S. Eliot called, ‘the mythical method’, in his well-known *Ulysses*

⁴⁸ J. B. Priestley, ‘High, Low, Broad’ in J. B. Priestley, *Open House: A Book of Essays* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927), p. 169.

⁴⁹ One of the key texts in the contemporary study of the middlebrow has been Erica Brown and Mary Grover’s *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920-1960* (2012) mentioned earlier.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Nicola Wilson, ‘Middlemen, Middlebrow, Broadbrow’ in *British Literature in Transition, 1920-1940: Futility and Anarchy* ed. by Charles Ferrall and Dougal McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp. 315-330 (pp. 328-29).

⁵¹ Priestley, p. 165.

⁵² Grover, p. 7.

essay.⁵³ Children often left school at fourteen and it would have been far more difficult for them to insert themselves into the world of epic poems or grand opera than those attending university.⁵⁴

If Priestley's answer is less than satisfactory, the situation itself remains unsatisfactory. While the issues between modernism and popular writing did not take up all the oxygen in 1922, the debate came to dominate the academic landscape and it was modernism that found itself the winner.⁵⁵ The issues cannot be resolved in retrospect, but the claim should be made that there was more to literature in 1922 than modernism. This thesis, has, I believe, helped to re-draw the map of this year, complicating and enlarging how the year should be understood. It is not that this year has been subject to neglect previously, but that it has too often been considered in similar ways. This reading of 1922 has offered a new perspective and recovered the lives and reputations of writers until recently consigned to the margins of literary history.

⁵³ T. S. Eliot, 'Ulysses, Order and Myth' in T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition Volume 2: The Perfect Critic, 1919-1926*, ed. by Ronald Schuchard and Anthony Cuda, 8 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), II, 479.

⁵⁴ See Grover, p. 137.

⁵⁵ And this despite Priestley's view that 'the highbrows [his broad term for modernists] were fighting from a position of weakness' (See Baxendale, p. 566).

Bibliography

Archive Materials

University of Reading Special Collections

Bodley Head Archive
Chatto & Windus Ltd Archive
Elinor Glyn Archive
George Allen & Unwin Ltd Archive
Hogarth Press Archive
Jonathan Cape Archive
Macmillan & Co Ltd Archive
W. H. Smith Business Archive
University College, Reading, War Memorial Fund MS 5508

London Metropolitan Archives

Hodder and Stoughton Limited

British Library

Macmillan Archive

Dartmouth College

Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts Repository

Lilly Library, University of Indiana

Methuen Mss. 1892-1944

Fiction

Alington, Cyril, *Mr. Evans; a Cricketo-Detective Story* (London: Macmillan, 1922)

———, *Strained Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1922)

Ayres, Ruby M., *A Gamble with Love* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922)

———, *The Matherson Marriage* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922)

Bentley, E. C., *Trent's Last Case* (London: Penguin, 1937)

Bridges, Victor, *Greensea Island: A Mystery of the Essex Coast* (London: Mills and Boon, 1922)

Buchan, John, *Huntingtower*, ed. by Ann Stonehouse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

- , *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (London: Penguin, 2004)
- Carr, John Dickson, *The Hollow Man* (Orion, 2002)
- Carswell, Catherine, *The Camomile: An Invention* (London: Virago, 1987)
- Christie, Agatha, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (London: Pan, 1954)
- , *The Secret Adversary* (London: J. Lane, 1922)
- Cole, Sophie, *Passing Footsteps* (Mills & Boon, 1922)
- Dell, Ethel M., *Charles Rex* (London: Hutchinson, 1922)
- , *The Odds and Other Stories* (London: Cassell, 1922)
- , *The Juice of the Pomegranate* (Cassell, 1938)
- , *The Knave of Diamonds* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913)
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet* ([n.p.] The Floating Press, 1989)
- Fletcher, J. S., *The Mazaroff Murder* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1922)
- Gibbs, Philip, *The Middle of the Road* (London: Hutchinson, 1922)
- Glyn, Elinor, *Man and Maid* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1922)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Desperate Remedies* Library Edition (London: Macmillan, 1951)
- Huxley, Aldous, *Mortal Coils* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922)
- , *Limbo: Six Stories and a Play* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946)
- Joad, C. E. M., *The Highbrows: A Modern Novel* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1922)
- Joyce, James, *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- , *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Granada, 1977)
- Larminie, Margaret Rivers, *Search* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922)
- McCabe, Cameron, *The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor* (London: Picador, 2016)
- Mansfield, Katherine, *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, ed. by Lorna Sage (London: Penguin, 2000)

- Milne, A. A., *The Red House Mystery* (London: Vintage, 2008)
- Nichols, Beverley, *Self* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922)
- , *Self* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938)
- Oppenheim, E. Phillips, *Nobody's Man* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1922)
- Poe, Edgar Allan, *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (New York: Penguin, 2006)
- 'Sapper' (H. C. McNeile), *The Black Gang* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922)
- Sinclair, May, *The Life and Death of Harriett Freaan* (London: Collins, 1922)
- Travers, Ben, *A Cuckoo in the Nest* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1922)
- Von Arnim, Elizabeth, *The Enchanted April* (London: Penguin, 2015)
- Wills Crofts, Freeman, *The Pit-Prop Syndicate* (London: Collins, 2020)
- Wodehouse, P. G., *Carry On, Jeeves* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1960)
- , *The Inimitable Jeeves* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953)
- Woolf, Virginia, *Jacob's Room*, ed. by Sue Roe (London: Penguin, 1992)
- , *Mrs Dalloway* (London: Granada, 1976)

Poetry

- Bates, Rachael, *Danaë and Other Poems* (London: Erskine Macdonald, 1922)
- Blunden, Edmund, *The Shepherd: And Other Poems of Peace and War* (London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1922)
- , *The Waggoner and Other Poems* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1920)
- Browning, Robert, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin, 2000)
- Dante, *Hell*, *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri, the Florentine/* transl. by Dorothy L. Sayers; *Cantica I* (London: Penguin, 1988)
- Davies, W. H., *The Hour of Magic and Other Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1922)
- Drinkwater, John, *Preludes 1921-1922* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1922)

- Eliot, T. S., *The Poems of T.S. Eliot. Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, 2 vols (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 1
- , *The Waste Land Facsimile: Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1971)
- E. M., ed., *Georgian Poetry 1911-1912* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1913)
- , ed., *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1922)
- Gibson, W. W., *Krindlesyke* (London: Macmillan, 1922)
- Hardy, Thomas, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1930)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (London: Macmillan, 1922)
- , *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries with Miscellaneous Pieces*, Pocket Edition (London: Macmillan, 1925)
- , *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*, new ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903)
- Housman, A. E., *A Shropshire Lad* (New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906)
- , *The Poems of A. E. Housman*, ed. by Archie Burnett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
- , *Last Poems* (London: Grant Richards, 1922)
- Jones, Herbert, *Romanel: A Poem* (London: John Lane, 1922)
- Le Gallienne, Richard, *A Jongleur Strayed: Verses on Love and Other Matters Sacred and Profane* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1922)
- MacGregor, John, *Through Death to Victory And Other Poems* (London: Routledge, 1922)
- Milton, John, *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. by John Carey (London: Longman, 1971)
- , *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 1971)
- Noyes, Alfred, *The Torch-Bearers: The Watchers of the Sky Volume 1*, 3 vols (London: William Blackwood, 1926), 1
- Pound, Ezra, *Selected Poems*, reprinted with additions (London: Faber & Faber, 1977)

- , 'Song in the Manner of Housman'
 <https://www.internal.org/Ezra_Pound/Song_in_the_Manner_of_Housman>[Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Reeves, James, ed., *Georgian Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962)
- Scott, Walter, *The Lady of the Lake* (New York: T. Y. Crowell, n.d.)
- Seymour, William Keane, *A Miscellany of Poetry, 1920-1922* (London: John G. Wilson, 1922)
- Shakespeare, William, *Complete Works: The RSC Shakespeare*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007)
- Squire, J. C., *Tricks of the Trade*, new ed. (London: Heinemann, 1918)
- Thomas, Edward, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Walter De La Mare (London: Faber & Faber, 1936)
- Wordsworth, William, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)

Secondary Sources

- A. D., 'An Interview with Mr. J. B. Pinker', *The Bookman*, 14.79 (1898), 9–10.
- A Literary Critic, 'Women Form a Phalanx', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 29 September 1923, p. 17
- A London Correspondent, 'The End of the Book Trade Strike', *Bookseller*, 1046.4 (1922), 69–70
- , 'The Strike in the London Book Trade', *Bookseller*, 1045.3 (1922), 84–85
- 'Abandoned London Underground Station':
<https://www.mylondon.news/news/nostalgia/abandoned-london-underground-station-became-21349696> [Accessed 8/10/24]
- Abercrombie, Lascelles, 'New Books: Victorians and Georgians', *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January 1913, p. 5
- , *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1912)
- Ackroyd, Peter, *T.S. Eliot* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984)
- Adam, Ruth, *A Woman's Place, 1910-1975* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975)

- Adamson, Walter L., 'How Avant-Gardes End - and Begin: Italian Futurism in Historical Perspective', *Literary History*, 41.4 (2010), 855-74
- Alberti, Johanna, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in Peace and War 1914-1928* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- Alder, Stephanie, "'A Mirror of Mid-Victorian Attitudes to Fiction'? Rethinking Censorship and Geraldine Jewsbury', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 54.3 (2021), 445-62
- Alexander, Sally, *Becoming a Woman: And Other Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995)
- Allen, Roger E., *Winnie-the-Pooh on Management: In Which a Very Important Bear and His Friends Are Introduced to a Very Important Subject* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011)
- Althusser, Louis, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984)
- An Enquirer, 'Sir Oliver Lodge's Spook Book', *Daily Mail*, 24 January 1917, p. 4
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed (London: Verso, 2006)
- Anderson, Patricia J., and Jonathan Rose, *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820-1880* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991)
- Anderson, Rachel, *The Purple Heart Throbs: The Sub-Literature of Love* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974)
- A.N.M., 'New Novels: The Unconventional Novel', *Manchester Guardian*, 3 November 1922, p. 9
- Anonymous, '1921 Goes Out in a Hurricane', *Sunday Illustrated*, 1 January 1922, p. 3
- , 'A Brilliant Detective Story', *Observer*, 14 May 1922, p. 4
- , 'A Headmaster's Story', *The Times*, 8 December 1922, p. 18
- , 'A Solemn Pilgrimage', *The Times*, 11 May 1922, p. 17
- , 'About Books and Authors', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 7 October 1924, p. 13
- , 'Advertising', *The Times*, 28 February 1922, p. 17
- , 'Advertising', *The Times*, 14 July 1922, p. 11
- , 'Allenby's Victory', *Leicester Daily Post*, 24 September 1918, p. 1
- , 'Births', *The Times* (London, 2 January 1922), p. 1

- , 'Book Trade Strike Settled', *Publishers' Circular*, 8 April 1922, p. 319
- , 'Books and Bookmen', *Nottingham Journal*, 26 October 1922, p. 4
- , 'Books in 1922', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1094 (1923), 4
- , 'Bull-Dog Drummond', *The Times*, 27 December 1922, p. 8
- , 'Children's Society Flag Day', *The Times*, 8 June 1920, p. 18
- , 'Classified Ad 19', *Manchester Guardian*, 5 April 1923, p. 1
- , 'Communication with the Dead', *Saturday Review*, 123. 3197 (1917), 110–11
- , 'Current Literature', *Daily Telegraph*, 12 June 1907, p. 4
- , 'Dinner to Mr. Sidney Dark', *The Times*, 15 January 1924, p. 9
- , 'Display Advertising', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 April 1922, p. 14
- , 'Display Advertising', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 October 1922, p. 4
- , 'Dr. Alington: Divine, Teacher, and Author', *The Times*, 17 May 1955, p. 13
- , 'Duckworth and Co.', *The Sunday Times*, 7 May 1922, p. 9
- , 'Ethel M. Dell: Charles Rex', *Daily News*, 17 February 1922, p. 2
- , 'Ethel M. Dell's Great Novel: "The Obstacle Race"', *Liverpool Echo*, 11 February 1922, p. 5
- , 'Ethel M. Dell to Wed', *Halifax Evening Courier*, 21 January 1922, p. 2
- , 'Eton's Head as Humorist', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 24 April 1923, p. 19
- , 'Fiction', *Truth*, (1922), 1076
- , 'Fierce Battle of Steinbach', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 January 1915, p. 9
- , 'For Easter', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 March 1923, p. 5
- , 'From Dr Fu-Manchu to Inspector Higgins', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2769, 1955, 124
- , 'Georgian Poetry', *The Sunday Times*, 23 February 1913, p. 4

- , 'Georgian Poetry', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 10 January 1923, p. 4
- , 'Georgian Poetry of the Twentieth Century', *Westminster Gazette*, 4 January 1913, p. 3
- , 'Georgian Poets', *The Times*, 1 December 1922, p. 18
- , 'Girl's Mysterious Death', *The Times*, 8 March 1922, p. 12
- , 'Good Housekeeping', *Daily Mail*, 28 April 1922, p. 12
- , 'Grant Richards Ltd.', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1079 (1922), 597
- , 'Greenwood Not Guilty', *The Times*, 10 November 1920, p. 12
- , 'Hardy's Poems', *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 5 June 1922, p. 2
- , 'Hawthornden Prize: Mr. E. Blunden's Success', *Westminster Gazette*, 30 June 1922, p. 12
- , 'Ilford Crime', *The Times*, 12 October 1922, p. 9
- , 'In Loving Memory', *Cleveland Standard*, 16 December 1922, p. 5
- , 'Ingenious Business Machines', *The Times*, 13 February 1922, p. 5
- , 'Kensington Flat Suicide', *The Times*, 19 January 1922, p. 7
- , *King James Bible* (Champaign: Project Gutenberg, 1992)
- , 'Late Lyrics and Earlier', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1922, p. 14
- , 'Late Lyrics and Earlier', *Justice*, 14 September 1922, p. 7
- , 'Libraries on Board Ship', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition* (4 December 1923), p. 3
- , 'Libraries - Public and Private', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 1922, p. 13
- , 'Lord Curzon on Woman Suffrage', *The Times*, 19 May 1909, p. 8
- , 'Lord Curzon on Woman Suffrage', *The Times*, 2 November 1912, p. 8
- , 'Luncheon', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 1925, p. 11
- , 'Macmillan's List', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 May 1922, p. 4
- , 'Macmillan's List', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 June 1922, p. 14

- , 'Macmillan's List', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1062 (1922), 334
- , 'Memorials', *Harrow Gazette*, 14 March 1919, p. 3
- , 'Memorials in a Memorial', *Globe*, 30 July 1919, p. 3
- , 'Messrs. Methuen's New Books', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1059, 259
- , 'Messrs. Methuen's New Books', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1057, 1922, 258
- , 'Modern Literature: Some Destructive Forces', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1922, p. 15
- , 'Mr Dudley Carew', *The Times*, 27 March 1981, p. 16
- , 'Mr. Ervine at Wormwood Scrubbs: Lecture to the Prisoners Questions', *Observer*, 28 May 1922, p. 15
- , 'Mr. Hardy's New Poems', *Saturday Review*, 118.3082 (1914), 535–36
- , 'Mr. Hardy's New Volume', *The Times*, 23 May 1922, p. 16
- , 'Mr. Hardy's Poems', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1063 (1922), 359
- , 'Mr. Housman's Farewell', *The Times*, 17 October 1922, p. 8
- , 'Mr. Milne's Detective Story.', *Observer* (9 April 1922), p. 4
- , 'Mr Victor Bridges', *The Times*, 1 December 1972, p. 18
- , 'New Fiction', *Scotsman*, 25 September 1922, p. 7
- , 'New Fiction', *The Sunday Times* (14 May 1922), p. 7
- , 'New Novel by Elinor Glyn', *Westminster Gazette*, 29 June 1911, p. 4
- , 'New Novels', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1922, p. 15
- , 'New Novels', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 October 1922, p. 6
- , 'New Novels', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 December 1922, p. 4
- , 'Notes and Reviews', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1922, p. 14
- , 'Obituary: Dr. C. A. Alington', *The Birmingham Post*, 17 May 1955, p. 5
- , 'Our War Graves in France', *The Times*, 4 July 1922, p. 16

- , 'Picture Gallery', *Daily Mail*, 13 December 1922, p. 9
- , 'Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division', *The Times*, 13 January 1922, p. 4
- , 'Programmes', *The Times*, 5 September 1927, p. 8
- , 'Pugilism and Literature.', *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 10 August 1923, p. 23
- , 'Richard Chatterton V.C. by Ruby M. Ayres', *The Athenaeum*, 4579, (1915), 77
- , 'Royal Visit to Belgium', *The Times*, 1 April 1922, p. 12
- , 'Satires of Circumstance', *Athenaeum*, 4544, (1914), 552
- , 'Shell Shock', *The Times*, 10 August 1922, p. 13
- , 'Sidney C. Lacey's Lending Library', *West Sussex County Times*, 9 December 1922, p. 3
- , 'Sir Oliver Lodge and Psychic Research', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 13 December 1922, p. 2
- , 'Snow and Sleet', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 January 1922, p. 2
- , 'Store Opened by Ruby M. Ayres', *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 7 December 1951, p. 2
- , 'Story-Teller', *The Sunday Times*, 14 May 1922, p. 17
- , 'Strained Relations', *Observer*, 21 May 1922, p. 4
- , 'The Bars of Iron by Ethel M. Dell', *Daily Mail*, 16 October 1915, p. 6
- , 'The Cost of Printing', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 49
- , 'The Demand for Poetry', *Daily News*, 10 February 1913, p. 7
- , *The English Catalogue of Books for 1922* (London: The Publishers' Circular Ltd., 1923)
- , 'The Film World', *The Times*, 4 December 1922, p. 17
- , 'The Hawthornden Prize', *The Times*, 30 June 1922, p. 11
- , 'The House of Cassell', *The Sunday Times*, 9 April 1922, p. 9

- , 'The Infamy of Reims', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 1914, p. 6
- , 'The Latest Georgians', *Observer*, 17 December 1922, p. 5
- , 'The Laurels of Literature', *Daily News*, 30 June 1922, p. 4
- , 'The Library Corner', *Porthcawl News*, 23 November 1922, p. 2
- , 'The Library Table', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 8 November 1922, p. 4
- , 'The "Love Will Find a Way" Luncheon', *The Sphere*, 15 November 1952, p. 280
- , 'The New Prize Poet', *Westminster Gazette*, 30 June 1922, p. 6
- , 'The Red House Mystery', *Daily Telegraph* (21 April 1922), p. 4
- , 'The Red House Mystery', *The Saturday Review*, 133.3472 (1922), p. 499
- , 'The Red House Mystery', *Observer* (14 May 1922), p. 4
- , 'The Reflections of Elinor Glyn', *The Sphere*, 28 June 1919, p. 31
- , 'The "Shropshire Lad" Again', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1083 (1922), 662
- , 'The Speaker at the Savage Club', *The Times*, 6 December 1926, p. 11
- , 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 25 February 1922, p. 143
- , 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 11 March 1922, p. 235
- , 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 18 March 1922, pp. 255 and 257
- , 'The Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 1 April 1922, p. 299
- , 'The Strike in the London Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 4 March 1922, p. 177
- , 'The Survival of Personality', *Times Literary Supplement*, 772 (1916), 522
- , 'The Way of an Eagle by E. M. Dell', *The Academy and Literature*, 2079, (1912), 302
- , 'The Yellow Magazine', *Daily Mail*, 24 September 1921, p. 1
- , 'To-Day's Gossip', *Daily Mirror*, 6 July 1922, p. 9
- , 'Types of Popular Fiction. The Fast, the Sensational and the Simple', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 (1937), 343

- , 'Typist's Secret. Death After Illegal Operation', *Daily Mail*, 12 April 1922, p. 12
- , 'Untitled', *Sydenham, Forest Hill and Penge Gazette*, 7 December 1951, p. 7
- , 'Victims of the Great Gale', *Daily Mail*, 2 January 1922, p. 7
- , 'War Memorials', *Scotsman*, 9 October 1922, p. 9
- , 'What Would You Do?', *Daily Mail*, 23 October 1930, p. 9
- , 'Year's Best Book: Hawthornden Prize for Mr. Blunden.', *Daily News*, 30 June 1922, p. 5
- Ardis, Ann L., *Modernism and Cultural Conflict 1880-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Ardis, Ann L., and Patrick Collier, eds, *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008)
- Armstrong, Tim, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000)
- Ascari, Maurizio, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007)
- Asher, Kenneth, 'T. S. Eliot and Charles Maurras', *ANQ*, 11.3 (1998), 20-28
- Ashley, Mike, *The Age of the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines, 1880-1950* (London: British Library, 2006)
- Ashman, Nathan, "'The Impotence of Human Reason": E. C. Bentley's Trent's Last Case and the Antidetective Text', *Clues*, 35.2 (2017), 7-17
- Attenborough, John, *A Living Memory: Hodder and Stoughton Publishers, 1868-1975* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975)
- Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003)
- Auyoung, Elaine, *When Fiction Feels Real: Representation and the Reading Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)
- Ayers, David, *English Literature of the 1920s*, revised ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)
- Bäckman, Sven, *The Manners of Ghosts: A Study of the Supernatural in Thomas Hardy's Short Poems* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2001)

- Badenhausen, Richard, 'Totalizing the City: Eliot, De Certeau, and the Evolution of The Waste Land', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 40.1 (2007), 91–115, 117
- Bahktin, M. M., *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)
- , *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994)
- Bailey, J. C., 'Georgian Poets', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1095 (1923), 24
- Bailey, J. O., *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy: A Handbook and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970)
- Baldick, Chris, *Literature of the 1920s: Writers Among the Ruins* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012)
- , *The Oxford English Literary History Volume 10: 1910-1940, The Modern Movement*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, 13 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), X
- Barber-Stetson, Claire, 'Modern Insecurities, or, Living on the Edge', *Modernism/Modernity*, 3, Cycle 2 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0080>>
- Barker, Nicolas, ed., *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society* (London: The British Library, 1993)
- Barnett, Vincent L., and Alexis Weedon, *Elinor Glyn as Novelist, Movemaker, Glamour Icon and Businesswoman* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016)
- Barthes, Roland, *The Rustle of Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)
- Basu, Sayoni, 'Benson, Edward Frederic (1867–1940), Novelist' (Oxford University Press, 2005) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30713>>
- Baxendale, John, *Priestley's England: J.B. Priestley and English Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014)
- Bayley, John, *Housman's Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)
- Bedford, Sybille, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography Volume 1: 1894-1939*, 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus; Collins, 1973), 1
- Beebe, Maurice, 'What Modernism Was', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3.5 (1974), 1065–84
- Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1973)
- Beauman, Nicola, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-39* (London: Persephone Books, 2008)
- Beaumont, A., 'Behind French Lines in the Vosges', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 January 1915, p. 10

- Becker, George Joseph, *Realism in Modern Literature* (New York: Ungar, 1980)
- Beddoe, Deirdre, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989)
- Beer, Gillian, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970)
- Belsey, Catherine, *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)
- Bennett, Arnold, *Literary Taste*, 5th ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913)
- , *The Journals of Arnold Bennett: Volume 2: 1911-1921*, ed. by Newman Flower, 3 vols (London: Cassell, 1932), II
- , *The Journals of Arnold Bennett: Volume 3: 1921-1928*, ed. by Newman Flower, 3 vols (London: Cassell, 1932), III
- Berberich, Christine, ed., *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015)
- Bergonzi, Bernard, *The Myth of Modernism and Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986)
- , *Blunden, Edmund Charles (1896-1974), Poet and University Teacher* (Oxford University Press, 2009) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30828>>
- Berlin, Jamie, 'The Poet in Transformation: Dantean Aesthetics in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*' (unpublished MA, Eastern Michigan University, 2012)
- Berman, Jessica Schiff, ed., *A Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016)
- Bernthal, J. C., "'If Not Yourself Who Would You Be?': Writing the Female Body in Agatha Christie's Second World War Detective Fiction', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 26.1-2 (2015)
- Bhaskar, Michael, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London: Anthem Press, 2013)
- Bickley, Francis, 'Sheep and Horses', *The Bookman*, 63.375 (1922), 168
- Bingham, Adrian, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004)
- Birch, Carol, 'Lives Beyond the Page', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5707/8 (2012), 21

- Birch, Dinah, 'Austin, Alfred' (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-436> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- , 'Bridges, Robert' (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-1048> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- , *Lucretius* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-4665> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- , 'Ugolino Della Gherardesca' (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-7704> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Bishop, Nicola, 'Mundane or Menacing? "Nobodies" in the Detective Fiction of Agatha Christie', *Clues*, 34.1 (2016), 82
- , 'Rural Nostalgia: Revisiting the Lost Idyll in British Library Crime Classics Detective Fiction', *Green Letters: Crime Fiction and Ecology*, 22.1 (2018), 31–42
- Black, Alistair, and Peter Hoare, eds, *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland: Volume 3, 1850-2000*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III
- Black, Elizabeth, *The Nature of Modernism: Ecocritical Approaches to the Poetry of Edward Thomas, T.S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell and Charlotte Mew* (London: Routledge, 2018)
- Blanco, María del Pilar, and Esther Peeren, eds, *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2010)
- Bloch, Ernst, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1988)
- Blockside, Martin, *A.E. Housman: A Single Life* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2016)
- Bloom, Clive, *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction since 1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)
- , ed., *Twentieth-Century Suspense: The Thriller Comes of Age* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990)
- Blunden, Edmund, 'A Poet on Charlie Chaplin', *Daily News*, 25 May 1922, p. 4
- , 'Great Names: Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)', *Daily Herald*, 11 August 1922, p. 7
- , 'Landscape in Verse', *The Times*, 17 May 1922, p. 16

- , *Nature in English Literature* (London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1929)
- , 'Shelley After a Hundred Years', *Daily News*, 7 July 1922, p. 4
- , *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1942)
- , *Undertones of War*, ed. by Hew Strachan (London: Penguin, 2010)
- Blunden, Edmund, and Mark Pottle, *Bottomley, Gordon (1874–1948), Poet and Playwright* (Oxford University Press, 2013) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31980>>
- Bogacz, T., 'War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England 1914–1922: The Work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell Shock', *The Journal of Contemporary History*, 24 (1989), 227–56
- Bond, Francis, *An Introduction to English Church Architecture from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols (London: Humphrey Milford/Oxford University Press, 1913), II
- Bone, Andrew Grierson, 'Beyond the Rule of Law: Aspects of the Defence of the Realm Acts and Regulations, 1914–1918' (unpublished PhD, McMaster University, 1995)
- Bonikowski, Wyatt, *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)
- Bornstein, George, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996)
- Boyiopoulos, Kostas, Anthony Patterson, and Mark Sandy, eds, *Literary and Cultural Alternatives to Modernism: Unsettling Presences* (London: Routledge, 2021)
- Bracco, Rosa Maria, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993)
- Bradford, Richard, *Is Shakespeare Any Good? And Other Questions on How to Evaluate Literature* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015)
- Bradshaw, David, ed., *The Hidden Huxley* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994)
- Branson, Noreen, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975)

- Brazil, Kevin, 'An Embarrassment of Lateness', *Modernism/Modernity*, 3, Cycle 4
<<https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0078>>
- Braybrooke, Patrick, *Some Goddesses of the Pen* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1966)
- Bridges, Victor, 'The Green Monkey', *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1935, p. 14
- Briganti, Chiara, and Kathy Mezei, *Domestic Modernism, the Novel, and E.H. Young* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)
- Brockman, William S., 'Richards, (Franklin Thomas) Grant (1872–1948), Publisher and Writer' (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47450>>
- Brome, Vincent, *J.B. Priestley* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988)
- Brooker, Jewel Spears, ed., *T.S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Brooker, Peter, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Deborah Longworth, and Andrew Thacker, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)
- Brooker, Peter, and Andrew Thacker, eds, *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines Volume 1: Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1
- Brown, Erica, and Mary Grover, eds, *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012)
- Brown, Richard, 'More "Sherlockholmesing" in Joyce's *Ulysses*', *Notes and Queries*, 55.1 (2008), 66–68
- Bruce, Benjamin, and Domonique Davies, eds, 'Inside and Outside Modernism: An Anatomy of 1922 and Its Cultures', *The Modernist Review*, 43, 2022
<<https://modernistreviewcouk.wordpress.com/2022/11/04/modernist-review-43-inside-and-outside-modernism-an-anatomy-of-1922-and-its-cultures/>> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Bruley, Sue, *Women in Britain since 1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999)
- Buchan, John, *Memory-Hold-The-Door* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1940)
- Bucknell, Clare, *The Treasuries: Poetry Anthologies and the Making of British Culture* (London: Apollo, 2023)
- By Our Reviewers, 'Books and Their Writers', *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1921, p. 2
- C. P., 'Mr. Hardy's Poems', *Manchester Guardian*, 23 May 1922, p. 7

- , 'New Books: Mr. Blunden's Poems', *Manchester Guardian*, 29 May 1922, p. 5
- Cadogan, Mary, *And Then Their Hearts Stood Still: An Exuberant Look at Romantic Fiction Past and Present* (London: Macmillan, 1994)
- Card, Tim, 'Alington, Cyril Argentine (1872–1955), Headmaster and Dean of Durham' (Oxford University Press, 2011) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30379>>
- Carew, Dudley, *The House Is Gone: A Personal Retrospective* (London: Robert Hale, 1949)
- Carey, John, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880 - 1939* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992)
- Carpenter, Humphrey, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988)
- Carr, Edward Hallett, and Richard J. Evans, *What Is History?: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 2018)
- Carr, Helen, *Williams, Ella Gwendoline Rees [Pseud. Jean Rhys] (1890–1979), Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31833>>
- Carrington, Hereward, *Psychical Phenomena and the War* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1918)
- Carver, Beci, 'London as a Waste of Space in Eliot's *The Waste Land*', *Critical Quarterly*, 49.4 (2007), 56–70
- Cawelti, John G., *Adventure, Mystery and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976)
- Cecil, Hugh, *Conservatism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912)
- Chandler, James, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)
- Chaplin, Charlie, *My Wonderful Visit* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1922)
- Chatfield, Zoë, 'The Role of Literary Prizes in Inciting Change: The Women's Prize for Fiction and the Booker Prize', *Logos*, 30.2 (2019), 19–25
- Chernaik, Warren, Warwick Gould, and Ian Willison eds, *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, 2nd ed (London: Palgrave, 1996)
- Chernaik, Warren, Martin Swales, and Robert Vilain, eds, *The Art of Detective Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000)

- Chesterton, G. K., *Eugenics and Other Evils* (London: Cassell, 1922)
- Child, Harold, 'France's Dead', *The Times*, 13 May 1922, p. 8
- Childs, Peter, *The Twentieth Century in Poetry: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge, 1999)
- Chinitz, David, ed., *A Companion to T.S. Eliot* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)
- Chinitz, David E., *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)
- Chinitz, David, and Gail McDonald, eds, *A Companion to Modernist Poetry* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014)
- Christie, Agatha, *An Autobiography* (London: Collins, 1977)
- City Literary Institute, *Tradition and Experiment in Present-Day Literature: Addresses Delivered at the City Institute* (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1929)
- Clark, Arthur Melville, *The Realist Revolt in Modern Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1922)
- Clark, Giles N., and Angus Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, Sixth edition (London: Routledge, 2020)
- Clark, Katerina, and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984)
- Clay, Catherine, "'The Novelist...Must Write About Politics': Mary Agnes Hamilton and the Politics of Modern Fiction", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 31.4 (2020), 366–83
- , *Time and Tide: The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018)
- Clay, Catherine, Maria DiCenzo, Barbara Green, and Fiona Hackney, eds, *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1918-1939: The Interwar Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018)
- Collier, John, and Iain Lang, *Just the Other Day; An Informal History of Great Britain Since the War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1932)
- Collier, Patrick, *Modern Print Artefacts: Textual Materiality and Literary Value in British Print Culture, 1890-1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016)
- Collini, Stefan, "'The Chatto List': Publishing Literary Criticism in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain", *The Review of English Studies*, 63.261 (09/12), 634–63

- 'Collins & Sons, William' (Oxford University Press, 2010)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-1113> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Collins, Wilkie, 'The Unknown Public', *Household Words*, 439, (1858), 217–22
- Connon, Bryan, *Beverley Nichols: A Life* (London: Constable, 1991)
- Connor, Steven, *The English Novel in History, 1950-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- , *Theory and Cultural Value* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992)
- Conversi, Daniele, 'Modernism and Nationalism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 17.1 (2012), 13–34
- Cooke, Katharine, 'The Georgian Poets: A Critical Examination of Their Poetry and Poetic Theory' (unpublished M.Phil., University of London, Royal Holloway College, 1973)
- Copley Eisenberg, Millie, 'The Case of the Self-Conscious Detective Novel: Modernism, Metafiction, and the Terms of Literary Value' (unpublished PhD, Princeton University, 2020)
- Corcoran, Neil, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Coward, Noël, *Fallen Angels* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- Cox, Michael, *The Concise Oxford Chronology of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Craig, Patricia, 'The Red House Mystery', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5511, 2008, p. 23
- Crawford, Robert, *Young Eliot: From St. Louis to The Waste Land* (London: Cape, 2015)
- Creed, Barbara, 'Abject' (Oxford University Press, 2014),
 doi:10.1093/acref/9780199747108.013.0002
- Cregan-Reid, Vybarr, 'Drowning in Early Dickens', *Textual Practice*, 19.1 (2005), 71–91
- Cresswell, Julia, 'Sarcasm' (Oxford University Press, 2021)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198868750.001.0001/acref-9780198868750-e-4321> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Cromie, Jenny, ed. *Short Story Criticism*, vol. 39, (Detroit, Gale, 2000). *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/H1420032414/GLS?u=rdg&sid=bookmark-GLS&xid=681fa06b. [Accessed 13 Sept. 2023]

- Cruickshank, David, *The Grotesque Modernist Body: Gothic Horror and Carnival Satire in Art and Writing* (Cham: Palgrave, 2024)
- Crystal, David, *Language Play* (London: Penguin, 2000)
- Csengeri, Karen, *Hulme, Thomas Ernest (1883–1917), Philosopher and Poet* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/40703>>
- Culler, Jonathan, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983)
- Currey, R. N., and Sayoni Basu, *Gibson, Wilfrid Wilson (1878–1962), Poet* (Oxford University Press, 2009) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33392>>
- Dahl, Curtis, 'The Victorian Wasteland', *College English*, 16.6 (1955), 341–47
- Dark, Sidney, *The New Reading Public: A Lecture Under the Auspices of the 'Society of Bookmen'* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922)
- Darkstar, 'Part of a Collection of World War One Postcards I Found', *Darkstar*, 2014 <<https://chelseaflores.blogspot.com/2014/04/part-of-collection-of-world-war-one.html>> [accessed 23 February 2024]
- Darnton, Robert, 'What Is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, III.3 (1982), 65–83
- Darwall-Smith, R. H., *Gordon, George Stuart (1881–1942), College Head and Literary Scholar* (Oxford University Press, 2005) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33461>>
- David, Hugh, *Heroes, Mavericks, and Bounders: The English Gentleman from Lord Curzon to James Bond* (London: Michael Joseph, 1991)
- Davidson, Scott, ed., *Ricoeur across the Disciplines* (New York: Continuum, 2010)
- Davis, Dick, 'Blue Remembered Hills', *Times Literary Supplement*, 4964 (1998), 3
- Davison, Edward, 'The Poetry of Alfred Noyes', *The English Journal*, XV.4 (1926), 247–55
- , 'The Poetry of J. C. Squire', *The English Journal*, 15.3 (1926), 167–76
- Day, Alan, *J. B. Priestley: Early Days in London* (Bradford: J. B. Priestley Society, 2008)
- Day, Gary, and Brian Docherty, eds, *British Poetry, 1900–50: Aspects of Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995)
- Dean, Charles, and Annie S. Swan, 'Sir Oliver Lodge's Spook Book', *Daily Mail*, 26 January 1917, p. 4

- Dell, Penelope, *Nettie and Sissie: The Biography of Ethel M. Dell and Her Sister Ella* (London: Hamilton, 1977)
- DiBattista, Maria, and Lucy McDiarmid, eds, *High and Low Moderns: Literature and Culture, 1889-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- DiCenzo, Maria, Lucy Delap, and Leila Ryan, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)
- Diemert, Brian, 'The Trials of Astrology in T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land": A Gloss on Lines 57-59', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 22.1 (1998), 175-81
- Diepeveen, Leonard, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2003)
- Dilla, Geraldine P., 'The Development of Wilfrid Wilson Gibson's Poetic Art', *The Sewanee Review*, 30.1 (1922), 39-56
- Dixon, Jay, *The Romance Fiction of Mills and Boon 1909-1990s* (London: UCL Press, 1999)
- Dobranski, Stephen B., 'Milton's Social Life', in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. by Dennis Danielson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Douglas-Fairhurst, Robert, 'Star Man', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5438 (2007), 3-5
- Draper, Warwick H., *The Tower* (London: Headley Brothers, 1918)
- Drew, Elizabeth, *The Modern Novel: Some Aspects of Contemporary Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926)
- Dryden, John, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896)
- Duffy, Maureen, *A Thousand Capricious Chances: A History of the Methuen List 1889 - 1989* (London: Methuen, 1989)
- Duncan, Andrew, *Centre and Periphery in Modern British Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005)
- E. H. L., 'New Books: Recent Verse: Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson and Others', *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 June 1917, p. 3
- , 'New Novels', *Manchester Guardian*, 3 July 1907, p. 5
- Eagleton, Terry, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1976)
- , ed., *Ideology* (London: Longman, 1994)

- , *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991)
- , *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)
- , *The Event of Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013)
- , *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (London: Verso, 1990)
- Eburne, Jonathan P., *Surrealism and the Art of Crime* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008)
- Edwards, Martin, *The Golden Age of Murder: The Mystery of the Writers Who Invented the Modern Detective Story* (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2015)
- , *The Story of Classic Crime in 100 Books* (London: The British Library, 2017)
- Edwards, Owen Dudley, *Wilde, Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills (1854–1900), Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2012) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29400>>
- Eliot, Simon, “‘His Generation Read His Stories’: Walter Besant, Chatto and Windus and All Sorts and Conditions of Men’, *Publishing History*, 21.1 (1987), 25–43
- , *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919*, Occasional Papers of the Bibliographic Society; No. 8 (London: Bibliographic Society, 1994)
- , ‘The Three Decker Novel and Its First Cheap Reprint, 1862–94’, *Library*, s6-VII.1 (1985), pp. 38–53
- Eliot, Simon J., ‘Continuity and Change in British Publishing, 1770–2000’, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 19.2 (2003), 37–50
- Eliot, Simon, Andrew Nash, and Ian Roy Willison, eds *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* (London: The British Library, 2007)
- Eliot, Simon, and Jonathan Rose, eds, *A Companion to the History of the Book*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019)
- Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays*, 3rd ed. (London: Faber, 1999)
- , *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957)
- Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition Volume 1: Apprentice Years, 1905–1918*, ed. by Ronald Schuchard and Jewel Spears Brooker, 8 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), 1

- , *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition Volume 2: The Perfect Critic, 1919-1926*, ed. by Ronald Schuchard and Anthony Cuda, 8 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), II
- , *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition Volume 3: Literature, Politics, Belief 1927-1929*, ed. by Frances Dickey, Jennifer Formichelli, and Ronald Schuchard, 8 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), III
- , *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Volume 1: 1898 - 1922*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton, rev. ed (London: Faber & Faber, 2009), I
- , *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Volume 2: 1923 - 1925*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2009), II
- , *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Volume 3: 1926 - 1927*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), III
- , *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Volume 4: 1928 - 1929*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2013), IV
- , *The Letters of T.S. Eliot. Volume 7: 1934-1935*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2017), VII
- Eliot, T. S., 'The Name and Nature of Poetry', *The Criterion*, XIII.50 (1933), 151-54
- Ellis Roberts, R., 'Poems of Genius', *Daily News*, 24 October 1922, p. 7
- Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce*, New and rev. ed., with corr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)
- England, Committee on English in the Educational System of, and Sir Henry John Newbolt, *The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to Inquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1921)
- Errington, Philip W., 'Masefield, John' (Oxford University Press, 2006)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780195169218.013.0303>>
- Evans, Curtis J., ed., *Mysteries Unlocked: Essays in Honor of Douglas G. Greene* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2014)
- Eyles, Leonora, *The Woman in the Little House* (Grant Richards, 1922)
- Feather, John, *A History of British Publishing*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006)
- Featherstone, Simon, 'Spiritualism as Popular Performance in the 1930s: The Dark Theatre of Helen Duncan', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 27.2 (2011), 141-52

- Feldman, Matthew, Anna Svendsen, and Erik Tønning, *Historicizing Modernists: Approaches to 'Archivalism'*, *Historicizing Modernism* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021)
- Felski, Rita, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015)
- Ferber, Michael, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Ferguson, Robert, *The Short Sharp Life of T.E. Hulme* (London: Allen Lane, 2002)
- Ferrall, Charles, and Dougal McNeill, eds, *British Literature in Transition, 1920-1940: Futility and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
- Figes, Orlando, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (London: Pimlico, 1997)
- Finkelpearl, P. J., *Beaumont, Francis (1584/5-1616), Playwright* (Oxford University Press, 2006) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1871>>
- Finkelstein, David, "'The Secret': British Publishers and Mudie's Struggle for Economic Survival 1861-64", *Publishing History*, 34.1 (1993), 21
- Finkelstein, David and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013)
- Firchow, Peter Edgerly, *Reluctant Modernists: Aldous Huxley and Some Contemporaries* ed. by Evelyn S. Firchow and Bernfried Nugel (Münster: Lit, 2002)
- Fletcher, John, and Andrew E. Benjamin, eds, *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- Flynn, Catherine, 'Circe and Surrealism: Joyce and the Avant-Garde', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 34.2 (2011), 121-38
- Flynn, Catherine, and Richard Brown, 'Introduction: Joycean Avant-Gardes', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 52.2 (2015), 265-71
- Ford, Boris, ed., *Early Twentieth-Century Britain, The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain*, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), VIII
- Ford, Mark, *Woman Much Missed: Thomas Hardy, Emma Hardy, and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023)
- Foucault, Michel, *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* ed. Dianna Taylor (Durham: Acumen, 2011)

- Fowler, Bridget, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Sage, 1997)
- , 'The "Canon" and Marxist Theories of Literature', *Cultural Studies*, 1.2 (1987), 162–78
- F. R., 'New Novels: The Combative Novel', *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1922, p. 7
- Fraser, Brodie, 'Books & Writers', *The Sunday Times*, 27 August 1922, p. 5
- Freeden, Michael, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Freeden, Michael, and Marc Stears, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Freeman, John, 'The Poetry of J. C. Squire', *The Bookman*, 67.398 (1924), 107–9
- Freud, Sigmund, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud; Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson: Volume 14 (1914-1916)*, ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud, 24 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), XIV
- , *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud; Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson: Volume 17 (1917-1919) An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), XVII
- , *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud; Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. Volume 18 (1920-1922) Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology, and Other Works*, ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), XVIII
- From Our Correspondent, 'Book Prices', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 47
- Frost, Laura Catherine, *The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and Its Discontents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013)
- Frow, John, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
- , *Genre*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015)

- Fussell, Paul, 'Modernism, Adversary Culture, and Edmund Blunden', *Sewanee Review*, 94.4 (1986), 583–601
- , *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Garnett, Edward, *Friday Nights: Literary Criticism and Appreciations* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929)
- Garrison, Daniel H., *Who's Who in Wodehouse*, rev. ed. (New York: International Polytonics, 1989)
- Gąsiorek, Andrzej, and Patrick Parrinder, eds, *The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel, 1880-1940*, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), IV
- Gelder, Ken, *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- Gervais, David, 'Masefield, John Edward (1878–1967), Poet and Novelist' (Oxford University Press, 2013) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34915>>
- Gibbons, Luke, *Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015)
- Gifford, Don, and Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008)
- Gill, Stephen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Gillies, Mary Ann, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007)
- Glasgow, Eric, 'The Hogarth Press: A Sketch', *Library Review*, 50.4 (2001), 197–200
- Glendinning, Victoria, *Edith Sitwell: A Unicorn among Lions* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981)
- , *Rebecca West: A Life* (London: Phoenix, 1996)
- Glover, David, and Scott McCracken, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Glyn, Anthony, *Elinor Glyn: A Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1955)
- Glyn, Elinor, *Romantic Adventure* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1936)

- Golding, Louis, 'Mr. Hardy and the New Poetry', *Saturday Review*, 133.3478 (1922), 649–50
- Goldring, Douglas, *The Nineteen Twenties: a General Survey and Some Personal Memories* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1945)
- Goldstein, Bill, *The World Broke in Two: Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster and the Year That Changed Literature* (London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2017)
- Goldstone, Andrew, 'Modernist Studies without Modernism', *OSF*, 03:12 PM, 26
<https://osf.io/wrhj2> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Goode, Patrick, ed., 'Tower', in *The Oxford Companion to Architecture* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Gorman, Herbert S., *The Procession of Masks* (Boston: B. J. Brimmer, 1923)
- Gosse, Edmund, 'The World of Books', *The Sunday Times*, 28 May 1922, p. 8
- , 'The World of Books', *The Sunday Times*, 17 December 1922, p. 6
- Gould, Gerald, 'New Fiction', *The Saturday Review*, 134.3498 (1922), 726
- Gramsci, Antonio, *A Gramsci reader: selected writings 1916-1935* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1999)
- Grant, Michael, and John Hazel, eds, 'Muses', in *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2002)
 <<https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/routwwcm/muses/o?institutionId=158>> [accessed 28 September 2020]
- Graves, Richard Perceval, *A. E. Housman: The Scholar-Poet* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979)
- Graves, Robert, *Goodbye to All That* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960)
- , *On English Poetry: Being an Irregular Approach to the Psychology of This Art, from Evidence Mainly Subjective* (London: Heinemann, 1922)
- Graves, Robert, and Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939* (London: Folio Society, 2009)
- Green, Jonathon, *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, New ed. with citations, 3 vols (London: Chambers, 2010), II
- , 'McNeile, (Herman) Cyril [Pseud. Sapper] (1888–1937), Writer' (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34810>>

- Greenberg, Jonathan Daniel, *Modernism, Satire, and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
- Greene, Graham, *Collected Essays* (London: Vintage, 2014)
- Greene, Roland, Stephen Cushman, Clare Cavanagh and others, eds, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012)
- Greenham, R. G. Harvey, 'Strike in the Book Trade', *Publishers' Circular*, 25 February 1922, p. 154
- Gregory, Rosalyn, and Benjamin Kohlmann, eds, *Utopian Spaces of Modernism: British Literature and Culture, 1885-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012)
- Griffin, Gabriele, ed., *Research Methods for English Studies*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2013)
- Gross, John J., *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800* (London: Penguin, 1991)
- Grossvogel, David I., *Mystery and Its Fictions: From Oedipus to Agatha Christie* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979)
- Guillory, John, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)
- Hadfield, Andrew, 'Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5028 (1999), 25
- Hainsworth, Peter, *Paradiso* (Oxford University Press, 2005)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198183327.001.0001/acref-9780198183327-e-2350> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Hall Knowles, Julie, 'London Bridge and the Hanged Man of "The Waste Land"', *Renascence*, 39.2 (1987), 374-82
- Hamilton, Paul, *Historicism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003)
- Hammill, Faye, and Mark Hussey, *Modernism's Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016)
- Hammond, Mary, *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

- Hammond, Mary, and Shafquat Towheed, eds, *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave; Published in association with the Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007)
- Hampden, John, ed., *The Book World* (London: Nelson, 1935)
- Hanscombe, Gillian E., and Virginia L. Smyers, *Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988)
- Hapgood, Lynne, ed., *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000)
- Hardie, Alec M., *Edmund Blunden* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958)
- Harding, Jason, ed., *T. S. Eliot in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
- Harding, Jason ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- Hardwick, Joan, *Addicted to Romance: The Life and Adventures of Elinor Glyn* (London: André Deutsch, 1994)
- Hardy, Thomas, 'A Spring Song', *The Shipley Times and Express*, 26 May 1922, p. 2
- Hardy, Thomas, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 6: 1920 - 1925*, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), VI
- Harman, Claire, *Rickword, (John) Edgell (1898-1982), Poet and Book Reviewer* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/40704>>
- Hartley, Cathy ed., *A Historical Dictionary of British Women* (London: Europa, 2003)
- Hattersley, Roy, *Borrowed Time: The Story of Britain between the Wars* (London: Abacus, 2010)
- Hawkes, David, *Ideology*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003)
- Haycraft, Howard, *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1941)
- , ed., *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946)
- Hazelgrove, Jenny, *Spiritualism and British Society Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)

- Herbert, Rosemary ed., *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Hurf, Jeffrey, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Hibberd, Dominic, *Harold Monro: Poet of the New Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)
- Hilliard, Christopher, 'Modernism and the Common Writer', *The Historical Journal*, 48.3 (2005), 769–87
- , 'Popular Reading and Social Investigation in Britain 1850s–1940s', *The Historical Journal*, 57.1 (2014), 247–71
- Hipsky, Martin, *Modernism and the Women's Popular Romance in Britain, 1885–1925* (Athens, Ga: Ohio University Press, 2011)
- Hirschkop, Ken, *Linguistic Turns, 1890–1950: Writing on Language as Social Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Hobday, Charles, *Edgell Rickword: A Poet at War* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989)
- Hobsbaum, Philip, *Noyes, Alfred (1880–1958), Poet* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35266>>
- Hobsbawm, E. J., *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997)
- Hodge, David, "'Sapper'", *The Bookman*, 56.334 (1919), 126–27
- Hoffman, Megan, *Gender and Representation in British 'Golden Age' Crime Fiction* (London: Palgrave, 2016)
- Holden, Alan W., and J. Roy Birch, eds, *A. E. Housman: A Reassessment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)
- Housman, A. E., 'Armistice Day. (11 November 1918.) 'Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries''.', *Westminster Gazette*, 11 November 1922, p. 1
- , 'Epitaph', *The Times*, 31 October 1917, p. 7
- , *Letters of A.E. Housman*, ed. by Archie Burnett, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)
- , *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933)
- Howard, Michael Spencer, *Jonathan Cape, Publisher: Herbert Jonathan Cape, G. Wren Howard* (London: Cape, 1971)

- Howarth, Patrick, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'* (London: Hutchinson, 1963)
- Howarth, Peter, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Howatson, M. C., *Harmony (Music) of the Spheres* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199548545.001.0001/acref-9780199548545-e-1421> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Huizinga, Johan, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955)
- Hulme, T. E., *Further Speculations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955)
- Humble, Nicola, 'Sitting Forward or Sitting Back: Middlebrow vs. Highbrow Reading', *Modernist Cultures*, 6.1 (2011), 41–59
- Hume, Robert D., 'Axiologies: Past and Present Concepts of Literary Value', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 78.2 (2017), 139–72
- , *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Hutchinson, Ben, *Modernism and Style* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)
- Huyssen, Andreas, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993)
- Hynes, Samuel, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990)
- Imlah, Mick, 'Masefield, John' (Oxford University Press, 2013)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199640256.001.0001/acref-9780199640256-e-767> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Inglis, Brian, *Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal from Earliest Times to 1914* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977)
- Ingram, Angela J. C., and Daphne Patai, eds, *Rediscovering Forgotten Radicals: British Women Writers, 1889-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993)
- Iser, Wolfgang, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974)
- J. A. H., 'Our Bookshelf', *Nature*, 98.2459 (1916), 289

- Jackson, Kevin, *Constellation of Genius: 1922: Modernism Year One* (London: Hutchinson, 2012)
- Jaillant, Lise, *Cheap Modernism: Expanding Markets, Publishers' Series and the Avant-Garde* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)
- , ed., *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019)
- , 'Sapper, Hodder & Stoughton, and the Popular Literature of the Great War', *Book History*, 14.1 (2011), 137–66
- James, Elizabeth, ed., *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)
- James, Louis, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963)
- Jameson, Fredric, 'Marxism and Historicism', *New Literary History*, 11.1 (1979), 41–73
- , *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2015)
- Jauss, Hans Robert, 'History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', *New Literary History*, 2.1 (1970), 7–37
- 'Jenkins, Herbert' (Oxford University Press, 2010)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-2524> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- John, K., 'Other Fiction', *Illustrated London News*, 21 March 1953, p. 452
- Joseph, Michael, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925)
- Kamlé, Jayashree, Eric Murphy Selinger, and Hsu-Ming Teo, eds, *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021)
- Kastor, E. H., *Advertising* (Chicago: La Salle Extension University, 1918)
- Kay-Robinson, Denys, *The Landscape of Thomas Hardy* (Salem: Salem House, 1984)
- Keating, P. J., *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875-1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989)
- Kelly, Thomas, *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, 1845-1975*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Library Association, 1977)

- Kennedy, Kate, and Trudi Tate, eds, *Silent Morning: Culture and Memory after the Armistice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016)
- Kestemont et al., Mike, 'Forgotten Books: The Application of Unseen Species Models to the Survival of Culture', *Science*, 375.6582 (2022), 765–69 <<https://doi.org/DOI:10.1126/science.abl7655>>
- Kingsford, R. J. L., *The Publishers Association 1896-1946: With an Epilogue* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970)
- Kipling, Rudyard, 'The King's Pilgrimage', *The Times*, 15 May 1922, p. 17
- , *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, ed. by Thomas Pinney, 6 vols (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), v
- Kitchin, C. H. B., 'Five Writers in One: The Versatility of Agatha Christie', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2769, 1955, 124
- Knight, Stephen, *Crime Fiction since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010)
- , *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1980)
- Kopff, E. Christian, 'Conservatism and Creativity in A. E. Housman', *Modern Age*, 47.3 (2005), 229–39
- Kracauer, Siegfried, *History, The Last Things Before the Last* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969)
- Kristeva, Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)
- Kroll, Jennifer, 'Mary Butts's "Unrest Cure" for the Waste Land', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 45.2 (1999), 159–73
- Lambert, Henry, *The Nature of History* (London: Oxford University Press; Humphrey Milford, 1933)
- Leavis, Q. D., *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Pimlico, 2000)
- Lee, Hermione, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996)
- Lehmann, John, ed., *Coming to London* (London: Phoenix House, 1957)
- Lennartz, Norbert, 'The Intrusion of Old Times: Ghosts and Resurrections in Hardy, Joyce and Beyond', *Connotations*, 17.1 (2007), 14–28

- Levenson, Michael H., 'Does The Waste Land Have a Politics?', *Modernism/Modernity*, 6.3 (1999), 1–13
- Levin, Harry, 'What Was Modernism?', *The Massachusetts Review*, 1.4 (1960), 609–30
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966)
- Lewis, Pericles, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to European Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
- Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Livingston Lowes, John, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922)
- Llewelyn Davies, Margaret, ed., *Life as We Have Known It by Co-Operative Working Women* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975)
- Llorens-Cubedo, Didac, 'Drowning, Shipwreck, Sailing: T. S. Eliot's Voyage of Transformation', *Odisea*, 0.14 (2017), 85–99
- Lodge, Oliver, *Raymond: or, Life and Death With Evidence for Survival of Memory and Affection After Death* (London: Methuen, 1916)
- Louvish, Simon, *Chaplin: The Tramp's Odyssey* (London: Faber & Faber, 2009)
- Lowe, Peter, "'Exploring Sunken Ruinous Roads": The First World War Poet as Archaeologist', *English Studies*, 97.1 (2016), 42–60
- Lucas, E. V., *Reading, Writing and Remembering: A Literary Record* (London: Methuen, 1933)
- Lucas, E. V., and Clare L. Taylor, 'Methuen [Formerly Stedman], Sir Algernon Methuen Marshall, Baronet (1856–1924), Publisher' (Oxford University Press, 2014), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/35002
- Lucas, John, 'Edgell Rickword: Man of Letters', *The Sewanee Review*, 102.1 (1994), 112–21
- , *The Radical Twenties: Aspects of Writing, Politics and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 1997)
- Lukacs, Georg, *Realism in Our Time: Literature and the Class Struggle* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971)
- , *Studies in European Realism* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964)

- Lunn, Eugene, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982)
- Lusty, Robert, *Swinnerton, Frank Arthur (1884–1982), Writer and Publisher's Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31741>
- Lynd, Robert, 'Mr. A. A. Milne.', *Daily News*, 3 August 1921, p. 4
- , 'Mr. Edmund Blunden', *Daily News*, 2 May 1922, p. 7
- M., 'Demands for Reassembly of Parliament', *Daily News*, 28 December 1922, final ed., p. 1
- Macdonald, Kate, *Novelists against Social Change: Conservative Popular Fiction, 1920-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015)
- Macdonald, Kate, and Christoph Singer, eds, *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing, 1880-1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015)
- Macdonald, Kate, and Nathan Waddell, eds, *John Buchan and the Idea of Modernity* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013)
- MacLehose, James, C. W. Bowerman, A. E. Goodwin, and A. E. Holmes, 'Effects of High Postal Charges', *Publishers' Circular*, 21 January 1922, p. 48
- Mais, S. P. B., 'Georgian Poetry', *The Bookman*, 57.341 (1920), 178–79
- , 'Men Who "Own" Their Wives', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 1921, p. 6
- Mallon, Thomas, *Edmund Blunden* (Boston: Twayne, 1983)
- Manganaro, Marc, *Culture, 1922: The Emergence of a Concept* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Manganiello, Dominic, *T.S. Eliot and Dante* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- Mannheim, Karl, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936)
- Manoff, Marlene, 'Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines', *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 4.1 (2004), 9–25
- Mao, Douglas, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA*, 123.3 (2008), 737–48
- March, Norah, *Sex Knowledge* (London: W. Foulsham, 1922)

- Marcus, Laura, and Peter Nicholls, *Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Martin, Graham, ed., *Eliot in Perspective: A Symposium* (London: Macmillan, 1970)
- Martin Mac, *Advertising Campaigns*, rev. ed. (New York: Alexander Hamilton Institute, 1922)
- Marx, Karl, *The Thought of Karl Marx: An Introduction* ed. by David McLellan, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980)
- Matthews, Steven, ed., *The Waste Land after One Hundred Years* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2022)
- Massey, W. T., 'Cavalry Gallop', *Daily Mail*, 24 September 1918, p. 3
- Masterman, C. F. G., *England After War: A Study* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922)
- Mavrogordato, E. E., 'The Red House Mystery', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1057, 1922, 259
- McAler, Joseph, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)
- McCracken, Scott, *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)
- McDonald, Peter D., *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- McGreevy, Ronan, *Great Hatred: The Assassination of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson MP* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022)
- McInnis, David, and Matthew Steggle, eds, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014)
- McIntire, Gabrielle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to The Waste Land* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- McLoughlin, Catherine Mary ed., *The Modernist Party* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)
- McMenemy, David, 'Public Libraries in the UK- History and Values' (University of Strathclyde, 2018)
<https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip_new_website/plss/l1_and_l2_ethics.pdf> [accessed 25 April 2019]

- McNeill, Fiona, *Ballads* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195169218.001.0001/acref-9780195169218-e-0025> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Melman, Billie, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (London: Macmillan, 1988)
- Merquior, José Guilherme, *Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987)
- Mess, Henry A., *Industrial Tyneside: A Social Survey Made for the Bureau of Social Research for Tyneside* (London: Ernest Benn, 1928)
- Messent, Peter B., *The Crime Fiction Handbook* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)
- Meyers, Jeffrey, 'Tormented Housman', *Style*, 50.1 (2016), 19–36
- Mezei, Kathy, and Chiara Briganti, eds, *The Domestic Space Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012)
- Millgate, Michael, *Thomas Hardy, a Biography* (New York: Random House, 1982)
- Mills, A. D., *Bourne End* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199609086.001.0001/acref-9780199609086-e-2019> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Milne, A. A., *Autobiography* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1939)
- , *By Way of Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1929)
- , *Mr Pim Passes By: A Comedy in Three Acts* (London: Samuel French, 1921)
- , *Once a Week* (London: Methuen, 1914)
- , *The Red House Mystery* (London: Vintage, 2008)
- Minto, John, and James Hutt, *A History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. and the Library Association, 1932)
- Modleski, Tania, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Methuen, 1982)
- Moise, Edwin, 'The "Hanged Man" in The Waste Land', *Notes and Queries*, 39.2 (1992), 193
- Monro, Harold, *Some Contemporary Poets* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920)
- Montague, C. E., *Disenchantment* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922)

- Montgomery, John, *The Twenties* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1970)
- Moody, A. David, *Ezra Pound, Poet: A Portrait of the Man & His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- , ed., *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Moody, Nickianne, 'Something to Read: The Boots Booklovers Library and the Great Fiction Question', *Popular Narrative Media*, 1.2 (2008), 197–209
- Moran, Clarence, *The Business of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 2013)
- Moretti, Franco, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (London: Verso, 2007)
- , *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms* (London: Verso, 1983)
- , 'The Slaughterhouse of Literature', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 61.1 (2000), 207–27
- Morgan, Charles, *The House of Macmillan (1843-1943)* (London: Macmillan, 1943)
- Morgan, Janet, *Christie [Née Miller; Other Married Name Mallowan], Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa (1890-1976), Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2017)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30926>>
- Morgan, William W., 'Verses Fitted for a Monument: Hardy's Contribution to the Dudley War Memorial', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 1.1 (1985), 25–32
- Morris, Pam, *Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)
- , *Realism* (London: Routledge, 2003)
- Morris, Warren Frederick, *Understanding Ideology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010)
- Morrisson, Mark S., *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001)
- Morton, H. V., *In Search of England*, fourteenth ed. (London: Methuen, 1931)
- Mott, Frederick W., *War Neuroses and Shell Shock* (London: Joint Committee of Henry Froude and Hodder & Stoughton, 1919)
- Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1955)

- Muirhead, Findlay, ed., *Muirhead's London and Its Environs*, Blue Guides (London: Macmillan, 1918)
- Mulhern, Francis, *The Moment of 'Scrutiny'* (London: New Left Books, 1979)
- Mumby, Frank Arthur, *Publishing and Bookselling: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949)
- Mumby, Frank Arthur, and Ian Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling: Part One from the Earliest Times to 1870: Part Two: 1870-1970*, 5th ed. (London: J. Cape, 1974)
- Munford, W. A., *Penny-Rate: Aspects of British Public Library History, 1850-1950* (London: Library Association, 1951)
- Murphy, Bernice M., *Key Concepts in Contemporary Popular Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)
- Murray, Nicholas, *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (London: Abacus, 2003)
- Murry, J. Middleton, *The Problem of Style* (London: G. Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1922)
- Mussell, James, and Graeme Gooday, eds, *A Pioneer of Connection: Recovering the Life and Work of Oliver Lodge* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2020)
- N. T., 'Ethel M. Dell', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 11 April 1921, p. 3
- Nash, Andrew, 'A Publisher's Reader on the Verge of Modernity: The Case of Frank Swinnerton', *Book History*, 6.1 (2003), 175-95
- Nash, Andrew, Claire Squires, and I. R. Willison, eds, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7; The Twentieth Century and Beyond*; *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), VII
- Nash, Walter, *Language in Popular Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- Nelles, William, and Linda Williams, 'Doing Hard Time: Narrative Order in Detective Fiction', *Style*, 55.2 (2021), 190-218
- Newman, John, and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Dorset, The Buildings of England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)
- Nichols, Beverley, *Are They the Same at Home?: Being a Series of Bouquets Diffidently Distributed* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927)
- , *Twenty-Five* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1935)

- Nichols, Robert, 'The Conscious and the Self-Conscious', *Daily Herald*, 3 May 1922, p. 7
- Norman, Sylva, *Contemporary Essays 1933* (London: Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1933)
- North, Michael, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- northumbrianlight, 'Dead Man's Fair', *Northumbrian: Light*, 2018
 <<https://northumbrianlight.com/2018/02/28/dead-mans-fair/>> [accessed 30 March 2023]
- Noyes, Alfred, *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1924)
- , *Two Worlds for Memory* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1953)
- O'Malley, Seamus, *Making History New: Modernism and Historical Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)
- Opie, Iona, and Moira Tatem, 'COCK Crows = Ill Omen' (Oxford University Press, 2003)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192829160.001.0001/acref-9780192829160-e-357> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- , 'COCK Crows Unseasonably' (Oxford University Press, 2003)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192829160.001.0001/acref-9780192829160-e-359> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Orel, Harold, *Popular Fiction in England, 1914-1918* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992)
- Osborne, Charles, *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* (London: Collins, 1982)
- Osborne, Huw Edwin, ed., *The Rise of the Modernist Bookshop: Books and the Commerce of Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)
- Our Correspondent, 'Armstrong Guilty', *The Times*, 15 April 1922, p. 7
- Our Correspondent, 'The Kidwelly Mystery', *The Times*, 16 June 1920, p. 16
- Ousby, Ian, 'Science Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature in English*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/cupliteng/science_fiction/o?institutionId=158. [Accessed 14 February 2024]
- Outka, Elizabeth, 'Dead Men, Walking: Actors, Networks, and Actualized Metaphors in "Mrs. Dalloway" and "Raymond"', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 46.2 (2013), 253-74

- , *Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020)
- Overy, Richard, *The Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009)
- Pacy, Frank, 'Public Libraries in England', *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, 20.10 (1926), 221–23
- P. F., 'English Bards', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 January 1913, p. 9
- Page, Norman, *Housman, Alfred Edward (1859–1936), Poet and Classical Scholar* (Oxford University Press, 2011) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34013>>
- , 'Macmillan, Frederick' (Oxford University Press, 2011)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0191> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- , 'Two on a Tower' (Oxford University Press, 2011)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604198.001.0001/acref-9780198604198-e-0332> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Palmer, D. J., *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature From Its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965)
- Palmer, Jerry, *Taking Humour Seriously* (London: Routledge, 1994)
- Panagia, Davide, 'Rita Felski, The Limits of Critique', *Critical Inquiry*, 42.4 (2016), 995–96
- Panek, LeRoy, *Watteau's Shepherds: The Detective Novel in Britain 1914–1940* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979)
- Parrinder, Patrick, Andrew Nash, and Nicola Wilson, eds, *New Directions in the History of the Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014)
- Pearce, Lynne, 'Romance and Repetition: Testing the Limits of Love', *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, 2.1 (2011), unpaginated
- Pellegrini, Anthony D., ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Play* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Perkins, David, *A History of Modern Poetry: From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1976)
- , ed., *Theoretical Issues in Literary History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991)

- Peterson, Linda H., *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- Page, Philip, 'And One Should Be as Popular as "Three Men in a Boat"', *Daily Mail*, 22 June 1939, p. 4
- Phillips, Roderick, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
- Pintard Ryan, Stephen, 'Alfred Noyes: Poet of Tradition' (unpublished PhD, Ottawa, 1942)
- Pividori, Cristina, 'Of Heroes, Ghosts and Witnesses: The Construction of Masculine Identity in the War Poets' Narratives', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 7.2, 162–78
- 'Places to Find Priest Holes': <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/houses-buildings/places-to-find-priest-holes> [Accessed 1/10/24]
- Plato, *Republic* (n.p.: The Floating Press, 2009)
- Pocklington, G. R., *The Story of W. H. Smith* (London: Printed for Private Circulation, 1921)
- Pollard, A. W., 'Commercial Circulating Libraries and the Price of Books', *The Library*, 9.4 (1929), 411
- Popper, Karl R., *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge, 2002)
- Pound, Ezra, and Olga Rudge, *Ezra Pound's and Olga Rudge's The Blue Spill: A Manuscript Critical Edition*, ed. by Mark Byron and Sophia Barnes (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021)
- Prall, David Wight, *A Study in the Theory of Value* (California: University of California Press, 1921)
- Press, John, *Blunden, Edmund* (Oxford University Press, 2013)
<<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199640256.001.0001/acref-9780199640256-e-107>> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Price, Harry, *Cold Light on Spiritualistic 'Phenomena': An Experiment with the Crewe Circle* (England: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1922)
- Price, Leah, and Pamela Thurschwell, eds, *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture* (London: Routledge, 2019)
- Priestley, J. B., *Margin Released: A Writer's Reminiscences and Reflections* (London: Heinemann, 1962)
- , *Open House: A Book of Essays* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927)

- Priestman, Martin, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Pryce-Jones, David, 'Baiting the Hearties', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3816 (1975), 444
- Pryor, Francis, *Britain B.C.: Life in Britain and Ireland before the Romans* (London: HarperCollins, 2003)
- Pugh, Martin, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992)
- , *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain since 1914*, 3rd ed. (London: Palgrave, 2015)
- Purdon, James, ed., *British Literature in Transition, 1900-1920: A New Age?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)
- Quiney, Anthony, *Tower* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198605683.001.0001/acref-9780198605683-e-1331> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Rabaté, Jean-Michel, ed., *1922: Literature, Culture, Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- Radway, Janice A., *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (London: Verso, 1987)
- Raine, Craig, *T.S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Rainey, Lawrence S., *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)
- Raleigh, Walter, *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. by Lady Raleigh, 2 vols (London: Methuen, 1926)
- Ray, Martin, 'Thomas Hardy and the Spectator's Female Reviewer of Late Lyrics and Earlier', *Notes and Queries*, 49.4 (2002), 490–91
- Richards, Grant, *Author Hunting by an Old Literary Sports Man: Memories of Years Spent Mainly in Publishing 1897-1925* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1934)
- Ricks, Christopher, ed., *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968)
- , 'A. E. Housman and the "colour of his hair." (Society and Justice According to a Poet)', *Essays in Criticism*, 47.3 (1997), 240–55

- Roberts, Neil, ed., *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)
- Roberts, R., 'J. C. Squire: His Prose', *The Bookman*, 67.398 (1924), 105–6
- Roe, Sue, and Susan Sellers, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Rogers, Timothy, ed., *Georgian Poetry, 1911-1922: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1977)
- Rollyson, Carl E., ed., *Critical Survey of Mystery and Detective Fiction*, Rev. ed., 5 vols (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2008)
- Rooney, Ellen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Rooyen, Lindy van, *Mapping the Modern Mind: Virginia Woolf's Parodic Approach to the Art of Fiction in 'Jacob's Room'* (Hamburg: Diplomica, 2012)
- Rose, Jonathan, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)
- , and Patricia J. Anderson, eds, *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1881-1965* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991)
- Ross, Robert H., *The Georgian Revolt* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967)
- Roth, Marty, *Foul & Fair Play: Reading Genre in Classic Detective Fiction* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1995)
- Rothkopf, Carol Zeman, ed., *Selected Letters of Siegfried Sassoon and Edmund Blunden, 1919-1967*, 2 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012)
- Rothstein, Eric, 'Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism by Robert D. Hume', *The Journal of English and German Philology*, 100.1 (2001), 110–14
- Rowland, Susan, *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell: British Women Writers in Detective and Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)
- Rowlands, Peter, *Lodge, Sir Oliver Joseph (1851-1940), Physicist* (Oxford University Press, 2011) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34583>>
- Ryder, Brian, 'The George Allen and Unwin Collection: Reading University Library', *Publishing History*, 47.1 (2000), 67–78

- Rzepka, Charles J., and Lee Horsley, eds, *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
- Sampson, George, *The Cambridge Concise History of English Literature* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1941)
- Sampson, George, and R. C. Churchill, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 3rd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970)
- Sandberg, Eric, “‘The Body in the Bath’: Dorothy L. Sayers’s Whose Body? And Embodied Detective Fiction’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 42.2 (2019), 1–20
- Saunders, Corinne J., ed., *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)
- Savage, Ernest, ‘Post War Conditions in British Public Libraries’, *American Library Association Bulletin*, 20.10 (1926), 232
- Schmidl, Laura, “‘A Very Different Class of Goods’: The History of Twopenny Libraries 1’, *Publishing History*, 69 (2011), 41–83
- Seaber, Luke and Michael Shallcross, ‘The Trouble with Modernism: A Dialogue’, *The Modernist Review*, 2019, unpaginated
- Serafini, Stefano, “‘The Ghost of Dr. Freud Haunts Everything Today’: Criminal Minds in the Golden Age Psychological Thriller’, *Clues*, 37.2 (2019), 20–30
- Seymour-Jones, Carole, *Painted Shadow: A Life of Vivienne Eliot* (London: Robinson, 2002)
- the Golden Age Psychological Thriller’, *Clues*, 37.2 (2019), 20–30
- Scott, Dixon, ‘At Home with the Woman Who Won a Ruby M. Ayres Award for a Romantic Novel’, *Daily Mirror*, 7 September 1963, p. 7
- Scott-James, R. A., *Modernism and Romance* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1908)
- Scott-Kilvert, Iain, ed., *British Writers Volume 7: Sean O’Casey to Poets of World War II*, 8 vols (New York: Scribner, 1984), VII
- Seidl, Monika, Roman Horak, and Lawrence Grossberg, eds, *About Raymond Williams* (London: Routledge, 2010)
- Shanks, Edward, *Second Essays on Literature* (London: Collins, 1927)
- Sheffield, Gary, *The Somme* (London: Cassell, 2003)

- Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing*, rev. and expanded ed. (London: Virago, 2009)
- , *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 2011)
- Sicart, Miguel, *Play Matters* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014)
- Simon, Myron, *The Georgian Poetic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975)
- Sitwell, Osbert, *Who Killed Cock-Robin?: Remarks on Poetry, On Its Criticism, and, As a Sad Warning, the Story of Eunuch Arden* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1921)
- Smith, Andrew, *The Ghost Story, 1840-1920: A Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010)
- Smith, Andrew, and Jeff Wallace, eds, *Gothic Modernisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988)
- , 'Marks and Variable Constancies: A Parable of Literary Value', *Poetics Today*, 1.1/2 (1979), 7-22
- Smith, D. N., and Donald Hawes, *Raleigh, Sir Walter Alexander (1861-1922), Literary Scholar and Historian* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35656>>
- Smith, Grover, 'T. S. Eliot and Sherlock Holmes', *Notes and Queries*, 193.2 (1948), 431-32
- Smith, Helen, *The Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2017)
- Smith, Mawnon, 'A Trinity of Talent', *Britannia and Eve*, September 1952, 36-37, 60
- Smith, Michael Douglas, *Couch, Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller- [Pseud. Q] (1863-1944), Writer and Anthologist* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35640>>
- Smith, Patricia Juliana, *Sitwell, Edith* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
<<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195169218.001.0001/acref-9780195169218-e-0433>> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Smyth, Adam, and Dennis Duncan, eds, *Book Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Southborough, Lord, 'Shell Shock', *The Times*, 2 September 1922, pp. 13-14

- Southam, B. C., *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*, 4th ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1981)
- Spinney, Laura, 'Could the Greatest Works of Literature Be Undiscovered?', *Guardian*, 28 May 2022, section Books, p. 71
- Spiropoulou, Angeliki, *Virginia Woolf, Modernity and History: Constellations with Walter Benjamin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010)
- Spoof, Robert E., "Nestor" and the Nightmare: The Presence of the Great War in Ulysses', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32.2 (1986), 137-54
- Spooner, Catherine, and Dale Townshend, eds, *Gothic in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, *The Cambridge History of the Gothic*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), III
- Squire, J. C., 'Books of the Day: Mr. Blunden's Poems', *Observer*, 14 May 1922, p. 4
- , *Essays on Poetry* (New York: Doran, 1923)
- , *The Honeysuckle and the Bee* (London: Heinemann, 1937)
- St Clair, William, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Stanford, Michael, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987)
- Stape, J. H., "The Pinker of Agents": A Family History of James Brand Pinker', *The Conradian*, 34.1 (2009), 111-43
- Stead, C. K., *The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot* (London: Continuum, 2005)
- Steedman, Carolyn, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- Sterry, Emma, *The Single Woman, Modernity, and Literary Culture: Women's Fiction from the 1920s to the 1940s* (Cham: Palgrave, 2018)
- Stevenson, Iain, *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century* (London: British Library, 2010)
- Stewart, Victoria, 'Introduction', *Clues*, 37.2 (2019), 5-8
- , "War Memoirs of the Dead": Writing and Remembrance in the First World War', *Literature and History*, 14.2 (2005), 37-52
- Stone, Lawrence, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

- Stott, Andrew, *Comedy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005)
- Strachan, R. H., *The Soul of Modern Poetry* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922)
- Stringer, Jenny, and John Sutherland, *Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 2005)
 <<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192122711.001.0001/acref-9780192122711-e-1944>> [Accessed 17 February 2024]
- Sturgeon, Mary C., *Studies of Contemporary Poets*, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1920)
- Suarez, Michael Felix, and Michael Lawrence Turner, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), v
- Suarez, Michael Felix, and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Swinnerton, Frank, *Authors and the Book Trade*, 2nd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1935)
- , *Figures in the Foreground: Literary Reminiscences, 1917-40* (London: Hutchinson, 1963)
- , *Swinnerton: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1937)
- , *The Georgian Literary Scene, 1910-1935: A Panorama*, rev. ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1950)
- Symons, Julian, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, 4th ed. (London: Pan Books, 1994)
- Tanner, David, *Riding the Tosh Horse: Ethel M. Dell, A Written Life* (Bath: Brown Dog Books, 2024)
- Tate, Trudi, *Modernism, History and the First World War*, 2nd ed. (Tirril, Penrith, CA: HEB, Humanities-Ebooks, 2013)
- Taylor, D. J., *The Prose Factory: Literary Life in England since 1918* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016)
- Taylor, Dennis, *Hardy's Poetry: 1860 - 1928*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- The Reviewers, 'Books and Their Writers', *Daily Mail*, 15 May 1922, p. 13
- Thwaite, Ann, *A. A. Milne: His Life* (Faber and Faber, 1990)

- , 'Milne, Alan Alexander [A. A. Milne] (1882–1956), Writer' (Oxford University Press, 2023), doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/35031
- Thompson, F. M. L., ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1
- Thompson, John B., *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)
- Thomson, H. Douglas, *Masters of Mystery: A Study of the Detective Novel* (London: W. Collins, 1931)
- Thorpe, Andrew, *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars, 1914-45* (London: Longman, 1994)
- Tillyard, E. M. W., *The Muse Unchained: An Intimate Account of the Revolution in English Studies at Cambridge* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1958)
- Tomlinson, H. M., *Waiting for Daylight* (London: Cassell, 1922)
- Torrens, James, 'Charles Maurras and Eliot's "New Life"', *PMLA*, 89.2 (1974), 312–22
- Tratner, Michael, *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995)
- Trotter, David, *The English Novel in History, 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- Turner, Catherine, *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003)
- Turner, Ellen, 'E. M. Hull's Camping in the Sahara: Desert Romance Meets Desert Reality', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 19.2 (2015), 127–46
- Unwin, Stanley, *The Book in the Making: A Lecture Given at Stationer's Hall, London, Friday, October 9, 1931* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931)
- , *The Truth About Publishing* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1946)
- Upton, Brian, *The Aesthetic of Play* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2015)
- Usborne, Richard, *Clubland Heroes: A Nostalgic Study of Some Recurrent Characters in the Romantic Fiction of Dornford Yates, John Buchan and Sapper*, 3rd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1983)
- W. P., 'A Play of Thrills by "Sapper"', *Daily Mail*, 30 March 1921, p. 5

- Wald, Priscilla and Michael A. Elliott eds, *The American Novel, 1870-1940*, The Oxford History of the Novel in English, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), vi
- Waller, P. J., *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Ward, A. C., *The Nineteen-Twenties: Literature and Ideas in the Post-War Decade* (London: Methuen, 1930)
- , *Twentieth-Century Literature: The Age of Interrogation 1901-1925* (London: Methuen, 1928)
- Ward, John Powell, *The English Line: Poetry of the Unpoetic from Wordsworth to Larkin* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991)
- Warner, Marina, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Warner, Oliver, *Chatto & Windus: A Brief Account of the Firm's Origin, History and Development* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973)
- Watson, Colin, *Snobbery with Violence: Crime Stories and Their Audience* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971)
- Waugh, Alec, 'The Neo-Georgians', *The Fortnightly Review*, 115.685 (1924), 126–37
- Waugh, Arthur, 'Georgian Poetry', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1922, p. 16
- , 'Last Poems', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 October 1922, p. 15
- Webb, Barry, *Edmund Blunden: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990)
- Weedon, Alexis, 'An Introduction to Elinor Glyn: Her Life and Legacy', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 29.2 (2018), 145–60
- , 'Elinor Glyn's System of Writing', *Publishing History*, 60 (2006), 31–49, 111
- , 'From Three-Deckers to Film Rights: A Turn in British Publishing Strategies, 1870-1930', *Book History*, 2 (1999), 188–206
- , *The Origins of Transmedia Storytelling in Early Twentieth Century Adaptation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2021)
- Weeks, Jeffrey, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1989)

- Weir, Allison, *Identities and Freedom: Feminist Theory between Power and Connection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Wells, Robert, 'Hidden and Unmasked', *Times Literary Supplement*, 4674 (1992), 11
- West, Rebecca, *The Strange Necessity: Essays and Reviews* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928)
- Westfall, Richard S., *Newton, Sir Isaac (1642–1727), Natural Philosopher and Mathematician* (Oxford University Press, 2009) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20059>>
- Wicke, Jennifer, *Advertising Fictions: Literature, Advertisement & Social Reading* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)
- , 'Appreciation, Depreciation: Modernism's Speculative Bubble', *Modernism/Modernity*, 8.3 (2001), 389–403
- Williams, Kevin, *Read All about It! A History of the British Newspaper* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)
- Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (London: Vintage, 2017)
- , *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- Williams, Raymond, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. by Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989)
- Williams-Ellis, Amabel, *An Anatomy of Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1922)
- Willison, I. R., George Watson, and J. D. Pickles, eds, *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. Volume 4: 1900 - 1950*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), IV
- Wilson, Keith, ed., *A Companion to Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)
- Wilson, Nicola, 'Boots Book-Lovers' Library and the Novel: The Impact of a Circulating Library Market On Twentieth-Century Fiction', *Information and Culture*, 49.4 (2014), 427–49
- , ed., *The Book World: Selling and Distributing British Literature, 1900–1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2016)
- , 'Virginia Woolf, Hugh Walpole, The Hogarth Press, and the Book Society', *ELH*, 79.1 (2012), 237–60
- Winkiel, Laura, 'Gendered Transnationalism in "The New Modernist Studies"', *Literature Compass*, 10.1 (2013), 38–44

- Winks, Robin W., ed., *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980)
- Winter, J. M., *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Winter, Jackie, *Lipsticks and Library Books: The Story of Boots Booklovers Library*. (Dorset: Chantries Press, 2016)
- Wiseman, Sam, *Locating the Gothic in British Modernity* (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2019)
- Wodehouse, P. G., *A Life in Letters* ed. by Sophie Ratcliffe (W. W. Norton, 2013)
- Wollaeger, Mark A., and Matt Eatough, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Woolf, Leonard, *Hunting the Highbrow* (London: L & Virginia Woolf, 1927)
- Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Triad Grafton, 1987)
- , *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume 3: 1919 - 1924*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1995), III
- , *The Moment and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1947)
- Young, Filson, 'Georgian Poetry', *The Saturday Review*, 114.2982 (1912), 764–65
- Young, Iris Marion, *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing like a Girl' and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Young, R. V., 'Withered Stumps of Time: The Waste Land and Mythic Disillusion', *Intercollegiate Review*, 38.2 (2003), 24–32
- Ziolkowski, Theodore, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998)