

another absolution: it is the worldly Doctor Plarr who whispers to Father León “*Ego te absolvo*” as both lie dying (114). And in *Quixote* the dying title character enacts “a final kenosis of himself” in placing not the Host but his own fingers on the tongue of his Communist fellow traveler Sancho (152). Greene’s Catholic pattern in the carpet does, it seems, exist to the end.

Some might ask, does it matter? For a Catholic reader, for a Jesuit scholar such as Mark Bosco, or for those interested in religion and literature, certainly Greene’s faith matters. And for the history of modernist literature, Greene’s sixty-year career also provides a fascinating anomaly. As Bosco notes in his conclusion, of all the famous modern Christian converts—including T. S. Eliot, G. K. Chesterton, Edith Sitwell, Evelyn Waugh, W. H. Auden, and C. S. Lewis—only Greene lived and wrote well into the second half of the twentieth century. Appropriately, then, only he moved into a Catholic post-modernism (155–56), and why should we expect him to remain a Catholic of the 1940s? Does Bosco trace a trajectory peculiar to Greene, or might other modern Catholic converts have followed similar paths?<sup>4</sup>

More generally, I would like to know how Greene’s Catholic imagination matters to his now vast secular audience. Who reads all those new editions of Greene’s novels, and why? When a popular film is made of a fifty-year-old novel;<sup>5</sup> when a well-known novelist tells me he is endeavoring to imitate Graham Greene; when a learned journal such as *Modern Philology* reviews a book on Greene—clearly this British novelist remains a literary presence to be reckoned with. The critical study that explains Graham Greene’s enduring appeal has yet to be written.

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*The Idea of a Colony: Cross-Culturalism in Modern Poetry.* Edward Marx. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. viii+213.

In “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*,” published in his collection *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York:

4. Several well-known and talented Catholic converts wrote most of their novels in the latter half of the twentieth century; these novelists include Muriel Spark, David Lodge, and the American Walker Percy. However, unlike Greene they were born (or “born again”) into a postmodern Catholicism, largely avoiding the question of a bifurcated career.

5. *The End of the Affair*, directed by Neil Jordan (1999).

Doubleday, 1989), the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe lays out a devastating indictment of Joseph Conrad's modernist classic. "Conrad," Achebe declares, was a "thoroughgoing racist," as evidenced by his portrayal of Africans not as human beings but as mere "props for the breakup of one petty European mind" (12).

Although Edward Marx's *The Idea of a Colony* is primarily a study of poetry, it opens with a response to Achebe's argument, in part because the book as a whole is an audacious rebuttal to Achebe's central claim: that the dehumanizing of racial others in literature is illegitimate and should be unequivocally condemned. Instead, Marx argues that Conrad's use of Africans as props is defensible because they are "the prop on which the European mind is constituted." What Achebe calls "arrogance," Marx calls "a profound, self-destructive, and very genuine need" in the psyche of the white European, which "does, after all, need a suitable hook" for its psychological projections of otherness (9). To understand racism, it seems, one need only see that the needs it serves are genuine.

Such arguments are characteristic of Marx's book, which examines the role of the primitive and the exotic in a range of modern poets, both canonical (Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens) and otherwise (the Indian nationalist poet Sarojini Naidu; the British orientalist James Elroy Flecker). Such an account is in itself not novel. Modernist primitivism has been surveyed in such studies as Michael North's *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Marianna Torgovnick's *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (University of Chicago Press, 1990), and the role of the exotic in modern poetry has received exhaustive treatment, from Zhaoming Qian's *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995) to Josephine Park's recent *Apparitions of Asia: Modernist Form and Asian American Poetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). But while standard studies of the topic have largely followed the model of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) in reading the exotic and primitive as large-scale cultural discourses created by the West, Marx views primitivism and exoticism as examples of psychological projection. They are, according to Marx, manifestations of what Jungian psychoanalysis calls the "shadow," repressed elements of the individual's unconscious that, in Marx's view, are projected onto racial and cultural others—allowing Marx to read primitivist and exoticist strategies as rooted in a poet's childhood biography.

Marx's use of Jung brings to mind the most sustained effort to analyze modern poetry through Jungian categories, Albert Gelpi's *A Coherent*

*Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Gelpi, like Marx, sees in Stevens's poetry a struggle with the feminine principle Jung calls the anima, and Gelpi also anticipates Marx in reading Pound's poetry as a negotiation among "the shadow, the anima, [and] the self" (188). Gelpi understands his Jungian archetypes as textual tropes rather than biographical facts, providing a thematic unity across the modern poets he studies. Marx, in contrast, extends his Jungian analysis into diagnoses of his poets. Thus Pound is an "extraverted intuitive" whose poetics "can be linked to problems of early childhood development associated with his repressed feelings for the Black and Chinese servants who served as his maternal substitutes" (15).

This framework has the effect of naturalizing the various writers' exoticizing strategies, framing the primitive, stereotypical, and even racist images of their poetry as mere symptoms of individual neuroses. The book is thus unable to deliver on its more ambitious claims for a "cross-cultural" analysis of modern poetry. Marx is certainly correct to see, with an increasing number of other scholars, that a study of modernist writers' representations of Asia or Africa can no longer proceed without some account of what black or Asian writers themselves were doing at the time. Thus he places Pound's and T. S. Eliot's engagements with India alongside the poetry of the Indian writers Sarojini Naidu and Rabindranath Tagore. But rather than use such comparisons to produce a critical view of Western (or Eastern) exoticism in the tradition of Said, Marx extends his psychological categories to Naidu and Tagore as well. If white modernist poets were seeking an anima in the East, Naidu was happy to be "everybody's anima." Being psychologically predisposed to define herself "in relation to a series of extraordinary men" (52), her achievement was in fulfilling exoticist expectations, "becom[ing] the (colonized female) other by mimicking the subject's projection of the other" (56). Tagore, likewise, was an "introverted intuitive," quite naturally producing the "stream of images, metaphors, allegories, and parables" that made him an exotic object of adoration in the West (66). These Indian poets, Marx suggests, wish to embody precisely the modes of exoticization that the West wants to see in them.

Such dynamics do not correspond to the kinds of exchanges and flows suggested by the term "cross-cultural." Instead, the cultural encounters Marx describes are one-sided, a fact that his readings disclose without sufficiently analyzing. The loathsome sentiments of James Elroy Flecker, who was disappointed that Turkey did not live up to his orientalist expectations and disgusted by its "filthy," "flyblown . . . horror and oppression" (19), are explained by Marx as growing "out of his troubled relationship with his father" (16) rather than simultaneously

from a larger cultural bias. And Marx invites us to see in the imperialist writings of Rudyard Kipling a “successful heroic journey” (26). Colonial cities like Peshawar, a “revolting, incomprehensible place filled with repulsive people” (29), become a backdrop to Kipling’s “encounter with the unconscious” (26), in which the writer “transforms” his “childhood trauma into heroism” (38). What Marx describes is less cross-culturalism than cultural solipsism, in which the function of China, India, or Africa is to serve as a lightning rod for the personal neuroses of Western poets.

The structure of *The Idea of a Colony*—ten chapters, each of which treats a different writer or group of writers—makes it a bit difficult for the book to mount a sustained argument. The later chapters contain some material of interest, including a brief discussion of the mixed reception of Native American poetry in the early twentieth century and an extended reading of Stevens’s “The Comedian as the Letter C,” which takes the poem’s colonial allegory as central, linking it to debates about American nativist modernism. Marx’s most striking insight into primitivism, however, may emerge from his observation that the source for T. S. Eliot’s interest in the primitive, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, was also an important source for C. G. Jung himself. “Lévy-Bruhl’s account of the transition from primitive to civilized mentality,” Marx notes, “became a key element in Jung’s conception of the modern personality,” leading Jung to his concept of the collective unconscious, which was composed of the remnants of the primitive psyche (132). If Eliot and Jung are drawing from the same primitivist source, does that not suggest that Jungian categories might themselves be a form of primitivism? The apparently close fit that Marx finds between poets’ psyches and their primitivist and exotic projections may ultimately suggest that Marx’s own analytic categories are themselves a legacy of primitivism, extending undeterred into our own time.

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