Josephs of the Country: James Jones’s Thirty-Year Men and the Image of the WWII Soldier in American Culture

by

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the war trilogy written by James Jones and argues that Jones’s GI characters are foundational sources of the American World War II soldier’s popular culture image in their own time and in the decades that followed. Not only do *From Here to Eternity*, *The Thin Red Line*, and *Whistle* demonstrate the influences of factors both historic and contemporary across the thirty years of their publication span, but they also serve as a generative medium in which the American soldier’s representative capacity, fluidity, and adaptability are highlighted. While a central goal of this thesis is to encourage new understandings of Jones’s characters as interstitial figures capable of expressing dissent within the channels of regulated society, the study also offers a critique of the ways that these same soldiers perpetuate certain values associated with a traditional American character. The dissertation begins by showing how Jones’s secondary soldiers rework the figure of the colonial yeoman in contemporary contexts, proceeds by explaining the characters’ reflection of Weberian influences in the organization of post-war American life, and finishes by examining their response to
America in Vietnam. At stake in the study is a deeper understanding of the soldier’s image in American life and the ways that this malleable image both shapes and reflects the cultural imagination. By seeking to restore balance to the discourse currently surrounding the soldier, the study engages current scholarship in the fields of Jones scholarship, studies of the war novel, and veteran studies.
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Introduction
Josephs of the Country: James Jones's WWII Soldiers

The American World War II war novel marks a turning point in the genre's history. From a form whose relation to the American character in the twentieth century is characterized either by its modernist alienation (E.E. Cummings’s *The Enormous Room*, Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*) or by its political radicalism (Laurence Stalling’s *Plumes*, John Dos Passos’ *Three Soldiers*), war novels written during and after WWII mark a large-scale change. Alongside accounts of civilian experience, narratives of atrocity, and historical analyses, contemporary soldiering fiction fed the national appetite for stories that would help civilians and veterans alike to understand what “it” had really been like. Whether tied to enlistment, training, active duty, or discharge, war fiction functioned as a medium through which the reality of the war could be integrated—and re-integrated, time after time—not just into an exclusively national representative frame, but also into the broader context of Western cultural iconography.

Besides serving as a medium for ontological negotiations with the war, the tropes generated by WWII war fiction are resources of enormous symbolic value and mythic energy for understanding other currents in contemporary American culture. A central idea is that the ordinary American soldier is the modern day equivalent of the colonial yeoman, a “Joseph of the country” upon whose honest and unassuming toil rests the progress of the generations, an industrious and temperate bedrock for a law-abiding and

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1 As Robert Reed Bonnadonna notes, “If poetry is the dominant genre of World War I (and the oral account that of the Vietnam War), the big novel is surely the master genre of World War II” (14). In American war literature of WWI, the disillusionment of works like Hemingway’s has less to do with the problems of an historic American self than it does with the crisis of modernity. Other works, like Dos Passos’s *Three Soldiers*, consider the soldier from the perspective of melting-pot cultural ferment. By the time of the Second World War, authors like Mailer, Vidal, Hawkes, and Wouk were writing war novels whose themes range from disempowerment to surreal fantasy, while war fiction by black and other minority writers became a flashpoint for discussions of patriotic performance in an inherently racist culture. War or soldiering fiction was written, published, sold, read, and adapted for film on an unprecedented scale in the Consensus period. Into this milieu the novels that make up Jones’s war trilogy appeared in 1952, 1962, and posthumously in 1978.
economically stable nation, and a bellwether for gauging the synchronicity between a country’s public mind and its military program. Arising from mixed perceptions of the latter, the GI often appears in WWII fiction as a figure of resistance to the specter of a malignant and all-pervasive bureaucracy that lay beneath the benign surface of Consensus-era optimism. From 1938 to 1962, popular belief in the moral justification and eventual triumph of liberal values globally was undermined by fears about the threat the military-industrial complex posed to American individuality. In popular war novels, the crisis is characterized by soldiers who persistently perceive the psychic threat posed by the military's institutional command structure as greater than the physical danger presented by the foreign enemy, because less honest in its intentions.

An essential element of the war story's narrative is perfectly adapted for the framing of this rupture of trust between the individual and the state, and distinguishes the genre from all other forms of WWII cultural representations. Unlike works in which the main narrative propulsion is provided by civilian characters, who, when caught up in war, ask "Why is this happening (or why did this happen) to me?" the primary question of active-duty soldiering fiction, "Why am I doing this?" is always already preceded by the fact of self-abnegation to an organization whose service to the principles of freedom can frequently seem at odds with the practices of its rigid hierarchical structure. In this way, the figure of the soldier caught between self-sacrifice in service of duty to the liberal state or self-preservation in fulfillment of its creed, war fiction occupies specific narrative territory of unique thematic possibility.

In his now-famous study of WWI and modern memory, Paul Fussell calls the soldier's conflict one of the "tragic satires" of war and its representations, and, indeed, after World War I it is impossible to think of soldiering fiction without thinking of its characters as figures determined by this central aporia (Great War 7). Some of the genre’s interlocuters, like Klaus Theweleit, Paolo Valesio, and George Mosse, consider the hypermasculine soldier as a figure that expresses a cultural desire for distinction and particularity combined with what John Fraser calls the "appeal of the martial and heroic"
For the fictional soldier, psychic surrender is often worse than physical annihilation; their narrative condition means that soldier characters become voices for expressing the ways that obedience comes into fatal collision with the promises of progress and prosperity embodied by the military.

My dissertation, “Josephs of the Country: James Jones’s Thirty-Year Men and the Image of the WWII Soldier in American Culture,” examines the war fiction trilogy written by the author whose works have played a central role in the development of the non-commissioned WWII soldier as a cultural touchstone in post-WWII American life. In my view, the soldier characters in From Here to Eternity, The Thin Red Line, and Whistle stand, Janus-like, at the crossroads of American liberal culture, hallmark figures in the effort to preserve individuality from the encroaching forces of bureaucratic statism. On one hand, they look back to the monolithic frontier roots of an historic American character; on the other, they are generative models for new forms of resistance needed in a bureaucratic and mechanistic postwar society.

I support my belief in Jones's soldier characters as generative touchstones by showing how his characters embody the fullest range of the war’s physical and psychological experiences. In a culture which increasingly understands itself through the stories—good and bad, heroic or cowardly, humanitarian or imperialist, integrated or alienated—of its war experiences, Jones’s war fiction influences all of America’s later war understandings and plays a foundational role in establishing the soldier as a central cultural peacetime figure in postwar America. What Alan Robinson, in his theory of historical fiction, describes as the cognitive asymmetry between experience and inquiry is, in Jones’s war fiction, subject to a social and chronological span that is rarely available in war fiction. By ranging across pre-war Hawaii to post-war civilian life, Jones’s narratives imagine

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2 Robert Reed Bonnadonna writes: "It is a central paradox of the hypermasculine figure, one grown sharper in the context of the gigantic, impersonal social organizations of the twentieth century, that the heroic fulfillment he desires must be sought through his membership in an organization, or within a social structure, from which he is at pains to distinguish himself even while he is complicit with it" (31).
their repeating main soldier characters in every conceivable situation: in peace-time; in battle; as injured veterans awaiting redeployment; and as discharged veterans. As important to the characters’ psychological development as the war is, the novels’ portrayal of the constantly fluctuating social milieu that the characters must negotiate functions on a second, historically oriented plane.

A central theme of my dissertation, therefore, is an argument for the importance of Jones's war fiction in projective, or forward-looking senses, as well as historiographic ones. In Jones's fictional WWII soldiers, all the 'classic' American virtues are reborn in a figure that combines the independence, self-reliance, physical stamina, and self-discipline of the eighteenth century, but in a twentieth-century framework of almost ceaseless institutional interpellation, and the specific ways and means of these intersections comprise the chapters that follow this introduction. An aspect of Jones’s war fiction that impacts my discussion is the way it anticipates by decades the important facets of what Tom Engelhardt calls the "triumphalist despair" that was an often overlooked or conveniently forgotten reality of victory culture (44). Jones’s soldiers are disillusioned and dysfunctional long before post-traumatic stress was acknowledged as a central element in veteran discourses; likewise, Jones’s use of his own war experience in the novels anticipates later interdisciplinary interest in autobiography in the fields of history, literary studies, and the social sciences. What guides my analysis, however, is neither the works’ autobiographical reflection of the author nor their life as exhibits connected to inquiries into the representation of war-related trauma. My concern, instead, is to show why and how his fiction’s ordinary soldiers are uniquely fitted for becoming a new “classic” American icon.

Like any credible cultural analysis, mine is obligated to sort out the burden of paradoxes and contradictions that make its subject interesting. By arguing for the works’ significant role in the creation of a new American icon, I do not ignore the ways that the image is complicated by connotations of uncritical heroism, and so I use the words “figure” and “archetype” and avoid using the word “hero” in my description. Indeed, the opportunity for genuine critical reflection that Jones's war novels make available is frequently
accompanied and sometimes even overshadowed by what Jeffrey Walsh calls a kind of softening jingoism (2); but I believe that the presence of this language contains within it important signposts to the historical contexts that influence Jones’s fiction. Most importantly, in Jones’s fictional soldier I see the emergence of a figure whose close parallels to the historic American yeoman provide opportunities for the transfer of certain values (which I discuss in more detail in the chapter outlines below) across the cultural divide created by World War II.

On a second front, the study matters because it sheds light on the artificial evolution of a figure that is now so indigenized into Western consciousness that it seems natural. Since the last decades of the twentieth-century, the all-American soldier is the touchstone figure for "support" culture built around sentimental heroism, whose performance of duty as an instrument in the protection of institutional interests is made acceptable by his or her common-folk ordinariness, and yet whose uniqueness simultaneously preserves the sacred tenets of Lockian liberal individualism. Particularly as the naturalized soldier has become the primary representative of institutionally sanctioned violence in American culture—the first agent of intervention in an ever-expanding peace patrol—the figure extends legitimacy to the police officer, prison guard, transportation security agent, organized crime or drug agent, federal border patrol officer, and private security guard.\(^3\)

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\(^{3}\) From theories that see the U.S. as a nation whose essential outlook was shaped primarily in relation to the absence of a history of war (Hartz), to one in which the negotiation of self is historically dependent on forcible conquest of the (Indian) Other (Slotkin), the role of sanctioned forms of violence in American liberal society has a long and complex history. Liberalism’s justification for war has always rested on the principles of intervention for justice’s sake only; as Edward Adams observes, in order to preserve the moral upper hand it is necessary to downplay the graphic aspects of battle; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Pope rewrote the war epic in the mold of liberal values, and by doing so, radically altered a tradition. As well, war is innately opposed to the inherently peaceful values of capitalism. Thus, the history of the soldier in American fiction often reflects these paradoxical junctures. Beginning with Stephen Crane, the common soldier is the activation point for a series of crises that arise from the collision of rugged individuality and social obligation, self-preservation in the Lockian tradition in conflict with the myths of liberal epic heroism, and the common American caught in the monopolizing government institution.
In this way, and though I continue to build on existing analyses of their historic significance in liberal society, I argue in a completely new way for the projective significance of Jones’s soldiers. By foregrounding violence, Jones’s novels produce conflicting effects. Because they draw attention to the regeneration of mythic violence in the twentieth century, they uncover the source of what Richard Slotkin calls a “structuring metaphor” in American life (5). At the same time, no matter how critical the works are in intention, they also contribute to the process of mythogenesis.

The study derives its central inspiration from an essential pair of works in the canon of Jones scholarship: Steven R. Carter’s 1998 work *James Jones: An American Literary Orientalist Master*, and James R. Giles’s 1981 study, *James Jones*. Carter’s observation about Jones’s lifelong preoccupation with “the beleaguered place of the individual in a modern, increasingly technological and bureaucratic society” (11) and his analysis of Jones’s belief that the solution lay in forms of self-reliance which drew upon European, Asian, and American influences exerts considerable influence on my work; Giles’s study of the evolution of Jones’s soldiers is an essential text for anyone conducting a study of the characters and a classic in its own right. Besides these, other significant influences on the development of my thought include the theory of conformitarianism put forward by the fragmentation historian, Louis Hartz, and the view of the liberal imagination put forward by Lionel Trilling; Jurgen Habermas’s emphasis on the relation of the title "private" for servants of the state whose public representativeness is fraught with connotations of anonymity; the influence of Max Weber’s Americanization in representations of the soldier’s belonging in and understanding of ‘band-of-brothers’ culture; and the theories of Jeffrey Walsh and Robert O. Self, which analyze the ways that frontierism and sexuality, respectively, continue to shape American war narratives.

One of my central aims is to offer a way of understanding the significance of Jones’s soldiers that does not depend on seeing them as wholly on one side or the other of the debate about the ‘rightness’ of American wars. James Jones's own history with academia is characterized by a similar dualism: he has not always fared well. Given that Jones was himself a boxer, it is hard to resist a boxing analogy to describe his status. In the club of
white male writers that dominated WWII American war fiction from 1948 to 1962, Jones can seem like the perennial fringe contender whose lay popularity did little to help—and may have, perversely, actually worked against—his acceptance by serious literati. For sheer force, Jones’s writing won the respect of most of his novelist contemporaries, but, like fellow boxer Sonny Liston, his journeyman gifts were never in the mold that makes sweethearts of fighters or writers and their academic judges—though if Liston was famously humiliated by reporters at the Philadelphia airport, at least he did not have to put up with the kind of venom Hemingway infamously nursed toward Jones. In academia, an opinion took root that claimed Jones’s structural inconsistencies and raw style were somehow indicative of an intrinsic un-literariness. It is a curious reaction, obliquely symptomatic of the long efforts of high criticism to keep separate some of the best aspects of liberalism—author-centric creativity and aesthetic idealism—from some of its worst: vulgarity, mass-market celebrity—and war. That, and the charge that he could “only” write war fiction combined to keep Jones’s work in the borderlands of academia.

The attitude is peculiarly near-sighted, since it undervalues both Jones’s talent with non-military short fiction (The Ice Cream Headache and Other Stories) and his gift for using military culture to explore aspects of American society that are part of the common history and experience of its people. An overlooked aspect of Jones’s fiction is the mark

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4 The two writers had a famously tumultuous relationship. In a letter to Charles Scribner, Hemingway said: “He (Jones) is an enormously skillful fuck-up whose work will do great harm to this country and I hope he kills himself just as soon as it does not hurt yours or his sales.” In a letter to Maxwell Perkins, Jones wrote: “I think Hemingway is confused on lots of things, just as I think Fountainhead was confused; but I also think both are magnificently right in many things” (Hendrick 77).

5 In the doctoral thesis that preceded his important 1989 book on Jones’s oriental liberalism, Steven Carter said the “outrage” Jones’s grammar provoked in some critics relieved them of an intellectual problem, since “they no longer had to probe his books for meaning, but could get by with a few choice specimens of his grammatical errors. After all, the entire fate of Culture was at stake every time he said “ain’t”, wasn’t it? . . . how could literature ever survive his refusal to use the apostrophe properly?” (8).

6 To his publisher, about positive reviews of his short fiction, a disillusioned Jones said in 1967: “I myself am not too terribly excited about those reviewers treating the story
it leaves in surprisingly diverse popular and academic genres. As a case in point, the relation of Jones’s war fiction to American working class literature is rich but largely unexplored territory, and comprises part of the third cultural “front” of my dissertation’s study. All of the novels in his trilogy foreground much of soldiering as mundane but backbreaking labour, to make what Alfred Kazin said was "ultimately a judgment on a society whose men have no real work" (79). Over the timeframe of their chronology, Jones's portrayal of soldiers as blue-collar workers covers the pre-war thirties history to the neo-liberal seventies. That enlisted soldiers and working class people share common concerns and face similar difficulties in the landscapes of American culture is not surprising; as Nicholas Coles and Janet Zandy point out, however, the public face of labor became less visible in the presence of postwar technological advancement, and withdrew into “recessed” private spaces (583), a shift Jones’s fiction mirrors in telling ways. Loyal Jones has given some attention to Jones’s representation of Appalachia, especially through the character of Prewitt, but more work needs to be done to map the connections between Jones’s proletarian and labour themes and the broader working tradition in American literature. I do so in the concluding section of my dissertation by arguing for a re-evaluation of Jones in post-9/11 contexts, and especially by showing how his work connects to specific examples of American war fiction about Iraq. Doing so is key, I think, to showing how the transformation of the soldier into a new kind of yeoman begun in Jones’s work continues to be carried out.

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collection well. After the beating I took [about the novel Some Came Running], I don’t give a fuck what they do; I’m sure it will be much easier for them to laud my stories since the volume has no chance at all of becoming a best seller anyway” (Hendrick 322). Popular blockbusters like Arthur Hailey’s Wheels, a novel about working the line in the auto industry (and that was made into a television movie of some acclaim in the seventies), owe much to Jones’s exploration of unknown workaday worlds, as do more "serious” works like Ken Kesey’s labour novel Sometimes a Great Notion and Billy Lynn’s veteran’s story Long Halftime Walk. An academic work like Ben Hamper’s Rivethead reveals links with Jones through its examination of proletarian Americanism, especially as it concerns progress, efficiency, and the subsequent catastrophic effect these twin pillars have on the tradition American self-conception. Jones’s preoccupation with street-level culture and the military’s correctional system align well with the growing attention given to prison literature (Doing Time, Narrating the Prison) and street literature.
The lack of critical attention given Jones’s working class soldiers was typical of his academic history generally. James Giles notes, in his introduction, that from 1951 to 1976 only ten scholarly works about Jones’s work were published. After Jones's death in 1977, biographies and collections of his correspondence by George Hendrick and Frank MacShane officially memorialized Jones mostly as of one of a select group of American male writers whose fiction and personalities were reciprocally formed. Besides these, from 1981 to 1989, seven scholarly works appeared, and in the '90s, ten. Obviously, in the last decades of the twentieth-century, Jones’s survival in academia was sometimes lichen-like outside of the work of Giles and Carter. More surprising, then, that around 2000 an unusual change began to take place: since that year, and in addition to the ten scholarly publications written by established academics, no less than thirty-six doctoral dissertations (and one master’s thesis) that feature some aspect of, or that concentrate entirely on, Jones’s war fiction have been produced; an astonishing thirty-one of these appear after 2001.\(^8\) The most obvious explanation is that the events of September 11, 2001, exert a kind of ambient force field around WWII cultural representations, especially those so readily available in the lore of popular culture that they seem, at least, to offer access familiar touchstones in the face of a second Pearl Harbor. I believe that a more accurate and complex answer results when we consider that Jones's work, with its mix of deep ambivalence toward American political institutions and unequivocal love for its people, touches a common register of loyalty and anxiety in post-9/11 American

\(^8\) Dissertations that include a Jones reference, organized alphabetically by their authors’ last names: Blaskiewicz, Robert J.; Carter, Russell Kendall; Chester, Robert Keith; Creadick, Anna Greenwood; Christle, Patrick Paul; Di Carpio, Ralph; Dicerson, Jacob Allen; Erickson, Lucas E.; Fiser, Benjamin F.; Froula, Anna Katherine; George, Sean M.; Gregory, Jim; Grindod, Jacqueline C.; Hendrix, Jan; Huebner, Andrew Jonathan; Ireland, Brian; Kasperski, Kenneth F.; LaFarge, Albert; Love, Rebecca I.; McDonald, Damina; Mundey, Lisa M.; Nagy, Peter; Peebles, Stacy; Peppler, Chito C.; Perel, Zivah; Perrin, Thomas Gordon; Ross, Mathew Samuel; Sabol, Regis T.; Smihula, John Henry; Sonnenburg, Penny Marie; Stockton, Julie M.; Tateishi, Shaun K.H.; Tsika, Noah; Van Meter, Larry A.; Vernon, Alex Cay; Vincent, Jonathan Edward; Wade, Elizabeth W.; Watts, Stephen Baldwin.
society, and offers, if not solutions, ways of understanding the cultural incoherence that is becoming the hallmark characteristic of the new liberal century.

Jones’s popularity as a research subject has diverse foci. Penny Marie Sonnenburg (2002) sees Jones’s fiction as the “essence of his historical experience—his soul” (7); Jan Hendrix (2009) takes a similar view of Jones’s as an author whose fiction is primarily driven by the author’s own wartime service. Likewise, Russell Kendall Carter (2009) studies Jones’s war novels as an expression of a struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, and his dissertation is representative of a group that reads Jones's war experience in closely autobiographical ways through his war fiction. Carter analyzes the development of Jones’s theory of the evolution of the soldier, set out in his 1975 non-fiction work *WWII*, as does Robert Reed Bonnadonna (1999), whose dissertation also extends Peter Leo Hays’ 1965 study, "The Maimed Figure: An Ancient Archetype in Modern Literature." Bonnadonna examines Jones's characters as one of a triad of contemporary re-inventions of ancient Homeric types of soldier--in Jones's case, the hyper-masculine soldier-hero against the models put forth by Evelyn Waugh and Kurt Vonnegut, the "soldier-gentleman" and the "soldier-storyteller" respectively.

on Jones’s importance for the study of violence and the centrality of non-heroes in war fiction.

In the post-graduate realm of academic criticism about Jones since 2000, contributions by James R. Giles, Jonathan E. Abel, Lawrence Dugan, Thomas J. Wood, Michael Kline, and Robert Lacy continue to provide evidence for Jones as a worthy subject of critical study. Many film-studies articles are Jones-centric, since interest in both the novels’ translatability to film and Terrence Malick’s film adaptation of *The Thin Red Line* shows no sign of abating. And yet, Jones’s academic supporters seem still to feel the need to defend him—in 2011, for example, the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas, Austin, hosted a conference titled “Why Jones and Mailer Matter.”

I have already mentioned how the works regularly lie athwart their own conflicting ideological impulses. In his own non-fiction work about war, *WWII*, Jones sets out his theory of the evolution of the soldier in ways that further problematize the analysis of his literature, partly because it then becomes necessary to separate the author’s intention from the actual afterlives of his creations. Jones’s style is a determining factor in embedding the soldier in postwar culture; it is also central for the reconceptualization of the liberal war epic that occurs in the same period. His graphic imagery is reminiscent of the “stretching the bull’s hide” trope used in classical, pre-liberal war epics like *The Iliad*, which Edward Adams contrasts with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century move to sanitize war narratives by de-emphasizing graphic descriptions.

One of Jones's most loyal supporters, William Styron, said Jones’s use of language was “so conventional as to be premodern . . . but it had Dreiserian force, the people were alive as those of Dostoevski”; about Jones’s insistence that his editors not censor words like “fuck” and “cunt”, Styron said his resistance to the “guardians of decency . . . was now

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9 Two examples are J.E. Smyth’s “James Jones, Columbia Pictures, and the Historical Confrontations of From Here to Eternity” in *Why We fought: America’s Wars in Film and History*, and “Filming the Spiritual Landscape of James Jones’ The Thin Red Line” by Barton R. Palmer, in *Twentieth-Century American Fiction on Screen.*
inscribed on the printed page in the speech pattern of those who normally spoke it. This alone was cause to celebrate” (Hendrick viii). By linking him to Dostoevski and Dreiser, Styron gestures to Jones’s self-conscious devotion to his writing as art; beneath the use of the soldier’s “gamy language” Irwin Shaw also saw a “man of letters, deeply involved in literature . . . a great poem or an eloquent page of prose could bring tears to his eyes” (MacShane 306). Besides their lexicon, Jones’s genius lies in his ability to grasp what many soldiers could not express, the despair, the fear, the depression, the pain, the thirst, the sexual frustration, the exhaustion, and above all, the absolute dependence on the institution that the war demanded.

The body of the dissertation is organized into three chapters. Each focuses on one of the novels of Jones’s war trilogy, ordered chronologically according to their publication order: Chapter One reads 1951’s From Here to Eternity; Chapter Two, 1962’s The Thin Red Line; and Chapter Three, 1978’s Whistle. Chapter One, “Good Soljers and Good Men: G-Company Waits for War in From Here to Eternity,” concentrates on the secondary characters in From Here to Eternity. In my view, these characters are generative models for what I think of as the soldier-yeoman, the ordinary enlisted man who, when confronted by the reality of the army’s institutionalism, becomes neither a tragically individualist hero like the novel’s young protagonist, Corporal Robert E. Lee Prewitt, nor an insanely depersonalized pragmatist like Prewitt’s counterweight, First Sergeant Milton Anthony Warden. In this way my work departs from the tradition in Jones’s scholarship that concentrates on Prewitt or Warden as the novel’s foundational characters, and builds on studies that emphasize the main characters’ struggle against the machinery of conformity, by showing how the secondary characters offer the possibility of a negotiated existence within the Army’s command structure.

In my analysis, the intensity of Warden’s and Prewitt’s ideological crises is worked out against the ordinariness of the secondary characters, a framework into which occasional identification with either Prewitt or Warden can safely occur. In this way, my reading of the novel’s ‘regular’ characters sees them as elements in Alex Woloch’s theory of secondary characters as a distributional matrix, and traces their relationship to the
middle-range figure of the historic yeoman. Often overlooked or treated as fragments with a strictly adjunct function to the central plot line, I contend that in these ways figures like Red, Chief Choate, and Maylon Stark function in ways far more important to the narrative than is typically thought because they exemplify a pragmatic, survival-oriented approach to the reality of mid-twentieth century society. As the warp and weft of G-Company, I aim to show how the peripheral characters’ plausibility saves what would otherwise be a relationship of caricatures between Warden and Prewitt. And aside from their usefulness as dramatic ballast, the secondary characters also emerge as the original models for the iconic soldier capable of “dividing it all by two” and thus surviving the military in all its bureaucratic byways. As examples of struggling and dysfunctional characters who survive the institution more or less in much the same manner as thousands of actual soldiers do, and who help move the soldier from strictly war-related contexts to those of ordinary daily life, I see important models emerge from the secondary characters in *From Here to Eternity*, models which dramatize some of the conceptual limitations imposed on originality by conformitarianism and which were discussed contemporarily by Louis Hartz and Lionel Trilling.

Chapter Two, “Jerkoffs and Brothers, Getting By: C-for-Charlie Goes to War in *The Thin Red Line*,” focuses on Jones’s portrayal of battle-experienced Guadalcanal soldiers in *The Thin Red Line* in order to draw out the ways they represent the influence of Max Weber in American culture. In this extension of the “dividing it all by two” metaphor I set out in the first chapter, I pay special attention to the ways that the nature of WWII battlefield experience becomes a crucible in which the characters’ understandings of their membership in the band-of-brothers is founded on the Weberian concepts of status group and life chances. In the brothers’ bravery, their fear, their cynicism, their masculinity, their self-reliance, their dependence, their ambition, their belief in love and, of course, their capacity for hate, I see the realization in fiction of Weber’s views about charisma, heroism, and leadership. Since this is one of the most famous of the American war novels about WWII, much of the chapter’s work takes place in light of analyses of Weber’s theory of rational calculation to situate the novel’s specific construction of soldiering and soldiers, and all its associated tropes, within the larger tradition of America’s self-
understanding that occurs through representations of war. I argue also that the novel’s strength lies in its capacity for pointing out some of the weaknesses underlying Weber’s theory of rationality, particularly in relation to technological infallibility: I show how Jones’s ambivalent and conflicted characters, caught up in cycles of violence from which they struggle with various degrees of success to extricate themselves as human beings, remain inexpert professional soldiers. As I also do with From Here to Eternity in Chapter One, in this chapter I analyze what it is about this novel that makes it far more complex than it is often considered to be, and why it should continue to spark critical debate as a foundation for American understandings about WWII. As part of that discussion, and in continuance of my search for the roots of the everyday soldier, I explore the characters’ self-reflexivity against their spiritual self-conceptions as part of what I see as a process that has much to reveal to us about conceptions of the soldier in our current moment.

Chapter Three, “Into Thin Air and Out: Jones’s Good Soljers Come Home in Whistle,” considers the last novel in the trilogy in relation to Vietnam-era discourses. For the way it intersects with representations of the frontier, for the way it depicts heterosexual relations, and for the way it imagines the class divide between enlisted men and civilian society, Whistle offers a bleak picture of its returning veterans’ disillusionment and disorientation. Its soldiers present layered images of the veteran with few or no prospects in the civilian world, who has trouble forming healthy relationships, and who wanders a depressing series of bars and parties in search of the double anaesthetic of booze and sex. Despite their deeply cynical diegesis, however, these characters offer a crucial path to understanding how malleable the figure of the soldier becomes in the post-war decades, from one that offers an “alternative to a bourgeois society, which deals death to the instinctual life” (Karl 95), to one that is made the instrument of calls for returning American to its roots.

As well, and besides forming instructive historical parallels in relation to the conditions encountered by many Vietnam veterans, the Whistle soldiers act as the refutation to much of the nostalgia that reframes WWII as a good war, and its veterans as prosperous optimists for whom every opportunity was an advantage. Though Whistle was not as
successful as *From Here to Eternity* or *The Thin Red Line*, I use the available evidence to speculate that this is because its pessimism was too charged with a brand of conservative thinking that has been regaining its particular ground in American popular culture today, and which attaches many traditional values to the figure of the soldier that Jones anticipated near the end of the twentieth century. The novel’s value lies in its long prophecy of the intrinsic way that the veteran continues to figure in the daily landscape of American life; at the same time, *Whistle* suggests the ways the figure of the soldier is vulnerable to social and political manipulation in ways that can call into question what Holger Klein called the war novel’s obligation to “proportionalism of selection, justice of typification, and correctness of detail” (4).

My conclusion considers the image of the World War II soldier in American popular culture of this moment broadly and the continuing influence Jones has on American war fiction, especially recent Iraq war fiction. Drawing on examples of the fluidity of the soldier’s image in current popular culture contexts, in official speeches, in social media contexts, and in think pieces, I seek to show how the World War II soldier is a deeply embedded touchstone in American culture, and how representations of soldiers and soldiering are associated with national characteristics often seen as being in danger of erosion, either because they have been overwhelmed by technology or as a result of some fundamental loss of values. I draw brief but specific parallels between Jones’s trilogy and recent work by other authors of American soldiering fiction in order to discuss how certain tropes and themes in Jones’s work remain faithful to elements generally ascribed to First World War literature but which also fall within characteristics associated with Vietnam War fiction. I return to the importance of Jones’s soldiers as “known knowns” that in an age of ever-increasing uncertainty provide ready, if often oversimplified, access to familiar narratives about what it means to be an American.
James Jones’s reputation was secured by his ability to tell stories about soldiers. Other American war writers of the period, to be sure, write about the Army’s largest population, its enlisted and non-commissioned men—it is hardly possible to live in the genre without doing so—but in the contemporary body of World War II fiction with a specifically military focus, few other authors make such consistent and repeated use of its most common members. Moreover, his plan for them extends beyond the confines of individual works: over the course of his novels, short fiction, non-fiction, and innumerable letters and interviews, Jones develops a theory of the evolution of the “good” soldier as a symbol of the dehumanizing effects contemporary life had on individualism and personal freedom.\(^{10}\) Success, in Jones’s evaluation of the military’s program for manufacturing good soldiers, is gauged by the devolution of men into feral killers, a theme that unfolds and intensifies over his war novels in the doubling and tripling of principal characters. Not only do the main characters in *From Here to Eternity*, *The Thin Red Line*, and *Whistle* fall prey to the machinations of a totalizing bureaucracy, they are also victims of their own fatal instincts, damned, as James R. Giles has noted, “by the same interrelated causes: the animal nature of man and the anonymous nature of modern technological society” (198).

This dark thesis, loaded with fatalism about the social structures from which good soldiers rise and, in that passage, good men fall, sits uneasily beside some contemporary evidence about possible reasons for the landslide popularity of the first of Jones's war

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\(^{10}\) The explicit articulation of Jones's theory, "The Evolution of the Soldier," occurs in his next-to-last 1975 novel *WWII: A Chronicle of Soldiering*. Men enter the army and are immediately subject to the beginning of successive stages of conditioning whose end result is complete self-abnegation; Jones's idea is that the only effective soldier is one who already thinks himself dead before he even enters battle (42-44). Russell Kendall Carter notes Jones's theory rests on the idea that "rational men will not capriciously sacrifice themselves" (11).
works, 1951's *From Here to Eternity*. A postwar Gallup poll of World War II American veterans revealed that 70% of the respondents believed a one-year period of service should be mandatory for all able-bodied young men even as 74% said they would not re-enlist even for a pay raise (Gabioud Brown 9); the results are suggestive of the veterans’ tendency to believe that something about the American military experience—when it is conditionally regulated—is ultimately beneficial, even necessary, to the health of both the male individual and the nation. Contemporary criticism acknowledged the nihilism of *From Here to Eternity’s* thematic crisis and simultaneously lauded Jones's ability to give meaning to the routines and appurtenances of the soldier's daily life by investing them with colour (Gabioud Brown 6). The paradoxes make it seems plausible, then, that for many WWII veterans the value of a good soldier lay more in the fact of his experience—and that experience’s connections to some abstract if vaguely-defined and amorphous idealism—than its quality: Jones’s war fiction represented a form of affirmation that the quotidian details of their privations, suffering, exhaustion, hunger, sexual frustration, abuse, and boredom meant something. Not only does this affirmation vindicate the experience of the individual soldiers, it makes the absorption and integration of their stories into the greater civilian popular culture realm possible while simultaneously offering criticism of the military command structure.

Apart from its relation to its readers, on a conceptual level, and especially in its view of the incorrigible animal self, the “evolution of the soldier” thesis seems somehow too totalizing itself, too constrained by ahistoric absolutes, to encompass other ideas about the constitution of the good soldier, perhaps less consciously developed by the author, that are at play in the military novels—and none more so than *From Here to Eternity*. In brief, the novel tells the story of G Company, an infantry company stationed on the Schofields Barracks base in Hawaii just before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The plot

11 The novel was on the bestseller list for 31 weeks and won the National Book Award in 1952. Jones later came to view *Eternity* with weariness, because he felt it was “romantic” and the characters all better than they would have been in real life; however, it is also possible that an attempt at overcorrection occurs in the second part that makes some of them worse than they would have been, too. About this, Giles defends Jones, writing that it is not cynicism so much as realistic acknowledgement of the “inevitable trap” that awaits twentieth-century man (198).
revolves around the progress of Corporal Robert E. Lee Prewitt, a young and idealistic infantryman from the itinerant coal mining culture of Appalachia, and Master Sergeant Milton Anthony Warden, a seasoned but cynical veteran of the Army. The machinations of an impersonal and frequently corrupt command structure are the catalysts for Prewitt’s resistance, incarceration, and eventual death at the hands of military police; against Prewitt’s romantic but futile and ultimately tragic individualism, Warden changes from a competent if alienated professional soldier to a character who manages to effect some personal salvation from the dehumanizing effects of the military by finding transcendence in an illicit affair with his captain’s wife.

In *From Here to Eternity*, the case for the primacy of animal nature in either of the two main characters is richly complicated nearly from the start. Character descriptions given in the beginning of long novels become markers orienting the reader to character later on; on the forty-ninth of the novel’s 800-plus pages, the narrator makes one of its intermittent appearances by drawing a Romulus / Remus analogy in the description of Warden and Prewitt, the "twin brothers of the same flesh and blood and heritage," philosophers whose divergence to “diametrically opposite” conclusions is based on differences of principle, not instinct. Similarly, Jones’s view of the causal relationship between the military’s purpose and the soldier’s psychic decompensation is frequently at odds with the actual writing of his characters, many of whom display what William Styron called the “grandeur” of Jones’s vision for them (Hendrick viii). Together, “heritage” and “grandeur” carry connotations of historicity and spirituality that complicate Jones’s soldiers beyond the essentially Cartesian view of their reactivity set out in his theory about their inevitable disintegration.

This chapter’s goal, then, is an analysis of the ‘good soljers’ in *From Here to Eternity* that reconciles the seemingly unbridgeable relation between Jones’s vision of them as trapped animals and their lives as carriers of American visions of “heritage” and “grandeur.” I argue that the patency of the connection between these apparently discrete and opposed forms of goodness is made possible by the intercession of an historic figure—the yeoman—whose impress in Jones’s soldiers is faint but constant, and whose
historicity is imbued with both grandeur and cynicism. I show how the seemingly weak ties between the nuclear soldier and colonial yeoman are actually unbreakably elastic filaments binding one of the nation’s oldest and most mutable structural narratives, the freedom-loving individual who is yet cognizant of his practical dependence on the ordered society. By doing so, I argue for an enhanced understanding of the complexity of Jones’s soldier characters in the bounded confines of their narrative lives as well as their symbolic importance in boundless contexts of American post-war culture. In the latter case, it is my theory that Jones’s soldiers are foundation figures for later cultural perceptions of the regular soldier in everyday American life, and that their generative power is part of their debt to the tenacity and adaptability of the yeoman.

To draw out the nature of the debt the soldier’s image owes the colonial yeoman, I begin with a discussion of the characters’ capacity for registering the yeoman’s unique, conflicting pre-modern goodesses—the traits that allowed members of the yeoman class to maintain positive relations with the state at the same time as they expressed dissent—in ways which both cede the potential threat of an encroaching mechanistic society at the same time as they respond by protest and resistance from within the structures of those bureaucracies. By seeking to understand the ways that Jones’s mid-twentieth century American soldiers take up the role and functions of the yeoman, sometimes in ways that are true to the historic model and at other moments in ways that rework or extend the tradition, I explore their power as both safeguards and safety valves in the deceptively still waters of post-war period of American liberal consensus. I situate the yeoman-soldier in the palimpsest of literary and historic representations to illustrate the timeliness of his reappearance in the war novel; I also show how, in the specific contexts of Jones’s novel, the collective formed by the figure’s individual instantiations act as dramatic ballast against the force of the novel’s main characters.
“The Pith and Substance of the County”

Since the terrorist attacks in America on September 11, 2001, a growing body of scholarship has appeared that is concerned with the themes and motifs expressed in James Jones's war writing. Emerging mostly from the doctoral dissertation level, the analyses can be organized by the patterns of their concentration within several categories. The first and largest of these is primarily concerned with Jones's theory of the soldier, violence, and the military, and that threesome's connections to current understandings of post-traumatic stress disorder and the performance and practice of war-related themes in American culture. A second considers Jones's engagement with the problem of individuality maintained within the strict confines of the military, his metaphor for society; and the third and smallest focuses on his fictional soldiers' specific relation to the historic portrayal of the soldier in literature.

In this last subdivision, a work written by Robert Reed Bonnadonna and published slightly before 9/11 sees Jones's From Here to Eternity soldiers as reiterations of Homeric archetypes. By reading Prewitt and Warden as types in the classic soldier-hero model, Bonnadonna contrasts what he reads as the characters' Consensus-era American "bellicose hypermasculinity" (9) against the soldier-gentleman reworked by Evelyn Waugh in Britain and the soldier-storyteller imagined by Kurt Vonnegut in the pre-postmodernist American sixties. Bonnadonna's use of classic soldiering figures for his thesis findings is a single example of a pattern of analysis that occurs across a variety of works that seek to understand the relations between organized public violence, literature, and culture through classical war texts. Other examples abound: in the introduction of James Dawes's work, Hannah Arendt's Iliad passage is used to frame Dawes's introduction to the his theory about the relations of force and discourse in twentieth-

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13 See theses by P.P. Christle, Z. Perel, and J.F. Severs.
14 In brief, his thesis is that in the institutional structures and conventions which shape Jones's antiquity-modeled soldiers a progressive movement occurs toward devolution, which is signaled first by inarticulateness and later by aphasia.
century American life (1); a similar long-range historicity takes place when Edward Adams analyzes the difference between classic treatments of war and those arising out of the emergence of liberalism; in a sideways manner, Alex Woloch, in his theory for secondary characters in the English social novel, also relies on *The Iliad* as the prototype text from which secondary characters gain their first significant footing; finally, in a return to a war-literature doctoral study, J.E. Vincent examines portrayals of the American soldier in the models of classic Greco-Roman prototypes.15 Indeed, as Vincent points out, the association between the classical text and American ideas about soldiering is so entrenched that the term "American Iliad" is commonly used by historians to refer to the Civil War (401).16

The benefit of this repeated return to classic representations of war writing is that it establishes, for scholars of war literature, the connections that exist between the primary agent of modern combat writing, the soldier, and the earliest of his forebears. A recurring trope across war studies analyses is the valences of silence that combat literature produces, recreates, perpetuates, and refutes through the dilation and contraction, voicing or voicelessness, of the soldier character; another is the shock of his—everyone’s—vulnerability to war's arbitrary imposition of transience. Reading war literature, we see in the soldier’s uncertain chances a reflection of our own in similar circumstances: big-as-life one second and dead the very next. Few readers expect that the good and brave Hector is about to be reduced to a footnote before what amounts to an umpire’s call as Achilles, already bored, probably scratching himself and thinking about fucking, stands over him and muses “The dragon wing of night o’erspreads the earth, / And, stickler-like, the armies separate” (*TCV* viii 18); even in fiction, war’s propensity for taking as many Hectors as its spares Thersites, and for glorifying as many Achilles as it rapes Cressidas, seems to defy reason and authorial control.

15 Dawes uses two models. The first he calls, after Arendt's term, the emancipatory model, in which violence and ability to speak it are presented as mutually exclusive. The second is the disciplinary model, which presents violence—and especially the "strategic" violence of war—and the power to express it as mutually constitutive (1).
Despite their strengths, the drawback of studies that emphasize classical models of soldiering representations is that they tend to adopt and perpetuate the classical professional soldier figure without considering at length the ways the image of the professional soldier has been affected by modern civilian influences. By focusing on one of the literary soldier's much closer and most significant historical relations, and by tracing the ties that connect him through his close cousin, the yeoman, to narratives of civilian culture, it becomes possible to see how the face of American soldiering has been influenced by social movements much nearer to us than Troy. Consider, for example, the following: in 1800, a Sussex yeoman wrote a pamphlet expressing his views about the war against Napoleon. The effort has, he says

an appearance of something more than Boldness, in a Yeoman of your County, intruding his Opinion upon a Subject on which the ablest Men in this Nation have already delivered their Sentiments. He has but little to say in his Defence. It is a Subject which, in some Measure, will occupy and agitate every Man whose heart vibrates with Humanity; and if a sincere Desire to contribute his Mite to the Service of his County be any Excuse, he tenders that Apology. (np)

The excerpt could be one of a tiny number of extant historical examples in which yeomanry—its modesty, its pride, and its military patriotism—is represented in British letters by an actual yeoman. More probably, the Sussex yeoman’s letter is one of a great number of literary works that only purport, briefly and calculatedly, to be written by him. Evidence for the yeoman’s plasticity in English literature can be seen in his recurrence from the fourteenth-century forward. As one of Ezra Pound’s recurring “acting ideas” which during special periods “come in a curious way into focus, and have become at least in some degree generative” (Guide to Kulchur 44), the yeoman looks out from many early canonical English texts, especially those that emphasize the virtues arising from his practical intelligence, loyalty, and honesty. In the prologue of Piers Plowman, "for profit of al the peple plowmen ordeyned / To tilie and to travaile as trewe lif asketh" (7); in The Canterbury Tales he is one of only two of the knight's servants who rides out to meet his returning master; in Sir Gawain's request of Arthur, "I beseche now with sawes sene /
This melly mot be myne" (26) lies the stamp of his modesty and courage.\textsuperscript{17} Quoting Tudor and Stuart commentators like William Harrison (1577), Sir Thomas Overbury (1615), and Thomas Fuller (1642), Albert J. Schmidt describes the classic yeoman of early modern England as the “very epitome of the guileless and uncorrupted countryman, the hearty and independent peasant” (2), whose preferences for simple clothing, plain food, and neat housing are personal reflections of a social outlook valuing settled accounts, good husbandry, and military preparedness (3).\textsuperscript{18}

In the social strata of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the yeoman’s industry, thrift, and temperance make him the hallmark figure of the middling realm, in social stature above peasant husbandmen but below the landed gentry. When his estate is defined it is defined by an appendix of negatives: in possession of his own property but, according to Raphael Holinshed, in his Chronicles, that not exceeding 100 acres or 40 shillings’ profit annually, he is of a superior intellectual and moral standard but, in the Oxford Dictionary of Old English, “not above his station,” a servant above many peasants and knaves but “not above a squire,” the trusted keeper of stores in the navy but not more than a “disposable pawn” in chess, the best example of a work ethic but not one complicated by overweening personal ambition (np). If the time came when his personal

\textsuperscript{17} Besides his representation by these and by other English canonical authors (Shakespeare, Hardy, Dickens, Lawrence), the yeoman is a popular figure in popular folklore literature. Schmidt's inventory of the songs, rhymes, and tales in which he appears, and which would have been familiar to his real-life iterations, includes The Witch of Edmonton (1658), The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green (1659), Albumazatar (1615), George A'Green, the Pinner of Wakefield (1599), Wily Beguiled (1606), and Brood of Cormorants (1622).

\textsuperscript{18} In his Description of England (1577), William Harrison says that the yeoman’s trustworthy nature results in a regard of “certain pre-eminence and more estimation than labourers and artificers, and these [yeomen] commonly keep good houses and travail to get riches”; in New and Choice Characters (1615), Sir Overbury emphasizes the yeoman’s virtues as peculiarly English, and also makes note of the egalitarianism that means he “says not to his servants ‘go to the field,’ but ‘let us go’”; in The Yeoman’s Prerogative (1652) Nathaniel Newbury calls him “the pith and substance of the county”; and in The Holy State (1642), Thomas Fuller draws biblical analogies from the yeoman, whose civic-mindedness “in time of famine [makes him] the Joseph of the country and keeps the poor from starving” (Schmidt 2-3, 12).
ascendancy meant he could rent out his lands rather than farm them himself, he was still a yeoman but no longer a farmer: "a yeoman was a farmer if he himself raised crops; but all farmers were not yeomen" (Redstone 239). For the way that he epitomizes both an opening, in terms of his capacity for a degree of material and social ascension, and a limit, in terms of his bounded place between extremes of social class, the yeoman functions as a kind of potential space in English literary history, an interstice whose primary action is the negotiation of fluidity and containment.

Within that interstitial space, however, the tones of his representation vary, and it is in keeping with literature's influences on social understanding that the yeoman's historical origins, synonymous with simplicity, transparency, and honesty, should become the literary vehicles for satire and subversive commentary. Shadowing his symbolic life as the ideal of non-aristocratic English Protestant manhood is a second, equally tenacious historic impression, which turns honest unpretentiousness to tunnel-visioned blockheadery.19 In Microcosmographie (1628), John Earle delivers what may be the first extended ethnography of the yeoman-as-bumpkin, sniffing:

His hand guides the plow and the plow his thoughts, and his ditch and landmark is the very mound of his meditations. He expostulates with his oxen very understandingly and speaks Gee and Ree better than English. His mind is not much distracted with objects, but if a good fat cow come in his way he stands dumb and astonished, and though his haste be never so great will fix here half an hour's contemplation . . . he is capable only of two prayers: for rain and fair weather. He apprehends God's blessings only in a good year or fat pasture . . . He is sensible of no calamity but the burning of a stack of corn or the overflowing of

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19 Alongside his other social functions, the yeoman was a model of masculinity. In The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green (1659), Old Strowd, the father, disparages his son's—and all young men's—taste for French and Italian "effeminate" clothing: "not content with their states of their fathers to be counted yeoman and called John or Robert . . . but must skip into his velvet breeches and silken doublet and, getting to be admitted into some Inn of Court of Chancery, must ever after think scorn to be called any other than gentleman" (Schmidt 22).
a meadow, and thinks Noah’s flood the greatest plague that ever was, not because it drowned the world but spoiled the grass. (Schmidt 3)²⁰

Despite Earle's assessment, away from England, where his independence can only be understood in relative terms within the rigid structure of Britain’s class system, in the New World the yeoman's innate elasticity allowed him to become gradually encouraged to expand and deepen the influence of his middling station. From a figure whose primary function was to support the aristocracy and thus perpetuate the hierarchal rule of power from above, in colonial America the middling classes became the subjects of a shift in the balance and dispensation of power. In the third of his *Letters From an American Farmer*, Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur calls him the "new man"; George Washington said he dared to "look up . . . [and feel] himself one of a class which is a pillar, and an honored pillar too, of the nation" (Washington 10).

Though the yeoman's historic virtues continued to serve him well—by 1740, Washington's letters characterize his Virginia iterations as "industrious and careful . . . already strong in property" (Washington 36)—the virtues ascribed to his colonial type, which blended British yeomanry with American pioneerism, describe the beginnings of a shift from modesty to boldness, from staid tradition to ingenuity, and from a figure tied solely to agrarian rhythms to one capable of great flexibility in the struggle for survival in a rugged, bountiful, but frequently hostile natural environment. Of all the theories about the development of an American character, Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 hypothesis is one of the most famous analyses of the ways that the frontier produced an outlook tempered by:

²⁰ Well before Earle, the yeoman’s self-interest is a Chaucerian target. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the yeoman begins of one of only two faithful servants retained by the knight, but soon descends into obsequiousness and dishonesty, confessing to the priest that his master’s alchemical practices, of some years duration, have always been a thorn to the yeoman’s piety and, now they are common knowledge, he wishes to publicly renounce his master and conveniently recuse himself. The significance of the knight’s retention of the yeoman, when all other of his servants have been let go, sharpens the point, since the yeoman’s analogous connection as a symbol of some of the best qualities of English society doubles for being linked to some its worst (Malarkey 293).
coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom.

(Billington 19)

Especially relevant to the valences of the yeoman's American cultural discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the increasing fluidity between his roles as a peace-and-prosperity farmer on one hand and a ready-in-a-minute soldier on the other. Despite Holinshed's assertion that the sixteenth-century yeoman could not bear arms independently, his combat utility is part of his historic English role. In America the yeoman's essential agrarian / military hybridity becomes even more pronounced. About the Mexican-American War of 1847, in Chapter Four of his 1852 Life of Franklin Pierce, Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote "There is nothing in any other country similar to what we see in our own when the blast of the trumpet at once converts men of peaceful pursuits into warriors" (np). The trend suggests that much about the yeoman's utility in colonial America is connected to a trope that moves American heroism from pioneer subjects to military ones. As Richard Slotkin writes in "Unit Pride," when the expansion of the American frontier "became more dependent on military power, military events and professional soldiers became progressively more important figures in popular mythology" (473).

21 As is suggested by the Sussex Yeoman passage above and in The Holy State (1642), the yeoman’s association with soldiering is characterized primarily by its “naturalness,” as when Thomas Fuller praises the “high spirit” and single-minded loyalty that makes the yeoman a “naturally good foot soldier” (Schmidt 2-3, 12), or by this definition, provided in the December 1854 issue of Notes and Queries (vol. I, page 440): “The title yeoman is of military origin . . . so styled because, besides the weapons fit for close engagement, they fought with arrows and the bow, which was made of yew; a tree that hath more repelling force and elasticity than any other.”
We have only to consult the language of Turner's 1920 amendment to his Frontier thesis to see how natural this deployment became. The historian's description of the pioneer is steeped in language that combines the farmer and soldier: "the rifle and the ax are the symbols of the backwoods pioneer"; the pioneer waged a "hand-to-hand war" on the forest; he "made war against the rank fertility of the soil"; he "fought his way across the continent"; he was, above all other things "a finder [and] a fighter" (Billington 27). The yeoman's military appeal is rooted in the same twofold serviceability that allows him to be at home in the wild as he is in the settlement, the main agent of activities whose success is dependent on qualities like resourcefulness, independence, and a capacity for self-preservation tempered by a civic conscience. It is not surprising then, that the figure on which so much settlement and exploration rests should also be connected to its protection and defense, and that the occasions for his most urgent requirement should coincide with times of national crisis.

During the Revolution, the yeoman's particular dualism lent itself to the rise of a distinctive figure in American patriotism. In the preface to his 1831 catalogue of paintings of the heroes of 1776, Colonel John Trumbull attributes American valor at Mystic River to the soldiers' ability to apply their farming skills to the redoubt, "securing their front . . . by throwing together fences, new-mown hay, and whatever else was moveable" (9). Cultural associations like this make practical intelligence and pragmatism the cross-vocational links connecting farming and fighting; as well, they play well into the early American fondness for self-comparison to Roman state virtues. The rise of the Minuteman is based in no small way on the transferred power of the pairing of agrarian and martial virtues embodied in the classic myth of Cincinnatus, who dropped his plow to save Rome, and whose character was often superimposed on the colonists' own "Illustrious Farmer of Mount Vernon," George Washington. Still, the reality of the

22 See "Farm Families and the American Revolution" by William Baller. In his Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson compared farmers to God’s chosen people. Farming bred independence, competency, dignity, and virtue. No less an experienced soldier than the Marquis de Lafayette confirmed Jefferson’s opinion in a letter to Henry Laurens in 1778: “Nobody in the world may have a higher respect than this I entertain for
marriage between fighting and farming cultures was complex and frequently disharmonious, as William Baller notes. About the gap that existed between perception and reality when it came to the militiamen's readiness, he refers to the record left by soldiers in which they complain that a lack of basic provisions and training puts their very survival in jeopardy; less concrete but no less serious were the resentments that took root in men for whom the idea of rugged individualism did not include military regimentation and discipline (31); thus a pattern emerges that reveals in the American yeoman's socially-constructed goodesses much that is contradictory between perception and reality.

The threadbare ties that bind the militia yeomen of the Revolution to the goodness of the ancient soldier-farmer archetype are further troubled because the association contravenes the kind of nationalism that the founding fathers, and Jefferson especially, envisioned for the new republic. Jean M. Yarbrough writes that the kind of nationalism directed by Jefferson's vision was not the "unqualified love of country, the instinctive, almost religious attachment to one's ancestors and traditions, which characterizes ancient republic . . . [but rather] well-considered, or rational, patriotism, based on each citizen's recognition that his own freedom and happiness depend on the safety and well-being of the whole . . . Agrarian virtue is not martial valor nor unconditional patriotism" (63). Ironically, the rationality of colonial soldiering, founded on considered participation in the social contract, was as vexed in practice as was the execution of its partner belief, the farmer's natural property rights. So difficult did it become, during the War of 1812, to encourage men to see extended military service as "rational" that Jefferson remarked

those virtuous men who leaving the plow for the sword . . . brought the Revolution to this glorious period.” For many contemporaries of Jefferson and Lafayette, George Washington epitomized Cincinnatus. At least two early American painters, including Charles Wilson Peale, did paintings that depicted Washington as Cincinnatus. In 1802, a prominent biographer “made Cincinnatus the symbolic center of a prophetic dream that comes to Washington’s mother.” D’Auberteuil compared Washington’s troops with the ancient legions of Rome (Baller 30).
drily "I think the truth must now be obvious that our people are too happy at home to be drawn into regular service."\(^{23}\)

Perceptions about the necessity of a standing army and ideas of rational engagement with the national project in the form of a career soldier divorced from the civilian farm become more troubled, not less, as the nineteenth century progresses; and as obvious as the nation's domestic happiness may have been to Jefferson at the start of the century, by the Civil War it was appallingly unclear to almost everyone. Suspicion of professional militarism is one of the core consequences of a culture where personal sovereignty is prized. For many Americans, too, standing armies were "those unmistakeable symbols of corruption, hierarchy, and tyranny marching through Europe" (Vincent 2) which threatened a disturbing historical regression and repudiation of liberal-capitalism's purportedly peace-oriented profit philosophy. Pressed into service as one of Pound's "acting ideas" once more, through much of the criticism surrounding the literature of that time the idealized figure of the yeoman-soldier again occupies two planes. In Civil War literature the soldier is either a figure who signals the nation's requirement for a large and permanent professional military or one who volunteers only when pressed by rare circumstance, and then only temporarily.

From the first group, James Dawes finds, in the war works of Melville and Crane, that the common soldier is the primary outlet for dissent, and that his entrapment by forces far outside his command or control and the horror and scale of his destruction anticipate the protest against industrialized violence that is characteristic of First World War literature. Conversely, critics from the second group have argued that the Civil War is represented largely as a "closed system" or terminal event in contemporary cultural representations, one whose soldier-participants fall outside the understandings of "normal" societal archetypes like the yeoman small-tradesman or farmer. They argue that professional soldier was anathematic to American idealism; instead, the Civil War allows contemporary authors an opportunity to explore the romantic adventure of war as a one-

time event from the vantage point of an historic vacuum. Peter Aichinger, for example, states that "in late nineteenth-century America, war was not thought of as a primary means of regulating external questions, it was looked upon as a salutary exercise—a tonic against the materialism of everyday life . . . the two most important novels written in the nineteenth century—*Billy Budd* (188) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) [treat the war] coolly and dispassionately . . . believing that such experience is not likely to become available in the future" (xxi).

The conflict about the representative nature of the professional soldier in American war literature at the close of the nineteenth century—and whether he is an early response to the rise of global Modernism or an essentially regional isolationist figure—is given depth by being mirrored in other contemporary media. Outside the generic conventions of combat literature, in the nineteenth century the yeoman undergoes one of his richest and most diverse periods of representation. Some of his most famous portraits, whether as adolescents or international travelers, of course, occur in the works of Mark Twain, but many other less-famous, extra-canonical examples exist. Mark Evans Bryans provides a history of the origins of a popular yeoman figure called "Uncle Josh," the rise of the one-act "rube" burlesque play, and the connections between the yeoman as a positive ideal and a negative parody in the popular mind. The ambivalence with which the yeoman is portrayed and received suggests the class tensions that dogged his portrayal in early modern England continue in America. In particular, the yeoman’s vacillating arc anywhere between a simple or natively cunning, if essentially harmless rube on one end and a virtuous and unaffected farmer-savant on the other, assumes a special association with the American character's frequently vexed association with qualities like pragmatism, ingenuity, and independence.

During the First World War, however, the strength of the yeoman-soldier’s perceived benefits—his capacity for representing stability and merit-based advancement—grows ever fainter, eroded by the forces of Modernism and the technological innovations of large-scale killing. According to Arnold Goldman and Anna Massa,
values and standards [that] had been shattered by the brutal and disillusioning spectacle of the slaughter of the First World War and by the territorial carve-up which followed . . . [resulted in a generation who had no faith] in the just war or the good peace. (160)

Personal resourcefulness has no significance in the trenches of WWI: marksmanship means nothing against the machine gun; barbwire traps the farmer as often as it does the city soldier. Individual skill, as Paul Fussell writes in The Great War and Modern Memory, is no longer a viable model for an equally outdated notion of romantic heroism in either American or British society. Instead of vacillating between poles of virtue and somewhat uncomplicated vice, founded more on vulgarity and a kind of banal self-interest than outright brutality, the yeoman in First World War combat literature is reworked through the lenses of diasporic migration and an industrial-scientific teleology that debride him of most if not all of his essential characteristics. Suddenly pale and ineffectual, the termination of the yeoman’s usefulness is figured either by metaphors of physical extinction, as by Katherine's miscarriage in Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms; or of brutal regression, as occurs with Chrisfield of Dos Passos' Three Soldiers.

Longstanding assumptions about the homogenous social character of ordinary American troops are first questioned and then swept away by the rising tide of twentieth-century immigrants, as is symbolized in the character of Fuselli, Three Soldiers' Italian-American private. Likewise, the soldier’s significance as a symbol of heterosexual masculinity is also subject to change in WWI literary representations. About the traditional associations between war and sexuality, Paul Fussell notes that “[t]he language of military attack—assault, impact, thrust, penetration—has always overlapped with that of sexual importunity” (271, emphasis original); comparing Robert Graves’ WWI phrases “valiant yard” and “fate-spasm” with Jones’s WWII use of sexual imagery in The Thin Red Line battle scenes helps Fussell emphasize that the gender of the object of the soldier’s lust became increasingly less bound by tradition in twentieth-century war literature (271).

24 See especially “The Troglodyte World,” in which Fussell discusses the dehumanizing effects of trenches that sometimes extended for ninety continual miles, and in whose hell an average of 7000 men were killed daily (GWMM 41).
At the same time, the WWI novel fixes more firmly some of the tropes that define the genre of war fiction. There begins, according to Holger Klein, to be an expectation that war fiction realism would not just entail a “convincing mirror,” but that the war novel would be “true to facts” in a different way than mere verisimilitude; that it need not be an absolute assertion of any one kind of truth but that the war novel put forth data that could be “scrutinized assiduously” for proportion and detail in its event selection, and accuracy in its representations of types (4). The result is that the war novel progresses in its trajectory “of increasing alienation from any world but that of war” (110), and that this circumscribed setting focuses more and more on the specific aspects of soldiering, including “the tension before, the triste after; the comradeship of danger; respect for the enemy; contempt for the staff at the base; boredom between operations; the causal, hectic pleasure-hunting of leave; the safety of routine” (Klein 117).

Alongside the narrower path of his soldierly pursuits, and his physical obliteration under the anonymous violence of the trench, the yeoman's historic capacity for economic adaptation, and especially for advancement, is also disappearing under the wheels of modern capital. The First World War effected large-scale change in the distribution and accessibility of American capital. From 1914 to 1925, capital fell more and more under the power of trust organizations propelled by the industrial impetus of WWI. According to Anthony Bimba, a contemporary historian, the consequences for the lower middle class were disastrous:

In the past there were many opportunities for a worker to escape from the proletariat into the ranks of the bourgeoisie. A small sum of money and a little “brains” were sufficient to secure a store or a small industrial enterprise . . . But by the beginning of the twentieth century a great shift has taken place (sic) in the conditions of industry. To become an employer in most industries now requires a large sum of money or credit. It is now very hard for a worker to get away from his class. The former process has been reversed. (224)
It is also true, however, that much of the literature produced about WWI was furnished by an upper-class literary group who, as Holger Klein notes, “were not ‘common men,’ in the sense that they were better educated, often separated by their social backgrounds, and had generally, because of their artistic dispositions, gone through the same experiences as their fellow soldiers or subalterns with profoundly different and therefore atypical reactions” (6). Thus a picture emerges in whose frame the pith and substance of the American colonial counties, and all his ties to a vigorously political middling sort, to agrarian and martial virtue, to resourcefulness and possessive individualism, becomes, in the twentieth-century, increasingly tied to representations of white rural working class men as these people are underrepresented in the First World War’s literature. More interesting then is the yeoman-soldier’s reactivation as Red, the first of Jones’s generative common enlisted men to set the stage in his 1951 novel, *From Here to Eternity*.

Dividing It All by Two: Yeoman-Soldiers and Calculating Rationality

Maybe back in the old days, back in the time of the pioneers, a man could do what he wanted to do, in peace. But he had the woods then, he could go off in the woods and live alone. He could live well off in the woods. And if they followed him there for this or that, he could just move on. There was always more woods on up ahead. But a man can’t do that now. He’s got to play ball with them. He’s got to divide it all by two. (*Eternity* 11)

This passage occurs very near the beginning of *From Here to Eternity* and is excerpted from an extended dialogue that introduces Corporal Robert E. Lee Prewitt as one of the novel’s two main characters; Milton Anthony Warden, the other, is Master Sergeant of the company Prewitt is about to transfer into. The light Prewitt and Warden's introductory scenes shine on them fosters the reader’s beginning grasp of the ways these "twin brothers of the same flesh and blood and heritage" stand for linked archetypes of historic American yeomanry. The twinning of these principal characters is one-half the inspiration for this section’s heading; the other is the way that the characters continually struggle against or engage with strategies of calculation aimed at maximizing the returns
for their self-interest within the military’s command structure, or the ways they ‘play ball’ with the modern institution.

Additionally, ‘dividing it by two’ marks a second, equally important differentiation between Jones’s treatment of major and minor characters across all the war novels. *Eternity* is the first example of his skill at creating principal character combinations whose energy and understanding, frequently pitted against each other as opposing intellectual poles in local plot contexts, draw together in their shared atavistic suspicion of the ‘normal’ modern society represented by his secondary characters. In Prewitt and Warden, Jones pits idealized American types—what we can think of as exemplars of the purest of the American yeoman's many representative forms—against their contemporary, and by implication, compromised, watered-down, duller versions.

The aspect of historic yeomanry most strongly marked in Warden is his native and uncompromising suspicion of any societal structure that restricts individual liberty, especially as that liberty is manifested by a certain independence of mind tuned to ideological metanarratives. "Property, property, all for property" is the refrain of Lieutenant Welsh, Warden’s later incarnation in *The Thin Red Line*, but the saying is equally appropriate to Warden. Despite being not just tied for life to the military as a career soldier, but almost hubristically proud of his professional efficiency as keeper of the Company's stores (traditionally, the historic domain of the Naval Yeoman), Warden's paradoxical ability to recognize the weaknesses of the system from within its structural confines explains a key aspect of his instrumentality in the novel. "Understanding this ambivalence," Giles asserts, "is crucial to comprehending the mood of *From Here to Eternity*. Jones's army . . . was what professional soldiers now call the old army, which had not been tested in combat for more than twenty years and which had lapsed into a rigid, self-perpetuating caste system. Any institution which continues to exist after its *raison d'être* has been virtually forgotten will inevitably become corrupt" (37). The comparison to past European social models, obvious in Giles's analysis, is also projected into the American present. Disgusted with the men's narrow absorption in the record-keeping of their daily small advancements and grievances, Warden tells one of them the
trouble is "that you can't see any further than that douchebag nose of yours. You concern yourself with the petty details of life in order not to think . . . While the whole goddamn world is rocketing to hell you got to go back and get your fucking teeth . . . Its because of you theres Nazis in Germany . . . Its because of you there'll be Fascism in this country someday" (309).

Though it is framed in the language of a deux-ex-machina—earlier, he tells Prewitt, "I can't help it if I was born smart. I'm only the instrument of a laughing Providence" (49)—Warden's obsession with being able to think beyond the veil of reification imposed by both historic and modern social systems is mirrored in Prewitt. Like his double, in the famous "chain of decidings" passage Prewitt ruminates on the ease with which people in a purportedly free culture give up the original sovereignty from which all others spring:

It was queer, he thought, how a man was always being forced to decide these things. You decided one thing right, with much effort, and then you thought you'd coast a while. But tomorrow you had to decide another thing. And as long as you decided the way you knew was right you had to go on deciding . . . and on the other hand was Red, and those kids over there, who because they decided wrong just once were free from anymore deciding. (9)

Where Warden's resistance is largely confined to manifesting itself intellectually in a kind of mad Hobbesian cynicism, and physically in a determination to seduce Karen Homes as an act of sexual retribution against her husband, the Company's Captain "Dynamite" Holmes, in Prewitt it results in a grandiose, fanatical physical and intellectual resistance to anything that even appears to threaten his personal sovereignty. The totality of Prewitt's stance describes a form of post-WWI social radicalism that is textually inconsistent with the novel's diegetic frame, which follows more the model of the nineteenth-century social realist novel. In fact, the disconnect may be one source to which the contradiction between popular and critical reception that I point out in this chapter's introduction may be traced. Discussing Lukacs's reception in ways that bear important similarities to From Here to Eternity, Fredric Jameson says "the political and theoretical activists who found History and Class Consciousness stimulating and
endlessly suggestive are often the same people who find the cultural premises of the essays on realism dull and traditional . . . How can the prescient and systematic analysis of reification in late capitalism . . . be reconciled . . . with the backwards-looking celebration of the tradition of the nineteenth-century bourgeois novel?” (202). Indeed, the commercially popular social realism of *From Here to Eternity*, attributable at least in part to what William Styron, making what may be an oblique comparison between Jones and authors like Sir Walter Scott, called its "premodern language," is at odds with the characters of Warden and Prewitt, who often seem in danger of nearly overwhelming the novel by flying in the face of the disinterest of the Company soldiers surrounding them, the "uninvolved public looking on . . . without the least intention of assisting" (Jameson 594).

But because the novels’ original primary pair is so powerful, it obscures the significance of the secondary characters, their involvement and their interest in assisting both themselves and each other. Against the mythic contrarianism of Prewitt and Warden, the minor, middling-ranks of *Eternity's* enlisted ordinary soldiers have a complex function beyond their usefulness as devices of setting or plot. Instead, Jones's other soldiers act as the generative ground for what Kenneth Burke, in *A Grammar of Motives*, calls the universal "representative anecdotes" (303) in war literature, or those stories that provide the basis for a complex set of reader identifications. Not just flat blank screens onto which Prewitt and Warden can project their frustrations, the secondary characters in *Eternity* describe a range of potential moral positions that together form a nexus with varying contrastive dimensions. Far from occupying "uncontroversial places of bland conformity" they are the round “topoi” Paolo Valesio says provide the “places of dramatic tension between opposite extremes” (37), and the "distributional matrix" Alex Woloch says becomes "particularly pressing in the realist novel, which has always been praised for two contradictory generic achievement: depth psychology and social expansiveness, depicting the interior life of a singular consciousness and casting a wide narrative gaze over a complex social universe" (19).
The speaker in the "pioneer" passage above marks the first and briefest appearance of the middling characters whose distributional warp and weft form *From Here to Eternity*'s matrix. The rumination on the pioneer woods is part of Red's larger concern for the circumstances of Prewitt's request to transfer out of the company, and in its entirety the scene is notable on two counts. First, it suggests the nature of Prewitt’s ambidextrous talents—he is gifted at both boxing and bugling—is complicated by an inconsistency of some obdurate or intractable character; and second, that by refusing to either box or bugle for the Army and by requesting transfer, by keeping his geniuses to himself—by insisting, in effect, on his inviolable right to himself and all of the products of his faculties—Prewitt fails in an equally elemental way to understand how the liberty he thinks essential is actually a chimera. For his pragmatic friend Red, however, no such veil exists.

Unclouded by excessive originality or talent, Red’s understanding of modern life is based on acceptance of the fact of ceaseless institutional intervention in the life of the unfree individual, the ‘they’ that can insist because there is no Frontier. Red’s uncertainty that even historic America afforded men unchallenged personal freedom, revealed in his doubtful “maybe,” further gestures to the possibility that indeed the kind of unfettered liberty Prewitt holds so dear never did exist. Moreover, behind his concern for Prewitt’s determination to quit bugling and boxing is Red's fear that Prewitt’s idealism is not just regrettable because it deprives the regiment of the bonds of natural fraternal pride, but that it is a “bad mistake” with repercussions, which though as yet unspecified, are nonetheless full of darkness, perplexion, and danger. Prewitt sees his refusals as natural right asserted, but for Red they are an invitation to high-stakes play in a “game where every card is in the other hand” (12), and where the rules, if they exist at all, are tipped to the state’s advantage.

In this way, Red is the first character to gesture to an important theme shaping the secondary characters' position in relation to both the mythologized yeomen represented by Warden and Prewitt and their real-life historic counterparts. Between the uncompromising poles of Prewitt’s idealism and Warden’s cynicism, the complicated
social universe Jones creates within the confines of G Company finds its realistically pragmatic dimension in characters like "Chief" Wayne Choate, Pop Karelson, Sal Clark, O’Hayer, Preem, Leva, Mazzioli, Anderson, Galovitch, Henderson, Dhom, and, especially, Maylon Stark. These characters perform in much the same way as the historic yeoman, straddling the middling-lower levels of the Company and pursuing material ascendancy from within the social structures that shape the opportunities available to them. The significance of their self-interest, continually seeking the best deals as can be had, signals an investment in the kind of security Jean M. Yarbrough calls the middling class's concern with the "comfortable self-preservation" of Locke’s ideology (xvii), and bears a direct relation to the historic yeoman's tradition of keeping to the inside of boundaries between social order and rebellion. In The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550-1640, Steven Hindle discusses the importance of yeomen within the juridically based social model, saying that by embracing their social responsibilities as “victims, constables, witnesses, and jurors . . . active participants . . . the rural middling sort were the characteristic agents of community self-government which [was a significant characteristic] of English social and political development” (24-9).

Foremost among the examples of self-regulation from within is Maylon Stark, the Company cook—yet another example of a yeoman ‘keeper of stores’ character whose understandings of the world are driven by a political philosophy of personal self-interest. The usefulness of his character for the narrative rests on both its catalytic effect on Prewitt’s own self-understanding and on its bridging function between the to-this-point largely separate plots occupied by Prewitt and Warden. Above all, Stark is both a good man and a good soldier; capable of doing his job well in the Army, he also actively maintains the cohesion of the group by demonstrating a practical concern for its individual members’ welfare. He thus occupies ambiguous space in relation to Jones’s thesis about the evolution of a soldier, almost as if the character has, in this instance, outsmarted its creator. Indeed, the scene between Prewitt and Stark, in which Stark offers Prewitt a job working in the kitchen, is the working-out of a thesis about being "smart" which is deepened under the exploration of the characters’ different understandings of the functional value of traditional American ideas versus their lived practice. Parallel to but
more proactive than Red’s simple concern, Stark’s offer of a place in the kitchen to Prewitt is a complicated act of kindness based on sympathy for the pressure the younger man faces because of his refusal to box for the regiment, to be “pushed around by a bunch of pricks” (205). Stark is the manifestation of Prewitt’s thirty-year-man goal, and is as many ways as toughly capable as Warden, with whom he shares a close if fraught relationship. He is perceptive enough, like Red, to see both the trouble Prewitt is currently in and the greater trouble it might yet cause him: “I like you . . . I reckon you know you can expect a tough time of it, when the Company moves back into field training after the rainy season’s all done . . . If you was in the kitchen, Prewitt, they couldnt none of them get at you” (206).

Also like Red, however, Stark’s offer of protection is balanced by self-interested practicality. His offer has limits. He warns the reluctant Prewitt that he is not being offered charity, and that “[i]n this world . . . today, nobody is left alone” (206). Still, Stark’s attempt to offer Prewitt a refuge is doomed to failure in advance, since what is most compelling about Prewitt’s character is his unwillingness to compromise.

Furthermore, in their differing understanding of American-ness, the characters’ return to the novel’s preoccupation with “smartness” reveals the philosophic divide that separates the two forms of knowing that Richard Hofstadter sees as forming the crux of political difference in post-WWII America. On one hand, Stark embodies the traditional conservative practical virtues favoring personal advancement, pragmatism, "ritualistic obeisance" to the state balanced by a distrust of monopolies, and a knack for exploitation of the full possibilities of a given circumstance (Paranoid Style 31); on the other, Prewitt represents left-wing intellectualism. But the forms of goodness the narrative gives each approach to this cultural divide are shaded by a complexity made more surprising because it seems out of keeping with the essential qualities ascribed to the major and minor characters to this point. About the “certain inalienable rights” that he learned in school, for example, Stark argues against Prewitt’s incongruous assertion that “Nobody believes that anymore” (207): “Sure they do,” Stark-the-pragmatist says," . . . They all believe it. They just dont do it. But they believe it” (207). Faced with the conceptual contradiction, Prewitt-the-idealist switches his rhetorical tactic and reverts to pragmatism temporarily, saying that he isn’t “talking about ideals. I’m talkin about life”:
Every man has certain rights . . . and if he don’t stand up for his own right nobody else is goin to stand up for them for him . . . I’m not just doing it to be bastardly, I got a good reason, and if I want to do something and I do do it, then I can still go along and live my life, as long as I don’t harm nobody, without bein kicked around. That’s my right, as a man. To not be kicked around. (208)

In the classic “bassackwards” passage, Stark disagrees, saying that Prewitt’s thinking is in fact based on idealism, not on life. Life, as Stark sees it, is about realizing that natural rights are to be believed in but not lived by, that ideals must be tempered by adaptation to reality, and that all people have to go on is their ability to be smart by understanding the difference and by learning to “play politics” (208) in order to get ahead. In this way, Stark’s outlook supports Hofstadter’s description of the psychological temper of the right-wing lower-middling working American class as one founded more on a tradition designed to "broaden the numbers of those who could benefit from the great American bonanza . . . than to humanize its workings" (PS 18). As the strongest figure of the traditional conservative yeoman, Stark offers Prewitt a pathway to security that is dependent on a sense of mutual interdependence designed to preserve things as they are rather than agitate for change—the second major characteristic Hofstadter identifies as an essential element of the historic American character. Moreover, Prewitt recognizes that despite its cynical attitude toward human relations, Stark’s outlook may have its compensations: “They lose a lot, he thought, but then like everybody else they probly gain a lot, things that the rest dont know. At least they get to do the work they like” (210).

Despite the fact that Stark’s vocation is the daily physical haul in the mess kitchen, instead of the relative ease and refinement of a bugling position, Prewitt recognizes that Stark’s compromises, his willingness to accept the imperfections of his world, have allowed him room enough to find some space for self-expression as well as a sense of control over the products of his labour.

Additionally, and despite their cynicism, Stark and Warden’s decision to remain firmly on the right side of the military’s regulations uncovers yet another tie binding the nuclear soldier to his historic civilian prototype, as both describe a pattern of consciously-
considered participation in social institutions which carries an expectation of reciprocity, not just for material security but also for allowance of expressions of discontent in the form of minor infractions. As K.J. Kesselring writes, yeomanry was an important safety valve for early modern English political and social dissatisfaction, its members the sources of “grumbling speech” that wanted “negotiated settlement rather than outright battle—most sought to express their dissent within the pre-existing convention of obedience” (np). In the novel, the soldiers’ conflicted, often resentful obedience is portrayed in their relations to the officers and the MPs. Characterized by bland superficial respect for authority to its face and petty acts of mutiny behind it, the soldiers grumble by playing poker, by drinking and listening to protest music like “The Re-enlistment Blues” during a base blackout, and perhaps, most subversively in light of the Army’s rigid stance regarding gender and sexuality, by dating “queers.”

Jones's divided views about the plight of the individual on the inside are expressed in his extended use of “smartness” as one of the primary tropes associated with the American heritage character in contemporary political and social arenas. The fact that Jones’s WWII novels feature characters whose disillusionment with their society becomes greater, not less, places his works in one of the broad categories by which contemporary WWII combat writing may be understood. Though it is correct to say, as Peter Aichinger notes, that single shared trait of most characters in American World War II fiction is a lack of "crusading spirit" (37), it is also true that in many of these works a transformative shift occurs once the soldiers are actually engaged in combat, which sees them suddenly become, if not inspired, at least committed to seeing the war through, as occurs in The Caine Mutiny, That Winter, A Walk in the Sun, and even in the ironically-titled The Crusaders. In its departure from this tendency, as Aichinger notes, Eternity more closely resembles WWI novels like Three Soldiers and Through the Wheat, where disillusionment and isolation are progressive. Not only does Eternity sidestep the battle issue by ending only just after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, it deviates in another way from its contemporaries by casting its characters in the role of professional soldiers whose thirty-year commitment occurs before the draft. In this way, though it still supports Aichinger's view that WWII combat novel characters are motivated by pragmatic factors like economic welfare and social security instead of patriotic morale (39), it also gestures toward the unique attractions of military life, the fraternity, stern sense of order, and the comfort of clear social expectations Red calls "the inside" (11).
have been its most inurbane proponent, but the partisan move to defend a true common-
sense American character from the malignancies associated with Eastern-based
intellectualism had long historic roots, as both Louis Hartz and Hofstadter theorize. In
this light, *Eternity's* preoccupation with the opposition between being smart and being
intelligent is a compelling indicator of its timeliness. The novel's position on the
worthiness of the two kinds of epistemology shaping twentieth-century American culture
is clear: the commonplace form of Red's stolid understanding, revealed in the admission
“I’m no temperamental genius,” is no match for Prewitt's intuitive brilliance; from the
novel's beginning, being "smart" about getting along in the world is construed as existing
in fundamental subservience to being sensitive or deeply intelligent or dedicated to
principle, but not, importantly, to certain kinds of clear-eyed self-understanding. Red is
the first of the novel’s everyman soldiers whose "smarts" counter Prewitt's dramatic and
sometimes inarticulate resistance to the military’s self-perpetuating bureaucracy. Red’s
source of pride is his self-identification as “a logical guy” who has had to “play politics”
all his life for what he wanted, who can “sense the way a thing is going” and who would
not “steer [a friend] wrong” in manipulating the system to his own advantage (12). In
many ways, therefore, and like Stark, Red embodies the common-soldier poised as one of
the primary founding groups of the emergent postwar lower middling class, whose model
is guided by historic yeomanry.

About the transfer that occurs between the American colonial yeoman and his new
counterpart, the twentieth-century WWII veteran, the kinds of ideals previously attached
to the former find a welcoming host in the latter. Not only were WWII veterans important
for American post-war economic growth and the emergence of the new nuclear –
suburban family model, but they continued the perpetuation of traditional values, the
"folkish virtues" Hofstadter says the soldier is ideally suited for carrying forward (*PS* 73).
Among these, a capacity for aloneness and individual effort is combined with fraternity
and interdependence; the soldier must, like his historic counterpart, be well able to cope
with impersonal forces; he must be stoic, resourceful, brave; and, in an odd gesture to the
deep anti-trust current in American understandings, he must also be able to claim his
ration—but only his, an ability embodied by Captain Dynamite Holmes’s boast that the
Company is a “damned fine smoothrunning outfit . . . where every man gets just what he earns. No more, no less” (43).

Among some contemporary critics, intellectuals, and historians, however, concerns arose about the cultural outlook and values of the new post-war middle class. In 1955’s *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Hartz saw traits like pragmatism, ahistoricism, and temperance as symptomatic of an “almost charming” but ultimately alarming innocence, which persists in making a “cult of constitution worship” that insists on moral unanimity verging on “the tyranny of consensus” (56). According to Hartz, the kind of divided-by-two thinking embodied by Red is the result of an inability to resolve the essential paradox of American liberalism: that the individual freedom that is a “master assumption . . . instinctive to the American mind” is threatened in the twentieth-century by a growing and intractable conformitarianism (56). “A sense of community based on a sense of uniformity is a deceptive thing,” Hartz writes, “It looks individualistic, and in part it actually is. It cannot tolerate internal relationships of disparity, because deviations from the common standard inspire in it irrational fright” (56). In *Eternity*, the idea is depicted in Red's distress over Prewitt's refusal to play his bugle, which verges on hysteria when he warns Prewitt he will get a reputation as a "bolshevik" (7), and is offset by his intuitive ability to understand that the scope of Prewitt's talents lie somewhere outside the sphere of things understood intelligibly: "I aint no temperamental genius. But I understand somethin else. I'm a good bugler and I know it. But I can't touch you on a bugle" (6).

Hartz's emphasis on the ways that creativity is restricted by liberalism's perpetuation of its own limitations echoes the beliefs of another public intellectual whose work has a continuing effect on the study of the mid-century Consensus. Unlike Hartz, an historian who sees consensus as the result of specific historical events—or, more correctly, the *absence* of specific historical events—and the nation's obsessive fixation on Locke, Lionel Trilling's literary critic's conception of consensus focuses on the role that imagination and emotion play in balancing the rational liberal mind. In 1950’s *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling argues that the restriction of the full power of authentic imaginative power happens:
Because liberalism in practice carries out its active and positive ends [and thus] it unconsciously limits its view of the world to what it can deal with, and it unconsciously develops theories and principles, particularly in relation to the nature of the human mind, that justify its limitations. (xii)

What is left is a weakened if not a wholly evacuated shell, from which the middle class expects and receives validation for its view of reality as a fixed and immutable external world. Red’s conflicting views of Prewitt, as a genius half to be admired and half to be feared, offers support for Trilling’s statement that “the middle class, so far as it liberal, admires from varying distances the motives and even the aims of revolutionists: it cannot imagine that revolutionists have anything to ‘gain’ as the middle class itself understands gain” (81). The fictional soldier lends himself well to illustrations of the Trilling’s belief that the literature of liberal democracy “pets and dandles its underprivileged characters” (87): in Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, the soldiers of Company B are doomed from the start by their powerlessness before the machiavellian General Cummings; in *Eternity*, Prewitt's prophetic vision of Red's "mobile face . . . melted to a battle-blackened skull as though a flamethrower had passed over it, kissed it lightly, and moved on" (10) holds Prewitt up as a protagonist seemingly predestined for tragedy by virtue of his extraordinariness.

Being able to divide it all by two, to be smart and live between the paradoxes of liberal theory and reality is crucial to the secondary characters’ service to *Eternity*. As is often the case with terms whose rhetorical use is complicated by a variety of complex and even contradictory connotations, the way that ‘smart’ is used in *Eternity* is easiest to define in the negative. First, though smart is not intellectual, either as the result of formal education or of autodidacticism like Prewitt's, neither is its common-sense pragmatism entirely as self-deceiving as Trilling believed—and Prewitt is forced to admit the truth of Red's point (13). Smart, in this novel, is a characteristic of the outward, or peer-oriented man, whose intuitive sensitivities are calibrated to respond to his perceptions of his status and relevance to others. In 1950's *The Lonely Crowd*, David Riesman discusses the phenomenon as a unique development of an increasingly pervasive bureaucratic
structure; in 1956's *The Organization Man*, William H. Whyte writes: "the organization man is someone who does not just work for The Organization but who belongs to it... they have left home, so to speak, spiritually and physically to take the vows... though most will never reach the top, it is from their ranks that the first and second echelons of American society emerges, and from their values its temper decided" (3).

For an authentic figure like Prewitt, however, the command he has over his fantasies actually serves to draw him, and those other like-minded souls who neither want nor accept a "world without shadows," closer to a truer version of reality (45). Prewitt possesses a capacity for critical insight that John Carlos Rowe says is one of four essential components of Trilling's liberal formulation, in that it allows him to discern the difference between the world as it is and the one created of his own predilection for romanticization (4). When he realizes, for example, that the inmate king The Malloy has displaced him as Angelo Maggio's hero, he swings between ironic self-criticism and wild jealousy (537-9). Trilling's conception of the importance of the "true" artist as an ethical outlier in modern liberal culture is the foundation for his literary analyses and has given rise to a rich and varied critical discourse ever since. If it is true that Trilling's theory effects a semi-divine elevation of its own program, that it privileges "high" culture over "low," and that it occasionally makes sweeping generalizations about readers and class; it is also true that it is capable of a fine self-reflexive irony about the pretensions

26 Trilling's "world without shadows" and his nostalgia for American literature of the nineteenth century make the similarity of his phrase to these, the first lines of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, seem more than coincidental: "When we find ourselves fading into shadows and unrealities, it seems hardly worth while to be sad, but rather to laugh as gaily as we may, and ask little reason wherefore."

27 Rowe writes that the four criteria of Trilling's Liberal Imagination are 1) a capacity for imagining other subject positions and values; 2) a critical spirit capable of discerning disparity between present particular liberal manifestations and the liberal ideal; 3) a philosophically and psychologically grounded subject whose subjective individualism relies on creative and analytic powers outside of class affiliations; and 4) characteristic modern cosmopolitanism and universal human rights advocacy (4).

28 "On the whole, the poor do not read about the poor, and in so far as the middle class has been satisfied and gratified by most of these books, it is not likely to admire James's
of ideology. As well, it recuperates an historical tie between liberalism and the work of art. The sense of "primitive wonder" that is an essential element of modern art is also at the heart of the origins of American liberalism. From the eighteenth century onward, the social structures of the West were "peculiarly fitted" for changes in fortune that were magical and romantic; art, like liberalism, is the bridge between the "massed social fact"—the middling yeomanry—and the thread of "legendary romance, even of downright magic" (Trilling 64). This magic makes the perseverance and triumph of artistry like Prewitt's bugling possible, in an episode in which his notes, transcending the Company's earthly preoccupations, rose:

triumphanty high on an untouchable level of pride above the humiliations, the degradations . . . They vibrated there, caressingly, filled with an infinite sadness, an endless patience . . . hovered like halos over the heads of the sleeping men in the darkened barracks, turning all grossness to the beauty that is the beauty of sympathy and understanding. (216)

If Trilling considers liberalism in a different sense than Hartz, he is equally persuaded of its potential dangers in twentieth-century practice. The advantages philosophic liberalism bestows on the private person, in terms of its permission of "variousness and possibility" are also political necessities. The problem occurs when the essential and unconscious basis for variousness and possibility, or variety and freedom, is not in accord with liberal practice. Each in his way, Prewitt and Warden struggle against the barriers blocking the realization of their personal autonomy. Contrastingly, the self-understandings of Red, Chief Choate, Maylon Stark, Andrews, and even Angelo Maggio are rooted in the acceptance of life in a society in which individualism is always already divided by two and inextricably bound up with resentment for the arbitrariness that guides men's rise or fall. Even the apparent success with which Stark is able to negotiate a kind of self-

treatment of the poor—dignified and intelligent to the same degree as the reading class" (Trilling 87).

29 "We who are liberal and progressive are capable of knowing that the poor are our equals in every sense except that of being equal to us" (Trilling 88).
possessed sovereignty in the mess kitchen is undermined by the scene in which, smoking outside, he hears Prewitt's music, which makes him

   Ashamed. Ashamed of his own good luck that had given him back his purpose and meaning. Ashamed that this other man had lost his own. He pinched the inoffensive coal between his fingers, relishing the sting, and threw it on the ground with all his strength, throwing it with all the overpowering injustice of the world that he could not stomach nor understand nor explain nor change. (218)

Hartz's "self-completing mechanism," the dark reality trap behind liberalism's promotion of itself as a system of justices, explanations, and rational changes, is not a result of an innate theoretical flaw in the principle of propertied individualism, but to Trilling's mind (even in 1970, when he wrote a new preface) occurs because of its positive actions: liberalism in practice carries out its active and positive ends [and so] it unconsciously limits its view of the world to what it can deal with, and it unconsciously develops theories and principles, particularly in relation to the nature of the human mind, that justify its limitation . . . [thus] . . . the paradox reappears, that from the essentially imaginative origins of liberalism—in the interests of freedom and rationality in human life—liberalism drifts toward a denial of the emotions and the imagination. (xiv)

In its affirmation of a strict and inflexible rationality, modern liberalism "constricts" and "makes mechanical" the emotional processes of the mind. For the ways that the mid-century Army draws ever closer to an image of the bureaucracy that most completely embodies the dangers hidden in the rise of a vast and powerful military-industrial complex, and that Eisenhower, for one, speculated would be the consequence of a complacent and comfortable post-war society, it is clear that many parallels exist between Trilling's concerns about middle-class liberal outlooks and later theorists, like Leerom Medovi, who sees WWII as the catastrophic extension of rationalism, and who asks what may be understood when we approach representative icons like the soldier as figures whose primary purpose is to provide a bridge through the interstice:
From a literary perspective, we might say, identity operates through the modality of national or popular allegory in its requirement of two reciprocal conditions of representation. First the individual’s trials and tribulations must serve to dramatize and instantiate the larger identity demand that the sovereignty of the people remain commensurate with the self-determination of individual members. Rather than pit the individual against society, in short, identity as a psychopolitical idea works to harmonize them as necessarily reciprocal images of one another in the struggle for sovereign selfhood. (55)

The negation of life that Trilling argues is "gray, empty, and devoid of meaning" (28) in Winesburg, Ohio is, in fact, a perfect and sterile reproduction of its arid culture surging into the open air of cultural representation; in Eternity, the same occurs in the stockade scenes that dominate the narrative's later sections. The soldiers sentenced to break rocks there, however, resist the power of the hyper-regulative panopticom by talking continuously "out of the corners of their mouths . . . [conducting] conversations that could never be entirely stamped out" (536).

The prisoners also echo the yeoman's historic knack for survival in hostile circumstances and the duality of his cultural representations, in that the most respected among them are simultaneously both "three time loser[s] and the smartest joe[s]" in the prison yard (536). The interstitial overlap between smart as a virtue in terms of its capacity for allowing men like Stark to carve out negotiated comforts and guys like Maggio to become a kind of penal homme d'affaires continues to trouble the idea as an unqualified good. In G Company, the initial contrast set out between being smart and being intelligent is subtly developed by the use of repeated tropes linking common sense to a collection of other modern values. Though it does emphasize the basically good intentions that drive Red's concern for Prewitt, the novel wastes little time in drawing an ironic ideological circle around fraternal feeling, political pragmatism, and the desires for security, material advancement, and ease—all the qualities, in fact, that characterize the historic yeoman figure. The tone it takes toward Red is kind but dry: despite being the same age as Prewitt, he is a caricature of a stodgy older brother or father, whose common-sense is
irrefutable and who regards a wayward son with concern, confusion, and finally frustration. Red is the first, but not the last, of Prewitt’s peers to point out all that he is risking—the sexual and emotional comfort of a steady girlfriend, the relative ease of a bugling position, the favour and advancement his participation in regimental boxing would bring. Because Red’s presence in the narrative is relatively brief, and because the narrative's tone toward him is ironic, he functions chiefly to illustrate aspects of Prewitt’s character. Nonetheless, he is the model for later, more significant secondary characters.

Where Prewitt was easily able to dismiss Red’s arguments, they assume a different timbre when, in the new company, he encounters them again in the person of Corporal Wayne “Chief” Choate. Like Red, Choate shares a common interest beside the mere fact of military culture with Prewitt, only this time the shared vocabulary is boxing—or more accurately, a refusal to box, and not bugling. But unlike Red, to whom Prewitt bore a slightly patronizing air (“Did you pack my shoes?”), Choate’s physical size reflects his character’s personal gravity, the “slow solemnity” that allows him to refuse to box without divulging his reason (73). Again, the relationship is brotherly, but this time it is Prewitt who is vaguely awed, both by Choate’s legendary athleticism and his taciturnity. Reunited with Choate in the new company, Prew “watched him now, thinking wonderingly of all these things, and since he could not say the things he wanted to say, waiting for him to speak” (73).

Unlike the garrulous and simple Red, who falls near the "rube" end of the yeoman's representative scale, Choate’s common sense appreciation for the facts of reality is given weight by the slight rank advantage he holds over Prewitt and further complicated by his ethnic heritage as a member of the Cheyenne nation. Although Choate offers a possible alternative to the middle-level American male’s traditional Scottish-Irish Protestant association, and his Army enlistment is framed in terms of an escape from the structures of oppression entrenched in life on the reserve, the character simultaneously warns about the damage resulting from that adaptation's costs (498). He is the narrative’s example of the destructive effects modern liberalism has historically had on indigenous peoples, and his silence is the aphasia of cultural oppression. As such, he also can be understood in a
category of characters within the narrative that occupy troubled space in relation to their belonging under the constructions of white masculinity that occur under the wider umbrella of yeomanry.

Choate is a corporal, Prewitt a private, but the scope of Choate’s normal supervisory duties to his squad have been increased by the regiment’s reliance on platoon formations. As a result, he tells Prewitt that he has transferred to the “Pineapple Army,” where boredom and graft rule. Prewitt’s response to this falls somewhere close to a burgeoning pattern of reflexive contrarianism: “I don’t know whether I like that or not,” Prew said. “I dint figure you would,” Chief said. “But thats the way she is”(74). The implication gathering momentum in many of these smaller scenes is that institutional forms of social organization must meet Prewitt’s highly intuitive, often poorly articulated ideals before he can commit himself wholly to the fulfillment of his obligations in relation to them. It seems principled, but it is also worth remembering that it contains a suggestion of a kind of immature fragility, a kind of personal innocence begotten of a simplistic and naive national outlook, belying what poses as intense and “rugged” individualism, or Hartz’s “appalling innocence” fostered by Lockian dogma and revealed by earnestness (2). Nor is it a secret beyond the comprehension of the merely ‘smart.’ In a kind of gesture to the not-entirely dull perceptive powers of the ordinary soldier, Choate has already guessed that the reality of the military as a large and as-yet idle bureaucracy sliding into laziness and inefficiency in peacetime will offend Prewitt; at this point, it occurs to the reader that any institution would be regarded with ambivalence by Prewitt. The last part of Choate’s response—“thats the way she is”—is significant, not just for its reminder that the military is not going to change to suit one Private from Appalachia, but also for the gesture it makes to the changed status and power of American liberal culture in the post-war period.

Choate's acceptance of imperfection partnered with a tolerance for uncertainty and compromise most distinguishes the novel’s secondary characters from Prewitt and Warden. The latter pair's unwillingness to compromise, motivated as it is either by undiluted idealism or pragmatism, is the source of mythic energy driving both main
characters. But the single-minded intensity of Prewitt and Warden also creates, in the first place, assumptions of superiority in relation to their understandings of others, as the previous ‘decidings’ passages show. In the second instance, the implied goodness of their ethical insight seems to occur at the expense of being able to form true human connections. Prewitt’s relationship with the prostitute Lorene/Alma and Warden’s relationship with Karen Holmes eventually disintegrate under the weight of their inability to surrender themselves to intimacy. Deciding not to commit to be in love with Karen, Warden concludes at one point, would allow him "still to be able to enjoy life" (451); at the end of their relationship Prewitt tells Alma he prefers the stockade because "it was simple. You had somebody over you that you hated and plenty of time to hate them, and plenty of help hating them, and you did what they told you and just hated them, without having to worry about hurting them any because you couldn't have hurt them anyway" (722). The difficulty Prewitt and Warden have in maintaining personal relationships is mirrored in their wider circle—neither is ever entirely fully absorbed into the Company’s social fabric. The result contains an implication about the unsustainability of the inflexible type of heritage American-ness in a world where the idea of “dividing it all by two,” so easily interpreted as a condemnation of modern life, can also gesture toward the less perfect but practically valuable goodneses of adaptability and resourcefulness necessary in private relationships over the long term.

One of Prewitt's central traits, connected to his pessimism in intimate relationships, is his view of the principles of liberal capitalist culture as a fight for survival marked not just by ascension but by the unending struggle to keep what you have once its acquired, the America where "everybody fights to become top dog, and then to stay top dog" (274); where a person craving solitude must continually face down the forces determined to steal it from him (Prewitt's refrain); where the "days of Jeb Stuart and the plumed hats and the highwayman . . . riding up to the old inn door" are long gone and over (264). And yet, for a long time both he and Warden are equally unable to give up the dream of being ‘good soljers’ in the competitive milieu they purport to distance themselves from. Only after Prewitt has killed the prison guard Fatso, and his solitary martyrdom is all but guaranteed, can Prewitt let go of his ties to the Profession. Tellingly, while he is
considering his options, the character he thinks of is also the one who embodies the contradictory valences inherent in the secondary characters' position.

While Stark, Choate, and the other members of G Company comprise a web around Warden and Prewitt that provides the realistic-pragmatic counterposes to them as idealized American yeomen, it is clear that their mediation is often complicated by nuances that trouble their pragmatic goodesses from a range of conceptual positions. Choate's concretization of the harm done indigenous peoples by the settling colonists is picked up again in the expression of other characters struggling to reconcile themselves as immigrants in established America. Foremost among these is Angelo Maggio. Maggio is the concrete expression of a peculiar strand in the evolution of the yeoman's twentieth-century American character, one whose idealism is expressed viscerally, not intellectually; who forms close local social ties at the same time as it has an abiding and often self-destructive suspicion of authority; and whose patriotism tends to be shaped less by love of country or national principles than by an instinctive hatred of anything foreign. Maggio is Jones's reworking of a folk-figure of the lower-class working man who is always more likely in danger, given his habits and shortsightedness, of tumbling down the social ladder instead of climbing it; whose good-time fraternal loyalty is mixed with a hair-trigger temper; the yeoman-rube who bucks the system for no good reason other than that it is there to be bucked, and whose profound inability to be "smart" and to play politics for personal gain is the oblique expression of a cynical view of an ability to decide wisely in greater political realms. Representative of the extreme end of Trilling's cynicism about the dangers of a fixed and immutable understanding of reality, Maggio is one of the underprivileged characters “petted and dandled” by the rest of C-for-Charlie, at least for a while, “quite as if they had a right to do, and [also to] forgive . . . [him] what faults . . . [he] may have” (Trilling 87).

On one hand, the narrative presents Warden and Malloy as modern yeomen whose ability to grasp the social interconnectedness of their positions makes them "superior beings of another grade that moved on another orbit" (630). On the other, the reader is given the example of Maggio, a throwback in the model of the rube caricature whose essential
earthiness keeps him tied to the lower and most inflexible end of the yeoman's class structure. But in another of its unexpected reversals, the novel also invests Maggio’s character with the overtones of a tragic and tenacious kind of grandeur that ties him figuratively and literally to Prewitt:

Angelo Maggio—first American-born generation of Brooklyn immigrant Italian stock, absolute hater of the Army; the total opposite of a mountain boy and thirty-year-man soldier whose white ancestors had come from Scotland and England before the Revolution, and still hated foreigners—Angelo Maggio was more nearly [Prewitt's] own kind and caliber and closer to him than the big guns like Malloy and Warden. (630)

Angelo Maggio is the earnest, fun-loving character through which the narrative avoids becoming an experiment in theoretical concepts or political parables, as is arguably the case with Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead*; as well, Maggio is the reader’s portal of access to and the frequent catalyst for the often free-indirect expression of Prewitt’s consciousness. Red, Maylon Stark and Chief Choate embody the “smarts” of the everyday man faced with the necessity of earning a living, and who must develop a resource-pool of skills that draw on the logic of best-outcome, practicality, and survival-oriented shrewdness. Maggio, on the other hand, is the example of anti-smarts run amok. The profound impression he makes on Prewitt is more remarkable for his almost entire invisibility to the other enlisted men: Choate dismisses him with the absent-minded authority adults reserve for irritating children; Stark ignores him entirely. The only notice he gets is from the other prisoners, where his particular brand of repeated foolish stubborn deviance earns him a kind of folkish heroism. Maggio's stockade scenes are the most explicit expression of Jones's devolution theme in the novel, even down to his physical description:

[T]his grin, stiff, wolfish, feverish, wild . . . Angelo Maggio's face had changed during the past two months. There was no longer any trace of the naively-cynical, city-bred, lovable young Italian boy. This face had discarded cynicism as being as useless a pose as optimism, and it was a face without nationality . . . He looked competent. (539-40)
The earnestness with which Maggio attaches himself to Prewitt in the first half of the novel carries with it more than a touch of pathos. Of any of the secondary characters, it is hardest to imagine Maggio existing in a narrative where Prewitt did not also live. And the dependence is reciprocal: without Maggio, Prewitt’s unceasingly existential ruminations, like any hero’s, run the risk of becoming tiresomely self-absorbed. Maggio gives him the humanity crucial for nurturing the reader’s sympathy:

Only when Kid Prewitt appeared on the scene, like a catalyst poured into a tranquil baker, did the mixture begin to boil and then explode. Angelo had not been tainted by the queers; it was only when Kid Galahad Prewitt had stepped in looking for the Holy Grail with his moralistic fears and questionings that Angelo had suddenly felt guilty enough, or tainted enough, to do something drastic. There were times when Prewitt felt a special quality in himself, a strange unpleasant quality that seemed to force everyone he touched into making drastic decisions about their own lives, no wonder people did not like to be around him . . . Enter Kid Galahad Prewitt. The action precipitates. (408)

Thus Maggio’s decompensation in the second part of the book marks a critical shift in the narrative. From an incorruptibly loyal if dumb regimental sidekick, by the time the action moves to the stockade Angelo Maggio’s character has shifted to that of a well-respected yeoman in the world of the stockade.

Beyond the effect it has on Prewitt in becoming the eventual catalyst for his tutelage in working-class solidarity by the enigma that is The Malloy, Maggio’s transformation to competence in the unfree world of the prison yard is representative of another major theme that runs through all Jones's war novels, and not just Eternity: the importance of work in establishing the American soldier as an icon in the popular mind. A much-underexamined aspect of Jones’s soldiering novels is that Jones’s evolution of the soldier theory is also dependent upon the creation of characters for whom consciousness depends on the form and internalized perceptions of their working attachments to each other. In the next chapter, I explore how, in The Thin Red Line, those attachments foreground much of soldiering as mundane but backbreaking labour, to make what Alfred Kazin said
was "ultimately a judgment on a society whose men have no real work" (79); at the same time, the novel’s primary emphasis is on the soldiers’ status group ties to each other. In this way, *The Thin Red Line* is a signal representation of the sociological theories of Max Weber and their influence in post-war America. While, as Nicholas Coles and Janet Zandy point out, the public face of labor became less visible in the presence of postwar technological advancement, and withdrew into “recessed” private spaces (583), Jones’s soldiers expose and concretize the image of the soldier as a communally bound and publicly exposed figure, whose participation in ceaseless rational calculations is a function of both his life chances and status group connections.
Chapter 2  
Jerkoffs and Brothers, Getting By: C-for-Charlie Goes to War in *The Thin Red Line*

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: “Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.” (Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic* 182)

“Everybody’s a jerkoff.” *The Thin Red Line* (57)

James Jones and Max Weber in America

Along with Coles and Zandy’s rank-and-file use, readers who have a store of English military language can quickly call up the other meaning of the word “private.” Even those readers not paying conscious attention likely draw some link between its two meanings. Jurgen Habermas writes that the word always already acts as "a linguistic reminder of . . . the use of private in the sense of ‘common’ soldier--the ordinary man without rank and without the particularity of a special power to command interpreted as ‘public’” (6). In the Habermasian view, the plain soldier becomes a touchstone any time social change alters our understandings of private and public, not just those that occurred four centuries ago.  

In my first chapter, I show how James Jones reworks a similar

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30 The rise of standing armies is one of the events marking the shift from feudalism to modern capitalism; likewise, the question of the common person’s entitlement to power by the assertion of a right to be heard publicly is one of its ideologic hallmarks. Habermas shows how, before the rise of market economy culture, the capacity for public representativeness was one in which the commonly acknowledged feudal “status attributes” of lords or kings invested them with powers that could only “occur in public . . . there is no representation that would be a private matter” (7). Over the long emergence of capitalism, new commercial relationships involving news and the exchange of information, the rise of bourgeois understandings of the public sphere, and the emergence
figure, and how the interstitiality of his yeomen redux is the source of his actors’ easy reassignment to postwar America. Continuing my steady interest in Jones’s piebald soldiers, in this chapter I pick up the next thread of their story. Its context is one in which “naturalness” has rarely been argued.

For the ways they express aspects of Max Weber’s thought, Jones’s soldiers join the popular war novel to the framework of modern American sociology. The novel that most brings Weber’s Americanization to life, *The Thin Red Line (RL)*, stands as one of those confluent moments in a country’s life when theory meets popular representation. It is interesting but not unlikely that the “low-culture” realism of the combat setting in *The Thin Red Line* should provide the best ground for the expression of the “high-culture” ideas changing America’s social outlook. In *The Historical Novel (HN)*, Lukacs says nexae of theory and concrete popular representations often arise after war; he hints they even depend on it. As a contemporary historical novel—it was published in 1961—*The Thin Red Line*’s mixing of current idea with past event agrees with the genre’s purpose:

> The appeal to national character is necessarily connected with a re-awakening of national history, with memories of the past, of past greatness, [and] with moments of national dishonor, whether this results in a progressive or a reactionary ideology. (*HN* 23)

War effects “mass experience.” It is the drastic measure by which the spatio-temporal temper of a people and their culture is changed for good (*HN* 20). The historical novel arose autochthonously from the French Revolution, Lukacs says, because its realism and its focus on average—neither very good nor very bad—actors sets forth the best forum by which people can grasp the facts of their levelling (*HN* 22-30). The first thing the historical novel’s readers seize upon is a personal sense of their culture’s depth. Whatever of institutions of public governance that were permanent and included a standing army (18), combined to effect a new kind of public that “may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public,” and which saw itself as a body often opposed to public authority, capable of political confrontation, and obligated to engage in debate about the public implications of private business (26).
roots the revolution has—war- or work- or family-related—and however these causes matter in daily life, the novel takes and spreads their impact among the largest number of people living in the aftermath, in the broadest manner possible. The result is a deeper sense of the ways small lives are subject to large forces. These novels remind their readers that, like the story’s characters, none of us lives outside our culture’s history or theory. But the historical novel also reverses the ‘big ideas’ that lead to, or result from the revolutionary drama, and drives them back into the common realm. This it does by offering concrete, local, specific representations: living graspables. The form’s concrete possibilities make it one of the genres, like musical theatre, that is able to retrieve ideology kept in high culture cloisters and disperse it back to the people for their own use—and plain readers somehow get the broad genius of that gift (HN 22).

Balzac thought Scott’s unique genius lay in “The broad delineation of manners and circumstances attendant upon events, the dramatic character of action and, in close connexion with this, the new and important role of dialogue in the novel” (qtd. in HN 30). Lukacs, likewise, praises the great life-force of Waverley’s characters (HN 40). Both point out that Scott’s people live, as most of us do, in the middle ranges of human response to uncertainty. It is by their short-comings that we know Scott’s and Jones’s actors. Their eccentricities are reasonable; their self-awareness has friendly limits. As outgrowths of their authors’ own middle-of-road outlooks, the characters are admirably prosaic. But they are never wasteful. Indeed, Lukacs say that the limitations of Scott’s own middle-class views are exactly the reasons the small crises between minor actors escape the stupid “psychology of the valet” (HN 50). His minor characters work because though their concerns are small, they matter to the characters’ dignity and so also to ours. Lukacs defends Scott as an “honest writer, keenly observant of the real facts of social development.” At the same time, he says Scott belongs to that group of famous writers whose greatness is “manifest mainly in their work, a depth which they often do not understand themselves because it has sprung from a truly realistic mastery of their material in conflict with their personal views and prejudices” (HN 30).
Jones is an honest writer, too. In a 1947 letter to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, Jones talks about the trouble narrative theory is giving him:

I’ve done a lot of reading on it, although most of it hasn’t helped me much. About the best help I got was from Tom Uzzell’s *Technique of the Novel*, altho if I did everything like he said I wouldn’t have to write, I’d be enough of a mastermind to just take the world over tomorrow and run it right. (Hendrick 86)

Some clever people thought Jones was a loser. Hemingway’s infamous “fuck-up” remark about Jones I have already noted in my introduction; another Jones opponent was Pearl Bell, a fiction reviewer for *Commentary* magazine, who describes the origins of what she sees as Jones’s "discomfort in the presence of ideas" as the legacy of his admiration for the writing of Thomas Wolfe, and its "habit of confusing incantation with ideas" (91) as evidence of the basic incompatibility of intellectualism with the author’s imagination and temperament.

Bell’s anti-intellectual view of Jones may have been based unfairly on a perception of his middle-of-the-road status. Jones came from the Midwest; his grandfather’s wealth ran out; his father was the town drunk and killed himself. Jones didn’t get on with his mother and stayed away from her funeral. He talked a lot about how much sex didn’t matter to him and almost never about drinking; maybe both were problems. He wrote kindly to his readers and generously about other writers. He could come off like a punk. He served in Guadalcanal and killed a Japanese soldier. He was himself wounded. His wife and children stood by him; he wrote passionate letters to Gloria their whole marriage. When famous, he drifted between sets; probably, he was a little too smart for Sinatra, and a little too loud for Vidal. He gave a lot of money away; he moved to France; he said he didn’t care for politics. He loved his country. He talked all the time, sometimes mendaciously, about his process and intent. His novels, though, still buck out from under him.31

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31 In *To Reach Eternity: The Letters of James Jones*, Hendrick includes this letter, in which Jones explains his rejection of cosmopolitanism in favour of the Midwest and reveals facets of his character at the same time: “That’s why I live in Marshall, Illinois, which is a pigsty in its own little way—but its way contains a lot less of the enjoyable
Jones lives in his work in a way Weber does not. While the difference between them is a function of the difference in their genres—scholarly versus creative—the side-by-side analysis I undertake in this chapter is valuable because it shows how Jones’s fiction sheds light on what Sacvan Bercovitch calls Weber’s concept of ideology as a “positive, empowering force . . . [that] provides a focus for historical understanding that is grounded in the substantiality of expressive form” (362). The substance of Jones’s narrative expression, the soldier, helps extend our understanding of the practical ramifications of Weberian theory, as well as opening avenues for a deeper exploration of the ways that the soldier-yoeman created by Jones becomes a figure of ideological significance, not just in the consensus era, but also in the decades of dissensus that followed that period. Especially since 9/11, the soldier in popular culture has become a symbol that expresses, superficially, many of the “positive, empowering” ideologies Bercovitch examines in American life; at the same time, this chapter is motivated by a commitment to inquire into the problems and contradictions concealed behind a façade of positive idealism preoccupied with self-reliance, individualism, and initiative.

The afterlives of Jones’s work have been confined to their mainstays, a core band of scholar-champions and a vast number of extra-academic people. Next to Weber, Jones’s story, in scholarly circles, is the life of a cell. The crucial thing about Weber’s thought in America is the scale of its reach. He was a polymorphous thinker whose ideas were sprung to hatch in a polyglot land. Talcott Parson’s three-volume 1930 translation of one of Weber’s central works, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, was well timed to changes underway in the structure of American jobs and class consciousness. By the forties, Weberian scholarly attention was firmly fixed in America; by the sixties and seventies, these big immigrant family first-generation studies had spawned an ocean of

selfdestructive (sic) temptation for me than the big literary one does . . . I do not [have the character to resist temptation] and I need somebody to look after me and keep me from killing myself drinking and fucking” (237).
sociological research aimed at understanding how the affective dimensions of work and self-identity were changing at the mid-century point.\footnote{Weberian work from the forties and fifties broke ground for later works like Kohn’s \emph{Class and Conformity} (1969), Etzioni’s \emph{The Active Society} (1968), and Galbraith’s \emph{The New Industrial State} (1967).}

Parson’s lead was taken up with Burnham’s \textit{The Managerial Revolution} (1941), Gerth and Mills’s 1946 translation \textit{From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology}, and Centers’s \textit{The Psychology of Class} (1949). In the fifties, Weber was everywhere. Some of the most well-known examples of works influenced by his thought are \textit{White Collar} (Mills 1951), \textit{Character and Social Structure} (Gerth and Mills 1953), \textit{The Power Elite} (Mills 1956), \textit{Social Stratification} (Barber 1957), and \textit{Class and Conflict in Industrial Society} (Dahrendorf 1959), but many others outside of sociology also exist. As Lawrence Scaff comments:

\begin{quote}
In the universities by the end of the 1950s, Weber’s texts had become standard fare in the sociology of religion, political sociology, studies of bureaucracy and organization, investigations of inequality and social stratification, the comparative historical analysis of social institutions, and the discussions of modernization. This diffusion of the work in sociology was only part of the story, however, for in terms of the major social science disciplines Weber’s ideas were also introduced in the same period into political science, cultural anthropology, and some areas of history, philosophy, and the humanities. (244)
\end{quote}

Given the scale of Weber’s reach in America, it is easy to see how his theories may have spread into many kinds of cultural discourse. And yet, to this day, studies of Weber’s influence focus mostly on his academic, political, or sociologic manifestations.

Even now, when Jones is enjoying a period of interest, his works’ Weberian mimetic has not, to my knowledge, been taken up.\footnote{Like Jones’s, Weber’s reception by the academic Humanities was vexed. In \textit{Wartime}, Paul Fussell discusses the break between vocational (social science) and academic (liberal humanities) education, using Auden’s poem “Under Which Lyre” to illustrate the mutual hostility that arose in the wake of the GI Bill (64-5). In their 1949 \textit{Methodology},} I hope also to suggest that the depth of Weber’s
influence in American culture has not yet been plumbed, especially in term of its effect on a significant genre of post-war fiction. In this chapter, then, I follow *The Thin Red Line* as one of the concentric rings that that ripples outward from the center of the amphidrome that is Weber in America. My work depends upon a hierarchy of propositions. The first of these expands the ‘smarts’ idea outlined in the previous chapter. Holding up Jones’s soldiers in relation to Weber’s theories about life chances and autonomy allows me to probe the ways and means of the soldiers’ calculating rationality, as well as the ways their behavior often crosses the line between rational and affective motivations. The next proposition builds on the first, and studies the narrative representation of the military company as a unique example of a corporate group. In C-for-Charlie, I see the first formulations of the popular band-of-brothers trope that so dominates American military culture today; a development I argue depends on Weber’s model of status groups and social honor. Finally, in the workings-out of individualism and conformity that exist in precarious balance with Army discipline, I hope to show how this novel addresses Weber’s ideas about charisma and bureaucracy.

This chapter rests on the first; it also paves the way for the next, in which I argue that another new-ness of Jones is that his soldiers are among the first to signal, in literary form, the displacement of returning veterans. By analyzing a unique and to this point unexplored historical intersection between theory and pop-culture, I hope to move Jones’s works more securely into the realm of serious thought. I also want to trace some manifestations of Weber’s influence that continue to make their presence felt in Western ‘support-our-troops’ culture today: the often-uncritical valorization of nationalist values that elide serious inquiry into the terms of their formation. Jones’s work, like Scott’s, uses history to help its contemporary readers understand themselves; the wonderful thing about the historical novel is that it keeps gathering meaning and life for every generation of reader who finds it. At the very least, I hope my work becomes a finding aid for other people interested in soldiers and their stories.

Shils and Finch say that the troubled water already lies between research practice and theory (vi).
Where Chapter 1 was historically asymmetric, in that it offered an exegesis of the yeoman-soldier’s broad origins, this chapter is built on the soldier-yeoman’s interaction with his most pressing contemporary contexts: the world of public representation, the problem of power, and the struggles of the small private person. I begin by examining the work of one of the leading Jones scholars, Steven R. Carter. I show how Carter’s work is a benchmark in the field, and I distinguish his approach from mine. As part of that process, I introduce a trope—the hedge-and-boost— I see as crucial to my reading, which testifies to what Lukacs called the “formulated psychology of the calculating individual agent of capitalism” (613 qtd in Allen 80). Next, I acknowledge the problematic aspects of my theoretical framework, and I compare Weber’s concept of status groups to traditional class formulations. Before moving into the body of my reading, I provide an overview of key concepts in Weber’s thought and his work’s American iterations. This leads to my discussions of The Thin Red Line’s illustration of practical calculating rationality, its varied representation of the openness or closure of the band-of-brothers status group, and the ways the combat scenes complicate Weber’s theory of discipline and technologic progress. Finally, I take up several of Jones’s signal WWII characters as charismatic models to show how they help us to understand Weber’s ideas about bureaucracy and individualism.

Most of the discourse about the nature of those understandings focuses on the agents’ struggles for freedom. As I point out in my introduction, Jones’s thematic spirituality—or more accurately, the debate about his works’ intellectualism versus their spirituality—has been the basis of the scholarly conversation connected to his work. So it is that the twenty-first century revival of academic interest in Jones bears a grandchild’s debt to James Giles but finds its parent in Steven R. Carter’s 1998 James Jones: An American Literary Orientalist Master. In his consideration of the works’ blend of Asiatic and American orientalist and transcendentalist philosophies, Carter reads Jones’s fiction for its revelations about the painful nature of private spiritual progress and the self-deceptions inherent in publicly-bred material desires and romantic ideals. His thesis is that the quasi-theosophic, semi-transcendentalist, semi-Buddhist character of Jones’s
narratives can be pictured as a single golden thread, upon which are strung characters, like beads. Each of the beads represents individualized narratives of the process of ego-reduction through reincarnation. Born as stalactic fragments of an organic oversoul, individuals travel a “V” meant to ensure they suffer enough on the plane of daily life—the base of the “V”—to wear away the edges of self-concern. When experience has worn them smooth, people re-ascend to reabsorption by the divine.\textsuperscript{34}

While it relies explicitly on the premise that "Jones’s artistry cannot be appraised or appreciated without understanding the religious system that shaped his organization, characterization, symbolism, setting, and thematic development" (5), Carter’s approach also depends implicitly on Jones’s sensitivity to the historical variations of material experience.\textsuperscript{35} The actors are locked into the harnesses of their lives, each unique in its troubles, and that makes them long for the relief of eternal salvation. The harness changes as the trilogy progresses through time; the changing details of their social contexts propel reader interest in both the continuity of repeating essential characters and their position on the karmic road across the series. Though Carter acknowledges the importance of setting for the works’ spiritual theme, confining Jones’s historical sense to an element of his religious system risks, to paraphrase Carter’s own judgment of \textit{The Pistol}, reducing it to a mere "trait" (79). This reduction presents problems on three fronts. First, subsuming the novels' historicity places a priori restrictions on analyses interested in the works'...

\textsuperscript{34} Carter writes: Having derived his Eastern conception of life primarily though the eastern filters of transcendentalism and theosophy, Jones produced works that reified, amplified, and elaborated on [Beongcheon] Yu’s concept of American literary orientalism. Far from treating reincarnation and spiritual evolution exotically or as a dilettante, he embodied them as the essence of human existence in substantially detailed, convincing American settings . . . His frequent use of war as a background for spiritual education recalls the Bhagavad-Ghita, similarly a paean to reincarnation and spiritual growth amid massed, armed combat, and confirms Joan Didion’s perception that "James Jones had known a great simple truth: the Army was nothing more or less than life itself" ("Goodbye, Gentleman-Ranker” 64)

\textsuperscript{35} Jones told Maxwell Perkins it was his intent "to discover an unsevered thread that will run continuously through everything I write . . . Emerson's philosophy . . . provides the conception for 'the evolution of the soldier'" (qtd. in Carter 4) (James Jones’s First Romance 16, 85).
development of extra-religious themes. Next, Carter’s emphasis on Jones’s textual religious logic invites comparison to one of Weber’s key “specific and peculiar” idiosyncrasies of Western culture, “the rationalization of mystical contemplation” (PE 26). Finally, Carter’s reading channels all criticism toward a single ontology. In his theory of narrative identity and situated agency, Paul Fairfield writes that:

While a principle of unity of one description or another is indeed an indispensable ingredient of a philosophy of the self, conventional liberalism errs in articulating this principle in the metaphysical vocabulary of the subject substance, essence, noumena, and so on . . . We may conceive of the person as constituted not only be certain of its moral ends and attachments but more fundamentally by the language, conventions, texts, and modes of self-understanding that characterize a particular historical setting. (145)

Jones’s works are rich enough to support competing hypotheses. Equally as much as they are beings whose local experience of life is the catalyst for their movement down or up the arms of a cosmic V, the soldiers are materially, socially, and historically-conscious characters. Understanding the trilogy from a historic-materialist perspective creates new paths for appreciating their creator’s genius, since the novel’s philosophy and realism become entwined strands on the same plane. Combined, they more fully illuminate a critical period in the national culture Jones watched and loved so closely and wholly. While Carter will remain the undisputed authority on both the works’ representation of, and Jones’s personal views toward spirituality, his analysis relies, as Fairfield suggests all like it must, on the liberal premise implicit in any Americanized spiritual system reliant on the idea of “progress.” Moreover, an analysis that focuses on other themes present in The Thin Red Line releases its reader from the anxiety of expectation associated with reading strategies that emphasize resolution and unity.

I highlight the difference between reading practices whose final aim is to release readers by giving them some method to solve the novel’s “problem” and reading practices that support freedom within the reading act by allowing, and even favoring, messy and ongoing explorations of disharmony. As I note in my introduction, Jones’s disharmonies
have always motivated a lively and at times heated discourse. Confining his works’ social and economic settings as subsets of their religiosity glances over the latent signification contained by the wayward detail. Theodor Adorno thought small plot details contain the rebellious "unbridled expression . . . the agent of opposition, against organization" (99). Against a body of criticism backed up by Jones’s own promotion of his spiritual themes, readings that seek out detail risk drawing conclusions that are occasionally disharmonious too.

Besides arguing for new appreciations of Jones’s style, this chapter also may end up circling back to address old criticisms. All I can offer as way of an answer is that when it comes to great art—and The Thin Red Line is great art—the purpose of critical analysis is not to identify the discordance Adorno writes about as the first stage in the critic’s own logic of resolution, but is, as Clifford Geertz says, more productive for trying to ask questions that probe cultural dissonance (20). Exploring disunity in critical analyses preserves the integrity of problematic elements in texts that do not always achieve what they appear to set out to do. The religious aspect of Jones's fiction is worth studying precisely for the way that it gestures to possibilities for transcendence, but:

that moment does not consist in achieved harmony, in the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society, but in those traits in which the discrepancy emerges, in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity. (Adorno 103)

I believe the discrepant agent in Jones’s war fiction emerges through a trope I call “hedge and boost,” which is borrowed from scholars of linguistics who analyze rhetorical elements that either strengthen or weaken a speaker’s position. In a carryover of their yeomen’s legacy, the characters continuously appraise their chances and self-adjust by tacking either closer to (the boost) or farther away from (the hedge) the institutions

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36 See Mary Talbot’s Language and Gender: An Introduction, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) in which she says “hedging and boosting devices are model elements; that is, elements that modify the force of a statement, either weakening it or intensifying it” (122).
dominating their lives. Hedging and boosting are the outward demonstration of a constant internal process of assessment; they are actions predicated on maximizing personal opportunity and preserving group connections. The hedge-and-boost’s ceaseless recalibration of self-interest in relation to bureaucracy reflects important currents in fifties’ culture, which changed in fundamental ways the ways which people saw themselves in relation to society. According to C. Wright Mills in *White Collar*, the middle-class yeomen could no longer rely on the historic image of themselves as mobile “small entrepreneurs—now they are one stratum among others: above them the big money; below them, the alienated employee: before them, the fate of politically dependent relics; behind them, their world” (58). Because it is a prime example of behavior directed at lived realities of daily life in response to forces embedded in post-war social organization, the hedge-and-boost trope is a perfect example of the kind of attempt at adaptation Weber said is a product of economic life (*MSS* 55-6). Hedging and boosting is the trope that, as much as ingenuity, resourcefulness, or industriousness, is part of a repertoire of adaptive mechanisms unique to the American character. In it, the external outlines of conformity contain the mechanisms of self-authored individualism.

The ways that Jones’s war fiction contains, in the figures of its soldier-yeomen, both dissent and conformity bears a striking resemblance to Philip Fisher’s description of the narrative realism of the American decades from 1890 to 1910, in which representative arts engaged in a “series of experiments in the modeling of a highly visible structure of identity and the new circumstances of conspicuous performance” (164). Jones’s WWII soldiering characters, like the nouveau riche millionaires captured in the nineteenth-century texts analyzed by Fisher, such as *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, satisfy public curiosity about secret or unknown worlds and at the same time present them as the products of strategies consequent to the “exhibition and visibility” implicit in models of conspicuousness, using the “machinery of making known, exposing, exhibiting, and locking into place new types” (176). At the same time as they boost the GI as a new image, as popular in the post-war period as Fisher notes the Singer sewing machine and Kodak camera were in the nineteenth-century, Jones’s characters hedge away from the
machinery of empty celebrity by offering a critique of the “psychological and social consequences of the new power” (Fisher 168).

This chapter’s consideration of the effects Jones’s authorial inconsistencies have on the texts’ hedging and boosting is enriched for acknowledging the in-tandem complications occurring in Weber’s theories. Weber’s “value-free” ideology paves the way for relativism, and this, combined with his tendency to minimize the differences between historical periods and to stress the “naturalness” and even transcendent ahistoricity of ethnic or status group “honor,” combine to put checks on potentially naively neutral or uncritical readings.37 He has been characterized variously as the “child of the Enlightenment born too late” or as one of the fathers of post-foundationalism born too early (Koshul i), a virulent secularist or a positivist ideologue. The excerpt from Weber’s famous “cage-and-nullity” passage that is one-half of the epigraph above is as significant for its facile judgment of the mundane self-interest of the masses as Jones’s “jerkoff” passage is for misleading some readers into thinking his characters really are. Indeed, the value of these epigraphs for this chapter is their gesture to the works’ intrinsic contradictions and problems. As Kieran Allen has already pointed out:

Behind all of Weber’s relativism there is . . . a systematic bias. He claims that values cannot be scientifically discussed or subject to discussion. However, if values cannot be critiqued, then the dominant values of the present system emerge unscathed from serious challenge. This is particularly useful for the elite.
Moreover, Weber’s calculating rational man . . . is by no means a neutral figure. (80)

37 From Economy and Society, Volume I, “Definitions of Sociology and Social Action,” about value-free methodology: “It is a tremendous misunderstanding to think that an “individualistic” method should involve what is in any conceivable sense an individualistic system of values” (18, italics orig.). About elitism, from “The Belief in Common Ethnicity,”: “the poor white trash . . . were the actual bearers of racial antipathy, which was quite foreign to the planters” (ESI 391). On relativism: “the idea of a notion of a chosen people derives its popularity from the fact that it can be claimed to an equal degree by any and every member of the mutually despising groups (ESI 391).
My constant inspiration is literature’s unceasing instinct for uncovering and challenging its producing culture’s sleight-of-hand truths. In Jones’s war fiction these revealing maverick details live in the framework of the great modern military industrial complex his characters call “The Profession.” Adorno suggests that subversiveness of a quality that we may find in works like Jones’s is the only way modern narratives realize grace, and for Ezra Pound the detail was the “luminous” part capable of resisting the homogenizing effects of liberal culture and history (Kulchur 38). The most interesting aspect of The Thin Red Line’s relation to Weber lies in the construction and character of the “luminous” intersection of action and theory, but that luminosity flickers and is never neutral. The determinedly proletarian realism that made Jones’s war novels appealing to his key publics, the WWII veteran and civilian, is the medium also responsible for the creation and perpetuation of ambivalent cultural tropes. Though they illustrate the novel’s deep connection to a distant ideology, “live and close up” these tropes have inflicted and can inflict much harm. No other popular WWII novel, I think, has marched “ideas into action” more vigorously than this one (Kulchur 44), but like any mobilization the outcome is never wholly good or successful.

The Thin Red Line and the Band-of-Brothers as a Weberian Status Group

Of all Jones’s war novels, The Thin Red Line is the one famously featuring active combat settings. In it, Jones reworks the characters of From Here to Eternity by placing them in the Guadalcanal theatre. C-for-Charlie is now a seasoned infantry company. Set down in jungle redoubts, the characters’ mostly-abstract Eternity reasoning about war, which ended in Pearl Harbor, is changed at this novel’s outset by the image of men offloading from naval troop carriers onto a jungle beach. They are rapt, hypnotized by the “gentle sighing . . . fluttery overtone . . . probing fingers” of the latest romantic inventions in killing technology (41-2). Before they were Prewitt, Warden, Stark, Holmes, and Mazzioli; now they are Witt and Welsh, Storm, Keck, Stein, and Doll. Joining them are a host of other characters: Bell, a thoughtful ex-officer who gave up his commission to be near his wife; Big’Un Cash, a fringe-wearing cowboy; Band, a priggish college English teacher turned rigid junior officer; Tills and Mazzioli, the odd couple in
temperament and outlook; and Fife and Bead, the company clerk and his junior, whose secret sexual relationship lies below their professional one.

The first of the Weberian concepts reflected in the novel is in the organization of C-for-Charlie’s “status group” social bonds. The “status group” is Weber’s answer to classic Marxian’s single-principle economic model of class. Conflict theorists maintain that exploitation under capitalism breeds resistance—so it is that a class-in-itself comes to self-awareness as a class-for-itself (Eichar 3). Thus “the appropriate terrain for [understanding] class is social and political conflict” (Eichar 5). But the exploitation-resistance model breaks down when it is applied to soldiers in combat, since the premise underlying soldiering is consent to the most radical economic exploitation possible. A counter-argument could claim that soldiers then can be considered in a like manner to religious disciples who perform acts of self-sacrifice, but this fails to account satisfactorily for both the numbers of soldiers relative to religious martyrs and the mobility that exists between soldiering and other, more traditional occupations, which does not occur on nearly the same scale for members of religious orders. A major connection exists between Jones’s representation of soldiers and class theory in the postwar decade, but the medium of its expression resists hard-left Marxian models. In part, this is because soldiering entails an essential paradox that occurs in no other job.

The soldier labors to produce a product, himself, whose primary value lies in his willingness to consider it ultimately valueless. The soldier worker's relation to his product is the ultimate example of labor alienation; the consequence of his progressive estrangement, set out in Marx’s Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, goes against the classic equation, where "the wretchedness of his [the worker’s] condition . . . is in inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of his [the worker’s] production" (Tucker 70). The more wretched the soldier the closer he is to death, in most cases: this is a parallel ratio, not an inverted one. Though his commanders must believe that he is an expendable resource, exchanged for something of higher value (and typically for much less, in just a few metres of ground), ordinary soldiers have to find some form of sustenance other than the exchange theory of surplus-value. Usually the literary solution
comes in the form of oblique reification under a veil of masculine national values or a warrior-hero ethos, but, as I try to show in more detail later in this section, Jones is unique among his peers in that he tackles the problem frankly. His characters assess the relation of patriotism to self-interest head-on, using local contexts. Their responses boost the soldiers closer to the ideas shaping class concepts in the post-war era—class, estate, status—at the same time as they hedge away from the conflict model of social class that underpins classic Marxian theory.

The characters’ hedging and boosting relates to Weber’s view of economic difference as only one of several ways that power is distributed across communities. Weber rejects economic theory as a single-principle ideal type because its application is “unrealistic or abstract in that [it] always ask[s] what course of action would take place if [actors] were purely rational and oriented to economic ends alone” (ESI 21). Weber’s social belonging, in contrast, relies on an assumption of mutable possibility. His theory of class rests on situations and types, where the first means the likelihood actors will get the goods, position, and satisfaction they want; and where the second refers to the kinds of goods, positions, and satisfactions they want. The mere differentiation of property, Weber writes, “is not ‘dynamic,’ that is, it need not result in class struggles and revolutions” (ESI 303). Conflict may occur, but if it happens at all it is most likely to happen between land owners and the entirely declassed, or between urban creditors and rural debtors, not among the ranks of stratified neighbors. Stratification of the types occurs across three main groups. In order of their descending economic power, social groups are arranged by property classes, the commercial classes, and the social classes. People can move, conditionally, within the groups. In the middle layers of stratified society, people of different class—different skill levels, different levels of education, different prospects through their “situations”—may live harmoniously together forever.

Money and goods are not enough by themselves as qualifiers of status; similarly, lack of property is not always a disqualifier. What must be noted is the looseness, even the ungainliness, of Weber’s idea. Class position, according to type, may vary greatly, but status positions may be equal. Similarity in status is what allows people from different classes to belong to the same status group, to come together even as they remain apart.
Like status, status groups are plastic; in America, their potential space, no matter how ill-defined, is a trait often reified into a national virtue. Though it appears nowhere in his work or letters, the idea of the status group is behind Jones’s love for his country. In a 1958 interview with Nelson Aldrich for The Paris Review, Jones said, “I happen to love that big, awkward, sprawling country very much—and its big, awkward, sprawling people.”

The status group is the theoretical model that makes it possible for soldiers of different civilian—economic, education, religious—backgrounds to see themselves as a cohesive group. Of Weber’s types of status groups, a military company is a “corporate” group: a closed (not open to outsiders unless by admission under a formal rule framework) unit whose action is united and oriented by a leading administrative authority, often supported by staff. For their single purpose, monopoly- and control-oriented behavior, corporate groups are especially likely to appear in times of war (TSEO 145). The band-of-brothers corporate group arises between the equal if swinging poles of communal groups, formed by subjective affective (emotion-value) or traditional (historic-custom) ties, and associative groups, dependent on rationally motivated (instrumental-calculated) collective agreements about either ends or values (IB 9). Both kinds of groups are firmly tied to their social structures and institutions, but the band-of-brothers’ capacity for a kind of “solidarity” imbued with decisive public representativeness (to go back to Habermas’s term) is conspicuously related to its orientation to violent conflict (IB 13).

Jones’s band-of-brothers expands on Weber’s typology of “corporate groups” and their internal reliance on bureaucratic structures by offering, in the model of Scott’s Waverley, a concrete micro-societal replica of legitimated public authority. Two things are most important for any discussion of military-industrial, band-of-brother corporate subgroups, and especially important in terms of Jones’s war fiction. The first is that, for its survival and justification, the regulative group must be or believe itself to be engaged by “continuous purposive activity.” The second is that the distinction between the individual members’ voluntary and compulsory membership is less important than their acceptance of the conventions of conformity that regulate the unit internally (IB 14-17).
Under the corporate group’s umbrella framework, officers and ordinary soldiers can consider themselves united in solidarity, but a solidarity that can appear inexplicable to outsiders and which is internally labile. Within the group, the Company’s band of brothers offers a dramatic and unusual example of a status group that encompasses the fluidity central to Weber’s status group definition. The rules designed to protect the group’s interests by vetting new members can also eject undesirable ones (IB 10). In C-for-Charlie, the soldiers are always recalibrating their perceptions of their internal status by gauging the reactions of their peers.

Preparing to steal the Thompson guns and ammunition Corporal Dale found cached in the jungle a few days after C-for-Charlie lands on Guadalcanal, Lieutenant Culp reinforces Dale’s status—“We need more men like you, Dale”—and at the same time only grudgingly accepts him as a member of the elite thieving team. The scene illustrates the continuously shifting internal assessments that shape a status group. Though he found the guns, Dale suspects that he would not have been included in the retrieval team were there some “honorable” way the inner circle led by the unit’s unofficial leaders, Welsh and Culp, could use to leave him behind (99). Besides plasticity, honor is one of the distinguishing features of Weber’s status group theory. As a tool for evaluating both past action and proposed future action, and for determining the degrees of openness or closure, honor is not automatically equitable with property (though it often is, as Dale’s scene illustrates). Furthermore, certain members of the status group possess a talent for accruing honor in disproportion to other members, which can lead to the internal creation of special castes of openness: “monopolies, special conventions, and their own “status-legends”” (Swedberg 269). On the other hand, group members can be summarily evicted who lack honor, or who threaten it, or whose personal perception of their status comes into conflict with the collective understanding in some fundamental way.

Status is akin to moral credit. “Status,” Weber says, “shall mean an effective claim to social esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges; it is typically founded on lifestyle.” Lifestyle, in turn, is a function of formal education, trades training, teaching about appropriate behavior in terms of reasonableness, and inherited or vocational prestige (ESI
At the heart of status group theory is the idea—and it is an important one for people interested in the tension between creativity and conformity—that as much as the individual actors depend on the group as a medium around which they can organize their experiences and thus give meaning to their lives, the status group also depends on each of the actor’s unique interpretations for its theoretical and practical existence. Clifford Geertz’s most famous quote from *The Interpretation of Cultures* uses the spider to show how things work between a person and his or her status group:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.(56)

If any united romantic representation of contemporary war indeed still existed at its 1962 publication date, *The Thin Red Line*’s realism quashes it. Instead, the bonds between the men—subject to minute-by-minute influence by extremes of hysteria or apathy, hatred or kindness, closeness and distance—reflect their lived experience in the WWII web. As much as graphic details about any war find their way into the public mind, they are a key feature of the WWII “big novel.” It is hard to say exactly why this is so, but Fussell, Keegan, and Hastings suggest it is an effect of a war fought from many distances, with many weapons, on many fronts, and for many causes. The significance of the realism in

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38 From *MSS*: The former creates the point of attachment from which there are to be regressively traced the web of causal connections and thus provides causal analysis with the decisive “viewpoints” without which it would indeed have to operate, as it were, without a compass on an uncharted sea. (“The Logic of the Cultural Sciences” 149)

39 Comparing the quantity and kind of literature produced after WWI to that produced after WWII, Fussell speculates the “ideological vacuum” and trauma of the latter resulted in a kind of literary aphasia. “One inference,” he writes, “might be that the more verbally confident poetry of the Great War emerged from a proud verbal culture, where language was trusted to convey and retain profound, permanent meaning, while the later world from which these laconic notations arise is one so doubtful of language that the responsible feel that only the fewest words, debased as they have been by advertising, publicity, politics, and the rhetoric of nationalism, should be hazarded” (Wartime, 135).

40 Because the war’s circumstances are so unpredictable, they disable its literature’s capacity for the two activities that together are the prerequisites of public romanticism:
*The Thin Red Line* is that, by emphasizing the alien and the disorderly in the American WWII experience, it shows how much the actors rely on their original webs to protect them against permanent dislocation while they incorporate experience and spin new ones. Near the beginning of the novel, Big Corporal Queen’s first impression of the jungle signals the Americans’ displacement:

> Here the rain did not fall. It was stopped high above by that roof of green shingles. From there it dripped down slowly, leaf to leaf, or ran down the stems and branches. Despite the heaviness of the downpour which now purred loudly in their ears from just outside, here there was only a low rustle of slow occasional dripping . . . this jungle was something else again. The indignant thought kept coming back to him that no American would ever let his woodlot get into any such condition as this. (61-3)

In contrast, from his autobiography *Goodbye to All That*, here is Robert Graves’s description of No Man’s Land in WWI:

> Between us and them was a flat meadow with cornflowers, marguerites, and poppies growing in the long grass, a few shell holes, the bushes I had seen the night before, the wreck of an aeroplane, our barbed wire and theirs. A thousand yards away was a big ruined house, behind that a red-brick village (Auchy), poplars and haystacks, a tall chimney, another village (Haisnes). Half-right was a pithead and smaller slag heaps. Lor Bassee lay half-left; the sun caught the weathervane of the church and made it twinkle. (142)

cultural introversion and ritualized melancholy. Unlike WWI, during which, as Paul Fussell notes in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, the observation of stand-to dawn-and-dusk drills and daylight fighting hours, the carry-over of British Imperial authority, and the comparatively close and familiar geographical fronts provided a fertile seedbed for British romantic representations, in WWII “[o]utmoded now, and hopelessly irrelevant, were such former military values and procedures” (*Understanding* 9).

41 In particular, this is demonstrated by Lieutenant “Brass” Band, the ex-schoolteacher whose “small smiles” and “cheap displays” (418) belied his insight into the “full, tragic cognizance” that he must approach his command duties as a “stern paternal love relationship . . . [just as in] his high school classes back home he had treated his students” (407).
No red-brick village spires sparkle above the rainforest canopy. No bamboo-stacking Charlie GI looks up and thinks: “There is my dear old friend the village Tassafaronga, and beyond it, my love’s chimney in Matanikau.” Guadalcanal was the first place Americans fought in the Pacific theatre. The novel shows how there hasn’t been enough time yet for the small repeated contact with civilian “friendlies” to anchor the new cultural webs being woven between people; no common framework yet exists. In this way, the novel differs significantly from Eternity. In Eternity, many of the soldiers have native Hawaiian girlfriends; one is married and has mixed-race children. Before he becomes an idealist, Eternity’s Prewitt considers living with his aboriginal girlfriend. It is not a major difference between the novels in terms of plot significance, for Eternity confines its aboriginal characters to brief, easy-to-miss sexual scenes—they are female whores or easy “shack-ups.” Only one very short scene in The Thin Red Line reveals an example of knowledge based on familiar contact. It relies on one of the novel’s archetype pre-modern charismatic figures, Welsh, who can “read” the female handwriting on the back of a Japanese photo (179). Otherwise, the absence is more than curious; it is a fascinating clue to the historical novel’s ability to live “really” in its setting in ways that use select historical moments to present their values, often ambiguously, in a work’s production moment. In 1961, it is more than odd that a war novel keeps such white company. That none of the white soldiers relate to the Japanese enemy by thinking about the divide between American black and white cultures, as Norman Mailer’s The Naked and the Dead troops do, is a notable absence in Jones. Moreover, the retrogressive conservatism that shapes the view of minor characters like Cash or Queen is picked up again, only more subtly, by one of the key liberal progressive characters, Bell.

Bell is one of the novel’s most complicated, thoroughly-drawn, and sympathetic characters. He is a model of the conflicted American anti-hero; it is no wonder he is the character at the center of Terrence Malick’s 1989 film adaptation. Near the novel’s end,

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42 Graves talks at length about how common it was for British soldiers in WWI to find themselves fighting on opposite sides, as he and members of his mother’s German family did (75).
Bell has a fever-dream. Ill with malaria, he dreams his wife, Marty, is in a hospital delivery room. She has a baby. The doctors congratulate Bell, but he wonders why none of them notice “it was black? Or didn’t they care? . . . But when he looked back down, he saw it wasn’t black it was Japanese . . . it wore a tiny, bent-up Imperial army forage cap, with a tiny, baby iron star” (410). Marty tells him flirtatiously she’s always wanted a black baby, and Bell is “thrilled . . . It was, first, a crack in the face of a social convention which they both hated. It was compliment to him, also, that she would let him in on the inside of this particular fantasy. But there was more than that. And the only word for that part of it he could give, was the ‘sexual esthetic’ of it . . . ‘Well, you’ll have to let me watch the conception of it’”(411). Bell is the character who carries the banner of distinctly American modern progressivism. His signal virtues are dignity and devotion to self-determination. His personal love for Marty is marked by a deeply spiritual vigorous sexuality; its complex ‘sexual esthetic’ is Jones’s masterful rendition of the ways that erotic love in liberal culture is a fulcrum for spiritual transcendence and intellectual depth. But the scene’s surface rejection of American prejudice and social inequity—the social conventions Bell and Marty hate—is not as straightforward or as deep a crack at it as many readers, especially those concerned for the reputation of its author, might like it to be.

Racial scenes in American fiction written by white authors tend to be read in one of two ways. They are read either as a moral judgment against an inequitable social practice or as a defense of it. But to arrive at the decision, a reader has to do what Weber, in “The Logic of the Cultural Sciences,” criticizes Eduard Meyer for doing. Meyer’s model of historical method, Weber says, focuses on interpreting the rich and varied data offered by historical representations in order that the practitioner can make a “discovery” about the particular stage of human progress under study (MSS 117). In Meyer’s model, “free will” and “chance” are perfectly clear and separate, though related concepts and are the primary forces shaping human progress through history (MSS 119). The purpose of Meyer’s kind of historical analysis is to assess the moral value of the actor in question by measuring his or her demonstration of free will, as demonstrated by action, against chance, the environmental factors arranged against the exercise. The problem with
Meyer’s methodology, Weber says, is that the energy spent coming to a judgment about the correctness of the actor’s decisions elides the other, better way of looking at a historical representation, as one which passes from a stage of the actual evaluation of an object into the stage of theoretical-interpretative reflection on possible relevance to values, in other words, when I construct historical individuals from the objects, it means that I am making explicit to myself and to others in an interpretative way the concrete, individual, and on that account, in the last analysis, unique form in which “ideas” . . . are “incorporated” or “work themselves out” in the political structures in question . . . or of the personality in question . . . or the literary product in question. (MSS 150-1, emphasis original)

Thus in Weber’s view Bell’s imprecise stance toward his wife’s infidelity with a black man—is the baby a foreign enemy, a social exemplar, or the byproduct of sexual-racial fantasy—offers several interpretations, each of which gestures to actual currents at work in the construction of race in America. However, by gesturing only to the scene’s layered, coexistent possibilities, the narrative also escapes confronting the implications of those interpretations. Formally, the scene’s ordering of thought in a febrile free indirect passage depicts the illogic of white America’s approaches to race. More than all the book’s battle scenes, this scene resists rationality, and rational reading practices the most, because it evades reckoning realistically with racial and civilian ugliness in a way that it is never shy of doing with war. On the other hand, over the three pages that it uses up, the scene falls back unconsciously on a kind of value-free objectivity, which, though grounded in Bell’s subjectivity, is relativistic in the same way Scaff says Weber is about other cultures and races.43

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43 Weber’s Western bias is demonstrated in his assessment of the organization and structures of cities. See “Magical Barriers to Oriental Development” in The City for the full exegesis of the following belief: “[a]s in almost all Asiatic and Near Eastern cities the community is missing or, at best, rudimentary” (104).
In *The City*, Weber writes that cities are not just dwellings built close together for literal reasons; they are figurative collections of cells whose inhabitants, though they may not know each other, recognize and reinforce the dominant life of a vast web. The main function of the modern Western city is to continuously perpetuate widening trade paths through the types and scale of their economic activities. Weber said that Western rationalism would always attempt to control, manipulate, and master nature (Poggi 55).

In *The Thin Red Line*, Nature strikes back: some of the GIs, treasure hunting, disturb a mass grave, and the smell of the bodies, like a living thing, chases them through the jungle. A city in a capitalist-rational economy is always a “market center” (*ES3* 1213). To the modern American eye, the undeveloped jungle suggests an absence of any sign of rational planning, and thus of progress (*ES3* 1218).

Thrown back upon each other, the American response to strangeness strengthens their touchstone reliance on C-for-Charlie’s status group bonds. It also makes hoarders of the soldiers. Bell, the only soldier whose service record means he is not drawn in by the Company’s “trepidity or excited compulsion” about the jungle, notes that no matter where it went, the American Army “went prepared to look and, if possible, to record. At least a third of every outfit carried cameras, lens filters and light meters tucked away somewhere. The fighting tourists, Bell called them” (65).

The characters’ gathering impulse reflects Edward Said’s orientalism. In a scene that forebodes sad ones in our time, C-for-Charlie reacts to finding one of their own corpses:

> with his hands tied behind his back and his head sitting on his chest . . . that he had been beheaded alive was equally clear from the amount of blood which has soaked into the earth near the severed neck.

The sheer barbarity of the thing swept through C-for-Charlie like a cold water shock. A cold knifing terror in the belly was followed immediately by a rage of anger. These men they were fighting were veterans of Burma and China and Sumatra. That they professed to hate all white men was well known. That they had perpetrated this sort of outrage in China and the Philippines on their own dark-skinned races was known too. But that they would dare to do the same sort of thing to civilized white American infantry, and specifically the Regiment of the
Division, was almost certainly too much to believe and certainly too much to be borne. (156)

Said’s characterization of Orientalism as a field of study with a “cumulative and corporate identity” echoes Weber’s definition of corporate groups. Though Said overlooks combat fiction in his list of forms of “generically-determined writing” (202), it is easy to understand how important the war novel is for the second-half of the twentieth-century’s formulation of an ever-widening axis of evil, peopled by the “backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded” (Said 207). Many of us think, like Private Doll does, that the worst thing that could happen to us is to find ourselves “being dragged back over the crest into the midst of those jabbering, Emperor-worshipping savages” (143). Without the affective value of the band-of-brothers, cynicism about the military-industrial complex’s program of expansion threatens to undermine its base of popular support. The Orient becomes a fertile source for “ideal” enemy types, just the sort who can provide the “necessary furniture of Empire” because they are unrelievedly “sadistic, treacherous, low” (Said 287).

The American response to the beheading is in keeping with Said’s theory of the othering of an Eastern enemy, but the conditions that enable it mirror Weber’s theory of history, progress, and rationality. Weber thought it not just possible but likely that the West would face a series of challenges, which it would perceive as threats, from cultures whose belief systems oppose the Protestant-Calvinistic moral system behind secular rationalization. Exacerbating the obsession with the other is the anxiety swimming ceaselessly beneath the surface of election, the result of the “extreme inhumanity” of a doctrine which “must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent inconsistency. That was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual . . . No one could help him” (PE 104). Conflict between liberal-rationalist cultures and other worldviews arises because, though status groups within rationalism’s microsocietal models allow forms of individual diversity, the macrosocietal rationalist model “marginalizes and sacrifices incompatible values, but cannot entirely suppress their appeal or the nostalgia that is evoked by their memory,”
especially when those myths are compared to a dominant culture perceived to have grown “vacuous, exhausted, corrupt, and inhuman” (Poggi 54). The beheading scene that shocks C-for-Charlie thus has two purposes: it reunites the soldiers with the justness of their war, and it minimizes their complaints against their own society by offering them an extreme example of foreign barbarity.

While it is easy to read C-for-Charlie’s response solely as the mirror of its country’s ideological stage, it is also important to remember the characters are very young. Most American WWII troops were. All wars rely for their fighting on credulous youth, on its sure feet and surer mind, but WWII was fought by armies of children. Talking about the age of American soldiers in Wartime, Paul Fussell says their youth is a “notable” feature of WWII (52); when it is given in RL, the average age of the old “blooded” soldiers is twenty or twenty-one.44 Graves, again, provides a useful instance for comparison. Of the forty men in his WWI unit, fourteen were over forty and some were even older—one was sixty-three; the underage soldiers numbered only five (129). Evelyn Waugh’s WWII avatar Guy Crouchback is 36, and his men laugh about his dotage; many of Norman Mailer’s and Joseph Heller’s characters are in the child-mold of Jones’s alphabetized C-for-Charlie.

At their life stage, the American soldiers’ instincts are primed for systems oriented to peer group belonging. Their real-world generation was, as well, taught to appraise everything in empiric terms. Cars, televisions, freezers, trips, yards, horsepower, women—quality was a matter of measurement. And yet, as David Halberstam notes, while in the fifties “the country was exploding in terms of science, technology, and business, and had assumed a new international role as the most powerful nation on earth, the minds of the governing class were rooted in a simpler day” (244). This longing for an earlier time was compounded by the effects of the “other-directedness” David Riesman

44The average American soldier was eighteen. Statistically, the war was fought on all sides by the youngest troops in history. Fussell says the most common cry of panicking WWII soldiers was “Mother!” (62). Jones’s Dale yells it when he charges; Fife thinks that the battlefield resembles a desperate game of Cowboys and Indians (199).
said was a result of highly industrialized bureaucracies most Americans were subject to; the isolation of lonely people in a crowd for whom the only comfort that can be found exists in the “ancestors within” (viii). For the ways that its band-of-brothers trope explores the other-directed individual’s anxious balance between internal ancestor and peer orientation, the combat novel is well suited for representing the nation’s readiness for Weberian social science.

Along with corporate groups and status, a third element to consider is the company’s representation of Weber’s ideal types. Designed to check scholars who find (aha!) in their subjects exactly the values and morals they themselves hold, ideal types are tools which Weber says must be used to untie the objective from the subjective, the thing-as-it-is from the thing-as-we-wish-it. The problem is, of course, that humans are helplessly suspended in and from our own webs. Nevertheless, when caught between hermeneutics and pure objectivity, scholars, Weber says, must always strive for the latter. In the essay “The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality,” Weber says ideal types are devices that encourage precision in both definition and analysis (MSS 1-47). It is an idea that seems intrinsically opposed to the purpose and function of characters in a historical novel, whose meaning is entirely a result of their subjective lives. But Weber is not saying that knowledge of a subjective character is worthless. Quite the opposite is true:

The empirical-psychological and historical analysis of certain evaluations with respect to the individual social conditions of their emergence and continued existence can never, under any circumstance, lead to anything other than an “understanding” explanation. This is by no means negligible. (MSS 14)

Not only does the historical novel’s use of subjectivity “do justice” to its actors’ thoughts and actions, it offers a lesson of “high scientific importance” in that it highlights both the empiric factors at work on an historic actor’s perceptions and the difference between his or her perceptions and our own, when we imagine our response (MSS 15).

In The Thin Red Line, Eternity’s troublemaker Prewitt is reincarnated as Witt, a “small, thin, Breathitt County Kentucky boy, an old [four years of service] Regular, a former Regimental boxer” whose transfer out of C-for-Charlie is a “fine object lesson” in the
Army’s maintenance of discipline and status group honor by “crud-shunting” (104). Witt embodies the two forms of law at work in the band-of-brothers corporate group. There are the empiric laws superimposed on a hyper-regulative administrative order, and then there are subjective conventions which, though not enforced by the all-important “staff,” exert no less powerful an effect on the group’s cohesion. Unlike the “worst drunks [and the] worst homosexuals” who usually form the ranks of the Army’s dis-elected dishonorable, Witt’s troublemaking consists of the same vague stubborn individualism that leads Prewitt to self-destruction (105). Despite being well-liked within the Company, and despite his crack competence, Witt is unable to fulfill a specific instance of the Company’s unofficial social honor code and is “officially” ejected, transferred out to a specially formed cannon company which really only exists as a place to send misfits. He enters the narrative when Fife, the college-educated clerk, sees him hanging around C-for-Charlie’s bivouac. Fife goes out to Witt’s cocopalm forest hiding place to talk to him. The scene between them brings to vigorous life several channels of Weberian influence on the currents in American thought. Witt says:

“Fife, I tell you. When I think of old C-for-Charlie goin up there into them Japs without me it like to breaks my heart . . . You know how I feel about this compny. It’s my compny. It aint right . . . It aint. I belong with the compny, Fife, old buddy . . . there aint a fucking damn thing I can do”

Prudent Fife, knowing Witt’s temper, cautiously suggests Witt plead his case to the captain. Tell “him how you feel . . . Old Bugger knows how good a soldier you are,” he says. The suggestion, however, sends Witt into rage: “Take me back! Take me back! They never should of made me go! It’s their fault, it aint mine!” (108)

45 In fact, Weber says, “violation of conventional rules—such as standards of “respectability” (Standessitte)—often leads to the extremely severe and effective sanction of an informal boycott on the part of the members of one’s status group. This may be more severe than any legal penalty” (ES 34). Especially as closure strategies among enlisted or common soldiers can be used as a flexible gateway in their internal communications, here boosted or open when doing so moves them closer to some interest and here closed or hedged when conditions are less favourable, the system of hinged negotiations illustrates the ways the band-of-brothers avoids overt class conflict between its officer and enlisted classes.
In Chapter 1, I offer Maggio as an example of ‘smarts’ run amok; here, Witt’s inability to negotiate with the structures of power for what he wants is a similar example of rugged individualism extended to self-sabotage. Moreover, the parable of throwback, unsustainable individualism that his refusal to concede suggests gains further texture by the scene’s conclusion. Fife, the white-collar rationalist, comes to the end of his reasoning patience when Witt’s whining begins again, that “it aint fair, and it aint square … It aint justice. It’s a traversty of justice.” “It’s travesty,” Fife said precisely . . . ‘Trav-yes-ty’ he repeated, as if teaching a child” (109).

Lukacs says that plainlife language is the source of good characterization. This is due not just to a realistic skill for reproducing naturalistic “stammers,” though that is often where its appreciation stops (HN 134). The true power of dialogue lives in its ability to tie the characters to their personal situations, and from there to the wider here-and-now. The characters must use the vocabulary and syntax that arise naturally from their individual responses to “precisely” this situation. Their language must “achieve intellectual concentration and condensation” so that it can move its ideas out of the ether and into the hands of the reader (or watcher, in the case of drama) caught up by the moment of identification (HN 135).

In this scene, it is because they use the precise language of their personal backgrounds that Fife and Witt also move from individual characters with an ordinary mix of typical traits to figures in Weber’s ideal typology. Through juxtaposition of the “pure” values of their opposing outlooks, the little scene distills a major issue in American life. Although “Fife admired and heroized Witt for all of the manly, tough, and brave qualities he had . . . [and] Witt secretly admired Fife for his education,” when it comes to lived practice their mutual admiration is not enough to bridge the gap between their reasonable but incompatible comprehensive doctrines (106). At the center of the conflict lies the problem that has always lain at the heart of the idea of national character: is America a nation dedicated to progress or to its founding values?
Fife’s clerkish insistence on semantic propriety is his private quirk in the novel, but it is a metonym of the rules-and-regulations outlook of a public bureaucratic class whose numbers, by 1961, are legion. Eichar’s study of occupational trends reveals how status-perceptions linked to job type changed in the postwar period. Mid-level office (Fife) occupations rose in status; craft or agriculture (Witt) jobs went down. What is important to note is that the status change occurs from both within and outside the job. The new beliefs about status were a result of changes happening in universities, which were in turn traceable to Weber’s acculturation. In the fifties, behavioural science took over as the path to enlightenment. An army of academic statisticians, social researchers, and data analysts marched onto shopfloors and into homes; they came out of graduate programs like Harvard University’s, which between 1946 and 1970, for example, received hundreds of applications every year (Calhoun 350).

But the desire to enhance understandings of social behavior by filling in the knowledge gap between personal motivation and action was belied by a gap of its own. I say, in the paragraph above, that Fife’s pedantry is a problem. It is a problem because it shows how the products of American social-science based bureaucratic practice—Fife—can become in reality fundamentally opposed to the subjects of their theory. When Witt, falling back on traditional values like justice and fairness, resists Fife’s needs-calculated rational logic, a social chasm appears. Witt asks and stands for affective rationalization; Fife’s positivist logic reaches its end. From a mundane little scene on the edge of C-for-Charlie’s camp perimeter, an enormous struggle has sprung up on the line between national progress and value preservation. In the novel’s real context, this same struggle was taking place in the arenas of civil rights, labor relations, gender equality, and race relations. Fife cannot win by reason, but neither can he allow reason to fail, and so he

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46 See especially Table 4.1, “Occupational Distribution in the United States from 1900 to 1981” (47).
47 Conflict over the goals of positivist theory and quantitative research was mirrored in university departments, too. Talcott Parson’s anti-positivism, though “muted” by the seventies, was attacked by his counterpose, George Homans, who “claimed to have told Parsons in a faculty meeting that ‘no member [of Homan’s department] shall be put under any pressure to read’” (Calhoun 352).
simultaneously reasserts his authority and punishes Witt by imposing semantic control. Witt can’t win either, but he escapes first by threatening Fife silently but physically so that Fife hurries back to camp, and then by retreating, like Natty Bumppo, back into the woods.

In a reversal of Lukacs’s theory of the historical novel’s device of concretization, Weber’s ideal types move away from the local and the specific. The goal, however, is the same. Ideal types connect the reader to the subject material by showing just how situated the actual historical actors were, how influenced by their special conditions, how subject to limitations and mistakes. Weber writes that only after the ideal commander-in-chiefs of a war are imagined, for example, can “the consequences of the fact that the real commanders neither had the knowledge nor were they free from error, and that they were not purely rational thinking machines, be unambiguously established” (MSS 42).

In another way, the scene is the first of the novel’s examples of the internal conflicts that pit actor against actor in C-for-Charlie’s common status group but which at their end preserve the status group’s integrity. Fife and Witt leave each other alone; they are tense and angry, but they do not cross the line into violence. Like yeomanry’s sliding scale, the status group provides a framework within which heterogenous and even intractably opposed Rawlsian outlooks can flourish, and at the same time it provides enough room for opposed actors to escape each other. If the escape is only temporary, it is enough to defuse the tension. The safety valve can exist first because all the actors in the group depend on the attachment of individualized subjective meaning that is always other-oriented in its course. Indeed, actions that seem outwardly opposed to the group are more often than not actually oriented to and by it, as the thief is to the law (TSEO 122). I discuss this idea in more detail below, in the context of the sex scenes in the novel. Second, individually, the socially-directed action of each actor can encompass a fluctuating range of responses, from positive estimations to passive acquiescence to negative withdrawal, which here draw them closer and there farther apart, hedging and boosting their social ties (ES 3).
Other examples of conflict-avoidance abound, and they all end the same way. The next one takes place between Captain Stein and Fife, again. Ambitious Fife applies for officer’s college, sees Stein’s discouraging reference, and, aggravated by the physical hardships of a march through the jungle, has an angry public outburst at his commanding officer. Ironically, when calculating logic fails him from above, Fife’s language is a perfect echo of Witt’s countryman common: “You! You tell me! Whadda you tell me! I’ll be walking when you’re on your back! I’ll be going when you and all these other guys . . . are on your knees and out!” (116). Stein ignores Fife, but thinks in the same patriarchal trope Fife used on Witt: “He hated them, all of them. You break your ass trying to look after them, be a father to them. And all they do is hate you for it, and for being an officer, with a hard, ignorant, stubborn endurance” (117).

Stein’s father-feeling for his Company is another concrete example of a ‘pure’ model in Weber’s thought. About families, Weber says the ideal form is one that displays “solidarity in dealing with the outside and communism of property and consumption of everyday goods within (household communism)” (*ESI* 359). Those families in medieval systems, he says, were described by contractual membership and entrepreneurship. The GIs meet the first by the draft, and the second by bartering their souvenirs with other companies. Moreover, they follow the communist principle by taking only what they need from the group’s resources, and no more — but they expect that share. When the water supply chain fails, C-for-Charlie is stranded on the front line in the sun for an entire day without. Dale is obsessed by the idea that others, behind them in the line, have taken more than their share: “Dirtyfuckers! Dirty bastards! Pig bastards! You got all the fucking water in the world, and you drinking ever fucking drop of it, too!” (297).

As the extension of Weber’s medieval family model, the band-of-brothers also illustrates his theory of the “unsentimental economic brotherhood.” Their desire to maintain their own space in a closely crowded neighborhood is what makes the soldiers surly with one another, and it is true that they are also only able to set aside their grudges and act in a coordinated fashion because they are in “common danger” (*ESI* 361). When one of the neighborhood brothers is in need, Weber writes, two principles apply. The first is the
unsentimental Protestant injunction “Do unto others,” and the second is its economic counterpart “Brothers do not bargain with one another” (ESI 362). As he gets the men ready for a dangerous patrol, Lieutenant Gaff “did not bother to give them any peptalk. He had already explained the operation to them thoroughly, back at the position. Now all he said was, ‘You all know the job we’ve got to do, fellows. There’s no point in my going over it all again’” (298). Weber’s family model provides a way to understand the power of a trope still used as a boosting strategy by the military today. Brothers pull their weight; brothers don’t fuck each other over. Jones’s detailed construction of the trope is unparalleled for scope and depth among his peers; the only other novel that uses the fraternal-family model to the same extent is And Then We Heard Thunder, John Oliver Killens’s 1970 novel about a company of black American WWII soldiers.48

The Thin Red Line and Weberian Authority: Breakdowns in Discipline and Reason

In The Thin Red Line, these scenes never result in the violent internal class conflict—the fragging—that occurred in Vietnam; they thus support Weber’s views about the deep sway of legitimate authority. But they do uncover a structural weakness in Weber’s theory of military discipline and corporate group psychology. “The discipline of the army gives birth to all discipline,” Weber says, “[n]o special proof is needed to show that military discipline is the ideal model for the modern capitalist factory” (IB 37-8). By this he means that acceptance of militarism’s strictly regulated conformity is the condition

48 Beyond the shared band-of-brothers trope, the significance of contemporary war novels written by black authors in the context of the civil rights movement lies in their narratives’ diegetic dualism, the encounter with the double "V" goal—victory over fascism abroad and racism at home—as well as the blunt portrayal of the perpetuation of the white privilege in the military command structure. From the five WWI contemporary war novels written by black Americans, to the eighteen written contemporary WWII black authors, the entrenched Jim Crow practices in the military are revealed as the perpetuation of attitudes that pervade every level of society, though perhaps less bluntly. Similarly, works that discuss the war from the perspective of interned Japanese Americans (The No-No Boy), or Asian Allies (The Promise) or from the standpoint of occupied Italians (The Gallery) or Germans (The Cannibal), or from Jewish American soldiers (Face of a Hero) establish alternative frames for addressing the dangers of traditional war novels’ often dangerously self-deluding hegemonic impulses.
most likely to favour a two-way profit margin; Habermas’s private accepts his ligatures because their public nature affords the best chance that sooner or later their turning wheels will create an opportunity for his advantage. Militarism’s psychology of disciplined conformity is the prerequisite underpinning the individual’s ability to recognize the specific moment of his private opportunity. Sergeant Welsh’s translation of the double-value equation, formatted as a mock *Life* headline translation, is inimical: “TIRED INFANTRYMEN REST IN SAFETY AFTER HEROIC CAPTURE OF POSITION. THE FIRST TEAM AT HALFTIME. BUY BONDS TILL IT HURTS YOUR ASSHOLE” (*sic*, 209). Standing armies, moreover, are the signal of stability in a nation’s political authority and collective economy (*IB* 36). Like many people, Fife is troubled by the paradox, however: “[E]verything was so organized, and handled with such matter-of-fact dispatch. Like a business. Like a regular business. And yet at the bottom of it was blood: blood, mutilation, and death” (37).

This professionalized discipline, in combination with technological advancements in machine warfare, were the reasons Weber thought, in 1913, that the model of expert efficiency found in permanent professional soldiers might lead to the “exclusive dominance of universal conscription” (*IB* 37). Anticipating Habermas’s figure of the private, he cites the Dutch Orange and Cromwell’s armies as the historic exemplars of rational discipline. He tells how Cromwell’s ‘Ironsides’—the ‘men of conscience’—trotted forward in firmly closed formation, at the same time calmly firing, and then, thrusting, brought about a successful attack. The major contrast lies in the fact that after the attack they remained in closed formation or immediately re-aligned themselves. It was this disciplined cavalry attack which was technically superior to the Cavaliers’ ardor. For it was the habit of the Cavaliers to gallop enthusiastically into the attack and then, without discipline, to disperse, either to plunder the camp of the enemy or to individually pursue single opponents in order to capture them for ransom. (*IB* 33)

As the passage demonstrates, the most important concept in Weber’s theory of military professionalization is its continued reliance on “sober and rational Puritan discipline”
In The Discipline of Large-Scale Economic Organizations, Weber’s admiration of America’s application is obvious. The individual’s calculations for his own profitability supported a culturally systemic belief that what was good for the agent was also good for the nation, and “[o]n the basis of this calculation, the American system of ‘scientific management’ enjoys the greatest triumphs in the rational conditioning and training of work performances” (IB 38). But sober discipline can devolve into numb bureaucratic drivel. One wonders if Weber would be enamored of the example of American efficiency modelled by this passage, from an eighteenth-century Army handbook. The subject is correct rifle-firing technique:

As front rank prime and load, throw the right hand across the body, seizing the piece at the small, the left hand seizing the piece between the swell and the guard; bring the piece to the right side, as at charging of bayonets, above the thigh bone, holding the piece firm in the left hand. To open pans, throw up the hammer with the left thumb; to handle cartridge, pull out the cartridge, keeping it between the thumb and forefinger; bite cartridge, raising the right hand to the mouth . . .

(Campbell 12)

Weber died in 1920. The six-plus million consequences of his homeland’s extension of scientific rationalism with military discipline were not his to live with. Nor does The Thin Red Line deal with the Holocaust. What Jones’s soldiers do instead is demonstrate the limits of battlefield conscientiousness in the largest liberal capitalist standing army the world had seen to that point. Far from the calm rationality of soldiers certain in their moral right, over and over the narrative gives examples of breakdowns in discipline. As it gets ready for its first engagement, C-for-Charlie watches the progress of the company before them in the attack order. They

49 In John Campbell’s manual, the orders for correct firing are so convoluted their correct carrying-out would require not only conscientiousness but a degree of literary patience not likely found in the ranks of eighteenth-century American infantrymen. The rationalization of drill this excerpt illustrates is the long forerunner of the imposition of discipline through fieldguides that Fussell says came to be known, in WWII enlisted ranks, as “chickenshit” for their pettiness, unintelligibility, and general uselessness.
had arrived just at the climax. As they stood in the milling mob on the knoll trying to see and taking all of this in for the first time, the several groups on the slope rose into a concerted line and rushed the crest, lobbing grenades ahead of them and firing. They got to within perhaps fifteen yards of the top before they were repulsed. The machine gun fire, clearly heard on the knoll, was too much for them. They broke and began leaping and scrambling back down the hill where they went to ground as before, having left a number of their men, perhaps ten percent, behind them on the uphill slope. There were exclamations of dismay and a number of angry groans on the hilltop around C-for-Charlie. (136)

The failure of the soldiers’ control is an example of the limits of military discipline on controlled, rational social action, or the failure of what Warfighting, a Marine handbook published by the American military in 1989, calls “the requirement to fight effectively within the medium of friction”—as if some other medium exists (6, emphasis original). In other scenes, the break is demonstrated more comically when the characters express surprise at the actual operation of their guns, or when their basic grenade training deserts them, leaving Doll, for one, staring in blank surprise at a live bomb in one of his hands and an enigmatic pin in the other (161, 163). Officers do not know how to use walkie-talkies (276). A Weberian Protestant-ethic archetype, an “elderly, morose, Calvinistic-looking 2d Lieutenant” stupidly stands up to look for a sniper and is shot in the chest (277). The soldiers’ naïve reactions to their technology underline and subvert Weber’s insistence that modern military discipline is a function of its expertise with its technological capability (IB 31).

In a wider sense, the soldiers’ ineptness mirrors two even more basic truths about WWII. It was not a war won by precision or aim. This was the blunt-force war where the winners won by killing as many of the other guys—and their wives, lovers, friends, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, priests, doctors, enemies, housemates, students, teachers, lawyers, community leaders, journalists, writers, photographers, artists, singers, musicians—as they could. Choosing weapons from the supply room, Welsh disdains the Springfields the rest of the men, “romantic kids,” want: “Give him the
Garand anytime. Give him the firepower, and you could keep your pinpoint accuracy. This was the age of firepower, not of accuracy”(123). It was also a war beset by mistakes, miscalculations, miscommunications, misidentifications, and misrepresentation—in short, a war marked by the kinds of things Weber says ideal generals throw into relief, the disastrous and fatal blunders that Fussell says were another hallmark of WWII (Wartime 19). Most often, the blunders noted by Fussell are the result of fragmentation within the ranks.

In *The Thin Red Line*, the strength of the band-of-brothers’ rational efficacy is dependent on the members’ ability to see, hear, and speak to each other almost all the time. Any interference is a friction, in modern Marine jargon, which, like the thickness of the jungle foliage, threatens to disrupt the Company’s status group unity. The separation-disruption trope is an idea that gains special momentum in Jones’s next, civilian-life novel about the core group of soldiers, *Some Came Running*. In the third of his war novels, however, the danger of separation from the group is emphasized in this scene, in which the men crawl through long grass toward an enemy bunker:

None of them ever knew what set them off. One moment they were crawling along in utter silence, each man totally alone and separate and out of contact with the others, and in the next machinegun fire was whipping and slashing over and around all about them. No one had fired, no one had thrown a grenade, no one had shown himself . . . Whatever it was, they now lay in a storm of fire, separated and cut off from contact with each other, unable to take concerted action . . . contact was lost and with it all command and control. Nobody could move. (280)

Even the command-adherence and skill-expertise of C-for-Charlie’s examples of successful missions are undercut by the implied undiscipline of what Weber calls premodern “ardor” and what the characters experience as a kind of invigorating, highly-ritualized hysteria. As C-for-Charlie’s Welsh gets ready to lead his men into battle,

He could not say exactly what the experiences of today made him feel. All Welsh knew was that he was scared shitless, and at the same time was afflicted with a choking gorge of anger that any social coercion existed in the world which could force him to be here. In addition the tremendously intense excitement on the hill-
top affected him powerfully. It was not unlike the feeling in a stadium generated by a crowd rooting at an important college football game. (139)

The competitive sports image in this scene is mirrored in other scenes where its sexual nature is foregrounded. A deer hunter whose hunting expertise is yet another echo of the yeoman tradition, Doll’s guilt at killing another human being is complicated by a synaesthetic pride in killing his first Japanese soldier. The experience “required extra tasting. Like getting screwed for the first time, it was too complex to be classed solely as pride of accomplishment” (204). Later, Doll’s exhilaration swings easily over and between Weber’s line separating affective and rational motivations. About to disobey an order and driven by his pathological desire to be a hero, Doll is nearly overcome by “what it was that was driving, pulling him to do it. It was like facing God. Or gambling with Luck. It was taking a dare from the Universe. It excited him more than all the hunting, gambling and fucking he had ever done all rolled together” (207). The sexual imagery transcends the individual characters’ outlook, moral philosophy, or level of education. After they desecrate a Japanese corpse, a group finds themselves overcome by “a sullen look of sexual guilt . . . They looked curiously like a gang of boys caught masturbating together” (69). Bell, the ex-officer and perhaps the only one of the men who understands personal love, finds that he volunteers for dangerous reconnaissance missions in part because the experience is based on “that thing of sexuality” (286).

Most of all, there is the sex between Bead and Fife. It begins as a satisfaction of wants based on instrumental rationality initiated by Bead, the junior character—“Shall we help

50 It is hard to gauge whether the novel’s depiction of the soldiers’ sexual awareness and their actual sex is realistic or not. Fussell claims a kind of innocence characterized the war’s sexual awakening, and that even in those contexts “the front is the one ‘sexless’ wartime place,” not just because outlets weren’t available but because “sexual deprivation and inordinate desire generally did not trouble the men on the front line. They were too scared, busy, tired, and demoralized to think about sex at all” (108). The other WWII war novel in which sex figures predominantly is Catch-22, like Jones’s also published in 1961. Perhaps by the sixties the changing climate made expressing some of the war’s sexual aspects permissible while Fussell’s opinion remains true for some soldiers some of the time.
each other out? Well, what about it?—I don’t see that either one of us’s got anything to lose. . . . I got one on, and you do too” he says to Fife (124). The sex, supposed to be about individual pleasure, soon changes their relationship. Fife becomes “more authoritarian with his little assistant than he had ever dared be with anyone in his life,” and Bead takes it (127). Weber says all not action is social. Some forms of solitary religious contemplation, or action directed only toward an inanimate object are not social. But sex, even in its most narcissistic expression, has a “minimum orientation” to social belonging (ES 27). C-for-Charlie’s eroticism is at the same time a result of and a response to the war’s violence, crude expressions of a fundamental need for social connection whose crudeness is a function of their environmental medium, not of the men.

The state of heightened arousal carries over into the men’s trophy-hunting activity. Based in one part on a rationally-organized profit motive, the soldiers barter Japanese battle flags, rifles, pistols, helmets, and wallets for liquor. Photographs—especially of the Japanese soldiers’ wives or girlfriends, especially if they are pornographic—are the most valuable, while actual money is worthless (352-3). On the other hand, their Cavalier-like desire for booty is sexualized, too, characterized by “painful, almost lascivious masochism” (65). They hunt for trophies; when all else has been stripped from Japanese corpses, when not “a piece of equipment, not a single strand of barbed wire, not even an empty Japanese cartridge casing or old shoe” remains, the Americans loot body parts from corpses (73).

Under the Weberian framework, these scenes do more than point out the failure of Army discipline. The characters’ irrational behavior uncover the ways social action results from the overlapping effects of modern motivations that are not always rational, and sometimes from impulses which are actually pre-rational, or medieval, in their origins. Weber categorizes behavioral motivation in four ways: rational-instrumental, rational-affective, affective, and traditional/historic.51

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51“Rational-instrumental, in terms of calculating probability that other people will behave in ways that create opportunity for the agent to achieve his own rationally-motivated goals. Rational-affective, or absolute, in terms of a rational belief in the absolute value of some behavior unconnected to material gain. Affective, in that the
In the degree of their conscious meaningfulness, the four orientations describe a descending continuum. Weber uses the word “borderline” to describe behaviors in the traditional/affective zones; both of these kinds of behavior, he says, often “go over the line” that separates rational actions from irrational ones (ES 25). It is well known that Jones chose *The Thin Red Line* as a title from Kipling’s poem “Tommy.” In the poem, the thin red line symbolizes both the hypocrisy with which red-coated common soldiers are treated and their front line status. Jones’s title is often talked about for the comment it makes about war, but it gains added contemporary significance when it is also considered next to Weber’s thin line. The plain privates in “Tommy” are treated either as crooks or heroes; the speaker wants us to know they are really only average men, with the same prospects outside of war as anyone else, but who do their duty when called to. The idea of duty is one of the internalized, multivalent ideas driving action within Weber’s status groups. As it affects personal and social assessments of an individual’s “honor,” duty opens space for thinking of the soldier in terms other than a terminally finite surplus-value problem or as single instances of reified warrior heroism. In *The Thin Red Line*, the relation between duty and the Weberian concept of “life chances” is especially relevant.

Though it does not appear in his basic concepts, Weber’s “life chances” include economic, social, and even future or past prospects. The closest he comes to a definition is this: “A complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the conduct in question” (ESI 11). Factors as diverse as the availability of potable water in your grandparents’ country of origin to the frequency of the police car circling your block tonight become life chances. In what is commonly recognized as an authoritative interpretation, Dahrendorf says the deliberate openness of Weber’s term is a counterpose to dogmatism (and it is not hard to conclude he is referring to conflict theory) but

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actor’s behaviour is driven by some specific emotional state, and traditional / historic, through the affective influence of or attachment to some “habituation of long practice”” (IB 6).
above and beyond that . . . Weber uses the notion of chance to indicate opportunities provided by social structure . . . Life chances are not the attributes of individuals. Individuals have life chances in society; their life chances are a response to these chances. Life chances are a mould (sic). They may be too big for individuals and challenge them to grow; or they may be too restricted and challenge them to resist. (29-30)

War has a pronounced effect on Dahrendorf’s “life chance challenges” paradigm. Trying not to have your head or ass blown off crystallizes the limits of situational opportunity. The opportunity to either grow or resist is collapsed into the space and speed of a rifle shell. A war of blunders makes the attempt to tip whatever odds exist to your favour by using rational or affective strategies almost impossible. This is the major theme driving the action in *The Thin Red Line* and one that is expressed in the image of soldiers playing poker.

**Life-chances and Counting Cards in The Thin Red Line**

From the novel’s beginning, its soldiers are steeped in the language of rational calculation and the concretized imagery of “life chances”; it is a kind of card-counting strategy designed to keep them in the game and ahead of the house. Describing C-for-Charlie waiting to disembark from the naval transport that has brought them to Guadalcanal, the narrative gives the first example of the intransigence of the company’s collective hedging. If their assumed-last position in the disembark order means they are likely to be attacked from the air as they unload into the sea is the question uppermost in all of C-for-Charlie’s minds. Actually C-for-Charlie was not last in any line. The numbers ran up as high as seven and eight. But this did not give consolation. C-for-Charlie was not concerned with the unlucky ones that came after it; that was their problem. C-for-Charlie was concerned only with the lucky ones who came before it, and that they should hurry, and as to just how long it itself was going to have to wait. (4)
The numbers obsession is not confined to the common soldiers. A second lieutenant’s close questioning of the company’s captain, “Bugger” Stein, about an order of bivouac reveals the same concern, as does the order of choosing from among officers and enlisted men for a raiding mission (9, 60). It is echoed in the soldiers’ minute-earlier / minute-later awareness (16), and in the narrative’s particular habit of giving accounts of distance, quantity, and position whose objective tone is undercut by modal-verb speculation:

. . . the regimental commander had ordered the exhausted 2d Battalion back to the Hills 207 and 208 into regimental reserve . . . the division’s reserve regiment on their left would the, undoubtedly, take over their lines on Hill 209 … Two companies would attack abreast; C-for-Charlie would be on the left and would capture . . . Hill 210, and A-for-Able would move into . . . Hill 214 . . . (168, emphasis mine)

In this instance, the use of the modal form by a seldom-seen omniscient narrator elevates the hedge-and-boost trope past the immediate contexts of plot to the level of metanarrative. Like Dawes’ evaluation of the cliché in war writing, the modal form here acts as a “linguistic device that forces the programmatic reproduction of specific and limited interpretive patterns” (187). The gesture thus signals the wider significance of the trope for war narratives generally, as a strategy that recalls the uncertain calculations upon which wars are fought by liberal states.

Like the deceptive casualness of the modal form, the depth of the brothers’ reliance on calculation is depicted through the banal degree of its practice. Gambling card games recur in all of Jones’s war fiction, so much so that a reader begins to imagine there is only the same game being played continuously across narrative time and space. Jones stands out among other contemporary WWII war novelist for making use of the trope this way. In a group including Mailer, Heller, Wouk, Uris, Stein, or Cheym on the American side and Manning, Waugh, Powell, Amis, or Golding for Britain, Jones’s preoccupation with gambling as a narrative device is notable. It is in keeping with Styron’s comment about Jones’s premodern realism that his practice echoes Victorian novelists like Dickens, Eliot, Thackeray, and Trollope who also use gambling for the ambiguous plasticity it
imparts to social commentary. Jane Austen’s Mr. Wickham is a fictional case of a gambling soldier; an actual example is Doestoevsky, whose work had a significant influence on Jones. Looking forward, Jones’s gambling trope is used just as forcefully by a later American author whose popularity also frequently subverts estimations of his literariness: Stephen King, in his Vietnam War novel *Hearts In Atlantis*. Jones’s card-dealing soldiers predate current research linking gambling to PTSD in veterans, and highlight arguments for Jones as a forerunner in cultural representations of veteran distress. Finally, the novel’s card-playing concretizes Weber’s repeated reference, in “Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences,” about the loaded-dice calculations that are embedded into modern liberal capitalism’s instrumental social rationality.

In *From Here to Eternity* and *Whistle*, the men play to relieve their boredom; in C-for-Charlie’s story, they play to self-soothe in moments of danger. The other-oriented calculations of poker and blackjack are so subtly woven into the narrative as vignette scenery that it is easy to overlook them, but they comprise the first luminous detail in the hedge-and-boost trope. Squatting in their slit trenches, able to overlook the battle taking place below, the men relieve their tension by playing blackjack: “Cries of ‘Hit me’ and ‘I’ll stay’ competed with the battle noises from 2d battalion” (153). As well, the concrete hedge-and-boost practices of the ordinary men’s poker games are repeated in darker abstraction by the calculations that influence the officers’ strategies. Stein, reporting Bead’s death to Colonel Tall, has the semi-hysterical thought that “Yes, he [Stein] had helped him all right. Boosted him right on off the old cinder and out and away” (255). Later, Tall tells him, “In a war people have to get killed . . . There just isn’t any way around it, Stein. And a good officer has to accept it, and then calculate the loss in lives against the potential gain” (336).

52 See Jodi L. Wagner’s Purdue University doctoral thesis, “Gambling and Risk in Victorian Culture.”
The soldiers’ daring ingenuity mitigates the moral ambiguity of their activities. Beside the relative innocence of cards betting, thievery—ironically enough, an activity often called boosting by its real-world professionals—often figures in the action vignettes. It is yet another two-way tie to the soldiers’ historic counterparts in yeomanry—the canny combination of math and luck upon which America was built—and to contemporary sociological theory. As Weber says they may, the characters manage the potential conflict the activity causes them by justifying their chronic thieving in terms of its instrumental or affective rationality. The war makes the line between the two much more elastic than it would be normally:

Choice between alternative and conflicting ends and results may well be determined in a value-rational manner. In that case, action is instrumentally rational only in respect to the choice of means. On the other hand, the actor may, instead of deciding between alternative ends in terms of a rational orientation to a system of values, simply . . . arrange them on a scale of consciously assessed relative urgency. (ES 26)

Before C-for-Charlie has even unloaded, PFC Doll, twenty-one, lately growing into boldness that “did not make him more likeable” (6), goes on a pistol-stealing mission designed to afford him better protection in the emergency that is the beach. Coming across not one but three loose weapons in the course of his trolling, Doll’s decision-making among the choices is shaped by the number of other men around and an intuitive sense of the moment’s “rightness.” Under the familiar numbers-luck ratio is his instinctive motivation to prove himself to the Company: “[H]e was tormented by the thought of Mazzi and Tills and the rest, if they saw him come back now without the pistol” (13). When Doll returns to C-for-Charlie’s quarters with the pistol, however, the reception is grudging:

“Well, what do you say now, hep guy?” Tills said looking after Doll.

“Just what I fucking said before,” Mazzi said, unperturbed. “The guy’s a jerkoff.”

“But he’s got a pistol.”

“So he’s a jerkoff with a pistol.” (18)
Like so many of Jones’s scenes, the comic moment is soon followed by a dark one. Seeing Doll’s boost as a proactive move, Tills desires pistols for Mazzi and himself; Mazzi’s refusal to accompany him and tip the odds in their favour signals, to Tills, his essential isolation, the precariousness of his—of any individual’s—status in the group (19). Unable to convince Mazzi to support him, hurt by the rejection, and seeking to reinforce his ties to the Company, Tills falls back on the simpler comfort of the continually-running poker game. Meanwhile, Doll’s satisfaction drains away, as “he could not rid himself of that gnawing thought about the possibility of air raids. If, after getting a damned pistol, and all of that, they were to get bombed out anyway—He could hardly bear the thought” (20). In one of its rare omniscient comments, the narrative, unfolding like later hindsight, remarks that “Obviously, whether a man had a pistol or not, it was not going to mean a thing under the blast of an aerial bomb” (52).

The pistol-theft seems like a minor episode, but it takes place over more than five pages and signals the start of several patterns that illustrate the flow of Weberian currents beneath the novel’s surface. Of the four types of social behaviour, the scene demonstrates the characters’ first-response reliance on gain- and value-rationalization, and their appraisal of probability through numbers-running. The continuous hedge-and-boost poker trope does dual duty as a metaphor at both the personal level of the soldier and the institutional level of the Army. As an example of the novel’s prescience, Warfighting picks up the hedge-and-boost thread and promotes odds-making as the only rational way for soldiers to behave:

55 Carter calls this trope Jones’s comic war, and sees in Red Line and Jones’s Some Came Running the fulfillment of a view of death “as comic; like the classic pratfall, it deflates the human ego. Dave’s [the Running protagonist] theory was that the previous writers on modern warfare had emphasized the ‘horrible horrible horrors of war . . . because their egos could not support this hated indignity of personal death’. . . . The classical epic-tragic view of warfare asserts that each man’s death in combat . . . is meaningful and noble . . . The Jonesian comic view, however, generally depicts men’s deaths as pointless, stupid, absurd, and laughable to shatter their illusions about the world and their own importance to it” (99-100).
The very nature of war makes absolute certainty impossible; all actions in war will be based on incomplete, inaccurate, or even contradictory information. At best, we can hope to determine probabilities. This implies a certain standard of military judgment: what is probable and what is not? By its nature, uncertainty invariably involves the estimation and acceptance of risk. Risk is inherent in war and is involved in every mission. Risk is also related to gain; normally, greater potential gain requires greater risk. (7-8)

But the behavior has pitfalls. Eventualities are accounted for yesterday and reckoned with today. The results of the soldiers’ calculations are in keeping with Swedberg’s observation about Weber’s definition of motive in rationalized risk-taking, which depends on the observer understanding that “what actors want to accomplish with their acts and what actually happens are in many cases two very different things” (170). Dahrendorf also warns about assuming a parallel relationship between numbers of alternatives and life chances. The alternatives built in to life chances always hinge on built-in restrictions, so that they are a “function of two elements, options and ligatures” (30, emphasis original). The gamble is only as stable as the factors shaping it from without, not within. The characters’ views of their life chances rely on judgments that are pitifully limited; the appraisals are proven mistaken and often fatally so when the soldiers’ think their math outsmarts the impersonal wheels of the military-industrial complex. A prime example is the short story of the company scout, Kral, a “hep kid from Jersey” who mistakenly believes that the “first” in First Scout refers to the position’s prestige, not to its target order (194). The soldiers’ attempts to hedge, or get around, what Weber called the “specific causal components” (ES3 927) arranging their life chances, or what Dahrendorf calls the vain attempt to transform positional goods into material ones (2), is a revelation of a community tactic with a dangerous potential inefficacy.

As a way of guarding your private interests and maintaining your social ties, the hedge and boost trope seems the most legitimate, because rational, way to cope with life in postwar America. Legitimacy itself is a term loaded with meaning in Weberian thought. It is at the center of Weber’s “relation of authority.” Legitimacy makes people likely to
comply—to willingly form a consensus—by obeying commands in the form of laws, conventions, or customs; these commands are in turn the frame of domination, authority, and statehood (ESI 212). Though the forms and ends of domination vary, it always seeks to present itself as legitimate. Just as there are kinds of domination, there is a corresponding typology of legitimation.

Weberian Legitimacy and Charisma in the Band-of-Brothers

Weber outlines three ‘pure types’ of legitimacy: legal-rational, traditional, and charismatic. Again, each rests only on the likelihood that people will agree to it:

Naturally, the legitimacy of a system of domination may be treated sociologically only as the probability that to a relevant degree the appropriate attitudes will exist, and the corresponding practical conduct ensue. (ESI 214)

Legal-rational legitimacy is a result of the modern political state, and its principal actions, hedging and boosting, have already been described. Traditional legitimacy is based in a shared historical sense and is closely aligned with the rational-affective category of motivation. Generally, traditional legitimacy is devoted to the values of a remote past. Over time, these values accrue mythic national value. Traditional legitimacy can be embodied by an actual person—Habermas’s feudal king—who then becomes a public model of correct behavior by reference to which people should not only behave but can “if necessary be made to behave” (Poggi 96). But it is the last form of legitimacy that most concerns me now. Charismatic legitimacy, or authority, is the next of Jones’s representative new-nesses that I want to explore, and I have saved it until the last because each of the scenes discussed so far points toward it in some way.

Of all Weber’s terms, charisma is to my mind the loosest and subtlest. Here is his definition:

The term “charisma” will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These as such are not accessible to the ordinary person, but
are regarded as divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is treated as a “leader.” In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of quality is thought of as resting on magical powers, whether of prophets, persons with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, leaders in the hunt, or heroes in war. (ESI 241)

As the definition unspools, it casts a wider and wider net; and like all human traits in Weber’s thought, charisma relies on an audience’s perception. It is the predicate of another subject. The charismatic person is the object of a positive verb phrase—he or she is “considered,” “regarded,” “treated as,” “thought of,” or has a “reputation for.” The prime example of charisma across Jones’s war trilogy is the Sergeant Warden / Welsh / Winch character. In The Thin Red Line, Welsh’s supernatural presence dominates every scene he appears in. He is the model Weberian medieval warlord; his banner flies above all the facts and politics about WWII; his trumpet reverberates deep and far in the American mind. He is also the foremost concretized model of Weber’s ideas about charisma in any American war novel written in any time. “Born of a highly Protestant, genteel family,” Welsh has “observed the principle of property in action all his life” (24). “Property, property, all for property” is his cynical mantra, and he repeats it in dramatic monologue fashion whenever the machinations of the rational war are especially horrifying. Welsh chooses the Army in 1930, the narrative says, because at the time it seemed to him to afford the best mathematical probability that he would avoid action; now that he is about to face it, the failure of his rational calculation strikes him only as amusing (23). He is both protective of and tortuous to his men; his contempt for their complicit entrapment cascades through every scene he is in.

Most of all, Welsh is the answer to the Army’s failure to fulfill the corporate group’s first requirement, continuous purposeful activity. Welsh’s character symbolism is so far outside the purview of the rational-instrumental model that he actually balances its inherent incompleteness—when the men can find nothing more to believe in at the official level, Welsh appears suddenly as the medieval cipher whose affective power moves them to obedience of an affective-historical kind. It is interesting, too, that
Welsh’s theoretical relationship, which places his charisma in balance with the rationalism of the administrative staff, is formalized by his infrequent appearances in the battle scenes when rational officers are in charge. In fact, unlike all the other characters, Welsh appears in almost none of the novel’s battle scenes. The sole instance of Welsh in battle is constructed around an act of singular heroism concerning another soldier, Tella, who is wounded and left screaming alone on the ridge. Welsh runs to him, tries to carry Tella to safety, can’t, and ends up administering, god-like, a fatal dose of morphine. The tug-of-war between Welsh, the almost overwhelmingly supernatural Achilles-figure come to life, and the rational authority that constitutes the group’s formal legitimate boundaries, continues to the novel’s end.

As well as concretizing Weber’s charisma concept, Welsh acts as a kind of archetype source for charisma picked up and repeated in smaller, more realistic ways by the minor characters. The next most charismatic character, the prodigal Kentucky yeoman, Witt, also has a reputation as a leader in C-for-Charlie. In the same scene that kills the Calvinistic Lieutenant-elect, Witt sneaks back to help his old company. Hiding on the ridge, Witt listens to Bell, the modern educated liberal, sing a version of God Bless America in which he replaces the words with “I am an Automaton.” Unlike Bell, whose ability to act is temporarily sapped by his emotional apathy, and who has concluded none who serve the state are “free individual human beings” (275), and that “all creative Art is shit,” Witt’s sense of individuality allows him to approach the problem of the battle creatively and actively—another byproduct of charisma. Witt has a sixth-sense certainty that he is “free, white, and twenty-one and had never taken no shit off nobody and never would” (276). A malcontent in the unit’s daily life, Witt is an initiative-taking hero in its crisis. He volunteers to go point by himself, and waits, “his rifle ready with the safety off. He had not shot squirrel all his life for nothing, he had not made High Expert on the range for the past six years for nothing, either” (276).

But Witt is not the novel’s only case of a sudden High-Priest / High-Expert transformation. Private Doll is a hero, too. In the same battle Doll runs across a field straight at an enemy gun nest. And there is Big Un Cash, who volunteers for a
special mission to avenge the beheaded American soldier. And Bell, who regains his agency and comes up with an idea to clear another enemy foxhole. And Witt, again, who volunteers to run a message across the redoubt. And Gaff, whom the men look to lead them well. Storm, the cook, keeps the men fed even if it means risking his life to get the food to them; he meets Weber’s “therapeutic” charisma because he is the character responsible for seeing the men take their anti-malarial pills. Even Captain Stein, who hates the war, meets Weber’s criteria in a roundabout way—both because of his civilian expertise as a lawyer and because his leadership can inspire Witt, the toughest of his men, to want to “throw his arms around his commander and kiss him on his dirt-crusted, stubbled cheek in an ecstasy of loving comradeship” (324).

All these minor characters are the proof that Weberian charisma occurs more locally and more often than we normally think when we are faced with the singular and rare dramatic instances like Welsh. Our culture tends to see charisma as Welsh-like, a pathological variant that one in a thousand people is born with and that defines all aspects of that person’s relationships throughout his or her life. In the variety of examples of the colour-burst charisma in otherwise mediocre—neither very good nor very bad—characters, two ideas that argue against this outlook are on the move.

The first idea is that Jones’s soldiers do what Lukacs says they must. They demonstrate their creator’s talent for creating characters whose “concrete, social-historical collisions” with forces beyond their control do not devolve into occasions for “universal human tragedy (or the futility of life in general),” and thus to the “disintegration of [the] really dramatic elements” of their form, the novel (HN 145). To be truly charismatic, in other words, the actor’s charisma must be local and temporary. The Thin Red Line charismatic character exists uniquely within his particular brand of charisma, for his few special seconds; there is really no wider parable to be drawn from his action or the perception of its specialness. While Weber writes that charisma is “specifically outside the realm of every-day routine and the profane sphere,” it is significant to Lukacs’s model because of its mundane ligatures, because it is locally produced, appreciated, and recorded (IB 51).
The soldier characters in question never see themselves as heroes, staying firmly grounded instead in their middling realm status. Welsh, on the other hand, knows he is different and specially gifted. He moves among his soldiers, muttering to himself like Jove among the hinds, and is the source of the minor characters’ charisma, a sort of lightening-rod source from which they can reflect his supernatural magnificence in small moments. But characters like Welsh are too much to be borne by narratives all the time. For the historical novel to fulfill its functions, the Welshes / Achilles have to disappear regularly and be disseminated, absorbed, spread among the most number of characters possible so that the full representative power of their ideas becomes socially connected. In contrast, until the narrative says the minor characters are special, either by having another character say it or by encouraging the reader to infer the extraordinary quality of their action from descriptive detail, the reader cannot rationally assume the actor is anything but ordinary.

Weber is not as clear about the apparent paradox between charisma and reason as I could hope, especially given the amount of writing he did about it. In On Charisma and Institution Building he says on one hand that charisma is a “typical anti-economic force” (53); that it is “specifically foreign to every-day routine structures” (54); and that charisma can only be “awakened and tested”; it cannot be “learned” or “taught” (58). On the other hand he says charisma is easily “transformed into those defining a traditional social status” (58); that it may acquire administrative staff (59); and that its anti-economic character is open to alteration (60). Finally, Weber thought it necessary that rationalistic democracies “should” rely on charisma for leaders who inspire trust and respect; but his definition of the charismatic individual is one who has never regarded his “quality as dependent on the attitudes of the masses toward him” (49); who despises “rational everyday economizing” (52); and who relies for his or her own survival on donations from followers (53).

In light of all this it is difficult to state once and for all what modern bureaucracy and Weberian charisma contribute to each other. Sam Whimster shows how the difficulty arises at least in part from gaps in the order which Weber wrote and revisited his essays
(236), and in another part by the gaps between Weber’s political condemnation of charismatic demagoguery and his academic assessments of its utility (241). Whimster also notes how modern democracies differ in the face and content of their rulers, and that democratic power can be routinized backwards into an attempt at power consolidation by those interested in establishing charismatic empires (240). Instead of sorting out the vast and intricate avenues of Weber’s political science, I go back to my third proposition, to propose that Jones’s representations of charisma can at least help us understand how the war novel uses charisma.

I believe that C-for-Charlie is the example of the way that the band-of-brothers uses the primitive warrior-family model inside the combat novel’s realistic frame, not just to support charismatic opportunities but to generate them. It does this to counterbalance the domination of the rational-calculating model. By showing how charisma lives in ordinary characters, the text records, like a flash-bulb, circumstances that inspire average people to extraordinary action and at the same time resists narratives intent on retelling unified stories spun around super-human characters like Welsh in moments of historical crisis. As Captain Stein thinks to himself:

Official sources always wanted a clean, clearcut, easily understood military campaign, easily explainable afterwards in terms of strategy and tactics which the generals of the world could write about cleanly, and this sort of thing was embarrassing to that concept. But in spite of official sources the story had swept around the front like wildfire, and Stein did not intend to be a party to the suppression of it. The troops should know what they were in for. (157)

The relative moral value of the charismatic action is not as important as the fact it realizes the actor’s escape from total domination by a rational-legal army. Indeed, the Army now uses this fact and attempts to turn it around by praising charismatic action by the common soldier. Warfighting praises officers-in-training who pursue it (11). But the war novel resists this attempt to turn charisma into a moral value. It does so by a formal device built into the genre; the concrete description of battle scenes. The battle scene always ends in death. What we are in for, then, in the combat novel’s charismatic
revelation, is not the further reification of an absolute truth about charisma but local accounts that send its personal veracity back to the masses of private people. Stories about war are at their end not stories about war but stories about people. Welsh is present in the final scene of the book, but the final sentence of *The Thin Red Line* is, “One day one of their number would write a book about all this, but none of them would believe it, because none of them would remember it that way.” The power of Jones’s historical novel is not its faithful replication of ideal public types but its faithful devotion to the private, living struggle of men who say

*We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,*

*But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;*

*An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,*

*Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;*

  *While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, fall be'ind",*

  *But it's "Please to walk in front, sir", when there's trouble in the wind,*

  *There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,*

  *O it's "Please to walk in front, sir", when there's trouble in the wind.*
Chapter 3
Into Thin Air and Out: Jones’s Good Soljers Come Home in Whistle

My aim in the last two chapters has been to trace, in the first and second novels of James Jones’s war trilogy, the significance of his representations of WWII soldiers. Because these blends of historic and contemporary influences stand Janus-like at the crossroads of America before and after WWII, I have come to think of the "good soljers" in From Here to Eternity and The Thin Red Line as 1776 GIs. As the term implies, the characters’ value to scholarly study lies in the ways they concretize and thus demystify the reciprocal relations between representations of American soldiers and their lived public culture. It is thus correct to say that I see Jones’s soldiers as generative models that bear an archetypal and effectual relation to certain values in postwar America.

The idea of an archetypal American soldier is a controversial one, however. While William James, in The Moral Equivalent of War, believed that the collective imaginary around American wars and soldiers formed “those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, [that] are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out,”(660) many other scholars insist that the very idea of an archetypal soldier is an example of the kind of dangerous mystification which mistakes hawkish militarism for founding American values. The historian Richard Kohn writes that the image of the American soldier has been in this way speciously deployed:

Moral worth, and our special distinctiveness as a country, seemed somehow to hinge on the people's eagerness to serve, its bravery under fire, its loyalty in captivity, its virtue in bivouac, and its willingness to melt back silently into civilian life. The government down through our history has also contributed to stereotyping American soldiers. To mobilize the population and justify the cause, propaganda has consistently pictured the American in uniform in the best possible light. Veterans’ organizations have also joined willingly in the celebrations of the
American soldier, lest they cheapen their own endeavors or call into question their sacrifice . . . Thus the American soldier has been a symbol, a political and cultural artifact for a nation diverse in culture, uncertain in unity, and concerned through much of its history with proving its superiority to the rest of the world. (556)

Some other critics point to Samuel A. Stouffer’s landmark six-volume 1949 sociological examination *American Soldier* to argue that the attempt to define the American soldier, even when undertaken empirically and under the auspices of social science, is defeated both by its subjects’ resistance to homogenization and by the inescapable bias toward the existing military-industrial complex that such efforts produce (Smith 193). Still others take a more conditional view. One of the foremost American historians of the Vietnam War, Christian Appy, points out that representative abstraction and idealization lead inevitably to cliché and obscenity, that “the names and concrete details of war are important” but also that “[U]nless we risk some generalizations, we cannot take clear positions on the most crucial events of our time. To reject all generalizations is itself a generalization . . . The competing views essential to a democratic society require not only a recovery of historical names but an ongoing debate about their significance” (2).

At its best, Jones’s war writing deftly copes with the challenge to demystify universal and individual WWII experience. Jones’s first two war novels avoid cliché by consistently emphasizing the distinct individuality of the American war experience. *Eternity* concludes with Karen Holmes wryly reassuring her eleven-year-old son that he’ll have his own war to experience; *The Thin Red Line* ends by acknowledging that each of the characters would remember the narrative differently. This sensitivity for the dialectic between individual and collective is one of the factors that contributed to Jones’s astonishing popularity: the first two novels uncover the closed, realistic world of the GI for civilian readers, and they also cemented the communal nature of that experience for veterans who had been there and expressed vicariously what some veterans could not. To paraphrase Claude Levi-Strauss, *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line* are successful not because they aim to define how soldiers work in fiction, but rather because
they show how soldiering works in American minds, and through their soldiers represent those minds back to themselves in ways hitherto “unbeknownst to them.”

In his first two war novels, however, Jones confines his representations to what the soldier characters call "The Profession," the closed world of the American military. Because The Profession frames the soldiers within the greater but still private world of the military, the characters’ perspectives on public America occur from a distance that is both figurative and literal. The novels’ undiluted militarism supports the soldiers' band-of-brothers’ internal ties while obviating the interference created in a narrative in which the soldiers come into regular, daily contact with civilians. Most critically, the soldiers in From Here to Eternity and The Thin Red Line are freestanding in their discrete social order; they do not depend on the civilian world for their “good soljer” status. The closed settings in these novels thus foreshorten the soldiers’ capacity to represent symbolic archetypes in and against the greater contexts of American civilian culture.

My purpose in this chapter, therefore, is to extend my own study of Jones’s war fiction and complement existing scholarship on the genre by describing and evaluating the third book in Jones's war trilogy, 1977’s Whistle, and its representations of soldiers in a civilian milieu. As with my first and second chapters, I do so here with a view to performing what Richard Kohn calls a “social” critique of military service, one that reveals as much about American civilian culture as it does about soldiering. The unique strength of soldiering, John Keegan says, is that it “stands far enough outside our own

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56 “I do not aim to show how men think in myths, but how myths think in men, unbeknownst to them” (qtd. in Jonathan Culler, 35).
57 In Red Line, with the exception of Private Bell, few of the characters in the Guadalcanal battle theatre reflect on their civilian ties. In the Schofields Barracks base setting of Eternity, the contact between soldiers and civilians takes place largely at night, either in Hawaiian brothels or in bars. These liminal spaces act as safety valves through which the soldiers can release their frustrations with The Profession on one hand and exploit its protective cocoon to their advantage on the other, and so suggest the dark side of the "good soljer" image. But these scenes are temporary, bound by the regulative parameters of the soldiers’ sanctioned leave hours and by their midnight-holiday carnivalesque air.
culture to perceive how it makes us . . . what we are” (12); my task in this chapter is to interpret what happens when that distance is closed, to identify the mystifications that remain or are even intensified by the closing of the gap, and to draw some conclusions about their relevance in their own time and in ours.

My goal is to advance a theory of Whistle’s position in relation to Eternity and Red Line that can be extended to certain ideological tropes that have also attached themselves to the archetype of the American soldier in the decades after WWII. I draw out the differences between Whistle and Jones’s previous two novels in order to deepen our understanding of the trilogy’s historical expressiveness in relation to the viability of the changing American narrative around the “good soljer.” Particularly relevant for my reading in this chapter are Whistle's representations of three ideas that are essential elements of the American errand and that are inextricably entwined with ideas about the “true” and the “real” in American soldiering: the frontier, heterosexual masculinity, and the Revolutionary citizen-soldier.

In its first part my thesis is that in their representations of these three concepts, the “good soljers” of Whistle depart from the images established in Eternity and Red Line to create characters whose mystifications from their liberal civilian counterparts increase, paradoxically, the closer the novel’s setting draws them together. Where I showed, in Chapters 1 and 2, how the first two sets of Jones’s soldiers closely parallel a major historical archetype, the yeoman, imbued with a set of characteristics—social adaptability, resourcefulness, calculating rationality—often associated with progressive liberalism, I now show how regressive, intractable, and rigid the other side of the archetype can be. I contend that the Whistle soldiers are transplanted anachronisms whose primary context is not WWII, but Vietnam, and who embody what Richard Hofstadter famously called the paranoid style in American politics. I argue that against Jones’s claim for it as an anti-war novel, Whistle is a conservative jeremiad opposed to social changes taking place in the sixties and seventies that ultimately ends up valorizing soldiers over civilians. I analyze the ways that Jones’s previous gift for representing ordinary GIs hardens into a program for their interment at the expense of their individuality. I propose
that instead of balancing individual and collective war experience, and drawing veterans and civilians closer together, the Whistle soldiers become figures that ultimately endorse traditional dividing points in American society.

The major analysis that I develop in this chapter, then, is the ways and means of a mystification that steadily unfolds from three individual areas of bewilderment. Whereas in Chapters 1 and 2, I studied the ways that Jones’s soldiers live in close adaptive synergy with certain progressive civilian archetypes, in this chapter I focus on the tropes that describe the soldiers’ regression and alienation. I begin by drawing out the ways Whistle foregrounds the frontier in ways that mirror the American interpretation of Vietnam and which establish the U.S. as a moral wilderness, anathematic to “pure” conservative American values. Next, I examine the novel’s treatment of sex to understand how it responds to social currents in the sixties and seventies, and how the characters’ attitudes toward women generally and heterosexual sex especially foreground the tense performance of idealized traditional American masculinity at a time when the values underlying the validity of those normative ideals were increasingly challenged. Finally, the chapter concludes by attempting to understand how the narrative’s representations of its soldiers reinstall a revolutionary citizen-soldier whose emphasis is on political and class difference rather than shared values.

Whistle

In Whistle, the collapse of the soldier-figure that has sustained the trilogy thus far is synecdochically related to the novel itself. Whistle is not just the weakest of Jones’s novels, it is a poor example of the war-novel genre. Its particular weaknesses are in keeping with what Edward Palm, writing in 1986 about a spate of Vietnam war novels published around the same time, calls “pandering to mood-playing on public sympathy” (np). The degree and quality of Whistle’s representation of the veterans’ traumas are so heavy-handed, and its moral position so totalizing, that it becomes a caricature of the protest war novel and its own predecessors. In 1970, Wayne Charles Miller, an expert on the American military novel, condemned both Eternity and Red Line for being “[d]evoid
of perceptiveness or ideas . . . [Red Line is] a long and boring book, filled with the leavings of other books that had dealt less pretentiously with the same subjects’ (141); it is hard to guess what dour nadir Miller would reach about Whistle. Kohn’s observation—that as dangerous as it is for people to place their faith in positive propaganda about soldiers, it is equally untrue, especially after Vietnam, to represent them as anti-social, intractably alienated or incapable of social integration—is also relevant to Whistle (Kohn 560). Even Jones’s most active academic proponents treat Whistle with some circumspection: Giles remarks that book’s pessimism is a reflection of the real-life difficulties many veterans faced when they had “to evolve back into a man functioning normally in society,” and that central to Jones’s vision was the idea that the United States had created new kinds of professional soldiers and then not welcomed them on their return (203); for his part, Carter, though he lauds the book’s expression of Jones’s philosophy, rationalizes the novel’s “lack of directness” as a consequence of Jones’s concern, after Some Came Running, with narratives that were less explicitly didactic in their revelation of his mysticism, and which may itself have been “because of incomprehension and a lack of sympathy for his views, even among many critics who supported his work” (36).

While Carter defends the novel’s technical inconsistencies, it is just as often the case that the best of Jones’s plain-people artistry—his gift for believable characters, detailed settings, dialogue and descriptions of war that made its terrible labour and its conflicted soldiers come alive—is seriously diminished in Whistle. The result is forced and in places exhausted, and even Carter eventually acknowledges that its themes present “perhaps a significant flaw in the novel . . . [representative of] a possible conflict in Jones’s thinking that he might not have worked out” (168). The plot relies on a series of encounters between the four main characters and the rest of the world that are unrelieved in their disillusionments and unbelievable in their dramatization. Part of the interest of Jones’s

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58 Still, according to Carter, “As the four primary characters in Whistle approach the dissolution of their current incarnations and, by implication, the ultimate dissolution that prepares them to be reabsorbed into God, it is by no means accidental or a lucky coincidence that their language shatters into fragments” (179).
earlier writing is his incorporation of a wide variety of cultural expressions—in *Eternity* and *Red Line*, blues, jazz, and poetry enhance the narratives’ complexity. In contrast, *Whistle*’s bricolage reproduces its influences as embarrassing caricatures. For example, boxing writing in the seventies was a popular genre—as it has always and still does, the subject drew sportswriters of unusual lyricism and elegance—but Jones’s gratuitous copy has punches in a bar fight occur, ridiculously, as “one, two; one, two; one two three four” (282). Most disappointingly, in *Whistle* the versions of American manliness, which at their best in *Eternity* and *Red Line* illustrate the nature of masculine charisma in twentieth-century American culture and uncover the contradictory philosophies inherent in the then-all-male world of the soldier, unspool into a series of bang-blam-pow clichés.

The novel’s provenance is also sad: alive in Jones's mind in 1947, it had to be completed after his death in 1977, by his friend and later biographer Willie Morris. Like *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line*, *Whistle* is a big book, taking up just over 500 pages to tell the final story of the trilogy’s major characters. In Jones’s own words, the novel was meant to signal the final maturation of his darkest views about the destructive effects war has on the human beings who fight them. He suggests the novel reflects the failure of mid-twentieth century American social planners and civilians to understand what wars do to the people who fight them. It offers a grim image of the extinction of the ordinary soldier, a figure it presents as a vital American model. “It will say,” Jones wrote in his 1973 preface, “just about everything I have ever had to say, or will ever have to say, on the human condition of war and what it means to us, as against what we claim it means to us” (19).

Significantly, Jones conceived the novel as a meditation on Vietnam. On June 17, 1967, Jones wrote to his brother Jeff:

Of course if it is any good it will by extension symbolize what is happening today with the current war in Viet-Nam. It will be about the home-front war-economy society and about its impact on a bunch of busted-up vets all of whom come back deeply guilty because they feel they have not done enough. It is in fact the
material which I used in that first book before Eternity, which I subsequently threw away. (Hendrick 319)

Whistle is divided into five sections: “The Ship,” “The Hospital,” “The City,” “The Camp,” and “The End of It.” Each book traces another stage in the journey of the character mainstays, whom Jones claimed in the introduction remained “the same people as before.” Set just before American WWII mobilization in Europe, Jones’s final word on war rests on the stateside return of the last four of C-for-Charlie’s soldiers. Wounded Pacific-front veterans now, the characters return home to undergo treatment and await eventual redeployment or discharge as America readies itself for the European front. It is, again, the first time readers see the characters against the backdrop of a regular civilian milieu, albeit a conditionally regulated one in which the Army is still a controlling force in the narrative.

Whistle’s story begins with a letter heralding the arrival of the remnants of C-for-Charlie Company to a stateside veterans’ hospital. All four of the returning main characters—Winch, Prell, Strange, and Landers—have injuries that require extensive medical care. Winch (the non-commissioned sergeant Warden / Welsh) is suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease exacerbated by stress and alcoholism. Prell, the Prewitt / Will character, faces leg amputation after a heroic but unsuccessful ambush on a Japanese redoubt. Landers, the clerk, has also sustained a leg wound, though it is not as severe an injury as Prell’s. Strange, the cook, has a shrapnel fragment lodged in his hand that becomes increasingly problematic for being ignored too long on the front. The reunion takes place in the fictional southern city of Luxor, which Jones modelled on Memphis,

The following table traces the characters’ reincarnations over the trilogy's settings and publications dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Here to Eternity</th>
<th>The Thin Red Line</th>
<th>Whistle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prewitt</td>
<td>Witt</td>
<td>Prell</td>
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<td>Warden</td>
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<td>Stark</td>
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<td>Strange</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>Landers</td>
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Tennessee. The plot depends for its action on the conflicts the four characters experience as they undergo treatment and rehabilitation, along the way attempting to recover from the psychological trauma of war and to adjust both to civilian life and to the non-combatant arms of the military. Looming over the characters’ rehabilitation is the spectre of redeployment on the European front.

The issues and problems alluded to, above, make Whistle a complicated final instalment in Jones’s war novel trilogy. Despite its structural inconsistencies, however, the novel signals an important moment in the afterlives of the GI in American culture. Its representation of the characters’ alienation not only helps us to understand important changes taking place in the fabric of American society, but it offers as well a picture of the soldier’s role in civilian contexts that refers once again back to the traditional yeoman’s bellwether function. In Whistle, the soldiers become symbols of a disappearing national vision, one whose receding horizons are thrown into relief by their return from the war’s Pacific frontier.

Bewilderment 1: The Frontier

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? (Matthew 11:7)

Thomas Shepard put the biblical question to the New England Puritans in 1660; it was destined to toll, bell-like, across American generations.\(^6^0\) The immensity of the idea of the frontier in the American mind is equalled only by its historic geographic reality and its vast surrounding discourse; no other people, as Richard Slotkin points out in Gunfighter Nation, have been so shaped by their willingness to conflate character, event, and horizon. In particular, Slotkin says, the carry-over of the frontier legacy on popular culture discourses of the sixties and seventies was significant, and its cross-over effect on representations of Vietnam, considerable:

\(^6^0\) Shepard, Parable, 179, qtd. in Carroll, 115.
This broad cultural impact was of course registered in the mythographic media of the commercial culture, including movie and television westerns . . . Through most of the New Frontier / Great Society era, and most markedly between 1965 and 1972, the Western . . . was the only one of the standard Hollywood genres whose practitioners regularly used genre symbolism to address the problems of Vietnam and to make the connection between domestic social / racial disorder and the counterinsurgency mission. (GN 536)

Besides the Hollywood Western, the frontier has had a similarly important impact on the figure of the soldier in war fiction of the same post-Consensus era. John Hellman, a scholar of American fiction about Asia after WWII, writes that the frontier’s requirement for contradictory and coexistent virtues become, in soldier characters, “a reflection of the tension in American culture between the anarchic impulses of its individualistic ethic and the social ideals of its perceived communal mission. From Leatherstocking through the Virginian to the Green Beret, the [soldier’s] democratic balance of self-reliance and self-restraint . . . mirrors the fantasies of a significant portion of the populace” (56). In this mirroring, soldiers, “symbolic heroes entering a symbolic landscape” (38) echo the agrarian farmer ideal; but unlike the bucolic connotations connected to the farmer, the soldier’s virtues spring from his capacity not just to defend the ideal but to extend its ideological and material horizons as well.

Both Hellman and Peter Schrijvers refer to the positive cult that grew up, as early as the 1850s, around American perceptions of China and Japan as a ripe, if under-realized and practically homogenous frontier awaiting American crusaders. By the Second World War, China had assumed a sympathetic character in the American imagination, while Imperial Japan had become the primitive and implacable enemy. As Jones’s “jabbering savages” beheading scene from The Thin Red Line helps illustrate, American war fiction

61 Fed by writers like Pearl Buck and Henry Luce, the celebrity of Madame Chiang, and the interests of the American “Asia Lobby,” America cast China as a sympathetic ally and as an opportunity to repeat the American revolutionary model in a foreign crusade (Schrijvers 11).
uses the Pacific theatre to reformulate classic tropes from the American West. Schrijvers, however, points out for most new WWII soldiers the Western epic began long before they arrived to board the naval troop carriers waiting for them at San Francisco, San Diego, or Hawaii. American GIs, especially those from the eastern states, were awestruck by their western journeys across their own country; faced with the Pacific Ocean at last, Schrijvers writes, their surprised reactions vary little from the diary entries of Lewis and Clark (20). Once they were at sea, crossing the equator became a special rite of passage, and in their letters sea-going WWII GIs compared themselves to Columbus, Cook, Tasman, and Bligh (Schrijvers 24).

The frontier associations expressed by WWII GIs only became stronger and more concretely expressed after landfall. Among many others, Schrijver quotes this infantry soldier, writing home about the 7th Cavalry Regiment’s arrival in New Guinea: “This is the same organization that went into the Little Big Horn under General Custer and came out without a man!” The greater Pacific theatre was itself often described in Indian-war terms by news correspondents as a “ruthless, tracking, potshotting, Indian kind of war” (30). In keeping with Puritan descriptions of the wilderness, depictions of the Pacific theatre in WWII culture tended to swing irregularly between representing the people and their environment as interrelated components of a vast, unspoiled Eden on one hand and a dangerous, sinful wilderness on the other. The perception in WWII was aided by media both unofficial and official: the military played up the pioneering motif to soldiers in its WWII handbooks, and the Western movie enjoyed unprecedented popularity in the years leading up to Pearl Harbour (Schrijvers 19).

Representations of the frontier in both From Here to Eternity and The Thin Red Line reinforce its status as an integral cultural episteme in the WWII American encounter with the Pacific. The Schofield Barracks, Hawaii setting of 1951’s Eternity, recollects the kinds of garrison outposts that settled the West before the frontier ‘closed’ in 1890. On the edge of the Pacific, with nowhere else to go and nothing to do, surrounded by pacified natives and dramatic but tamed Nature, G Company relaxes into complacency. In contrast, in Chapter 2, I note how, in The Thin Red Line, C-for-Charlie wanders through
the Guadalcanal jungle either as a childlike tourist or as a settled Yankee woodsman. Both reactions are precipitated by the jungle’s frontier strangeness. But The Thin Red Line also juxtaposes that novelty and assimilates it by referencing the historic American West. Fife, the Red Line clerk, thinks at one point that the battle resembles nothing so much as a deranged game of “Cowboys and Indians! Cowboys and Indians!” (199); a dead GI wears a shirt with homemade fringe just like “the oldfashioned buckskin fringe of the plainsmen” (67); Witt is a plainsman sharpshooter. The Western frontier thus assumes a central role in the formation and maintenance of the soldiers’ capacity for charisma.

In the first two books of Jones’s trilogy, however, and despite the emphasis their reactions place on American-ness, most of the soldiers waste little energy wondering about the specifics of ‘home.’ The U.S. exists as a stable but fundamentally off-stage presence that shapes the soldiers only insofar as it highlights the exclusivity of The Profession. In Whistle, however, the idea of “home”—and most of all, what happens to the soldiers who get there—is central to the narrative from the beginning.

“It's funny, you know,” Prell said after a moment. "We never really knew what happens to them, after they get hit and leave the outfit. And now we're doing it ourselves. They get hit and they walk off the field, or get carried off, and that's just sort of the last we ever see of them . . . they get flown or shipped back to the States and they—just sort of disappear into thin air. And we never know. And now it's happening to us. (66)

Whistle's central theme is that “home” indeed no longer exists, either for the band-of-brothers who return burdened by their war experience or for the traditional values they embody. In this way, the novel makes the first of its departures from the typical image of WWII GI veterans to take on the characteristics that draw it closer to the Vietnam novel. Likening the Vietnam experience to the symbolic rise and fall of a re-worked American Adam, Hellmann argues for an understanding of the frontier in Vietnam fiction as one radically different from the Pacific frontier of WWII, because it was focused "not on the journey into Southeast Asia but on its legacy, on what it means to be American after
Vietnam" (139). Whistle’s obsession with what happens after its soldiers cross the “thin air” divide between the Pacific front and home is characteristic of now-classic Vietnam novels like *Going After Cacciato*, *If I Die in a Combat Zone*, *Better Times Than These*, *Dispatches*, and *Dog Soldiers*, novels whose out-and-back-again plot structures emphasize the complex moral dilemmas of veterans beset by doubt, not just about the justness of the war they fought but about the justness of the society from which they come. The approach marks a definite departure from the out-only standard plot of contemporary WWII novels, in which, as Schrivers’ research suggests, the fact of the leave-taking was sufficient in and of itself.

The difference in Whistle’s treatment of the out-and-back plot structure and the other novels I mention above lies in the way Jones’s narrative downplays the question of the war’s justness and emphasizes the overseas GIs as martyrs, a point I take up in more detail below. In part, it manages to do so because it maintains itself as a WWII narrative, and so evades confrontation with the political debates that characterize Vietnam discourse. But the difference is a technical detail of increasing superficiality. From the beginning, the novel’s imagery juxtaposes veterans whose primary disillusionments result not from the war, but from the fallen society that awaits them.

At first, the disjuncture between the soldiers’ expectations and their contemporary American culture is camouflaged by the optimism of New World discoverers. Whistle’s first book, “The Ship,” begins by bringing the last four members of C-for-Charlie back to the States, either to be cured enough for redeployment to the opening European front or to be acquitted through honorable discharge. It completes the sea-voyage trope begun at the end of *Eternity* (on the deck of the ship leaving Pearl Harbor) and continued at the beginning of *Red Line* (with the disembarkation in the Guadalcanal bay), and so brings the trilogy’s core characters full circle. But the circle “The Ship” describes has a wider historical circumference, too. Just before the Whistle hospital ship reaches landfall, the clerk Landers—the reincarnation of Fife, from *Red Line*—is standing on the deck. He has a primate vision:
And far off, the white breakers clashed gently on the unpeopled sands of that long blue coast, where forests of great green-leafed trees and green supple grasses remained the only living things. That continent which, uninhabited, enigmatic, unfathomable and vast, loomed beckoning. And upon which no ship would ever make its landing. (55)

To Steven R. Carter, Landers’ out-of-body experience is an example of Jones’s transcendental orientalism, and Carter’s view is supported by Lander’s sense, at the end of the vision, that his soul returns as if from some other plane, “pouring back in [to his body] slowly in a thick solid untrickling stream” (55). The scene is also repeated, nearly verbatim, at the end of the fourth book in the novel, “The Camp,” when Landers, discharged, commits suicide before he even leaves the base, by walking into a car driven by an officer’s wife (444).

Landers’ impressionistic first and last visions are significant because their utopian New World imagery mimics historic discovery narratives, and because by extension they then also align the soldiers with a ‘pure’ founding-fathers type. Of all the Whistle characters, Landers, the visionary clerk, is the most middle-class in origins and liberal in outlook, the most idealistic, and the best-educated. And yet, by the time of his suicide, Landers has become estranged from his family, has gone AWOL, and has been confined to the mental-health unit of the Army hospital; his honorable discharge is effected as a last-ditch salvation attempt by the Company’s band-of-brothers leader, the string-pulling Sergeant Winch. For these reasons, Landers is a character in the model of Red Line’s Bell and (even more than Whistle’s Prell) the rebel hero Prewitt from Eternity, who also explicitly reject promotion and opportunities for compromise with military authority. But Landers’ bracketed visions of a vast and empty utopian frontier that is perpetually unpeopled, and which beckons forever just out of reach, underscore his resistance to the

62 “It may represent, on another level, a place—or state—where humans are not separate beings but parts of a beautiful, peaceful whole and will eventually return and be absorbed into God” (Carter 166).
decompensation that Jones theorizes is the inevitable result of a military system designed to produce good soldiers.

The fact that Landers’ humanity remains intact, even tragically so, is significant beyond the contradiction it poses to Jones’s narrative program. Landers also illustrates the narrative’s emphasis on the regular soldiers’ special gift for discerning a ‘true’ American character, and at the same time highlights civilian society’s flawed and self-serving perceptions. The primary source of Landers’ tragedy is not his dehumanization; it is a consequence of the alienation from his family and country caused by his adherence to his ideals.

Returning to his hometown, the unsubtly-named “Imperium,” Landers is met by the local town fathers—the story's public-bench guards of small town America and the narrative's symbolic gesture to a now-corrupt founding-fathers cultural trope. Arriving in town with his cane and limp, Landers is immediately identified by one of the idle gossips: “Say, aint you Jeremy Landers’ boy, Marion?”(196). The news that a GI has come home spreads quickly—by the time he arrives at his parents’ home, Landers, who more and more resembles a stereotyped Vietnam antihero, knows “That was the way it was going to be. Everybody was going to be treating him as the returned war hero.” Hard on the heels of that realization, however, Landers has another vision: “And suddenly he saw a picture of the company’s waterless platoons, with their fear-haunted eyes under their helmets and dirt on their faces and the stubbles of beard. It blanked out everything, the station, the dispatcher, the cab” (196).

The image of the GIs still fighting in the Pacific theatre recurs not just in Lander’s imagination but arrives, visitation-like, to all the other major characters—Winch, Strange, and Prell. Each time, the repeated vision presents the dream-soldiers as figures in a picture, images which but for context might have appeared in a painting about scourging religious penitents. Landers, again, “found himself seeing again the picture . . . and stared at the clean, white streaks down all the dirty faces from weeping” (158). Winch’s nightmare vision contains elements of the sacrificial lamb: he “could hear him [a
wounded soldier] crying piteously, bleating for help, whenever the fire slackened. And there wasn’t a thing Winch could do about it” (387). Unable to help their vision-sufferers, the characters suffer mightily. Their guilt manifests both in dreamscenes in which the veterans are safely stateside and, in their dreams, unable by some moral failure to help the ‘ghosts’—Winch’s repeating version of the vision often frames his failure as selfishness: "Again they were begging him for water and he would not give them any” (276).

These scenes are significant illustrations of the novel’s thematic development because they draw a melodramatic analogy between American troops and Christian doctrine. Troublingly, for characters set in WWII contexts, none of the characters reflect on the consequences of war for anyone else; if we decide to release the narrative from its moral imperative to tackle Nazi Germany because we see it as a Vietnam novel, we are confronted with Whistle’s elision of the non-American Pacific Rim victims. In this way the visions not only contradict Jones’s theory about the inevitable depersonalization that is the military’s final goal for soldiers, but they also set up a disturbingly narrow moral paradigm. By elevating common soldiers to warrior ciphers, the narrative concretizes a strain of right-wing thought in which the righteous coupling of isolationist culture with manifest destiny is the primary mandate of American culture.

The narrative makes it clear that the main characters’ capacity for moral action—relieving the vision-sufferers—is thwarted not just by their physical location in the civilian U.S. but also by the moral corruption that is its consequence and that seeps even into the band-of-brothers’ formerly unassailable code:

Winch hated to use the word *informers*. But that was what it was. Pals, or buddies, would have been a better word. But that wasn’t what they were, they were informers. For vanity’s sake, and for pride, the whole thing was built and structured to look, and to seem, as if they were buddies. (382, emphasis original)

Frequently, the veterans have visions shortly before or after they have sex, a plot figuration that draws attention to the ways the narrative represents women, family, and masculinity; I develop this point in more detail later in this chapter. Along with the
Edenic coastline, the sacrificial-victim imagery works on the development of Winch, Strange, Prell and Landers to produce characters that are increasingly anachronistic and whose devotion describes not the movement from human to animal that so many critics, following Jones’s own lead, see in his war fiction. Instead of a human-to-animal spiritual reversal, the Whistle soldiers travel backward toward a superhuman historic myth, one which upholds ideal American-ness in its justification of ‘true’ soldiering and warfare while decrying the ‘real’ society its warriors must return to.

In *A History of Warfare*, John Keegan writes that the idea that there may exist ‘true’ versus ‘real’ wars—the just versus the unjust—finds its origins in the Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz’s infamous nineteenth-century theory of war as a “continuation of politics by other means.” Against the Clausewitzian legacy, which reconciles the “two antithetical human types, the pacifist and the ‘lawful bearer of arms’” and so makes a just war possible within a liberal political model, Keegan argues that culture, and especially original myths, not politics, are equally significant determinants of a society’s military program (2). Keegan criticizes Western Clausewitzian strategists in the twentieth century for overemphasizing the ‘truth’ of war’s rationality at the expense of an honest inquiry into the degree to which war’s supposed justification is really only a perverse reflection of cultural essentialism. Moreover, Keegan says, “[i]t is a besetting fault of triumphant warrior systems that fail to fund economic and social diversification from the fruits of victory, that they should become fossilized in their moment of glory” (31).

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63 Keegan’s analysis of Clausewitz’s 1873 *On War* shows how Clausewitz, an intellectual heir of Aristotle, advanced a theory of war as the legitimate pursuit of modern states, for which security and progress depended on a military capable of both rational calculation and civilized morality. Clausewitz was a Prussian officer and veteran of the Napoleonic wars, who was in Keegan’s words “revolted” by what he saw as the barbarism, cruelty, and greed of the Cossacks. Keegan notes that Clausewitz’s posthumous discovery by Western military strategists has enabled cultural (and capitalist) self-justification in the pursuit of “good” wars ever since. Ironically, given Clausewitz’s Prussian influence on military policy in the U.S., in 2010, William Pfaff, a leading American military analyst, said: “The defense and security industries are today the most important components of the U.S. manufacturing sector . . . [their] corporate interests are now in a position to dominate Congress, as well as an inexperienced administration . . . Without excessive exaggeration, one might say of the United States today what was once said of Prussia—that it is a state owned by its army” (np).
In *Whistle*, the fossilization of the soldier characters—which, playing on Clausewitz’s theory, I identify as a movement that occurs throughout the narrative—closely parallels Keegan’s political criticism. The clever, resilient soldiers that in *Eternity* and *Red Line* so vividly represented ordinary American men bewildered first by militarism and then by war are petrified by social change. Having lost their capacity for adaptability, the *Whistle* brothers also lose their ability to survive; the valour of their war injuries stands in marked contrast to this ideologic rigidity, their real sickness. The imagery of physical illness runs throughout the novel, however, and its description often recollects the heavy-handed pathos used in the “Imperium” scenes. The mass of returning soldiers, for example, greets landfall like any privation-stricken boatload of Atlantic passage settlers:

> They were a sorry looking bunch . . . they pushed out through the doors onto the open forward deck and squeezed against the rail, or against those already squeezed against the rail. Shaky, skinny, stringy, yellow of eyeball and of skin, bandaged and suppurating or wearing plaster, they crippled their way up from below, some tottering, some helping each other along, a number limping along on leg casts . . . A few cried. Some laughed or clapped their hands, or slapped each other on the back. All gazed around them and at each other with anxiety. (42)

The soldiers’ anxiety, combined with their sickness and physical injuries, helps juxtapose their return from fighting the ‘good war’ in the Pacific frontier to a culture divided between opposed images of a progressive, technologic frontier and a traditionally preserved Edenic idyll. Appearances are deceiving—outwardly the soldiers look like social cast-offs, but they actually embody all the positive values associated with a particular version of American patriotism. The aporia between this idealized, highly principled version and the morally lax one they return to supports another aspect of Hellmann’s view, which represents the Pacific theatre in American war literature as a landscape in which Americans could perceive images symbolic of an internal American struggle. That struggle was between a bureaucratic, decadent, technological society and a minority true to the original American dream of
democracy, racial brotherhood, authentic personal relations, and harmony with nature and with the self. (75)

The ‘authentic’ bonds between the soldiers that Hellman describes are, in Whistle, strengthened by communal ties that Peter M. Carroll says are the main result of sea crossings. Describing the effect of sea travel on Puritan cohesion, Carroll writes “Traveling in cramped quarters and beset by external and uncontrollable factors, the passengers drew closer together during periods of crisis. The ocean voyage was, in short, a communal experience in which earlier loyalties and friendships were forged even more strongly” (34). Along with the utopian shore visions, the historic exploration overtones of the soldiers’ sea-voyage helps create an impermeable cocoon around the Whistle soldiers, an effect heightened when juxtaposed with the characters’ oddly conflicted homecoming fervor. The band-of-brothers awaiting disembarkation in the Guadalcanal harbour at the beginning of Red Line feels the reasonable anxiety of soldiers who are expecting attack in a moment of physical vulnerability. The nervousness of Whistle’s C-for-Charlie returning wounded, gazing about with anxiety, hints on the other hand that on some level the characters have intuited the disconnect between expectation and reality awaiting them. Against Landers' primeval frontier vision, the soldiers' actual disembarkation marks a violent contrast:

The main impression they got was one of enormous growth. Urban, industrial, maritime, civic . . . Whole new forests of smokestacks seemed to have sprouted. Industrial smoke seemed to have doubled. Shipping had tripled. Truck traffic had at least doubled. There were many more installments, and many more people, everywhere. Some of the men, seated by the ambulance rear windows, caught glimpses of a city. (75)

That the soldiers are totally bewildered by what is really only the dockyard adds suggestive intensity to the US city waiting for them; that their first encounters with the hurly-burly business of the war effort occur first from the deck of a hospital ship and then
from the rear windows of ambulances mark them conspicuously as failures of that effort. Moreover, the reversal between the reality of C-for-Charlie's landing and Landers' New World vision hints that the narrative has begun to question the veracity of its characters' 'home' perceptions of their country in ways that they never do from their WWII Hawaiian or Guadalcanal 'away' locations. The Whistle characters have been gone only "a year or two," but the mood is one of estrangement bordering on psychosis. Every step of their return brings the fact of America’s newness and growth closer to the men. The hospital, especially, foregrounds the soldiers' brokenness in ways that emphasize the institution's centrality as an integral social structure in the emergent landscape. The description, like the harbour city's, emphasizes depersonalization and defamiliarization by using the language of size and panoptical reproduction:

The oldest two buildings, administration and recreation, couldn’t have been two years old yet. Around these, covering a vast amount of acreage and getting newer and rawer the farther out they stood, lay two multiple series of ward buildings. Each ward building was a separate two-story brick building. All of them were connected to each other and to the center by strings of brick-porticoed concrete walkways. The sheer magnitude of it was disheartening. (116)

The degree of the soldiers' alienation in view of their short absence highlights the rapidity of the transformations that changed American culture after WWII, and recollects an outlook that Richard Hofstadter says is basic to the kind of conservative paranoia that arose in fifties and sixties. Hofstadter remarks on 1964 political rhetoric that "resounds with the fundamental revolt against the conditions of modernity" and calls for a return to a shared sense of national purpose, individualism, and Protestant work values against empty consumerism and deep-state bureaucracies (118-19).

The character of political alienation that fascinated Hofstadter is woven into Whistle's narrative fabric. C-for-Charlie's psychological distance from ordinary civilians, from the business-oriented officer class that forms the new military aristocracy, or even from other soldiers without combat experience, is so great it forms an unbridgeable social chasm. Moreover, the more the soldiers come into contact with civilian culture, the more they
begin to resemble figures in the mold of the later Rambo character characterized as “Leatherstocking on steroids” by Harold Schecter and Jonna Seikes (23).

Like Schecter and Seikes’ Rambo, the Whistle soldiers are rigidly divided popular-culture blends of savagery and spirituality; either they are engaged in monk-like metaphysical ruminations or they are hyper-masculine goons whose primary occupations are fighting, fucking, and drinking (Schecter 24). Whistle’s soldiers occupy no pragmatic middle ground; the plasticity that made their Eternity and Red Line forebears so identifiably interesting has hardened into a brittle and unprofitable binary. Prell is the prime example of the anachronistic movement. His character, which began the trilogy in Eternity as Prewitt, the complex and wonderfully developed itinerant son of Kentucky coal-mining labour culture, is transformed in Whistle to a pseudo-Indian whose assimilation to American hero culture as a wheelchair-bound bond-selling war vet encompasses the worst fictional stereotypes of both. While the description of his disability frames it in terms of an emasculating embarrassment—“His folding wheelchair was always kept near the desk, out of sight, no matter what the hotel or the city. This was a strategy he and Kurntz had worked out at the start of the tour to satisfy Prell” (449)—the narrative returns again to idealizing a romantic historic vision of soldiering in which Prell’s continued best chance for dignity and usefulness occurs within a military framework: “A kind of wildly inarticulate love, out of all proportion to anything he was used to feeling for anybody, had seized him [Prell] for this elegant old soldier. He was such an example of the old-time, old-line, gentlemanly school of Army officer who once had existed” (455).

Similarly, when Strange, the cook, realizes that the old company is broken up for good, he feels “uprooted, homeless. He suffered from feeling naked and alone and orphaned with a severity he had never experienced before. Not even when he left home, or when his parents died. The existence of his civilian wife and her civilian family where he was accepted as a member was no help for this feeling at all” (240). Like Prell, Strange is disillusioned with the military but even more profoundly isolated outside it; the idea, as
Giles says, is that WWII had created a new kind of professional soldier for whom no home existed once they returned (203).

The soldiers’ alienation does work against the admittedly misleading popular image of the WWII veteran and his return to civilian society. Typically, WWII veterans are seen as the generation that got home, got to work, and got back to business. In her study of the effects of the GI Bill, Suzanne Mettler points to the slough of books that confirm the image, from Tom Brokaw’s *The Greatest Generation* to Stephen Ambrose’s *Citizen Soldiers* and Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (viii). All these works are based on the premise that the WWII veterans’ generation was comprised of the people who formed the bedrock of the Kennedy’s New Frontier America; despite credible research that suggests otherwise, WWII veterans are not usually seen as being broken in the same ways—politically and socially—as Vietnam veterans.

Like the story of the currents underneath what Whittaker Chambers called the "bland influence of the idea of progress" that marked the Consensus era, however, the mantle of homogenous victory culture blanketed a collection of individuals whose knotty ethnic, geographic, and socio-economic heterogeniety was further complicated by the trauma of their wartime experience. Although it was long believed that WWII innovations in military psychiatry—like screening and selection procedures designed to weed out actually or potentially unstable candidates; and field-hospital innovations in psychotherapy, occupational therapy, and art therapy—had significantly proactive therapeutic benefits, and had thus averted costly pension expenses to many thousands of veterans who were instead seamlessly reintegrated into the workforce, recent studies suggest that this conventional view is flawed. As Jones and Wessely write:

> While theoretical knowledge had undoubtedly advanced, an investigation of original medical records, rather than published accounts, suggest that wartime treatments may not have been as efficacious as claimed. Expectations of what might reasonably be accomplished seem to have been raised by psychiatrists not
unreasonably seeking to justify their position within the medical hierarchy (Shepard, 2000). (Jones and Wessely 74)

If shell-shocked soldiers responded well to in-patient treatment, their relapse rates once returned to active duty or civilian life were as high as 50% within a year of discharge (80); one British psychiatrist who conducted a follow-up survey in 1943 found that, six-months after discharge, the 120 British soldiers he interviewed had depressing prognoses: "They were less usefully employed than before, earning less, less contented, less tolerable to live with, less healthy" (Lewin, 1943, pp168-9)." (Jones and Wessely 81). American clinical pathways were no more promising, guided as they were by the ‘covering-up’ method, whose aim was to men returned to combat as quickly as possible in the theory that re-identification with the "band-of-brothers" would repair a shattered psyche. It was an approach whose self-service is only perhaps outweighed by its brutality: one US Army psychiatrist boasted of having returned 70% of 494 psychiatric casualties to combat after a mere 48 hours of "treatment," though the later official line was that it was "difficult to determine the validity of such return-to-duty results"—presumably because so many of the sample subjects conveniently never came back (Jones and Wessely 91).65

For millions of civilian Americans, involvement in the war had been forced by the attack on Pearl Harbor, when a "savage, nonwhite enemy had launched a barbaric attack on Americans going about their lives early one Sunday morning" (Englehardt 5). Moreover, the frontier overtones of ambush attached to Pearl Harbor seemed disquietingly similar to other racially based problems simmering away beneath the ideals of equality and freedom. That Germany, a society devoted to technologic progress, industrial expansion, efficient government, and cultural preservation, could author the worst crimes known to humanity based on perceived racial distinctions suggested uncanny and unspeakable parallels to ugly currents in American history. For many black Americans, wartime service was fraught by the knowledge that the principles they fought for on international

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65 Citing Kyle, Jill Manske points out that in 1946, nation-wide, there were 98 VA hospitals and 186 social workers dedicated to veterans’ issues. By 1953, in response to need, there were 200 VA hospitals staffed by 1 352 social workers.
fronts were not extended to them at home—Nazi atrocities seemed to warn of the extremes that could result from the festering aporia between American national and international programs for human rights-based liberalism.66

Those soldiers lucky enough to make it home were not the only ones struggling for equilibrium. Women empowered by the war's opportunities suddenly found themselves, upon the return of 16 million combat veterans, under pressure to give up their independence. Having lived through worry over their loved ones' safe return and the hardships of managing homes and finances singlehandedly, veterans' partners and families found themselves, in some cases, facing strangers whose affect and behavior were difficult to understand and live with. In contrast to the ‘happily-ever-after’ myth suggested by images like Alfred Eisenstaedt's *V-J Day In Times Square*, divorce rates in the fifties among couples where one partner was a combat veteran were several times higher than the national average (Pavalko and Elder 1990).

While both *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line* protest against the injustices of military life, the strength of the band-of-brothers’ ties provides a re-stabilizing balance. In *Whistle*, the characters’ unresolved disconnections, despite mirroring some of the realities of WWII veteran experience, draw them much closer to the stereotype of the disillusioned Vietnam veteran. One of the key arenas for the representation of those disconnections as a protest against a later age is the narrative’s portrayal of the soldiers’ sexual and romantic relationships.

**Bewilderment 2: Sex**

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66 Horace Crayton wrote that "To win a cheap military victory over the Axis and then continue the exploitation of subject peoples within the British Empire and the subordination of Negroes in the United States is to set the stage for the next world war—probably a war of color . . . somehow, through some mechanism, there must be achieved in America and in the world a moral order which will include the American Negro and all other oppressed peoples, The present war must be considered as one phase of a larger struggle to achieve this new moral order. (Brinkley 167)
As with *Eternity*, the main settings for the *Whistle* soldiers’ interactions with civilians are bars and hotel rooms. But while *Whistle*’s hotel rooms differ little from *Eternity*’s brothels for their lack of privacy and frankly sexual purpose, the female characters that populate them change in one key aspect. With the exception of Karen Holmes, Sergeant Milton Warden’s lover, most of the female characters in *Eternity* are prostitutes. In *Whistle*, with few exceptions the female characters are either factory workers or hospital volunteers—but the outward legitimacy their work gives them is the source of provocation for the soldiers. Unlike *Eternity*’s anonymous, passive prostitutes, these female characters become the tipping point for the violence that pervades the narrative. *Whistle*’s female characters highlight the veterans’ alienation not just from financially and sexually independent female characters who consider themselves the soldiers’ equals; they also underscore the male characters’ representative and reactionary kinship to a form of historic conservatism associated with narratives of masculinity.

Generally, Jones’s earlier war novels have been praised for representations of sex and romantic love that have been seen as progressive. Both Stephen Carter and James Giles see *Eternity*’s Warden / Karen relationship as a terminal affair that helps realize the self-actualization of both characters and that emphasizes Warden’s selflessness. Carter, especially, praises depictions of heterosexual love across Jones’s fiction for their transcendent power. The representations of homosexuality in both *Eternity* and *Red Line* are unusual in their time and genre. But, as Anna G. Creadick shows, in her 2002 PhD study of normalizing cultural practices in the post-war period, the depictions of homosexuality that occur in *Eternity* “invoke and excise homosexuality in a pre-war setting in order to erect and then normalize a certain brand of violent male heterosexuality in its place” (x). Creadick’s evaluation correctly gauges the mood of the scenes in both *Eternity* and *Red Line* for the ways homosexuality is downplayed in favour of constructing the homoerotic sexual act as a consequence of the soldiers’ practical needs and deprived circumstances—they engage in queer behaviour to allay their

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67 For Carter, the sex between these characters is about spiritual connection predicated on the absence of consummation, and “probably reflects Lowney Handy’s version of yoga and occult attitudes toward sex” (68). Giles also sees their affair as indicative of mutual transcendence fostered by genuine tenderness (58).
financial or sexual distress, or to vent against the rigid discipline of the command structure, or as a naturalized consequence of combat’s sexual charge—while maintaining the soldiers’ essentially ‘straight’ American-ness. In this way, the portrayals of homosexuality in *Eternity* and *Red Line* are confined themselves as naturalized but essentially transient and thus, ultimately, excusable transgressions. By keeping the focus on situational contingency, the ‘queer-hunting’ in *Eternity* and the sex between Bead and Fife in *Red Line* avoid engaging deeply, as John Horne Burns does in 1947’s *The Gallery*, with the larger issue of gay GIs in active service, and instead re-install the “powerful, manly friendship” that unites men in war (*Red Line* 101).

As I suggest in the introduction to this chapter, *Whistle*’s most serious flaw is its depictions of heterosexual sex. *Whistle* ignores or perhaps forgets the complicated relationships that unfold between Warden and Karen Holmes or Bell and his wife Marty in *Eternity* and *Red Line* to focus on gratuitously swollen, adolescent, and curiously (given the novel’s preoccupation with its Southern setting) geographically-generic sex. “Delicious” women are invariably double-named in the manner of piano-lounge cocktails: Delia Mae, Linda Sue, Frances Mackey, Frances Highsmith, Carol Firebaugh—it is as if by themselves these characters lack the depth or interest to sustain themselves on the page. Moreover, their overwhelmingly physical portrayals set them up for ridiculous parodies of sexual morality, as is illustrated in Landers’ characterization of them as shallow, petty, perpetually immature “girls” whose primary occupations are man-hunting and gold-digging:

He had been abruptly penetrated by the idea that these girls had their own fierce little pecking order going on here, fought over with just as much blood thirst as any other group of young females. The only difference was that the time span was shortened by the war, and their pride of ownership telescoped to three days or five days, or one night. So they fought over the men night by night. Then they started over, like any divorcee. (279)

The women are promiscuous, and their promiscuity describes two varieties: pseudo-virginal ‘nice’ girls who go on dates with the soldiers and then lisp haltingly to their
frustrated escorts: “You’re not very forceful” (192); and tramps based on pulp fiction stereotypes who actually beg to be punched: “Yahhh. Yahhh. Hit me. Go ahead” (296); or whose orgasms are ridiculous parodies of comic book phonetics: “mowWwwwAARRGHNNNnnnNNHHH!” (320).

In *Whistle*, female sexuality mirrors the reversal of the frontier images that emphasize urban culture as a nefast wilderness and the Pacific theatre as a frontier worthy of the best American types, a theme repeated in its stance toward homosexuality. Unlike *Eternity* and *Red Line*, in which the representations of homosexuality at least gesture to a historic reality among companies of troops, *Whistle* avoids any direct engagement with the issue of gay America inside or outside the military—a notable absence given its 1977 publication date. At the same time as *Whistle* reworks its veteran soldiers characters in the mold of the "frontier vigor of the true American fathers" (Hellmann 58), however, antisocial tendencies, as well as a pervasive homophobic anxiety, lurk at its edges. The major motif for the novel’s homophobic expression is oral sex, and male-on-female cunnilingus especially. At first an odd and sometimes discomfiting sideline to the plot, the soldiers’ conflicted stances toward oral sex with their female partners becomes the defining trope in the narrative’s construction of the conflict between its soldiers and their civilian society, one in which anxiety about ‘straight’ male sexual behaviour dominates even in the performance of heterosexual acts. Strange, for example, has oral sex with a woman for the first time and thinks about the "new undigested knowledge" he has of himself: that he is a "pervert. A Sexual pervert . . . Jesus, in most places it was even against the laws. Specifically against the laws. Like fucking animals. Or homosexuality" (321). By linking oral sex with women to a perversion on par with bestiality, and bestiality with homosexuality, the novel makes another in a series of gestures in which fears of emasculation accompany any change in a highly idealized fantasy of American manhood. That bestiality and homosexuality are practically equated in Strange’s “pervert” thoughts underlines not just Robert O. Self’s discussion, in *All in the Family*, of

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68 For information on the increasing, if officially denied, acknowledgment of gay troops in the sixties and seventies, see Randy Shilts’s study, *Conduct Unbecoming*, on lesbians and gays in the American military from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf.
the fight for sexual equality going on in the sixties and seventies, but also the enduring legacy of similar thinking by the right today—in 2012, for example, Republican Senator Rick Santorum made the same comparison.\(^{69}\)

The *Whistle* soldiers’ discomfort with what they view as sexual deviance has wider contemporary implications. Writing about “extravaginal heterosexual relations” in 1960, psychotherapist and sexologist Albert Ellis says,

> Whereas, in the early part of this century, anyone who practiced fellatio or cunnilingus with his or her spouse would almost certainly consider himself or herself to be some kind of “pervert,” today’s educated mate who does not to some extent engage in these kinds of practices is likely to consider himself or herself to be ‘abnormal.’ (193)

Just how historically regressive the *Whistle* soldiers’ views toward oral sex are is picked up again by the 1974 study *Sexual Behavior in the 1970s*, published, appropriately enough, by the Playboy Press. In a survey of 2,026 Americans across 24 cities, three-fourths of the male and four-fifths of the female respondents disagreed strongly with a statement saying that it was wrong for a man to perform cunnilingus on a woman; indeed, the study’s research team suggests that the practice is well on its way from a “normal deviance” akin to masturbation and premarital intercourse to an “accepted more” (23). In tandem with his analysis of its effect on civilian culture, Self examines the ways that sexual politics helped redefine American soldiering in the sixties and seventies. Partisans on both sides of the left/right divide in American politics aligned themselves either with conservative traditionalists, who saw in the heterosexual nuclear family all the ideals of the historic American errand, or with minorities who likewise saw themselves as upholding those ideals in more tolerant and equitable expressions of sex, love, and family. Caught in the middle were many more, uneasily aware that Bob Dylan was

right—the times they were a-changing—and uncertain about what the future implications might be. Self describes the shift from the liberal breadwinner ideology that shaped the early sixties to the “conservative breadwinner” politics of the later sixties and seventies as one that embodied key conflicts between traditional America and the civil and equal rights movements. Maintaining the heterosexual white man as the head of his family—the “breadwinner”—became the touchstone of conservative American domestic policy in the era. Along with the sexual and economic ideas shaping the head-of-his-family’s-household idea, Self says, another core image of traditional American-ness was at play: soldiering.

About soldiering and the culture wars in America, Self writes:

Breadwinning was not the only norm of manhood under duress in the 1960s. It was joined by soldiering. At the start of the decade, American soldiers still stood for a shared national morality. But they were also asked to do the unthinkable: endure a blizzard of violence and kill other human beings. The tension between morality and manhood was resolved, so Americans hoped, in military manhood—not just duty and patriotism but the very foundation of the nation’s image. Because he is meant to be noble and the best the nation has to offer, and because he is a mirror for the nation to gaze upon itself, the soldier is by nature a public figure, his manhood subject to explicit discussion and debate. (47)

The idea of the common soldier as a moral bellwether for civilians, and especially of his status as a model for reinforcing a classic form of American masculinity, is a central theme in Whistle. In this way the novel reflects the important role Vietnam War narratives assume in contemporary constructions of American gender. Susan Jeffords writes that “gender provides for Vietnam representation a familiar and simple mechanism for the enactment of collectivity at the same time it contains it within a clear system of differentiation” (80-1). Jeffords shows how the band-of-brothers bonds forged under duress become, in many Vietnam combat novels, the vehicles by which the American troops’ racial and class differences are, if not neutralized, at least temporarily set aside. A common masculinity, metonymic of an archetypal American consciousness, is always
latent in the combat group, and though it may subsume other socially constructed antagonisms it is united in its ‘natural’ opposition to the feminine (85). This is the reason, Jeffords suggests, that Vietnam combat novels so often feature scenes in which the anatomy or habits of Asian prostitutes are exclaimed over by American soldier characters—women are women no matter where you go, but the power exchanges between men can fluctuate according to need or circumstance (87).

That women may just "love to fuck," as one female character in Whistle says while she's having sex with Sergeant Winch, is an idea that threatens the integrity of that classic masculine soldier narrative. In 1979, the groundbreaking Village Voice rock-music critic / cultural commentator Ellen Willis, who wrote extensively about women, sex, pornography, and reproductive rights throughout the seventies, wrote an essay called “Classical and Baroque Sex in Everyday Life.” In it, Willis contrasts the difference between traditional and newer sexual attitudes by characterizing them either as romantic, morally worthy, and serious—classical—or as experimental, amoral, and promiscuous—baroque (103). Classical sex’s goal is the literal and figurative coming-together of a heterosexual couple for moral and procreative purposes. At its most extreme, classical sex’s obsession with purpose becomes puritanical, and baroque sex’s fascination with Kinseyian technical finesse, obscene.

In keeping with its conservatism, Whistle keeps firmly to the inside of the classical line when it comes to its representations of the soldiers’ approaches to heterosexual sex. Its female characters, even the ‘nice’ girls, are confined in the oppositional spaces of baroque territory. One-way violence marks the divide and the degree to which the soldiers’ conservatism is threatened by the sexually emancipated female figure. Sergeant Winch, the sexual partner of the confident female character in the previous paragraph, thinks he "wanted to punch her face. Instead, he put his hand . . . down between her legs" (105). Later, Strange does punch Frances, a female character whom he has stood up for a

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70 Although she does not directly refer to it, Willis’ theory is reminiscent of the anthropologist Ruth Benedict’s 1934 work Patterns of Culture, in which develops a theory of Appollonian and Dionysian influences in American 20th-century culture.
date and who, drunk, taunts him that she works for her own living, pays her own way, and that she will “help myself to anything around here that I want . . . and none of you fucking pricks will stop me” (295). When she ends by calling Strange a “Chickenshit,” he breaks her nose. While Strange is appalled that he should have done something so ungentlemanly, the scene’s dominant theme is that unruly women invite violence. In its close, the passage makes Frances a materialistic, biologically-defined, and ungrateful character:

She was much more worried about the blood on the lap of her skirt than about her nose, apparently. The skirt made her look as if she had started menstruating . . . They gave her a hotel napkin to cover it and Landers went down with her to the street and put her in a cab. He offered to go with her, but she did not want him to. When he came back, he threw himself down in a deep armchair with a “Whoosh!” of relief. (297)

Several scenes later, Strange—whom Frances, apparently if inexplicably forgiving his ‘reasonable’ masculine violence, will continue to date—has oral sex for the first time with her. But, even his decision to do so contains a redefinition of the act in the manner of a Willis’s classical tradition, rationalized as it is by Strange’s decision that: “Frances deserved to be first. By every moral right” (291). Thus legitimated by reason, and in a sad parody of courtship, the narrative is free to allow Strange to returns to the now-compliant Frances, the embodiment of baroque feminist erotics subsumed to classical authority. Even Landers, the most educated and liberal-progressive of the four soldiers, and the most sexually open of the characters, can only have oral sex with a willing partner when the next scene takes on the rhetoric of missionary rape: "he took Mary Lou . . . and hobbled to the bed and locked the door and fucked her and made love to her until her tongue was hanging out and even Mary Lou didn't want anymore” (286).

71 The framing of Frances as a provocative agent, complicit in the violence that ultimately ends with the couple’s reunion, mirrors the ongoing public perception of many abused women. In her 2014 article on domestic violence in the NFL, “Together We Make Football,” Louisa Thomas draws a comparison between the American military and professional sports culture as two institutions that perpetuate the culture of idealized and normative masculine violence in civilian culture.
The *Whistle* soldiers’ fears about "queerness" in relation to cunnilingus with female partners stands in sharp contrast to the mild, self-justifying tone the *Eternity* and *Red Line* characters take toward frankly homo-erotic or homosexual behaviour. Given the narrative’s tone, it comes as no surprise to learn that, while they are initially lukewarm but increasingly persuade-able about oral sex performed by women on them, the idea that men may perform oral sexual acts that have no direct relation to male orgasm alternately perplexes and affronts the soldier characters—a theme that falls within Willis’s classical sex behaviours, as ‘coming together’ is the figurative and literal purpose of sex that has both purpose and morality. The *Whistle* soldiers’ fears about oral sex and homosexuality has other implications, too; one of these is the opaque but persistent threat “loose lips and wagging tongues” pose to the internal, secretive order of the closed-mouth band-of-brothers code. About the relation of orality to special male societies, Harry Brod analyzes *The Sopranos* television series episode in which a mafia leader’s uncle, also a member of the criminal organization, warns his female partner to keep silent about the oral sex he performs on her:

“They figure,” he tells her, “that if you’ll put that in your mouth, you’ll put anything in it.” “Anything” here is, of course, that universal signifier, the penis/phallus. The insight shown here into the real code of heterosexual masculinity operative in our culture is striking. The "official story" of our culture separates homosexuality from heterosexuality by what psychologists call “object choice.” That is to say, if a male has sex with a female he is heterosexual, but if he has sex with another male he is homosexual. Underneath this official code, however, lies a more subtle and powerful code, one that draws the distinction not in terms of object choice but in terms of what psychologists call “sexual aim.” That is to say, the issue is not with whom you are having sex, but which sex acts are being performed on and by whom. The man conceptualized as “active,” i.e. the one receiving sexual pleasure or the penetrator, can retain a sexual identity as straight even if oral sex is being performed on him by another man. But the man perceived as “passive,” i. e. the one performing sex on another or the one being penetrated, is “gay.” Hence a man who performs oral sex is seen as “gay,” i. e.
submissive, weak and effeminate, even if he is performing it on a woman. This is the real code by which men stigmatize and valorize other men. It was the rule that ruled in ancient Greece, it is the principle of power in men’s prisons, and it is the code of many contemporary cultures around the world. (Brod 3)

Linked to this purposeful sexual morality, of course, are other cultural perceptions. Foremost among these is the other relationship described by the soldiers’ reactions to the new sexuality: class, which becomes especially significant as it describes the regional divide identified by Hofstadter between urban and rural American ideology. One example of this separation occurs in Frances’ answer to Strange’s concerns that oral sex will make him a homosexual: “Queer? . . . Queer? You must be a real country boy” (217); another is implicit in the scene in which Landers’ teenage lover describes her hometown:

“Sounds like a wide-open place, Barleyville. For a country town,” Landers said from the bed.

Annie stopped writing the note to her father and looked up, nude, her face laughing. “Are you kidding, country town? It’s country people who really know what people are like. That’s why they’re all Baptists.” (409)

Likewise, when Strange’s wife, Linda Sue, finally tells him their marriage is over, she tells him it’s because she's found an officer who likes to have oral sex with her: “He’s a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force . . . and he’s a wonderful person. He’s a Princeton graduate, and he comes from someplace on Long Island called Southampton.” Strange immediately thinks: “That would account for all the new sophistication, wouldn’t it?” (247). With little regret, Winch, too, loses his eventual girlfriend to a new (also upper-middle-class and college-educated) boyfriend whom she unblushingly tells Winch "Loves it when I go down on him . . . and he loves to go down on me" (390).

Bewilderment 3: Service

Like the studies cited in the previous section about attitudes toward the cultural perceptions of oral sex as a perversion, a 1948 symposium on the Kinsey report also
suggests that class factors influence the reception of sexual practice. “In general,” one report notes, “the upper social level has a wider variety of techniques in sexual intercourse, including more oral eroticism” (Deutsch 44). The class gulf that emerges between the soldiers and the sexually confident workingwomen of the new cultural frontier is picked up in a scene in which Winch assesses a female volunteer in language that suggests a blazon constructed on the significations of class and cynical male objectification justified by an inappropriate female display, and that ends in resentment and the promise of violence:

She was clearly one of the Combined Ladies Clubs delegation, and she didn’t have on her Gray Lady’s uniform. She had on very expensive dress, was obviously wealthy, and her middle-aged shortish blonde hair had just been marcelled into a very sexy, seductive hair-do. There was no Gray Lady’s cap on it. She was little dumpy, but she didn’t have a bad ass at all, and very nice tits. And Winch was suddenly afflicted with an immediate and totally uncontrollable need to go over to her and seize one of her tits gently, and pour all of his new, second glass of white wine all over her brand-new hair-do. (395)

The preoccupation with female behaviour as one of the foremost signifiers of class division is repeated in the soldiers’ interactions with officers and with society generally. Watching the thronging sidewalks from the convoy truck taking the wounded soldiers to Luxor, Landers “watched the rich-looking, affluent, clean American city roll past them in the sunny summer air and did not know if he was happy, or angry and jealous. Well-off-looking men and women in summer clothes stopped on the streets to wave at them”—he wants to “throttle” a young woman who shows off for the soldiers (117). For his part, Prell has the feeling that there were two Luxors, existing side by side, or perhaps one on top the other. There was the Luxor of his buddies of cunt and cock and booze and parties that never stopped, going nonstop day and night in the hotels and bars. And there was another Luxor of businessmen and families, who went to the office and went home to wives and bought bonds without being aware of the first Luxor, which was not aware of them, either. (259)
The officer class, insulated from the war because it is comprised of either civilian professionals like doctors or professional soldiers who have risen through the ranks to the top levels of military bureaucracy, is represented as either hawkishly opportunistic or as sympathetic but fundamentally baffled by the soldiers’ old-fashioned values. Winch’s service record earns him officer status; he quickly learns to fit in among the non-combatant stateside officers by adjusting his approach. “It was funny,” his character thinks, “how you could pump yourself up till you fell into their way of talking; their language”; but Winch is determined also “not to overdo it” and to remain true to his yeoman brothers (332). But his loyalty is narrowly proscribed to the remaining three brothers the novel focuses on, not even extended, as it is in *Eternity* and *Red Line*, to the vast majority of regular soldiers. Winch, the last iteration of the charismatic warrior whose leadership is a crucial ontology in the formation of the band-of-brothers clan, can now no longer “feel strongly about the other old-company men. Perhaps it was because the rest had already been back awhile and had changed, before he and Strange and the other two had arrived” (330). Winch’s diminished feeling for his band-of-brothers mates is paralleled by a corresponding inability to become accustomed to his new class status, since while he can pretend to fit in, he is alienated as much in the company of officers as he is among his former men.

A scene between Strange and an Army surgeon named Curran also underlines the image of the main soldiers as inhabitants of a shrinking cloister. The surgeon is sympathetic to the men’s plight but perplexed by their continuous withdrawal from overtures of help: “You know, you people amaze me. You’re really as thick as a bunch of fleas, aren’t you?” (176). In a later scene, Curran offers also to help Landers. In the scene that best depicts the *Whistle* characters as the historical anachronisms they have become, Landers refuses the offer: “I can’t think about after,” Landers said again. “There’s no after there. There’s nothing. A blank wall. A curtain of fog, that I can’t see beyond” (357). The surgeon’s “you people” comment suggests that the alienation is reciprocal, and it is indeed repeated by civilian characters as *Whistle*’s plot unfolds. From the combat-veteran milieu of the Red Cross ship to the civilian-background officer class that runs the
hospital, the incidence and degree of bewilderment between civilians and soldiers gradually increases. The trend reaches its apex in “The City,” where the characters come into frequent, unregulated, and violent collisions with both civilians and non-veterans.

As a result, Whistle’s 1977 frontier and sexual tropes work in tandem to produce a soldier figure that recollects the soldier-citizen of the American Revolution, perhaps as an escape from a culture grown increasingly complicated by an explosion of what John Rawls calls mutually irreconcilable but entirely credible individual comprehensive doctrines.\textsuperscript{72} In the introduction to this chapter, I allude to the importance that Jones’s war novels have as jeremiads that foreclose the Rawlsian idea of the basic importance of co-existing and opposed ideologies in American culture.

Instead, Whistle endorses a mythic version of the ordinary soldier that is increasingly tied to conservative values and which describes a sad realization, in Jones’s writing, of a criticism he levelled at one of his models, Dostoevski, when the latter allowed his gift for “incidental things” to become subsumed or overridden by sentimentalism or moral preaching (Hendrick 230). The professional soldiers of Whistle--Winch, Strange, Prell, and Landers--are placed in situations of unrelieved opposition to change and progressive liberalism. Its depiction of the modern military plays obliquely but suggestively on the dire image of feudal European aristocracy that has since America’s beginnings proved so troublesome. In its final scenes, the novel depicts Strange, on the deck of a troop carrier headed to Europe, thinking. “He faces finally the fact that he simply cannot go through the whole process again . . . he sees what a trap he has placed himself in by insisting that he should go to Europe” (512). Strange jumps overboard into the sea, and his final vision, of taking into himself “all of the pain and anguish and sorrow and misery that is the lot of all soldiers,” draws again on the figure of the Revolutionary citizen-soldier for its inspiration and the masses of lower and middle classes that fight wars for its numbers.

\textsuperscript{72} Rawls describes the basic problem of political liberalism by asking: “How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?”
By portraying *Whistle*’s last citizen-soldier as an agent capable of discerning just versus unjust wars, Jones gesture to the idea that it is the American soldiers’ stubborn individualism, combined with a collective natural resistance to totalitarianism that allowed them to both recognize and withstand anti-democratic imperialism.\textsuperscript{73} Walter Millis doesn’t go as far as endorsing mandatory service, but his argument is based on a premise many Americans like, because, as Wayne Charles Miller says, it idealizes the citizen-soldiers by emphasizing the idea that their success resulted from their commitment to democratic ideals. [Authors like Millis, Howard H. Peckham, and Christopher Ward envision] them as more competent in battle than mercenaries because they [the drafted soldiers] enjoyed more rights and responsibilities . . . Clearly, the historian, the political scientist, and the sociologist find matters of great importance in the military situation during and after the Revolution—matters, in some cases, basic to democratic processes. (6-7)

*Whistle* portrays its infantry characters as true Americans, but it blurs the lines between professional soldiers and draftees—Winch, Strange, and Prell are all ‘thirty-year’ men, while only Landers is a draftee. Their pride in their status as thirty-year men in what they call The Profession suggests the soldiers endorse a guild craftsman's point of view toward professional soldiering; at the same time, their pride is undercut by the scenes which emphasize their powerlessness before the changing institution—one of the senior officers reminds Prell that “it’s twenty years nowadays. Not thirty” (155). The partnering of soldiering with guild-like craftsmanship is not new among military historians—Keegan refers to it as one of the concepts in Clausewitz’s model that aligns militarism with capitalism, and soldiers with the band-of-brothers honour code (20).

\textsuperscript{73} Millis writes that “While the regular armies marched and fought more or less ineffectively, it was the militia that presented the greatest single impediment to Britain’s only practicable weapon, that of counterrevolution. The militia were often much less than ideal combat troops and they have come in for many hard words ever since. But their true military and political significance may have been underrated” (Millis 35).
From the trilogy's beginning, Jones's first two sets of soldiers take on many of the traits of a traditionally working-class guild. Jones’s earlier proletarianism has been remarked on by Giles and Carter, but on the whole overlooked by the spate of recent scholarship on Jones.\(^74\) In the first two novels of the trilogy, Jones frankly engages with soldiers as military workers. In his concern for the enlisted man as the most expendable of the military's resources; in his interest in the soldier as a worker who is both labourer and product; and for his insight into the ways that the solidarity bred of military labour reflects wider cultural understandings of class and community, Jones's commonplace soldiers are the first to signal, in literary channels, the place of military workers in the American postwar working-class pantheon. In close analysis, his *Eternity* and *Red Line* soldiers reflect contemporary labour and class issues resulting from veteran transition that were largely ignored by other writers working in the genre, and they draw attention to the marginalization of military workers in labour discourses. Looking at these first two texts in relation to their world, the narratives illuminate aspects of the “managerial revolution” and illustrate some of the consequences, for labour, of contemporary political and social events.

The most proletarian of Jones's early characters is the enigmatic and compelling Jack Malloy, Prewitt's stockade idol in *Eternity*. "The Malloy" is the leading image in both Giles and Carter’s assessments of Jones's debt to the thirties’ protest novels written by Dos Passos, Wolfe, and Steinbeck.\(^75\) The Malloy’s power as a character is due to the sophistication of his development as the historic voice of the American labour movements’ principles from the twenties and thirties. His character bridges the gap between military and civilian culture by drawing them together in images of a shared

\(^74\) Giles writes: “Jones saw the American enlisted man as anew and inevitably doomed proletarian. While he always distrusted Marxism, or any political or social attempt to uplift a group of people, his artistic concern remained with that “lumpen proletariat” even after he returned to the ‘upper classes’” (204).

\(^75\) The letters Jones wrote and that were collected by Hendrick contain many references to these writers and Dostoevski, Tolstoy, and Conrad, as well. Jones’s affinity for the working class was rooted in his experience and in his belief that “those on the lower economic level have a much truer sense of life. They’re not simply concerned with getting on and all that” (Morris 160).
struggle. In contrast, by *Whistle*, Jones's thirty-year soldier and his dominant collective consciousness has become a pale replica of the earlier version offered by *The Malloy*.

Trying to win Prell, the descendant of *Eternity*’s doomed Prewitt, the right not to have his festering legs amputated, the remaining members of C-for-Charlie present their commanding officer, Colonel Stevens, with a petition. While Giles defends the petition as an ironic, comedic gesture on Jones’s part toward the intractable military bureaucracy, he also acknowledges the general view of the petition’s implausibility (188). The suggestion of solidarity between the soldiers falls flat because it is in the first place unrealistic, and in the second, confused by Prell’s later capitulation to the surgeons and acceptance of the Medal of Honor (172). Where the reader should have at this point a strongly developed sense of Prell’s tragic disillusionment, by the time the plot presents him as an amputee, touring the country, making war-effort appearances as a hero and selling war bonds, there is only a sense of relief that the character’s plotline is coming to a close (449). Prell eventually embodies Giles suggestion that, in *Whistle*, gone is “Jones's ability to create sympathy not only for the obvious victims of injustice [as he did in *Eternity*], but for less sympathetic characters as well” (66).

In another example of the *Whistle*’s weaknesses next to *Eternity*, Winch makes a speech in the middle of a public crowd of soldiers in which he exhorts them to organize; the passage ends as disappointingly as Prell’s, when Winch, seeing the military police, simply runs away (108). While the *Red Line* soldiers’ representations of community reflect on and respond to changes taking place in American understandings of class and opportunity in the Weberian postwar years, in *Whistle* they vacillate shallowly between caricatures of working-class solidarity and social alienation during the seventies. It is as though the novel’s primary commitment—depicting the American soldier’s extinction at the hands of a liberal and tolerant culture—leaves no room for deep engagement with the many facets of class which that culture breeds.

The suggestively named Strange, described as having a “peasant’s” features (38) goes to visit his wife as soon as the hospital doctors give him leave to. Strange, the last version of
the trilogy’s stoic, loyal, enterprising cooks that began with Maylon Stark, has a hand injury that threatens, ignominiously, to end his ability to work and thus to continue the tradition of honest guild-service that military cooks embody. Once he arrives at his wife’s family home, however, he is lost in the routine of continuous factory shift work that defines the life of the housemates: "It was hard to sort them out and keep track of any of them, with all the coming and going. Not once, while Strange was there, was the whole family ever all together" (132). Beginning with the first ellipsis between the idea of home and its reality, and running through the disconnection of a society newly focused on fragmented labour and mobility “without exception, each shipload had felt moved and disturbed and somehow stricken by the home continent landfall . . . Hardly a handful of them believed it would be there, really” (41).

And of course the soldiers are right: the America they left isn’t there anymore. The suggestion of the thin-air ephemera that surrounds the Whistle soldiers’ superstitious perception of their home culture reinforces their instinctive, almost preternatural discomfort with social change. Their essentially agrarian isolationism marks an important thematic turn in the trilogy, one in which their power as archetypes turns them away from the acknowledgments of difference that made Whistle’s predecessors so popular. Instead of characters that are various, identifiable, and—most important of all—adaptable representations of an America that was as diverse as they were, Whistle’s soldiers become shrill caricatures of an ideology rigidly opposed to diversity and variety. In Red Line and Eternity, adaptation to change is the major current unifying the secondary characters. As the narrative fathers to the Whistle characters, in Red Line and in Eternity the regular soldiers maintain an attitude of rational calculation toward change and American 'progress.' As Prewitt says, Americans have to come to philosophic terms with with the idea of progress that shapes and underpins their culture: "When times changed, you accepted it. The days of Jeb Stuart and the plumed hats and the highwayman came riding, riding up to the old inn door; that was the Civil War, that wasnt now . . . Times change is all" (Eternity 264).
Against the flexibility and capacity for adaptation that characterizes the soldiers of the trilogy’s first two novels, however, the *Whistle* soldiers’ rigidity can be seen in quite another light. I have discussed how *Whistle*’s major theme, spiritual mystification, emerges as a problem located in and spreading from three areas of civilian culture—images of the frontier, sexuality, and an inability to adapt. In the incapacity of one the nation’s central traditional models—the common soldier—to withstand the pressures of modern life, the narrative moves toward a regeneration of values associated with traditional American conservativism. Certainly, it is a pessimistic novel, but the full force of its pessimism is concealed almost disingenuously, reserved for civilian America, not the military. What the *Whistle* soldiers increasingly resemble is a move toward characters used in the Puritan political sermon known as the jeremiad; a form of address reliant on end-days imagery and founding-fathers’ warnings.

The jeremiad’s history as a uniquely American rhetorical form is a function of its association with the Puritan settlements of New England. Political sermons designed to both preserve and propel the social covenant, jeremiads rely on figuralism that Sacvan Bercovitch says provides “a sense of purpose, direction, and continuity, a mode of social discipline and self-criticism, and an assurance about the future during a troubled period of transition” (80). Emphasizing that current social conditions are evidence of moral backsliding and political crisis, jeremiads take a stern tone, and often use end-days imagery to stir their audiences to full concentration. As this excerpt from a 1683 speech by the Puritan leader Samuel Torrey shows, jeremiads rely on the rhetoric of collective probation and salvation to inspire personal change:

> You have been set in this your day of Grace in a way of probation and trial. O it is high time to make that great, comprehensive, unchangeable, eternal Choice, upon which depends not only the Salvation of your own Souls, but even the deliverance and salvation of the People . . . if you should refuse, you will likely, not only to destroy your selves; but all. (qtd, in Bercovitch 55)

One of the foremost among a series of identifiable tropes upon which jeremiads rely is the reformulation of what are often supposed to be contradictory or conflicting concepts
as complementary aspects of a unified social program. In this purposeful reconciliation of disparate elements, a conscious and entirely necessary ambivalence emerges. In the conviction that apparently disparate ends could be made to correspond in the New Canaan, the jeremiad does several things that are significantly unique in light of later American life. First, it blurs the boundaries between abstract and material ends, thus paving the way for capitalist endeavor; second, it promotes a doctrine of preparation for its chosen people; and third, it resolves a paradox of exceptionalism by making crisis the form and substance of progress (Bercovitch 47-62).

The soldiers that people Whistle here produce an ideologically rigid narrative that evades honest confrontation with the issues it takes up because it performs a sleight-of-hand evasion in the manner of Bercovitch’s observation about jeremiadic rhetoric: that in its “doctrine of preparation” it not only perpetuates crisis as a source of strength, but uses common sense argumentation to present conformity as the path to social regeneration (108). By representing a frontier whose promise has disintegrated and whose people are morally degenerate; by depicting women as the primary agents of that moral degeneracy; and by elevating common soldiers to a role whose pressures and demands doom them to failure even before they begin to respond, the Whistle troops exemplify the post-war jeremiad, which differs from the classic form in that where the “latter’s figuralism was rooted in scripture, the former falls back on WWII for its hermeneutics” (93).
Conclusion
Josephs of the Country: Iraq and Beyond

One year after the terrorist group al-Qaeda attacked the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93, President Bush addressed the 2002 West Point graduating cadet class. While “Every West Point class is commissioned to the armed forces,” he said,

Some West Point classes are also commissioned by history to take part in a great new calling for their country. Speaking here to the class of 1942 six months after Pearl Harbor, General Marshall said: “We’re determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle our flag will be recognized throughout the world as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming power on the other.” Officers graduating that year helped fulfill that mission, defeating Japan and Germany and then reconstructing those nations as allies. West Point graduates of the 1940s saw the rise of a deadly new challenge, the challenge of imperial communism, and opposed it from Korea to Berlin to Vietnam and in the cold war from beginning to end. And as the sun set on their struggle many of those West Point officers lived to see a world transformed. History has also issued its call to your generation. In your last year America was attacked by a ruthless and resourceful enemy. You graduate from this academy in a time of war, taking your place in an American military that is powerful and is honorable.(np)

More than thirteen years of almost continuous war have now passed since the president spoke in New York. The soldiers who answered his call, sons and daughters of the global force for good, have struggled to spread freedom and consolidate power in places where honour means radically different things than it does in the West and where the upheaval implicit in efforts aimed at turning enemies in to allies, far from a reconstructive stepping-stone to peace and stability, has become a condition of frightening normalcy.77

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76 See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/02PTEXWEB.html?pagewanted=all
77 The phrase “A global force for good” was the Navy’s recruitment advertising slogan for five years, from 2009 to 2014. In 2014, responding to opinion polls conducted among
And yet, if anything, the image of the WWII vet in popular culture is more powerful than ever. No other speech made in the days after 9/11 can match the president’s for anticipating how the image of the World War II veteran was to become commissioned in millennial America. In popular culture, the GI is now foremost in a pantheon of historic symbols dedicated to American duty, honour, and capability. Debra Ramsay, studying the figure’s dissemination in entertainment media, points out that the renaissance of the GI that began to take hold in the 1990s with films like Saving Private Ryan continued, unlike other pop-culture movie tropes, with an almost effortless transition to television series like HBO’s WWII-based Band of Brothers, which premiered in 2001.

Revered as an example of personal characteristics seen by many as the American values—ingenuity, stamina, skill with guns and machines, an ability to subsume personal interests to team goals—the WWII soldier has also become a true-measure cipher in just war discourses. The GI is invoked frequently in cultural representations of American soldiers in Iraq, and the allusion is often bolstered by the incontrovertible claims of family lore. The day after American Sniper was nominated for six Oscars, for example, Michael Moore tweeted “My uncle killed by sniper in WW2. We were taught snipers were cowards. Will shoot u in the back. Snipers aren’t heroes. And invaders r worse.”

service personnel, officers, and civilians that showed a low approval rating, the Navy switched to a campaign called “The Shield,” which uses a video showing an American family surrounded by an increasingly dense ring of service people and ends with the voiceover: “To get to you, they’d have to get through us.” See http://www.navymagazine.com/story/military/pentagon/2014/12/15/navy-recruiting-slogan-changes/20443467/.

Ramsay’s work traces the evolution of the soldier from 1990s film to later television series. Citing Steven Speilberg’s 1999 mission statement about DreamWorks Studios, in which productions like Saving Private Ryan, an example of the war’s “great stories,” would be the studio’s focus, Ramsay shows how the momentum building up around the self-declared ‘authentic’ representations set up in 1990s film continues in HBO series like Band of Brothers (np).

Tweet dated January 18, 2015, 3:40 pm. In a later Facebook post, Moore wrote: “Lots of talk about snipers this weekend (the holiday weekend of a great man, killed by a sniper), so I thought I'd weigh in with what I was raised to believe about snipers. My dad was in the First Marine Division in the South Pacific in World War II,” Moore wrote. “His brother, my uncle, Lawrence Moore, was an Army paratrooper and was killed by a
Similarly, in the introduction to his work *Reading the War on Terror through Vietnam*, Ty Hawkins recounts this story about Pat Tillman, the National Football League American soldier ironically killed in a friendly-fire incident that the military tried to present as an Iraq-war fatality:

> Shortly after the Twin Towers fell on Sept 11, NBC news interviewed Tillman. He is reported to have said: “My great-grandfather was at Pearl Harbor . . . and a lot of my family has gone and fought in wars, and I really haven’t done a damn thing as far as laying myself on the line like that” (“Ex-NFL Star”). (Hawkins 2)

Though earnestness is the usual tone, sometimes the WWII comparison is ironic. A case in point is *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*, Ben Fountain’s sad, funny story about a company of returning Iraq war veterans. Primed for fame by a Hollywood producer, Bravo company is thrilled by the prospect of having their story turned into a blockbuster movie; naively happy when told that Universal Studios is “verbally committed”; confused but still game when told Hilary Swank will play, alone, several of their characters; and finally disillusioned when told that their future fame is guaranteed, “all on condition that the story relocates to World War II” (59).

As well as serving as a model of American social honour, the GI has been seen as a hallmark of political agency, especially by those concerned by a military plan that continues to reduce the number of active-duty service people at the same times as it increases spending on military technology. One of the leaders in the campaign to restore the numbers of ordinary soldiers and to cut back on the latter is the well-known military analyst James Fallows.

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Japanese sniper 70 years ago next month. My dad always said, 'Snipers are cowards. They don't believe in a fair fight. Like someone coming up from behind you and coldcocking you. Just isn't right. It's cowardly to shoot a person in the back. Only a coward will shoot someone who can't shoot back.'”


80 See “Making a Case for a Pause in Troop Cutbacks”:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/world/middleeast/13military.html?_r=0;
For the cover of its January 2015 issue, *The Atlantic Monthly* ran an essay by Fallows entitled “The Tragedy of the American Military.” In it, Fallows—Harvard alumnus, Rhodes scholar, winner of the National Magazine and National Book awards for his writing about American military and economic policy; editor of *The Washington Monthly, Texas Monthly*, and *The Atlantic*’s Washington office; one-time speechwriter for Jimmy Carter; and current Chair in U.S. Media at the University of Sydney—writes about a three-way disconnect in the Department of Defense’s public image, service reality, and official accountability. Fallows deplores “chickenhawk” culture for perpetuating the empty valorization of service personnel and for ballasting a vast head-office military whose internal workings are secret. He complains Americans are “reverent but disengaged” toward soldiers and that service realities are “exotic territory” to most. “However much Americans ‘support’ and ‘respect’ their troops,” he says, “they are not involved with them, and that disengagement inevitably leads to dangerous decisions the public barely notices” (np).

Referring to World War II as the nation’s “last mass-mobilization war,” Fallows writes that in the decade after 1945, three in four Americans had a close relationship with someone in uniform. Now, he says, only one in three does; more Americans know that other unicorn, a farmer. The current mystification between America’s civilians and its service people creates, he believes, a climate of political complacency that in turn has led to a collective “willingness to wade into conflict after conflict, blithely assuming we would win.” Unlike post-WWII society, in which most people “were familiar enough with the military to respect it while being sharply aware of its shortcomings,” many of today’s civilians and most American military leaders, he continues, are guilty of “too weak a tragic imagination” to see the dangers of their present course, which leads not just to (more) bloat and graft on the part of the corporate military complex but also effects a national tragedy in the cultural costs that arise from wars fought and, just as importantly, lost. Fallows’ gist—it is a central theme in an impressive body of work that now spans four decades—is that a large, literally standing, boots-on-the-ground Army is vital not
just for international peace but also as a check against hawkish political militarism at home.

“The Tragedy of the American Military” generated more than 2000 online comments, most of them positive. Many of the respondents, Fallows should be heartened to hear, have robust tragic imaginations. They agree that Eisenhower’s famous 1961 warning about the military-industrial complex has been realized. They identify with Fallows’ use of the F35 ‘Lightning’ jet as an example of the *Gulliver’s Travels* Laputan outlook that Fallows, in his 1981 book, *National Defense*, said guides the development of American military technology. They share an innate suspicion of a military bureaucracy seduced by technologic possibility, massive funding, and what Fallows has characterized elsewhere as a “careerist emphasis on getting ahead, no matter the cost” (*ND* 108).

They also share Fallows’ concern for the authentic representation of ordinary soldiers. A number of the responses are devoted to outing other commentators as military fakers, and the energy they devote to pursuing service forgers points to a central aspect of Fallows’ tragedy. A result of a culture in which fewer and fewer civilians have close ties with

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81 A common point is that you can’t trust a drone, and it’s not the ones flying over the Middle East they worry about. Nubwaxer writes: ‘i absolutely believe we will be using robot killing machines sooner than later which will sanitize war more for domestic consumption. we’ll probably also see the top ranking military leaders become union reps for all those serving in the armed forces. i also agree that the f-35 is a monumental swindle when we could defeat our current enemies with little more than WWII surplus. (sic)’

82 Swift’s Laputa is a flying island ruled by people devoted to ridiculously impractical ideas; one Laputan project aimed to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. In 1981’s *National Defense* Fallows uses it as an analogy for inefficient military technology. Fallows charges that Lightning happened because the officers in charge of it, like many of America’s current officer class, are drawn largely from the ranks of business administration and public administration degree programs. Products of a feeder-system for white-collar professionalism with fluid—and lucrative—transition opportunities on the civilian side, he characterizes most officers as rank opportunists, economic hawks with an eye always toward moving on. All Fallows’ story about the F35 debacle lacks is a character like *Catch 22*’s Milo Fassbinder, Joseph Heller’s archetype officer-profiteer hawk.

83 To another respondent, Hell Biker says: “You also might want to get a clue for who
service personnel, in current popular representations, Fallows charges, the soldier has become a romantic caricature, the impotent symbol of a culture that privileges affect over action. Returning again to WWII, Fallows argues that, against the images currently reflected in and perpetuated by popular media representations of soldiers, in the America’s postwar Consensus era fictional soldiers were invested with the kind of therapeutic and ultimately positive realism that only arises with close contact. From “Mister Roberts to South Pacific to Catch-22, from The Caine Mutiny to The Naked and the Dead to From Here to Eternity,” he says,

American popular and high culture treated our last mass-mobilization war as an effort deserving deep respect and pride, but not above criticism and lampooning. The collective achievement of the military was heroic, but its members and leaders were still real people, with all the foibles of real life. A decade after that war ended, the most popular military-themed TV program was The Phil Silvers Show, about a con man in uniform named Sgt. Bilko. As Bilko, Phil Silvers was that stock American sitcom figure, the lovable blowhard—a role familiar from the time of Jackie Gleason in The Honeymooners to Homer Simpson in The Simpsons today. Gomer Pyle, USMC; Hogan’s Heroes; McHale’s Navy; and even the anachronistic frontier show F Troop were sitcoms whose settings were U.S. military units and whose villains—and schemers, and stooges, and occasional idealists—were people in uniform. American culture was sufficiently at ease with the military to make fun of it, a stance now hard to imagine outside the military itself. (np)

you’re talking to. I Just got out of the military with time on both the enlisted and officer sides so the military doesn’t ‘elude me’, I know damn well what I’m talking about . . . whereas your statements lead me to believe that the entirety of your experience with the military consists of watching movies about us. (sic)” NManning says: ‘I also served in the military, and not as a lawyer or some other non-combat wannabe. I served overseas in an Airborne Combat Team. How about you?’ To which Mosahlah replies: “What’s an ‘Airborne Combat Team’? What's your 5 digit MOS identifier and rank?” (np).
Now, Fallows says, media representations of American soldiers “emphasize their suffering or stoicism, or the long-term personal damage they may endure . . . But while cumulatively these dramas highlight the damage that open-ended warfare has done . . . they lack the comfortable closeness with the military that would allow them to question its competence as they would any other institution’s” (np).

Fallows’ insistence that WWII’s pop culture television afterlives were “at ease” with the American military—and it’s hard not to hear an hysterical character to the laugh track in many of the light sitcom examples he cites in the passage above, of which all but Phil Silvers, interestingly, were produced in the sixties and not the “decade after” WWII—poses as much as a misunderstanding of those shows as does his claim about the thematic division in representations of soldiers that he claims arises between Jones’s war fiction and fiction being produced by American writers about the war in Iraq.

While my concern in the preceding chapters has been to show how Jones’s trilogy does more than any other war fiction of its time to fix of the fictional GI as a founding-fathers figure in American culture, in this, the conclusion to my dissertation, I aim to offer the beginnings of a challenge to claims like Fallows’ by sketching the ways Jones’s trilogy continues to influence the soldiering novel; my hope is that my brief outline will encourage more research on those connections. Despite the significant attention Jones’s works have received in scholarly circles since 9/11, little emphasis has been placed on the connections between Jones’s fiction and the war novels being produced by American writers in the aftermath. Agents whose power, on one hand, lies in their commonplace capacity for adaptation to new contexts and on the other, in their preservation of historic values, Jones’s fictional soldiers provide an important seedbed for writers currently concerned with the image of soldiers; among them, Ben Fountain, Michael Pitre, David Finkel, and Phil Klay are important members of a group just as concerned with representing the role of the military in America as they are with the effects its wars have on its military personnel.
Fountain’s *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk* is at the forefront of the works that bear in their characters the imprint of the legacy of Jones’s fictional soldiers. Billy Lynn, Fountain’s nineteen-year-old protagonist, is a character directly in the mold of *From Here to Eternity*’s Prewitt. The son of a struggling working-class family, Billy’s enlistment is the result of a court order—convicted of assaulting the man who raped his sister, Billy decides to join the Army rather than go to jail when a judge offers him the choice. Sent to Iraq with his new company, Billy’s innate nobility and his natural adaptation to being a ‘good soljer’ overcome the battalion’s initial suspicion, and he finds, in the band-of-brothers family, a code that is the foundation for his emergent awareness of the inequities and paradoxes that make up America both at home, in civilian culture, and away, in its military operations. The plot of the novel revolves around the company’s transient moment of glory at an NFL game. Waiting to be paraded at halftime as the heroes who have killed a Saddam-like figure, Billy and his mates, knowing they’re awaiting redeployment back to Iraq, experience all the valences of the perception that Americans have for ordinary soldiers: all the flag-waving, all the bluster, all the sex, all the sympathy and jealousy, all the booze and graft, all the gushing sentimentality, and, ultimately, all the empty rhetoric.

Billy’s basic nobility and instinctive resistance to insincerity are the two traits that set him up as an inheritor of Jones’s most famous character. The combination of his child’s innocence, his sense of fair play, and his belief in individualism make Fountain’s twenty-first century Prewitt the foil to Lieutenant Stone, the narrative’s Warden-esque double. Along with the parallels between the Billy / Stone and Prewitt / Warden doubling, the secondary characters’ resilience and adaptability in Fountain’s novel mirror G Company’s secondary characters. Attacked after their half-time appearance by a gang of roadies, the company sticks together in the Superbowl stadium jungle as much as C-for-Charlie, in *The Thin Red Line*, looks after one another in the Guadalcanal jungle. As the novel ends and Fountain’s Bravo company moves into the vehicles waiting to take them on the first leg of their journey back to Iraq, the bittersweet exchange between Billy and Lieutenant Stone evokes Welch’s “Property, property,” mantra that runs throughout *The Thin Red Line*. 
Beside the band-of-brothers bonding and social disillusionment that forms the basis for Billy Lynn’s story, aspects of Jones’s war fiction are picked up in Michael Pitre’s *Fives and Twenty-Fives*. Pitre’s story of a company of Iraq war veterans alternates, Whistle-like, between the characters’ collective struggles with civilian reintegration and their individual perceptions of their experience in Iraq. The response of Pitre’s lower-ranking characters to their commanding officers echoes a tension in the relations between enlisted men and officers found across Jones’s trilogy, as this dead-pan response to a Lieutenant’s scolding over arcane regimentation illustrates: “Good deal, sir. Thanks for the gouge. Anything else?” (48). *Fives and Twenty-fives* also emphasizes the routines and appurtenances of its soldiers’ daily work in ways that rework Jones’s focus on detail as a strategy for making the soldiering experience intelligible to civilian readers. At pains, in an echo of Jones’s *The Thin Red Line* “fighting tourists,” to warn its readers about the dangers of “combat tourism” (44), Pitre’s narrative offers the kind of familiar, easy criticism of the command structure that Fallows says is a hallmark of Jones’s writing. At the same time, Pitre’s characters—though more diverse than Jones’s—are equally caught up, when home, by the daily problems and challenges of the lower class from which they come, and those struggles continuously throw them back on each other for comfort and security, highlighting the bonds that one character thinks they need “More than money. More than safety, even” (321).

In its treatment of the soldiers’ class and social status, *Fives and Twenty-fives* shares the influence of Jones with David Finkel’s journalistic *Thank You for Your Service*, which follows the real stories of several infantry soldiers who served in Baghdad as they try to negotiate the return to civilian life. Even Finkel’s style during his discussions of the veterans’ alienation is reminiscent of Jones’s forceful, unpretentious voice, and his theme certainly recollects Jones’s concern for the soldiers’ recognition:

> How to grasp the true size of such a number, and all of its implications, especially in a country that paid scant attention to the wars in the first place? One way would be to imagine the five hundred thousand in total, perhaps as points on a map of
America, all suddenly illuminated at once. The sight would be of a country glowing from coast to coast. (Finkel 9)

Finkel’s subjects differ little in their resourcefulness and in the values they display as they struggle to get by than the secondary characters across Jones’s trilogy. His portrayal of his subjects also extends in uncanny ways Jones’s soldier-yeomen’s rural roots and ideological outlook:

It’s a good house, loud and disorganized, especially now, at the end of September, when the harvest is beginning and Brandon will spend the next few weeks taking off from work and helping his parents with hundreds of acres of soybeans. The work is dirty. The combine will break down at one point. They will all gather around a part that bent in the wrong direction as it scraped over the uneven ground and worry that they don’t have time for this, that the first frosts are coming and the beans have to get out of the pods and into the trucks and onto the scales while the going rate is still ten dollars a bushel. Their life or rhapsody is in truth a practical one, with only so much room for luxuries such as melancholy.

(116)

Of all of the work currently being produced in which the representations of soldiers follow in the Jones tradition, however, perhaps the most faithful to his style is Phil Klay. In *Redeployment*, Klay’s collection of short stories about American soldiers on active duty in Iraq and veterans at home, the impress of Jones’s work appears, like the impress of the yeoman, as a distant but unbreakable filament. One example lies in the hate some of Klay’s troops have for officers created in the model of *From Here to Eternity*’s Dynamite Holmes, who inspire the same kind of laconic humour evident throughout Jones’s trilogy. “I’m worried about Charlie Company,” one character, a chaplain, says to a major, who replies, “Yeah, we’re all worried about Charlie Company . . . They’re led by an idiot. What are you gonna do?” (143). Another recalls Jones’s emphasis on the sexuality of the battle experience, as occurs when a character describes the voyeuristic feel looking down a rifle scope gives him (187). Yet another occurs in the stories’ civilian settings, which tend toward bars and brothels. Most of all, however, it is things less
tangible that identify Klay’s debt to Jones—the realism of his soldiers’ language; their often conflicted devotion to each other while looking out for their own interests; their intense, transient moments of heroic charisma and their realistic, cynical devotion to their duty; their weary, half-resentful resourcefulness and adaptability.

In Chapter 1, I quote Holger Klein’s assessment of the criteria that emerged from WWI fiction and became essential to the war novel of WWII: a concentration on the world of war as a discrete narrative universe, an emphasis on the specific aspects of life as a member of a combat troop, and the depiction of before-and-after battle feelings and perceptions. Along with those plot elements, Klein also suggests that the war novel author holds in trust certain narrative obligations, especially as these responsibilities describe the selection of events, their representative proportion, and the ability of their details to stand up to rigorous scrutiny (4). In these areas, Jones’s fiction exemplifies Klein’s requirement for truth in war writing; his trilogy is the signal example of the genre’s expressiveness after WWII.

According to Ty Hawkins, however, the narrative structures that help define war fiction for the first part of the twentieth century begin to shift after Vietnam:

The difficulty members of the Vietnam generation and the recently dubbed “Iraq generation” share—the difficulty that threatens the deconstruction of their identities as Americans—partly is one of narrative. Both generations are living in a period when the explanatory power of the American narrative, or what often is termed “American myth,” is deeply threatened. This myth is one that began with the Puritans and dictates that Americans are to initiate an “errand into the wilderness” so as to create a new society that will serve as an energizing force toward the spiritual and political liberation of all humankind, thereby enabling a millennial utopia wherein free peoples everywhere follow God’s word. (7)

Hawkins’s oblique reference to Perry Miller’s “errand into the wilderness” is worth pausing over as it gestures to the question Miller said was at the heart of any narrative concerned, as American soldiering tales always already are, with the idea of an American project: Are its emissaries doers of errands, or errand boys? (Miller 37). This is the
question that emerges, unanswerable, over the course of Jones’s trilogy but that also guarantees his war novels’ relevance in our own time. Indeed, the challenge mounted to unifying narratives by Jones’s war novels as they progress across the course of their trilogic span anticipates Hawkins’ view by a full two decades, and suggests that, in fact, the deconstruction Hawkins identifies as essential to Vietnam fiction had earlier origins in the work of Jones.

Besides giving concrete expression to the aporia that defines the democratic citizen’s ongoing struggle between autonomy and duty, Jones’s soldiers continue to present a “known known” that counters the “unknown unknown” famously theorized by Donald Rumsfeld:

   The message is: there are known knowns. There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know. (Pascoe 39)

In Rumsfeld’s and Fallows’ framework, Jones’s familiar soldier provides a values-bulwark against the unknowns implicit in the “thirsting needs” of the “armament manufacturers, the ship and engine builders, military men looking for careers, bankers looking for foreign investment, merchants interested in colonial markets, investors in the “banana republics.” And yet as the quote suggests—it is actually Walter Millis’s summary, in 1964’s *Arms and Men* (161), of the kinds of conditions from which fears about a professional Army arose after the Revolutionary War—one of the reasons Jones’s novels have maintained such a continuous popularity is because they provide touchstones that help people negotiate their understanding of the American military in Afghanistan and Iraq. Jones’s WWII soldiers continue to stand as the twentieth-century version of the Revolutionary War citizen-soldier, the gun-dog of Small America and the agents of political diffusion whose guiding orientation combines both progressive and conservative aspects. His American Josephs are one of the central images upon which the post-war image of the soldier is constituted.
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