



Churchgoing in the Modern Novel

Pericles Lewis

In Philip Larkin's "Church Going" (1954), a bored cyclist visits an empty church. "Hatless," he removes his cycle-clips as a gesture of "awkward reverence."¹ Uncertain of the names or meanings of various architectural features, he contemplates the church building with some confusion and wonders what the ultimate fate of churches will be:

Power of some sort or other will go on
In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;
But superstition, like belief, must die,
And what remains when disbelief has gone?

Apart from a building in ruins, there will remain some who attend the church out of dependence on ritual or antiquarian excitement: "Christmas-addict[s]" and "ruin-bibber[s]" randy for antique." The church holds a certain attenuated narcotic or sexual thrill for such recovering Christians. Yet Larkin's speaker wonders if the very last person to seek the church for "what it was" will be "my representative,"

Bored, uninformed, knowing the ghostly silt
Dispersed, yet tending to this cross of ground
Through suburb scrub because it held unpilt
So long and equably what since is found
Only in separation—marriage, and birth,
And death, and thoughts of these—for which was built
This special shell? For, though I've no idea
What this accoutred frowsty barn is worth,
It pleases me to stand in silence here;

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A serious house on serious earth it is,
 In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
 Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
 And that much never can be obsolete,
 Since someone will forever be surprising
 A hunger in himself to be more serious,
 And gravitating with it to this ground,
 Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
 If only that so many dead lie round.

The speaker concludes that the church still contains some sort of power, which he associates with the ritual function of “robing” compulsions as “destinies.” The power connected with the church is one it receives from the dead and from its long association with central human life functions around which sacraments have developed. The poem’s stately pace, pseudo-Spenserian stanza form, slant rhymes (idea/here), occasional feminine rhyme (surprising/wise in), rhetorical questions, and combination of high and low diction (“accoutred frowsty”) give it an “awkward reverence” like that of its speaker. The poem itself has something of the quality of a ritual that persists even after its participants no longer accord it sacred meaning, and Larkin’s self-consciously formal verse emphasizes this belatedness. The ironic use of the expression “Church Going” in the title indicates that in fact regular churchgoing (for worship) is no longer an option for the poet. The poet calls attention to his own ritual function when he writes of “mounting the lectern” to “peruse a few / Hectoring large-scale verses, and pronounce / ‘Here endeth’ much more loudly than I’d meant. / The echoes snigger briefly.” The atmosphere of the church and his position at the lectern make his commentary on the end of religion more pronounced than he realizes: he lacks control of his own voice, and the echoes of his “here endeth” suggest the echoes of religious belief and ritual that continue to reverberate in his poem. The poet has here usurped the position of priest and thus arrogated to himself, bored and uninformed though he may be, the power to explain the significance of the hallowed site and to speak in some sense for the dead.

Larkin’s poem describes a situation that fascinated many modern novelists as well as poets. In the works of several major modern novelists, lone male wanderers, often with touristic inclinations, visit churches and puzzle over the question of just what sort of power remains when even disbelief no longer motivates their view of religion. This little-noted topos embraces a wide range of modern heroes or antiheroes—including Henry James’s Lambert Strether, Marcel Proust’s narrator, James Joyce’s Leopold Bloom, Franz Kafka’s Josef K., and (in a twist) Virginia Woolf’s Miss La Trobe. The remarkable similarities among these scenes are all the more striking because several of their authors had not read each other’s work.² In *The Gay Science*, Friedrich Nietzsche has his madman ask “What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?”³ The modernists seem almost ghoulishly attracted to these splendid tombs. T. E. Hulme complained that romanticism was “spilt religion” and proposed in its place a hard, dry classicism; churches seem to have maintained a fasci-

nation for a number of his modernist contemporaries precisely because they “held unspilt,” in the words of Larkin’s poem, some ritual or sacramental power that modern writers sought to channel into their own work.⁴ This image of the church as container of a sacred essence, which the author seeks to transmit in the frail vessel of the novel or poem, seems to haunt the modernists.

Among the major modernists, poets were more likely than novelists to espouse religious views or to link their work explicitly with the problem of religious experience. Thus, Wallace Stevens wrote as late as 1940, “It is a habit of mind with me to be thinking of some substitute for religion. . . . My trouble, and the trouble of a great many people, is the loss of belief in the sort of God in Whom we were all brought up to believe.”⁵ Poems frequently took the tone or even the form of prayers, as in well-known works by W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and W. H. Auden. Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to the fact that novelists of the period shared the poets’ evident concern with religious experience.⁶ The demands of the novel form and the agnostic views of many who practiced it seem to have meant that their search was perhaps less for a “substitute” for religion than for a satisfying explanation of the phenomena associated with religion. If poems frequently echoed their religious precursors, the novel tends to approach the sacred more obliquely. Its characteristic concerns are sociological or anthropological rather than spiritual.⁷ Precisely the attempt to turn this sociological form toward a consideration of religious experience helped the modernists to transform the novel, even as the novel tended to retain some of the characteristics of the sociological study. The modernists’ attempts to describe forms of experience that would traditionally have been called “religious” reflects a blurring of the lines between the sacred and the profane. Precisely as the modernists turn away from institutional religion, they seek forms of sacredness and possibilities of ritual in the profane world. To do so requires a reworking of the techniques of description that their forerunners had applied to this world. In particular, while modern novelists used techniques that had been associated in the realist novel with the accurate description of social phenomena, they tended to adapt these techniques under the influence of symbolism in order to describe more esoteric experiences and to challenge the realist novel’s emphasis on the orderly workings of the visible world. Virginia Woolf described the work of modern fiction (specifically *Ulysses*) as a return to the “spiritual” in response to the “materialis[m]” of her Edwardian predecessors, and the modern novel is strikingly concerned with the spiritual rather than the material aspects of life.⁸

At the level of form, the blurring of sacred and profane can be understood in relation to Edmund Wilson’s claim, in 1931, that “the literary history of our time is to a great extent that of the development of Symbolism and of its fusion or contact with Naturalism.”⁹ Where the naturalist impulse seeks to describe the secular world in all its objective randomness of detail, the symbolist impulse seeks a subjectively meaningful pattern to hold all these details together. On the one hand, the modern novel carries forward the secularizing tendencies represented by realism and naturalism; Emile Zola aimed to make “the experimental novel” into “a practical sociology” and “a help to political and economical sciences.”¹⁰ On the other hand, its attempt to find

672 some underlying pattern in such apparent randomness suggests a continuation of the symbolist project of “spiritualis[ing] literature,” as described by Arthur Symons in 1899:

as we brush aside the accidents of daily life, in which men and women imagine that they are alone touching reality, we come closer to humanity, to everything in humanity that may have begun before the world and may outlast it. . . . [In] speaking to us so intimately, so solemnly, as only religion had hitherto spoken to us, [literature] becomes itself a kind of religion, with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual.¹¹

The sense of the sacredness of the everyday in modernist novels grows in part out of the symbolist heritage, with its emphasis on hermetic meanings and its linguistic inventiveness, but it also results from an extension of naturalist techniques, which give increasing weight to quotidian details. Modernism thus involves both the extension of naturalist or realist techniques and their transformation or even reversal. By presenting life in all its randomness, the modern novel suggests that the randomness itself contains a pattern.

The modernist churchgoing scene stages the confrontation of this underlying spiritualism in the novel with the apparently outmoded institutions of formal religious belief. Unlike Larkin, modern novelists seldom represent a church that is totally deserted. Rather, the churches visited by the male modernist protagonists tend to have small groups of primarily female worshippers, who are often the object of the protagonist’s fantasies. Whether the novelist is Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, the churches visited tend to be Catholic ones, often with rich historical associations that make them appropriate tourist destinations. Almost always, the protagonist’s religion, social class, or background makes him feel like an outsider in the church. Frequently, he feels tired and enters the church looking for a place to sit down or rest. These churchgoing scenes seem in one sense to bespeak a process of secularization, since the protagonists of modern novels very seldom enter churches to worship God. However, the persistence of some sort of sacred power, associated variously with the regulation of sexuality (Larkin’s “marriage, and birth”), the passage of time (“because it held unspilt / So long and equably . . .”), or the art of the church building (“this special shell”), suggests that “secularization” may be a misleading word for what happened to art’s relation to the sacred in the twentieth century. Although the institutions represented by the church building may no longer hold much appeal, a residuum of the sacred seems to remain, and the modern novelist tries to control it. The question posed in each of these churchgoing scenes is whether the novel can in some way sate the “hunger in [one]self to be more serious” that Larkin associates with the sacred ground of the church—whether the novel too can become a site that is “proper to grow wise in.”

The Secularization Hypothesis

In an obvious sense, all of the church scenes I will discuss here deal with a process that has been called “secularization”: the churchgoers are present primarily as tourists, not worshippers, and they feel alienated from the religious proceedings they witness.

Yet these scenes also suggest the continuing significance of institutionalized religion for a variety of agnostic or atheistic modern authors and imply the importance for them of finding new ways to understand and interpret traditional religion. They also suggest a desire for alternative, more authentic forms of religious experience. To recognize the continued importance of religious experience for the modern novel requires a revision of traditional accounts of the novel and of its relationship to modernity. Theories of the novel have tended to emphasize the process of secularization. The most common narrative describes the rejection of earlier, religious forms (especially the epic), in which supernatural forces such as gods and monsters play a role, and their replacement by naturalistic techniques and attention to the empirically observable world. Walter Benjamin, Erich Auerbach, and Mikhail Bakhtin offer versions of this account, but Georg Lukács expressed it most succinctly when he wrote, in *The Theory of the Novel* (1916), that the novel is “the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God.”¹² This account of the novel relies on a much broader historical narrative, which I will call the “secularization hypothesis.” The secularization hypothesis characterizes the emergence of modernity as the result of increasingly rational modes of thought and a rejection of belief in the supernatural. In 1918, alluding to Friedrich Schiller, Max Weber called this process “the disenchantment of the world.”¹³ If the novel is indeed the art form of secularization, “the representative art-form of our age” in Lukács’s words, and if modernity is indeed a secular age, then we could expect the modern novel to be doubly secular.¹⁴ Many major novels of the early twentieth century do in fact seem to represent a “world that has been abandoned by God,” inasmuch as virtually none of their characters expresses any concrete religious faith and no gods intervene in the course of the action.¹⁵ Not only is religion basically absent as a force in the lives of characters in modern novels, but arguably the attack on the conventions of the nineteenth-century novel itself promotes a further step in secularization, namely the rejection or challenging of “grand narratives.” The modernists reject the realist novel’s alleged depiction of an orderly world, represented to us in an orderly manner by a narrator who speaks as if with the voice of God. They thus suggest that our faith in narrative may be a holdover of our earlier religious beliefs.¹⁶ Yet, as the continual attraction to churchgoing scenes suggests, a sense of the sacred persists in these apparently godless novels.

To understand this persistence requires a brief reexamination of the secularization hypothesis, which was receiving its most influential formulations precisely during the high phase of literary modernism. In the broad, unidirectional scheme in which the hypothesis is most often presented, the Victorian era appears as the age of faith and its crisis—“the disappearance of God” or “God’s funeral”—while the twentieth century has already learned the lesson of the death of God and has no further need for him.¹⁷ Victorian earnestness gives way to modern irony.¹⁸ I would like to suggest that the rigid distinction between the Victorians and the moderns masks important continuities. The secularization hypothesis, which bears comparison with the “repressive hypothesis” identified and criticized by Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*, contrasts the knowing, sophisticated twentieth century with the naïve nineteenth. Foucault’s in-

674 quiry into the twentieth century's continued "putting into discourse of sex" suggests a parallel inquiry into the concept of secularization.¹⁹ If the modern age has so comfortably dispensed with the supernatural, why do we continue to produce so much discourse about the need to abandon it, from Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud through the existentialists to the post-structuralist critique of "grand narratives" and the "metaphysics of presence"?²⁰ What accounts for the persistence of popular and literary fascination with the supernatural? Why does secular modern society produce so many vogues for Eastern religions, spiritualism, or the New Age? Why did the twentieth century produce so much religious fundamentalism in developing and developed societies alike? Without proposing a grand, Foucauldian historical framework for the "discourse about God," I would like to note that discourse about God and the supernatural (whether for or against) continues to proliferate. If God died in the nineteenth century, then he had an active afterlife in the twentieth. Nietzsche himself wrote that "After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown.—And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too."²¹ In the first decades of the twentieth century, the question of how to cope with this shadow became an important concern of modern novelists and of a wide range of social scientists, including Weber, Emile Durkheim, William James, and Freud. As Raymond Aron has written of Weber, Durkheim, and Vilfredo Pareto, "It is not too much to say that the fundamental theme of their thought—and, in their view, the fundamental cause of [the crisis of European society]—was the relation between religion and science."²²

Within religious communities themselves, the early twentieth century witnessed a rejection of many of the premises of nineteenth-century liberal religious thought, which had sought an accommodation between traditional religion and modernity through what its critics saw as increasingly private and undemanding forms of religious observance that rejected specific religious dogmas in favor of broad ethical principles. Rather than accept the "modernization" of religion as an irresistible force, theologians as diverse as Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Franz Rosenzweig challenged the liberal consensus. In various ways, the new religious movements and ideas of the twentieth century rejected the notion that religious experience could be reconciled with nineteenth-century ideals such as historical progress and bourgeois culture, and that organized religions could, without tension, support the development of the liberal state. A renewed interest in the thought of Søren Kierkegaard and Nietzsche among theologians pointed to the sense of dissatisfaction with optimistic liberal theology. In the Catholic Church, the "modernist" crisis exposed a deep rift between those who embraced modern science and Biblical criticism and the Church hierarchy, which excommunicated a number of modernists, notably Fathers Alfred Loisy and George Tyrrell, and instituted an oath against "modernism," a term which referred in most languages to the ultraliberal movement in the Catholic Church before it was ever applied to literary experiment. Within religious life, then, as well as in the social-scientific study of religion, the early twentieth century was a period not of widespread agnosticism and

liberalism, but of heightened tension and conflict over the possibilities for a religious life in the modern world. The waves of anti-Semitism and then anticlericalism in France following the Dreyfus Affair showed that such conflict had political repercussions.²³

More recently, a number of social scientists and philosophers have criticized the secularization hypothesis as oversimplifying the data. Opponents of secularization theory, who are legion, tend to note that in most of the world, outside western Europe, the twentieth century witnessed a great upsurge in religious fervor and that a majority of people even in apparently secular countries still claim to believe in God. An entirely different order of objection comes from those who observe the rise of “functional equivalents” of religion, that is, forms of social belonging (labor unions, ethnic groups, sports teams) or belief (nationalism, communism, consumerism, liberalism) that supply the role in modern life once played by the church.²⁴ The critique of the secularization hypothesis most relevant to the modern novel, however, involves a recognition of the increasingly private nature of religious belief and experience. The philosopher Charles Taylor, without denying that religion no longer plays its former role in the public sphere, has argued that the twentieth century witnessed a privatization of religious belief. With the decrease in church adherence among large groups of Western Europeans and international elites, people came to define their religion in increasingly personal terms and thus turned away from the public ritual and sacramental functions of churches. The attitude of “expressive individualism,” influenced by romanticism and by consumer culture, insisted that, in Taylor’s words, “The religious life or practice that I become part of not only must be my choice, but must speak to me; it must make sense in terms of my spiritual development as I understand this.”²⁵ Modern spiritual life, then, is not secular per se, but the sacred no longer has its former public role.

Whether we consider this privatization of religious experience another version of secularization or simply a transformation of religious life, it corresponds to the removal of ultimate values from the public sphere that Max Weber identified with the “disenchantment of the world.” Weber wrote that

Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. It is not accidental that our greatest art is intimate and not monumental, nor is it accidental that today [in 1918] only within the smallest and intimate circles, in personal human situations, in *pianissimo*, that something is pulsating that corresponds to the prophetic *pneuma* [spirit], which in former times swept through the great communities like a firebrand, welding them together.²⁶

These words seem particularly applicable to the modern novel. The novel, of course, concerns itself largely with “direct and personal human relations,” and modernism has long been understood as a “turning inward” of the novel, a heightened attention to the workings of the individual consciousness and to the most intimate of experiences. Yet the novels under consideration here are at the same time monumental. They tend to be very long. They make large claims for themselves and require an attention normally

676 devoted only to holy scripture. As Franco Moretti has observed of *Ulysses* and several other major “modern epics,” “These are not just any old books. They are monuments. Sacred texts that the modern West has subjected to a lengthy scrutiny, searching in them for its own secret.”²⁷ This seems equally true of some of the shorter texts of modernism, such as Kafka’s parable “Before the Law.” Modern novelists frequently imagined their own work as competing with churches. The narrator of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* compares writing a novel to building a church and laments, “How many great cathedrals remain unfinished!”²⁸ Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus sets himself up as a “priest of the eternal imagination.”²⁹ In Henry James’s first novel, the heroine writes that “To go into most of the churches is like reading some better novel than I find most novels.”³⁰ In each case, the novelist suggests that novels take the place, in modern life, of churches. However, unlike attending a church service, writing and reading a novel are fundamentally private activities. The church scene plays such an important role in the modern novel, I will argue, because it stages the encounter between the great public monuments of Christian faith and the intimate monuments of an increasingly privatized form of religious experience, modern novels.

Scenes of Churchgoing

The churchgoing scenes in modernist novels offer opportunities for the novelist to claim a form of monumentality for his or her own work. The modernists develop highly formalized sets of linguistic conventions that depart markedly from the novel’s traditional method of narrating events through the use of mainly referential language. Each novelist tends to develop his or her own style in such a heightened fashion that it is easy, for example, to tell a text by Kafka apart from one by Proust (even in translation); in the attempt to create a sense of the ultimate reality behind everyday life, the very language of the modern novel thus becomes ritualized.³¹ The modernist novel tends, too, by the difficulty and self-consciousness of its literary style, to call attention to the problem of its own interpretation. Scenes of churchgoing are apt especially to highlight hermeneutical questions, both because the protagonists of modern novels often expend considerable energy on interpreting the church rituals they witness and because such scenes seem to announce themselves as moments susceptible of allegorical interpretation. These churchgoing scenes seem indeed to offer themselves up for an interpretation loosely modeled on the fourfold exegetical technique of the medieval allegorists, which I am adapting somewhat differently than Fredric Jameson does in *The Political Unconscious*.³² At the literal level of the motif, the protagonists of these modern novels puzzle over the monuments they encounter. Just as Larkin lingers over the “brass and stuff / Up at the holy end” of the church, and wonders whether the roof is “new or restored,” the modern novelists focus their attention on church architecture and terminology, as a way perhaps of avoiding theological questions, but also in order to transfer questions about ultimate meaning from the ethereal spiritual realm to the solid world of architectural forms and technical language. This motif offers an opportunity for the celebration of a highly ritualized language, so that even the literal level

of the text provides a sort of ritualistic experience. On a formal level, the texts represent a variety of possible relationships between the narrator and the protagonists; all involve some modernist development of the realist technique of free indirect discourse, which links the highly ritualized use of language in the novels to the problem of understanding the experience of the novel's protagonist. On a thematic or moral level, each of the texts seems to explore the limits of the protagonist's ability to sympathize with others, and especially with the female penitents he encounters in the church. This question is clearly linked to the problem of the relationship between narrator and protagonist; both are versions of the problem of other minds. Finally, on the eschatological plane, each of these texts gestures, though in varying degrees, to the typological imagination of the modernists, their tendency to draw parallels between the lives of their own middle-class heroes and the dramas of the Bible and of world history. These four levels of interpretation may not apply equally to each of the texts, but the central concerns of adapting language to describe a heightened form of experience, addressing the narrator's relationship to the protagonist and the protagonist's relationship to other characters, and the place of the churchgoing scene in a broad mythical or historical pattern all tend to resurface at particularly powerful moments in many modernist novels. Although some of these churchgoing scenes may seem minor, I will argue that each plays a crucial role in the development of the novel in which it appears.³³

Notre Dame Cathedral around the turn of the century provides a good first case of modernist churchgoing. Although deprived of any religious consolation in his confrontation with the alien mores of Paris, Lambert Strether, in Henry James's *The Ambassadors* (1902), becomes a haunter of churches: "I'm terrible, in general, for churches. The old women who live in them all know me; in fact I'm already myself one of the old women."³⁴ Strether undergoes a significant change of heart about the apparently wicked Madame de Vionnet upon seeing her praying in Notre Dame. The scene takes place at the very beginning of the second volume of *The Ambassadors*, a turning point in the novel's plot, and it echoes an equally crucial scene in James's early novel *The American* (1876-77). Strether begins the episode conscious of his exclusion from the Catholic Church: "The great church had no altar for his worship, no direct voice for his soul; but it was none the less soothing even to sanctity; for he could feel while there what he could n't elsewhere, that he was a plain tired man taking the holiday he had earned" (A, 2:5). Strether's contemplation of his position at Notre Dame typifies the "double consciousness" that James has ascribed to him early in the novel: there is, as James writes, "detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference" (A, 1:5). Strether has "observation for his pastime," but he spends much of the time observing his own thought processes. James represents all the hesitations, evasions, and self-corrections typical of Strether's halfhearted struggle to escape from his own subjectivity. James's elaborate development of indirect discourse sets up a complex interaction between narratorial statements and Strether's own thoughts, in which Strether sometimes seems to be correcting the narrator's comments about him and James's account of Strether's situation can only with difficulty be disentangled from Strether's own contemplation of it.

Like a student under the charm of a museum, Strether attends to the architectural features of Notre Dame: "He trod the long dim nave, sat in the splendid choir, paused before the clustered chapels of the east end . . ." (A, 2:5). However, he seems rather more interested in studying those visitors to the church for whom it retains its theological significance, the "figures of mystery and anxiety . . . whom, with observation for his pastime, he ranked as those who were fleeing from justice" (A, 2:5). He is as interested in anthropology as in church architecture. The episode introduces some subtle and ancient stereotypes about Catholicism on which a number of modernists will draw. The plural character of Notre Dame's "altars" and "clustered chapels" suggests the "far-reaching, quivering groping tentacles" that Strether has imagined earlier in the novel as part of his friend Waymarsh's view of the Catholic Church. The novel plays on these tentacles too in the image of Madame de Vionnet as having a mind with "doors as numerous as the many-tongued cluster of confessionals at Saint Peter's" (A, 1:230). Multiple tongues and quivering tentacles seem to lie in wait among the "clustered chapels" and "many altars" of the cathedral. James also calls attention to the lighting effects of Notre Dame: "Justice was outside, in the hard light, and injustice too; but one was as absent as the other from the air of the long aisles and the brightness of the many altars" (A, 2:5). Strether distances himself from the worshippers in the Cathedral, the "real refugee[s]," but he longs at some level to participate in their rites. He sits in the choir as if he might like to sing a hymn, and he goes on to meditate at some length on absolution, a sacrament alien to his own (Protestant) religious tradition.

In an innocently voyeuristic mood, Strether observes a lady in a chapel who seems to be praying: "She reminded our friend . . . of some fine firm concentrated heroine of an old story, something he had heard, read, something that, had he had a hand for drama, he might himself have written, renewing her courage, renewing her clearness, in splendidly-protected meditation" (A, 2:6–7). In a wonderful example of "delayed decoding" that prefigures the famous recognition scene by the river later in the novel, the worshipper that he has observed turns out to be Madame de Vionnet, and this encounter proves a turning point in the novel's plot.³⁵ The central themes of the modernist churchgoing scene are present in this episode: Strether's attempt to understand the frame of mind of the worshippers, James's play with the relationship between the narrator's observations and Strether's thoughts, and even a sort of typology whereby Strether associates the real Notre Dame with the imagined one of Victor Hugo. Although the church itself has only residual theological meaning for Strether personally, as a setting for historical romance it allows him to transfigure a woman whom he admires but mistrusts into a splendid heroine. Like Larkin's speaker, he studies the cathedral's architecture, but he is drawn to the church largely by an awkward reverence for the past and for the residues of sacramental power to be found there. Strether's own "small struggle" becomes the monumental subject of *The Ambassadors* as a whole, and the scene of his encounter with Notre Dame emphasizes both his distance from institutional religion and the continuities between his spiritual crises and those undergone by the "real refugee[s]," the still-believing Catholics (A, 2:4–5).

The architectural motif is more pronounced in Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–27; *Remembrance of Things Past*), whose narrator is a serious churchgoer with a taste for Romanesque and Gothic architecture inspired in part by Ruskin. Two churches dominate the narrator's memories of summers in Combray and color his later aesthetic and social theories. Each of them brings the romance of the Middle Ages to the narrator's childhood and inspires one of his earliest sexual fantasies. The narrator's family would attend mass at the fictional church of Saint-Hilaire, with its array of aristocratic associations. The church contains the tombs of the abbots of Combray and the sons of Louis the German ("in porphyry and enamelled copper"), two famous tapestries in silk and wool representing the coronation of Esther, and stained-glass windows depicting medieval noblemen and battles (*RTP*, 1:65).³⁶ Proust seems to take a certain pleasure in the accuracy of his technical descriptions of these works of art, several of which connect the church to the noble family of the region, the Guermantes: their ancestor Gilbert the Bad is the subject of one of the stained-glass windows and an earlier countess of Guermantes is said to have served as a model for Esther in the tapestries. For the narrator, this connection to a legendary history gives the church its "supernatural" power. The narrator is introduced into the passage describing this church in a subordinate clause, one of many in a sentence 384 words long that has only one independent clause.³⁷ This introduction dramatizes grammatically how the narrator's tiny self is overwhelmed by the splendor of the church:

I used to advance into the church, as we made our way to our seats, as into a fairy-haunted valley, where the rustic sees with amazement in a rock, a tree, a pond, the tangible traces of the little people's supernatural passage—all this made of the church for me something entirely different from the rest of the town: an edifice occupying, so to speak, a four-dimensional space—the name of the fourth being Time . . . (*RTP*, 1:66)³⁸

Immediately upon being introduced, the narrator enters into a sort of epic simile, comparing himself to a peasant amazed at the evidence of the passage of fairies. In order to explain his own feelings in encountering the church, the narrator has to reach for a simile referring to an older form of supernatural belief. The narrator continually seeks parallels between the Biblical story of Esther, the legendary history of the Guermantes family, and his own mundane bourgeois life, just as he imagines his own relation to Swann in typological terms: Swann represents the Old Testament, the narrator the New. Proust's novel continually emphasizes the magical element of our relations with others and with the past. Although the apse of the church is "so crude, so devoid of artistic beauty, even of religious feeling," and its exterior suggests that it is a "simple citizen of Combray" like the adjacent buildings, the narrator surrounds the church building itself with an aura of sacredness associated with his fantasies about the Guermantes family (*RTP*, 1:66–7).³⁹ The supernatural quality of the church of Saint-Hilaire has less to do with its sacred function than with its place in history; the historic character of the church reminds the narrator of a fairy world of magic rather than of anything Christian. However, history, legend, and Biblical narrative all tend to merge in this passage, just as the colors of the Esther tapestries melt into one another. The

680 narrator imagines that the church will “endure for centuries after my death as it had for centuries before my birth” (*RTP*, 3:726).⁴⁰ During the First World War, however, the Baron de Charlus will inform the narrator that the French and English have destroyed the church because its tower was being used as an observatory by the Germans, who have occupied Combray (*RTP*, 3:822; *ARTP*, 4:374).

The historical associations of Saint-Hilaire contribute to the narrator’s fascination with the current Duchess of Guermantes, who one day appears in the family chapel and seems to the narrator to be watching him with special attention:

[Her] smile fell upon me, who had never taken my eyes off her. And remembering the glance which she had let fall upon me during mass, blue as a ray of sunlight that had penetrated the window of Gilbert the Bad, I said to myself, “She must have taken notice of me.” I fancied that I had found favour in her eyes, that she would continue to think of me after she had left the church, and would perhaps feel sad that evening, at Guermantes, because of me. And at once I fell in love with her. . . . (*RTP*, 1:194)⁴¹

Although the actual appearance of the Duchess rather disappoints the narrator, since it has more in common with that of her stylish bourgeois contemporaries than with the tapestries or stained-glass windows in which her ancestors are depicted, his fantasies about her aristocratic lineage manage to transform this unremarkable-looking woman into a sort of fairy princess.

The aristocracy has its historical romance; so too does the peasantry, which the narrator associates with the other important church of his childhood, Saint-André-des-Champs, between Combray and Méséglise.⁴² Proust writes: “How French that church was! Over its door the saints, the chevalier kings with lilies in their hands, the wedding scenes and funerals were carved as they might have been in the mind of Françoise” (*RTP*, 1:164).⁴³ The narrator frequently imagines the family servant Françoise as a typical medieval peasant transplanted to late-nineteenth-century France. Like her, Théodore the grocer’s boy, though himself a hard case, seems filled with the spirit of Saint-André-des-Champs. When he helps the narrator’s invalid aunt rearrange her head on a pillow, he displays “the same naïve and zealous mien as the little angels in the bas-reliefs who throng, with tapers in their hands, about the swooning Virgin” (*RTP*, 1:165).⁴⁴ While on a walk with his family, the narrator takes shelter on the porch of Saint-André-des-Champs and compares its statues to “some girl from the fields, come, like ourselves, for shelter beneath the porch, whose presence . . . seemed deliberately intended to enable us, by confronting it with its type in nature, to form a critical estimate of the truth of the work of art” (*RTP*, 1:166).⁴⁵ He develops a desire to clasp in his arms a “peasant-girl from Méséglise,” but it remains unfulfilled (*RTP*, 1:171).⁴⁶ On his solitary walks, “I might go as far as the porch of Saint-André-des-Champs: never did I find there the peasant girl whom I should not have failed to meet had I been with my grandfather and thus unable to engage her in conversation” (*RTP*, 1:173).⁴⁷ Proust’s treatment of the church of Saint-André-des-Champs emphasizes the role of art in constructing the sacred. If the church building seems to elevate the local peasantry through its art, it also takes some of its sacred character from those very

peasants and their immemorial way of life, including the rituals such as weddings and funerals later mentioned by Larkin. The fantasy of the “peasant-girl from Méséglise,” like James’s scene in *Notre Dame*, links a fascination with the sacred to sublimated sexual desire and suggests the role of such desire in artistic creation.

Sexual desire is hardly sublimated at all in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922). In the “Lotus-Eaters” episode, Leopold Bloom drops in to All Hallows Church after picking up a letter from Martha Clifford, with whom he is carrying on a flirtatious correspondence, and before visiting the Leinster Street Turkish Baths. Upon reading a notice of a sermon by a Jesuit missionary, Bloom imagines the reactions of the “heathen Chinees” and “blacks” with “blub lips.”⁴⁸ Despite having been baptized three times (once by a Catholic priest [*U*, 558]), Bloom, with his Jewish ancestry, still experiences the Church as an outsider, and he sympathizes with the Chinese: “Prefer an ounce of opium. Celestials. Rank heresy for them” (*U*, 65). As he observes a mass, Bloom tends to mix theological and sexual associations: “Nice discreet place to be next some girl. Who is my neighbour? Jammed by the hour to slow music. That woman at midnight mass. Seventh heaven” (*U*, 66). Set next to Proust’s gargantuan sentences, the typical phrase from Bloom’s stream of consciousness, at two to eight words, resembles a Lilliputian among the Brobdingnagians.⁴⁹ Like James’s Strether, Bloom admires the practice of confession, which he interprets in somewhat sadomasochistic fashion: “Confession. Everyone wants to. Then I will tell you all. Penance. Punish me, please. Great weapon in their hands. More than doctor or solicitor. Woman dying to” (*U*, 68).⁵⁰ Here as elsewhere Joyce makes explicit the link between sexual dynamics and sacred practices that both James and Proust imply. For Bloom, the very sacrament of Penance fulfils the sexual fantasies of women and priests. Joyce’s novel is pervaded by Bloom’s efforts to identify sympathetically with the thoughts of the women about whom he fantasizes, a desire that reaches its most complete expression in the “Nausicaa” episode. Rather than simply fantasizing about women in church, Bloom likes to fantasize about their fantasies. In this he resembles Proust’s narrator, who falls in love with Madame de Guermantes because he imagines she loves him. Indeed, this quality of sympathetic fantasy is a central concern of the modern novel. Since the minds of others are never quite known directly in modernism, and since even conversation is frequently misleading, the characters and indeed narrators of the novels attempt incessantly to imagine the thought processes of other characters.

Bloom’s particular skill at sympathetic fantasy explains his acumen as an observer of Catholic ritual. Like Larkin’s ill-informed tourist, Bloom has some difficulty with church-related terminology; he is fuzzy on details about the host and on Latin acronyms. Nonetheless, he has a pretty clear theory of the spirit of Catholicism. Like an amateur anthropologist who has descended from outer space with the vaguest knowledge of Catholic theology, he contemplates the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance and attempts to explain their power. Bloom arrives at a workable theory of the social function of the mass not all that far from the attitudes of contemporary social scientists:

Something like those mazzoth: it’s that sort of bread: unleavened shewbread. Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy. Lollipop. It does. Yes, bread of angels it’s

called. There's a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you feel. First communicants. Hokypoky penny a lump. Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the same swim. They do. I'm sure of that. Not so lonely. (*U*, 66)

Some arcane knowledge is smuggled into the narrative under the guise of colloquial language. The phrase “hokypoky penny a lump,” for example, refers to a late-nineteenth-century children’s rhyme about a type of ice cream, but “hokypoky” is also a variant of *hocus-pocus*, a term for deception and false magic, associated by probably false etymology with anti-Catholic ridicule of the Latin mass: *hoc est corpus*. In this apparently childish allusion, then, Bloom or Joyce combines the uncertain and largely forgotten reference to the mass in the name of the ice cream with the idea of the host as a sort of lollipop to make grown children happy.⁵¹ Bloom himself, like Strether and like Proust’s narrator, tends to feel lonely, but if all three are the victims of anomie, each can appreciate in his own way the function of religion in encouraging social cohesion. For Bloom, the Church and its sacraments seem to offer a model of such cohesion in which he would not mind participating, if only his nature and intellect tended that way (“Thing is if you really believe in it” [*U*, 66]). Like other modernist heroes, he seems excluded from full participation in the mysteries of the Church.

The theme of the Passover, introduced in this episode for the first time in *Ulysses* by reference to the matzoth, contributes to a central symbolic aspect of the novel of which Bloom remains mostly in ignorance, the typological parallel between himself and Jesus.⁵² Bloom recognizes the continuity of the mass with the Passover seder, but he probably does not realize that in Christian typological reading, the Passover is a central Old Testament type for the resurrection.⁵³ The christological dimension of Bloom’s day receives one of its most memorable formulations in the final lines of this passage. Bloom tries to remember the meanings of “I. N. R. I.” (“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”) and “I. H. S.” (“Jesus the Savior of Man,” but also interpreted as “In Hoc Signo”—“In this sign [thou shalt conquer]”).⁵⁴ “I. H. S.” amounts for Bloom to a sort of existential comment on the nature of human life, and Joyce’s punctuation nicely captures Bloom’s self-correcting interpretation of the acronym “I have sinned: or no: I have suffered, it is.” Bloom seems to emphasize the stoical conception of life as suffering over the Church’s doctrine of original sin, but his worldview has room for both. He then remembers I. N. R. I., “iron nails ran in,” an intensely material way of describing the Passion, both funny for its attempt to find a common-sense English meaning for the Latin acronym, and terribly sad in the immediacy of the image of Christ’s suffering, recollecting the sheer brutality and mockery of the crucifixion. Over the course of June 16, 1904, Bloom will have his messiah fantasies, and he will commit a few sins, but he will also suffer, and the image of the crucifixion will remain a powerful focus for this suffering. The All Hallows episode may appear to have some of the qualities of a set piece, a simple way station on Bloom’s odyssey, but the problems it raises are crucial to the entire novel. The listing in “Ithaca” of the rites in which Bloom has participated during the day suggests that *Ulysses* may be read in terms of a search for alternatives to the mass, from the mock mass of Buck Mulligan with which the novel opens,

through Bloom's unconscious "burnt offering" of the pork kidney, to the black mass of "Circe" (*U*, 599).

One of the bleaker church visits in the modern novel belongs, not surprisingly, to Franz Kafka. In the climactic penultimate chapter⁵⁵ of *Der Proceß* (written 1914–15, published 1925; *The Trial*), Josef K. is asked by the manager of the bank where he works as a clerk to escort an Italian client on a tour of the town's cathedral. Kafka of course was a Jew, but K. has no apparent biographical reason for his alienation from the Church. Where Strether and Bloom sought a little calm, and Proust's narrator worshipped art, however, K. only enters the cathedral on unpleasant business, possibly sent there as a subterfuge by agents of the Court (his girlfriend Leni tells him "they're goading you").⁵⁶ He arrives at the cathedral in pouring rain; the Italian does not show up; the Cathedral is almost deserted: "K. went through both of the side aisles and saw no one but an old woman muffled in a shawl who was kneeling before a Madonna with adoring eyes" (*T*, 203–4).⁵⁷ The prayerful old woman, vaguely associated with the Madonna, does not hold the same attraction or comfort for Josef K. that Madame de Vionnet, the Duchesse de Guermantes, or even Joyce's masochistic penitents do for K.'s counterparts. Her presence seems almost vestigial. The sexual charge that K. has frequently found from associating with women during crucial moments of his trial, and which may have interfered with his defense, seems drained here too.

Formerly a member of the "Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments," K. seems closer to Proust's narrator than to Leopold Bloom in his knowledge of art and architecture, but he cannot indulge his connoisseurship (*T*, 199).⁵⁸ He lacks the technical terms in Italian for his assignment as tour guide, and he spends the morning before his visit "copying from the dictionary various unfamiliar words which he would need in his tour of the Cathedral" (*T*, 202).⁵⁹ Furthermore, the cathedral is dark, and K. must use his pocket flashlight to examine a picture of "Christ being laid in the tomb" (*T*, 205).⁶⁰ The flashlight contrasts nicely with the candles in James's Notre Dame and the light of the stained-glass windows in Proust. A verger appears and voicelessly gestures for K. to move in "some vaguely indicated direction" (*T*, 206).⁶¹ K. disregards him, but a sign and a light above the smaller of two pulpits indicate that a sermon is about to be preached. The old woman worshipper is nowhere to be seen. While K. contemplates his escape, the cathedral seems to grow huge: "the size of the Cathedral struck him as bordering on the limit of what human beings could bear" (*T*, 208).⁶² K. grabs his album of tourist sights and prepares to leave. A priest, who has climbed the small pulpit, addresses him: "Josef K.!" In a moment that exemplifies K.'s tendency to set traps for himself, he hesitates about whether to leave:

K. paused and stared at the ground before him. For the moment he was still free, he could continue on his way and vanish through one of the [three] small, dark, wooden doors that faced him at no great distance. It would simply indicate that he had not understood the call, or that he had understood it and did not care. But if he were to turn round he would be caught, for that would amount to an admission that he had understood it very well, that he was really the person addressed, and that he was ready to obey. Had the priest called his name a second time K. would certainly have gone on, but as everything

remained silent, though he stood waiting a long time, he could not help turning his head a little just to see what the priest was doing. (*T*, 209)⁶³

Kafka's short but syntactically complex sentences express the paranoid logic of K.'s position. Kafka's syntax is not particularly difficult to follow, but it is relentless. The last sentence quoted shows his difference from Proust: there is a great deal of subordination going on here, but it is tightly controlled and signaled mainly by conjunctions, and it creates the sense not of a flowing stream into which any observation might plunge but of a tightly enclosed space in which the options for action are rigorously limited. Indeed it describes a moment in which K., like a pathetic Orpheus, cannot help looking back at the priest who has hailed him. The narrator's relationship to K. seems even closer than James's to Strether; it is virtually impossible to distinguish a separate voice of narrative commentary from K.'s own analysis of his situation, self-contradictory as that analysis frequently is. K. seems the extreme form of Strether's unhappy consciousness.

Just as Strether thought to escape from his problems by entering Notre Dame, but instead encountered them there in the person of Madame de Vionnet, K. discovers that the Cathedral is only an extension of the Court. The priest introduces himself as the prison chaplain and asks,

"What is that in your hand? Is it a prayer book?" "No," replied K., it is an album of sights worth seeing in the town." "Lay it down," said the priest. K. threw it away so violently that it flew open and slid some way along the floor with disheveled leaves. (*T*, 210)⁶⁴

The tension evident in each of the churchgoing scenes between the possibility of seeking spiritual solace in the church and the touristic impulse to view it as an outsider, a sort of amateur anthropologist, receives its sharpest expression here in the Priest's command to lay down the book and the image of the book's disheveled leaves as K. throws it away violently. The action prefigures Larkin's poet's surprise at the loudness of his own voice. Some power in the church causes K. to lose control of his own actions, particularly symbolic actions like this one. The scene concludes with the Priest relating to K. the parable "Before the Law," which reveals how the Court, with its legal texts, takes the place of the Church and its scriptures.⁶⁵ Strether was comforted to imagine that justice and injustice were equally absent from the aisles of Notre Dame, but the perverse justice of the Court follows K. everywhere. "Before the Law" is of course also an important text about the power of literary interpretation, in which interpretation itself is seen as a sort of sacred task. As a commentary on Kafka's own text, it emphasizes the modernist location of questions of ultimate meaning not in public rituals but in multiply interpretable literary works.⁶⁶

Not all modernist churchgoers are male. Virginia Woolf's last novel, *Between the Acts* (published posthumously in 1941), provides a sort of culmination of the modernist churchgoing scene. Here, near the end of a novel that describes the mounting of a rather idiosyncratic pageant about British history, the playwright and director Miss La Trobe leaves the stage vacant. The pageant itself is a sort of ritual, held annually in the

village. This year, as the audience reads in the program, “The profits are to go to a fund for installing electric light in the Church.” Here, of course, the modernist tradition of describing the subtle lighting effects inside the church, pricked already in a way by Josef K.’s flashlight, is almost parodied by the plan to electrify the Church. Woolf describes the audience’s reaction: “Where was the Church? Over there. You could see the spire among the trees.”⁶⁷ In fact, we never see the inside of the church in *Between the Acts*, but the clearing where the play is performed is described as “an open-air cathedral” and the barn, where refreshments are served, is “as old as the church, and built of the same stone,” although it has no steeple (*BA*, 36, 15). Woolf tells us more about the architecture of this barn than about the church, and this seems almost to prefigure Larkin’s reference to his church as “this accoutred, frowsty barn.” In *Between the Acts*, the local clergyman, “The Rev. G. W. Streatfield, M. A.,” does attempt to offer an interpretation of Miss La Trobe’s pageant, but his understanding of it is as comically inadequate as that of Mrs. Mayhew, who thinks how she would conclude the pageant: “a Grand Ensemble. Army; Navy; Union Jack; and behind them perhaps—Mrs. Mayhew sketched what she would have done had it been her pageant—the Church. In cardboard. One window, looking east, brilliantly illuminated to symbolize—she could work that out when the time came” (*BA*, 101, 96). The Church, whose brilliant illumination is not only Mrs. Mayhew’s ideal but also the literal goal of the entire proceeding, is reduced to a cardboard cutout, glimpsed through the trees, not clearly symbolizing anything. Although this passage seems to indicate Mrs. Mayhew’s foolishness, it also dramatizes how the entire novel poses the problem of infinitely deferred interpretive possibilities: what sense are we to make of British history and of the Church’s role in it?

Woolf focuses her attention on the uncomfortable reaction of the audience to the ending of the pageant with an empty stage:

“Ourselves” They returned to the programme. But what could she know about ourselves? The Elizabethans, yes; the Victorians, perhaps; but ourselves; sitting here on a June day in 1939—it was ridiculous. “Myself”—it was impossible. Other people, perhaps . . . Cobbet of Cobbs Corner; the Major; old Bartholomew; Mrs. Swithin—them, perhaps. But she won’t get me—no, not me. The audience fidgeted. Sounds of laughter came from the bushes. But nothing whatsoever appeared on the stage. (*BA*, 95–6)

The distinctive feature of Woolf’s prose style here is her elaboration of the sympathetic fantasy seen already in the male protagonists of earlier modern novels. Woolf gives us access not only to the stream of consciousness of her protagonists, Miss La Trobe and Isabella Oliver, but also of the anonymous members of the audience, who deny that they can be summarized as easily as the Victorians or the Elizabethans—“she won’t get me—no, not me”—then of particular audience members, minor characters like Mrs. Mayhew, and finally of Miss La Trobe herself.⁶⁸ Miss La Trobe has planned to confront the audience with “present time: reality,” but she mutters, “reality too strong.” In an excess of sympathy, “She felt everything they felt,” and she imagines herself like the dancing girl in the Hans Christian Andersen story, with blood pouring

686 from her shoes. Here the question of the protagonist's sympathy with the worshippers merges with the problem of the narrator's sympathy with her characters, and Miss La Trobe seems to stand in for the author: "Curse 'em!", she thinks, "Audiences were the devil." The novel reaches its climax as a storm breaks and the rain pours, "like all the people in the world weeping. Tears. Tears. Tears" (BA, 96). The line from Walt Whitman's "Sea-Drift" functions as a sort of chorus here, and the passage has moved from the reaction of the audience as a whole through the imagined reaction of individual audience members and that of the author Miss La Trobe to a more universal level. More than the other modernists, Woolf's emphasis falls on the status of the church as absent center and its failure to unite the community, even when the occasion of that community's gathering is a church pageant. In this respect, Woolf shares some of Larkin's coldly elegiacal attitude to the church; it is not a living option for her. Yet, the tone is elegiacal nonetheless, and not simply satirical; throughout Woolf's work, we continue to hear what Matthew Arnold, almost a century earlier, had called "the melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of "the Sea of Faith." The setting of the pageant in June 1939 of course calls attention to the fact that another storm is brewing across the channel, "where ignorant armies clash by night."⁶⁹

The churchgoing scenes I have analyzed here range from Lambert Strether's vision of the Notre Dame of romance, seen by the "brightness" of the candles in its "many altars," to the cardboard cutout of a Church that is not even included in Miss La Trobe's pageant, the proceeds of which will go towards providing electric light for the local church, whose inside we never see. *The Ambassadors* was published in 1902, *Between the Acts* in 1941. Perhaps the most obvious precursor of such novels is Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* of 1896.⁷⁰ What marks Hardy's stonemason off from James's Strether, apart from the arbitrary turn of the century, is that Jude hopes for some meaning and guidance from Christminster and from the church; the discovery that the church is in fact empty and that religious codes are merely expressions of narrow social views of morality causes a great mournfulness for Jude and for Hardy.⁷¹ Mournfulness, however, plays little role in the modernist churchgoing scene, in which no one particularly expects any answers from God in the first place. This may at some level confirm the traditional contrast between Victorian earnestness and modernist irony, but these churchgoing scenes suggest that much remains at stake in the modernists' struggle to "vanquish God's shadow." If the beginning of the modernist period can be marked by the fact that Strether comes to the church not to rebuild it but to admire it, not to worship but to observe the worshippers, then its end can be seen in the fact that Larkin's speaker in "Church Going" enters a church from which even the worshippers have disappeared.

Religious Experience in the Modernist Novel

The sheer abundance of churchgoing scenes in the modernist novel suggests the need to rethink the secularization hypothesis that has (sometimes unconsciously) dominated so much literary criticism. The case of Joyce's *Ulysses* shows the paradoxical

character of the modern novel's encounter with the sacred. T. S. Eliot interpreted *Ulysses* as struggling against the effects of secularization by establishing a "mythical method": "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy that is contemporary history."⁷² However, most critics have rejected Eliot's interpretation, and the predominant way of reading *Ulysses* has been to see it as a debunking or parody of myth. As George Orwell put it, "What Joyce is saying is 'Here is life without God. Just look at it!'"⁷³ Yet this eminently modern novel, presumably the secular product of a secular age, is peculiarly God-haunted. Even though Bloom feels excluded from the mysteries of the Church, *Ulysses* provides other sites of quasi-sacred ritual in which he can fulfill his religious impulses. Joyce of course begins the novel with a mock mass—Buck Mulligan treats his morning shave as a sacrament, his shaving bowl as a chalice, and intones "*Introibo ad altare Dei*" (*U*, 3). Yet Buck's mocking attitude toward the sacraments seems less adequate, ultimately, than the unconscious reverence of Bloom himself: when Bloom burns his breakfast kidney, he is unknowingly reenacting ancient Hebrew rites.⁷⁴ Such allusions, though still ironic (especially since in this case it is a pork kidney), highlight the ritualistic character of many of our daily activities: cooking breakfast, reading the mail, feeding the cat, appeasing a grumpy spouse. The novel confers a sacramental quality on these mundane tasks. As Robert Alter has put it, Joyce "sacralize[s] the profane."⁷⁵

This sense of the sacredness of everyday life, and of the need to create more intimate, modern rituals in place of the great public rites of the Church, can be observed continually in the modern novel. What ultimately characterizes "modernism" in the novel is not a time period or a set of thematic concerns, but the fact that in modernism the form and presuppositions of the novel itself become a subject of experiment. Characteristic of the modern novel are: an intensive concern with the workings of consciousness or the inner life; self-consciousness about the literary quality or style of language used, in opposition to the earlier tendency to make the prose of novels generally referential; a skepticism of traditional, received plots; a preference for antiheroes or at any rate heroes who do not resemble the heroes of earlier novels; the use of private or esoteric symbolism; a tendency to experiment with narrative devices; non-linear representation of time; ambiguous or unstably ironic representation of events; exploration of previously taboo subject matters, such as adultery, homosexuality, or the workings of the digestive system; and representation of rapid social changes, including feminism and the effects of the suffrage movement, the rise of advertising and mass culture, and the shock of the First World War. These characteristics refer to several elements of the novel: its subject matter, its plot, its formal qualities, and the social content linked to the period in which modern novels were being written. Of course, some characteristically modern concerns can be found in earlier novels, whether in François Rabelais's interest in digestive functions, Laurence Sterne's play with narrative conventions, Charles Dickens's complicated plots, or Gustave Flaubert's subtle irony. Modernism in the novel is best described as the convergence of all these factors, and their prevalence among a wide range of writers, not just a radical few.

The features on this list contribute in various ways to the attempt to give literature, as Symons put it, “all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual.” The modernists’ concern with the inner life often suggests a modern form of mysticism. Their elevated attention to language and their use of symbolism both contribute to the awareness of planes of experience not normally recognized in everyday life. Their search for new narrative devices and plots combines an aspiration to grander meanings than those of the realist novel (the allusions to scripture, the Greek myths, the classical unities) with much more mundane subject matter (a day in the life of an advertising canvasser or a society hostess). The quest for new forms of plot and new types of hero underwrites the modernists’ characteristic concern with authenticity in the representation of experience. Unstable irony, ambiguity, and the concern with nonlinear time all challenge realistic methods that represent the world as ordered by the secular forces of a forward-moving history. The concern with taboo subject matters of course bespeaks a challenge to the border between the sacred and the profane. The overwhelming sense that modernism breaks with the past, and that the twentieth century faces radically new concerns, can be attributed to any number of historical causes, but it suggests the need for new values and it chimes in with the sense of contemporary theologians and social scientists that a new form of religion was needed for the modern age. Each of these features serves many functions other than those I have mentioned, and I do not wish to suggest that modernism in literature results solely from a response to a religious crisis. However, the distinctive characteristics of the modern novel all seem to implicate some central concern with the question of the sacred and its forms in modern life. The formal features of the modern novel, in particular, tend to contribute to the sense that its task is both to represent the profane world as fully as possible and to find in it mysteries of a sacred character.

William James made an important contribution to the developing social sciences of religion when he proposed to define religion “in the most general terms possible” as consisting of “the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.”⁷⁶ The figures under consideration here did not necessarily believe in such an unseen order; nor did they often think it possible to adjust themselves to any that might exist. Yet all were concerned with the implications of the disappearance, as it were, of that unseen order, and with the difficulties of living in the visible world without recourse to the unseen. Whereas the realist novel tends to operate primarily on the level of things that can be seen and catalogued, the modernist novel seems obsessed with vast impersonal and ineffable forces, with the way that individual lives are shaped by things unseen—patterns, myths, social and psychic forces—things that cannot be catalogued even by the most encyclopedic of literary forms. These are the gods of modern life with which the modern novel has to grapple.

Larkin’s account of apparently secular postwar Britain suggests how the problem of sacred power remains central to religious experience after organized religion has begun to fade away. As Larkin writes, “power of some sort or other will go on.” In particular, people seem to demand ultimate explanations for the forces—psychic, social,

natural, or supernatural—that shape their lives, whether they find these explanations in traditional, liberal, or modernized religion, neo-orthodoxy or spiritualism, fundamentalism or New Age myth, or such systems of thought as pragmatism, psychoanalysis, dialectical materialism, or quantum mechanics. Although the latter four systems are arguably “secular” in that they resist appeals to the supernatural, people’s relationships to these belief systems are often structured by feeling, desire, and need rather than strictly by rationality. Furthermore, the very appeal of such systems, like that of the great religions, is the rational, intellectual coherence they offer for understanding what are ultimately matters of faith. For the modernists, the privatization of religious values described by Charles Taylor and Max Weber seems already to have taken place, but its consequences are far from clear. Many modernists seek to locate ultimate meaning simply in the flux of individual experience (“an ordinary mind on an ordinary day,” in Virginia Woolf’s phrase).⁷⁷ At the same time, however, the modernists continually return to the problem of ritual and to the question of what types of ritual are appropriate to the privatized and pluralistic (but not necessarily secular) forms that the quest for ultimate meanings takes in modernity. Through its attention to private rituals and forms of meaning-making, the modern novel does what it can to contain and give “a shape and a significance” to those “compulsions” that the Church once “robed as destinies.” While this process may be understood as a form of secularization, it does not exactly amount to a “disenchantment.” Rather, it involves a shifting of the forces of enchantment from the public forum of churches to the private world of individual experience, which is the precinct of the modern novel.

Notes

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1. Philip Larkin, “Church Going,” in *Collected Poems*, ed. Anthony Thwaite (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1989), 97–8.

2. Joyce had read James, and Woolf had read the earlier modern novelists (except perhaps Kafka), but Kafka, Proust, and Joyce were all essentially ignorant of each other’s work.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1974), 182.

4. T. E. Hulme, “Romanticism and Classicism,” written 1913–14, published 1924, reprinted in Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory Since Plato* (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 768.

5. Wallace Stevens, letter to Hi Simons, quoted in *Collected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Frank Kermode and Joan Richardson (New York: Library of America, 1997), 966.

6. See, however, Eugene Webb, *The Dark Dove: The Sacred and Secular in Modern Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975); Robert Alter, *Canon and Creativity: Modern Writing and the Authority of Scripture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000); and George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001). For a discussion of the importance of churches to Proust, see M. J. Jackson, “Proust’s Churches in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*,” *Journal of Literature and Theology* 5 (1991): 297–310.

7. See Marc Manganaro, ed., *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) and Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

8. Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *Collected Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), 2:107, 104.
9. Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 25.
10. Emile Zola, "The Experimental Novel," in "*The Experimental Novel*" and *Other Essays*, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 26.
11. Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1899), 9–10. Symons here echoes Matthew Arnold and Stéphane Mallarmé.
12. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 88. See also Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953).
13. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1948), 155. For the relationship between Weber and Lukács, see Lukács's preface (1962) to *Theory of the Novel*, 12, 15; and Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, trans. and ed. Harry Zohn (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1975), 464–8.
14. Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 93.
15. Novels of the period that do address theological themes more directly seem to be excluded from the modernist canon precisely because of their express interest in religion; works by authors as varied as Georges Bernanos, Willa Cather, Marie Corelli, Graham Greene, Radclyffe Hall, François Mauriac, and Evelyn Waugh bear an uneasy relation to the term "modernism." "High" modernist works address religious experience not thematically but through formal experiment.
16. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 236–7; Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 19–24, 127–52.
17. See A. N. Wilson, *God's Funeral: A Biography of Faith and Doubt in Western Civilization* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999) and J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*, 1963, new ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
18. For a good general statement of the view of modernist literature as motivated in part by "skepticism," see Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900–1916* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 1–4, 89–106. For Victorian earnestness, see Walter Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), 218–62.
19. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1980), 1:13.
20. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, ed. and trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 281.
21. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 167.
22. Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, trans. Richard Howard and Helen Weaver (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 2:2. For the central works of these thinkers on religion, see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (1904–05; New York: Routledge, 1992) and *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (1922; Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (1912; New York: Free Press-Macmillan, 1965); William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. Martin E. Marty (1902; New York: Penguin, 1982); and Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (1913; New York: Norton, 1962) and *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (1939; New York: Random House, 1967). For Durkheim's and Weber's attitudes to religion, see H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890–1930*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1977), 278–87, 314–23.

23. On the religious history of the period, see Mark Lilla, "A Battle for Religion," *New York Review of Books*, 5 December 2002; Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 932–48; Sheridan Gilley and W. J. Sheils, eds., *A History of Religion in Britain* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 277–466, 503–21; Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 325–35; Hans Küng, *The Catholic Church: A Short History*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 159–76; Alec R. Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church: Its Origins and Outcome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934); Robert Tombs, *France 1814–1914* (New York: Longman, 1996), 462–72; Paula E. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 91–114; and Maurice Larkin, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

24. For debate on the secularization hypothesis, see Peter Berger, "Globalization and Religion," *The Hedgehog Review* 4, no. 2 (summer 2002): 7–20; Peter Berger, ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Andrew M. Greeley, *Unsecular Man* (New York: Schocken, 1972); and Robert N. Bellah and Phillip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

25. Charles Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 94.

26. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 155.

27. Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Verso, 1996), 1.

28. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor, 3 vols. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 3:1089; hereafter abbreviated as *RTP*. "Combien de grandes cathédrales restent inachevées!" *A la recherche du temps perdu*, new Pléiade edition, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié et al., 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 4:610; hereafter abbreviated as *ARTP*.

29. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, corrected by Chester G. Anderson and ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking, 1964), 221.

30. Henry James, *Watch and Ward*, in *Novels, 1871–1880*, ed. William T. Stafford (New York: Library of America, 1983), 88.

31. The modernist novel's attempts to draw a sort of sacramental power from the very language of religious experience are most notable perhaps in the lengthy sermons that are such a prominent feature of such works as Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*, and James Baldwin's *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. In each case, although great parodic energy goes into the mimicking of the preacher's voice, the sermons are not quite parodies. The authors of these novels seem to stand in awe of the pure power of the preacher's words, and they incorporate the sermons as a way of channeling that power into their own works.

32. The most famous exposition of the fourfold scheme is in Dante's letter to Can Grande della Scala, trans. Robert S. Haller, in David H. Richter, ed., *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998), 120–2. Fredric Jameson draws on this letter in establishing his own scheme in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 17–102. The following chart, based on one on page 31 of *The Political Unconscious*, will indicate how the four levels of interpretation I have suggested correspond to those used by Jameson and by Dante.

<i>My four levels</i>	<i>Dante's four levels</i>	<i>Jameson's four levels</i>
Motif	Literal	Historical Referent
Form	Allegorical	Interpretive Code
Theme	Moral	Psychological Reading
Typology	Anagogical	Political Reading

If my fourfold scheme for interpreting churchgoing scenes seems anachronistic, it is worth noting that the modernists generally knew Dante well and that they frequently thematize the problem of a

692 typological or allegorical interpretation. Robert Slifkin discusses the typological dimension of Proust in an unpublished paper, "The Uses and Abuses of Art in *Swann's Way*."

33. In addition to the scenes analyzed here, churchgoing plays an important role in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915), Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1938), and other works too numerous to list.

34. Henry James, *The Ambassadors*, New York Edition, vols. 21 and 22 of *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* (New York: Scribner's, 1909), 2:8; hereafter abbreviated as A.

35. Ian Watt discusses James's delayed decoding in "The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*," in Ruth Bernard Yeazell, ed., *Henry James: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1994), 118–34. On the style of *The Ambassadors*, see also David Lodge, "Strether by the River," in *Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 189–213.

36. "[En] porphyre et en cuivre émaillé" (*ARTP*, 1:60).

37. On Proust's style, see Leo Spitzer, "Le style de Marcel Proust," trans. Alain Coulon, in *Etudes de style* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 397–473; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 542–9; and Gérard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

38. "[J]e m'avançais dans l'église, quand nous gagnions nos chaises, comme dans une vallée visitée des fées, où le paysan s'émerveille de voir dans un rocher, dans un arbre, dans une mare, la trace palpable de leur passage surnaturel, tout cela faisait d'elle pour moi quelque chose d'entièrement différent du reste de la ville : un édifice occupant, si l'on peut dire, un espace à quatre dimensions—la quatrième étant celle du Temps . . ." (*ARTP*, 1:60).

39. "[L'abside] était si grossière, si dénuée de beauté artistique et même d'élan religieux"; "simple citoyenne de Combray" (*ARTP*, 1:61–2).

40. "[L'église] me semblait devoir durer longtemps après ma mort comme elle avait duré longtemps avant ma naissance" (*ARTP*, 4:285).

41. "[Son] sourire tomba sur moi qui ne la quittais pas des yeux. Alors me rappelant ce regard qu'elle avait laissé s'arrêter sur moi, pendant la messe, bleu comme un rayon de soleil qui aurait traversé le vitrail de Gilbert le Mauvais, je me dis : « Mais sans doute elle fait attention à moi. » Je crus que je lui plaisais, qu'elle penserait encore à moi quand elle aurait quitté l'église, qu'à cause de moi elle serait peut-être triste le soir à Guermantes. Et aussitôt je l'aimai . . ." (*ARTP*, 1:175).

42. The name Méséglise contains the word "église" or church. Proust originally called the town "Méréglise," which in French suggests "sea-church" or "mother-church." The final name Méséglise suggests "my churches," although it could also suggest a false church, on an analogy with "mésalliance," a term that suggests the narrator's attraction to the peasant girl.

43. "Que cette église était française. Au-dessus de la porte, les Saints, les rois-chevaliers une fleur de lys à la main, des scènes de noces et de funérailles, étaient représentés comme ils pouvaient l'être dans l'âme de Françoise" (*ARTP*, 1:149).

44. "[Il avait] la mine naïve et zélée des petits anges des bas-reliefs, s'empresant, un cierge à la main, autour de la Vierge défaillante" (*ARTP*, 1:149).

45. "[La statue ressemblait à] quelque fille des champs, venue comme nous se mettre à couvert et dont la présence . . . semblait destinée à permettre, par une confrontation avec la nature, de juger de la vérité de l'oeuvre d'art" (*ARTP*, 1:150).

46. "[Une] paysanne de Méséglise" (*ARTP*, 1:155).

47. "Je pouvais aller jusqu'au porche de Saint-André-des-Champs; jamais ne s'y trouvait la paysanne que je n'eusse pas manqué d'y rencontrer si j'avais été avec mon grand-père et dans l'impossibilité de lier conversation avec elle" (*ARTP*, 1:156).

48. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, Wolfhard Steppe, and Claus Melchior (New York: Random House, 1986), 65–6; hereafter abbreviated as *U*.

49. On Joyce's style, see Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses*, rev. ed. (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) and Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic*, 123–229.

50. On Bloom's masochism, see Laura Frost, "'With This Ring I Thee Own': Masochism and Social Reform in *Ulysses*," in Thomas Foster et al., eds., *Sex Positives? The Cultural Politics of Dissident Sexualities* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 225–64.

51. Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93; *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Hokey-pokey.”

52. On the special status of the Bible among sources for Joyce’s allusions, see Robert Alter, *Canon and Creativity: Modern Writing and the Authority of Scripture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 151–83.

53. “For Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

54. *U*, 66; Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, 94. The reference to “I. N. R. I.” was added by Joyce between 1918 and 1922. The version of the passage that appears in *The Little Review* concludes: “I. H. S. Molly told me one time I asked her. I have sinned: or no: I have suffered it is.” James Joyce, “Ulysses, V,” *The Little Review* (July 1918): 45.

55. *The Trial* was of course unfinished at Kafka’s death, and Kafka did not number the chapters. Max Brod ordered the chapters according to internal evidence, and it seems likely that “In the Cathedral” was intended by Kafka for the penultimate position in which Brod placed it. See Brod’s postscripts to the first three editions in Franz Kafka, *The Trial: Definitive Edition*, trans. Willa Muir, Edwin Muir, and E. M. Butler (New York: Knopf, 1988), 264–74.

56. “Sie hetzen dich.” Franz Kafka, *The Trial: Definitive Edition*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, rev. E. M. Butler (New York, Schocken Books, 1988), 203; hereafter abbreviated as *T*. Franz Kafka, *Der Proceß*, Critical Edition, ed. Malcolm Pasley, Fischer paperback reprint (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), 215; hereafter abbreviated as *P*. Pasley restores Kafka’s idiosyncratic spelling of “Proceß.” Like Brod, he places “In the Cathedral” in the penultimate position.

57. “K. durchlief beide Seitenschiffe, er traf nur ein altes Weib, das eingehüllt in ein warmes Tuch vor einem Marienbild kniete und es anblickte” (*P*, 215).

58. “[Der] Verein zur Erhaltung der städtischen Kunstdenkmäler” (*P*, 210).

59. “Die Zeit, die ihm noch freibleib verbrachte er damit seltene Vokabeln, die er zur Führung im Dom benötigte, aus dem Wörterbuch herauszuschreiben” (*P*, 214).

60. “[Eine] Grablegung Christi” (*P*, 217).

61. “[In] irgendeiner unbestimmten Richtung” (*P*, 218).

62. “[A]uch schien ihm die Größe des Doms gerade an der Grenze des für Menschen noch Erträglichen zu liegen” (*P*, 221).

63. Translation slightly modified. “K. stockte und sah vor sich auf den Boden. Vorläufig war er noch frei, er konnte noch weitergehn und durch eine der drei kleinen dunklen Holztüren, die nicht weit vor ihm waren, sich davon machen. Es würde eben bedeuten, daß er nicht verstanden hatte oder daß er zwar verstanden hatte, sich aber darum nicht kümmern wollte. Falls er sich aber umdrehte, war er festgehalten, denn dann hatte er das Geständnis gemacht, daß er gut verstanden hatte, daß er wirklich der Angerufene war und daß er auch folgen wollte. Hätte der Geistliche nochmals gerufen, wäre K. gewiß fortgegangen, aber da alles still blieb, solange K. auch wartete, drehte er doch ein wenig den Kopf, denn er wollte sehn, was der Geistliche jetzt mache” (*P*, 221–2).

64. “„Was hältst Du in der Hand? Ist es ein Gebetbuch?“ „Nein“, antwortete K., „es ist ein Album der städtischen Sehenswürdigkeiten.“ „Leg es aus der Hand“, sagte der Geistliche. K. warf es so heftig weg, daß es aufklappte und mit zerdrückten Blättern ein Stück über den Boden schleifte” (*P*, 222–3).

65. “Vor dem Gesetz.” *T*, 213–5; *P*, 226–7.

66. For a recent discussion of the text, see Jacques Derrida, “Before the Law,” trans. Avital Ronell and Christine Roulston, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 181–220. For a discussion of Kafka and theology, see Walter Benjamin, “Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death” and “Some Reflections on Kafka” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 111–4; and *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932–1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem, trans. Gary Smith and Andre Lefevere (New York: Schocken Books, 1989).

67. Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*, Shakespeare Head edition, ed. Susan Dick and Mary S. Millar (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 2002), 95; hereafter abbreviated as *BA*.

68. For a related analysis of *To the Lighthouse*, see Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 525–41.

69. Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach," in *The Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 401.

70. A more distant, but more widely shared, precursor is Gustave Flaubert, who in many respects sets the tone for modernist descriptions of religious experience.

71. Hardy's mournfulness is noted in Wilson, *God's Funeral*, 3–15.

72. "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 178, 177.

73. George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," *Collected Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961), 136.

74. On the burnt kidney, see Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, 70 n. 1.

75. Alter, *Canon and Creativity*, 162.

76. James, *Religious Experience*, 53.

77. Woolf, "Modern Fiction," 106.