

Pentecostal Modernism

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Pentecostal Modernism

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**STEPHEN SHAPIRO
AND
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PART A

Methods

1

Modernism and the capitalist world-system: Williams, Wallerstein, Foucault

Consider modernism through two women's embodied voice-visions, as transcribed by men.

On the one hand, there is Freud's account of Ida Bauer's first dream, excavated in his *Dora: Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. Freud began writing his modern foundational account of female hysteria in late 1900 and completed it by January 1901, although it was not published until 1905.¹

A house was on fire.* My father was standing beside my bed and woke me up. I dressed quickly. Mother wanted to stop and save her jewel-case; but Father said: "I refuse to let myself and my two children be burnt for the sake of your jewel-case." We hurried downstairs, and as soon as I was outside I woke

¹The dating of the piece's completion is recounted in Strachey's "Editor's Note" to Sigmund Freud, *Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 7 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 3.

up. [*In answer to an inquiry Dora told me that there had never been a fire at their house.]²

On the other, we have a nearly simultaneous event that began on the last day of 1900 and continued through the night to January 1, 1901, in Topeka, Kansas, described by minister Charles Parham.

Sister Agnes N. Ozman, (now LaBerge) asked that hands might be laid upon her to receive the Holy Spirit as she hoped to go to foreign fields. At first I refused not having the experience myself. Then being further pressed to do it humbly in the name of Jesus, I laid my hand upon her head and prayed. I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days. When she tried to write in English to tell us of her experience, she wrote in Chinese, copies of which we still have in newspapers printed at that time.³

Ozman's speaking-in-tongues was an inaugural event in the history of Pentecostalism that later crossed a major threshold from isolated act to mass movement when it was presented to the world in April 1906 from a makeshift church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles.

Occurring and publicized contemporaneously, the paranormal tales of Ida Bauer (Dora) and Agnes Ozman have vastly different narrative fates and legacies for cultural history. Dora's is of course by far the better known. A canonical text for Freudian analysis of (female) hysteria, *Dora* has been read countless times beyond the clinic as an exemplum of modernist aesthetics and as a training text used by literary and cultural studies to teach students how to "read," that is, how to approach the structural logic of narrative itself.

²Sigmund Freud, *Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 7 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 64. Originally published as "Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse," *Monatschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie* (1905) 18: 285–309 and 408–67.

³Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles Parham: Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement*, 2nd ed. (Joplin, MO: Hunter Printing, 1969), 52–3.

Dora's voice is put on the couch not only to be mediated by a male professional's individual and institutional prestige, but also to help subsequent readers assume authority by emulating Freud's deep reading, his hermeneutic of suspicion, that takes Dora's dream as rich in latent meaning, as telling much more than what she manifestly says and wants her listener to understand. The importance of the secret to be discovered appears even in the work's title, with Ida's pseudonym Dora.

For the reader to participate in the halo of interpretive mastery, the text of Dora's dream must be unveiled to produce the truth of her authentic, interior desires. What is at stake here is not simply what Dora believes but the entire apparatus of what Foucault calls *veridiction*, or the means by which truth-statements are produced and accepted as such.⁴ In Freud's account of Dora, a hermeneutic approach that seeks to reveal what is not immediately perceptible is strategically deployed as an objective methodology. The production of a tale that is fragmented and requires a new optics is then taken to exemplify and define the aesthetics of modernism as distinct from prior cultural movements such as realism, naturalism, or other historical attempts to mirror and mimetically reproduce the surface of social experience and interaction.

Agnes Ozman's loss of bodily self-control before a male figure likewise produces noteworthy words but these have an entirely different trajectory and history of effect. Since the male minister Parham provides only a general description of Ozman's words, her actual utterance is not recorded for later textual analysis and her "Chinese writing" lands in the daily press where it produces ephemeral sensation. Neither is archived in elite academic outlets for enduring scholarly contemplation or canonized on teaching syllabi in the research university.

In a certain sense, however, Parham's inattention to primary speech does not matter. Speaking-in-tongues encloses no message that requires decoding or decipherment. Its indexical- iconic public

⁴Foucault's most extensive discussion of veridiction appears in *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave, 2010) and *The Courage of the Truth (The Government of Self and Others II), Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984*, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave, 2011).

performance simply makes manifest the individual's third baptism by the Holy Spirit (Ghost), indicating the presence of Christ's grace in the speaking individual and, by extension, the possibility that this gift may be available to all. For this reason, the distinction between xenoglossy (the speaking/writing of existing foreign languages, which facilitates foreign missionary work) and glossolalia (the speaking of ancient or paranormal languages) remains unpersuasive in this context since, whether Ozman's outburst is purportedly modern Chinese or ancient Aramaic, both are incomprehensible to listeners in the moment of first enactment, which thereby remains impervious to translation.

Moreover, it is not important in pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit, that the subject or individual functions as a medium for Christ's good news, as the synoptic gospels are already sufficient for this task. Instead, it is the event, occurrence, or *moment* of tongues that deserves witness. Consequently, little or no reading technique can be methodized from Agnes as her declarations require neither secondary elaboration nor maieutic commentary. Unlike Dora, Agnes's name does not have to be hidden. Her language, merely described by Parham, achieves its status by its performance alone, without the kind of interpretive elaboration that occurs in the case of Dora and Freud.

In view of the dramatic difference in roles constructed for these discursive producers and receivers, perhaps it is not coincidental that Agnes, Parham, and many other first saints of Pentecostalism, such as William Seymour, appear so rarely in popular and scholarly accounts of the twentieth-century United States. Even in studies of American religion, the Pentecostalism of the century's first decade has been an object of historical amnesia. Despite its immense importance as the inauguration of one of the largest, most global, and rapidly growing strands of Christianity in the contemporary world, its historical presence is often ignored. Not only are the modern(ist) apostles of Pentecostalism largely unknown outside Pentecostal circles, but even within the movement they have tended to become "lost" as historical actors fading quickly from the movement's memory, so much so that even later biographies of the early leaders remain only weakly known.⁵

⁵The reasons for this neglect of Seymour and Azusa Street, amid mention of their importance, are not hard to find. First, there has been an almost total lack of primary

As a further factor contributing to early Pentecostalism's relative neglect in cultural-historical terms, the central phenomenon of speaking-in-tongues refuses the fixed, static space-time of an *axis mundi* or sacred locale. The logic of tongues negates the value of a specific, auratic site that would link the mundane and sacred realms, for its acts can occur anytime and anywhere.⁶ Unlike the commemorated site of Jacob's Ladder at Beth-El (Gen. 28:10–22) or of the Passion in Jerusalem, the first description of tongues in Acts 2 sets the signal event in an unnamed location, consequentially denying the event and its potential a site for possible pilgrimage. As speaking-in-tongues becomes a modern(ist) phenomenon in the first decade of the twentieth century, its sitelessness makes it congruent with Walter Benjamin's discussion of the modern work of art, in the mechanical reproduction essay, as a cultural practice that is inherently plural and without origin, thereby distinct from earlier works whose "aura" was predicated on their singularity and fixed location.⁷ The individual speaking-in-tongues, like Benjamin's modernist cultural practices, minus their technological basis, carries transformational energies but does not become a prestigious or exceptional "case," since tongues are demotic, open to all, without the need for esoteric training, and require no canonical text, unique city, or exceptional individual for their enactment.

Rather than seek redress for Agnes by making her into Dora, or suggesting that speaking-in-tongues merits the same value and prestige given to hermeneutic texts and depth-subjectivity, we more polemically insist that Dora, Freud, and the psychoanalytic project may be better or differently understood through Agnes, Parham, and the Pentecostal project. Hermeneutic and allegorical

source materials upon which to base a more complete treatment . . . The problem is acute in the handful of brief primary source references to Seymour." Douglas J. Nelson, "For Such a Time as This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival," PhD thesis (University of Birmingham, 1981), 2–3.

⁶Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13–14 quoted in Nimi Wariboko, *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Urban Life* (London: Palgrave, 2014), 7–8.

⁷Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Third Version," in *Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–40*, trans. Harry Zohn and Edmund Jephcott, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 251–83.

protocols of interpretation need not be seen as the only path to the promised land of modernism, or as a royal road to the unfolding of its full contours. Rather than automatically situating high modernist hermeneutics as a privileged mode of approaching the period's artifacts and practices, we regard it as an evidentiary practice, symptomatic of dynamics embedded within a wider modernist world-culture. In what follows, we argue for a different perspective on modernism by addressing three exemplary productions: the early or emergent phase of American Pentecostalism that comes into mass awareness from the Azusa Street Mission in 1906, the weird fiction of Howard Phillips (H. P.) Lovecraft, written concurrently with a renewed upsurge of Pentecostal activity in the 1920–30s, and Social Gospel's explication at Rochester, New York, in 1907.

Pentecostal Modernism makes three interrelated claims.

1. The cultural history of modernism needs to include that of religious movements

Religious movements are not marginal to heroic high modernism, nor do they exist in negative relation to it. Rather, they are inescapably interwoven with modernism's constitution and consecration. Here we follow C. A. Bayly, among others, who insists that religion cannot be seen as somehow inimical to "modernity" or as a residual aberration within it. He argues that the "millenarian mode" (which "believed that in some way the supernatural or the heavenly had 'leaked' into human history, bringing a new age of godliness or virtue or prophecy") and the "secular shift to modernity" (which preaches technological and cultural "progress") are intertwined and mutually reinforcing: "these sensibilities all bonded together."⁸ Far from declining or weakening with the onset of urbanizing industrialization, "in reality, the great religions staffed a remarkable resurgence after

⁸C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2004), 11.

1815.”⁹ In accounting for religion’s resilience during modernization, Bayly argues that “among the most powerful agents in the building up of these more uniform religious practices were ordinary people of the ‘middling sort’. These included schoolmasters, government clerks, and small tradesmen, who saw standardized religious observance as part of a more general struggle to assert their worth and respectability and to find a common ground with each other,” and within this struggle, “women and the control of women was an important theme.”¹⁰ So much, in other words, for the supposed incompatibility of religion and modernity or modernism.

If one approaches canonical or high modernism as a cultural tradition that enshrines a canon of elite artistic practices in a transcendental aura of visionary and disruptive genius, it is not difficult to see this form of celebration of the aesthetic and its coteries as a quasi-religious doctrine or cult in its own right. In the most general sense, how could capitalist modernity (a tautology) be seen as the onset of a separable rationality and secularity in *every instance*, in every practice or manifestation, given that one of capitalism’s chief effects or productions is the subsumption or reformulation of spirituality in the form of a legion of fetish-effects, of which one (but not the only) is the commodity fetish. If the capitalist mode of production “appears as a monstrous exhibition of commodities,” it likewise creates a horror show of cultural institutions, ideas, and practices that validate the aesthetic as a mystical experience of the commodity, an occult superflow, that is as profound a form of “feeling modern” as any other product of capitalism’s logistic.¹¹

In a basic sense, Marx described capitalism as a concatenation of the effects of separation, alienation, and fetishism. For a modern proletarian or wage-worker to exist as a historically new agent, she or he must be “free,” in the sense of removed or separated from earlier conditions, in two interlinked ways. First, there must be a “historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production,” whereby the subject is removed from access to

⁹Bayly, *Birth*, 330.

¹⁰Bayly, *Birth*, 334.

¹¹See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Viking, 1977), 125. “Monstrous exhibition of commodities” is our own translation of “eine ‘ungeheure Warensammlung.’”

and knowledge of ways of subsisting outside the marketplace.¹² For Marx, the classic illustration of this process of separation was enclosures, the expropriation of traditional agricultural populations, usually through coercive violence, and their insertion into the supply-demand pressures of the modern marketplace.

If the wage-worker's first freedom is a forced separation from previous conditions, it is followed by a second in the historically new ability (or obligation) to sell or alienate one's labor as a commodified and quantified unit of labor-power. The peasant becomes a wage-laborer. These two "freedoms" result in a form of expression or phenomenon that Marx calls the commodity fetish in which laborers, after losing their subjective links to the means of production and selling their embodied labor as a separable object, experience commodities as autonomous, suprahuman entities that create value and profit alone, without any human involvement.¹³ Marx's choice of words in the development of this concept signals his insistence on a specific, modern occult-effect created by the process of capitalist transformation. Rather than calling the capitalist commodity an idol or icon, that is, an object that functions as an outside transmitter for a supernatural god, Marx chose the term fetish, then a new noun and concept that had entered European proto-anthropology through the Atlantic slave trade. Slave traders saw that African religions used amulets made from human skin, hair, and so on, and worn on the body rather than worshipped *in situ*. The specific embodiment of the mobile religious object defined it as a fetish rather than an icon or idol.¹⁴ Marx's development of the term commodity-fetish rather than, say, commodity-idol, thus highlights a particular, embodied mystical experience as specific to capitalist modernity's separation and alienation, and thus as an intrinsic part or manifestation of its advancement.

In what follows, we will return to this complex of separation, alienation, and fetishism as it relates to the social and cultural transformations brought about by urbanizing population movements and population flows that followed new capital and infrastructures of processing, transportation, and communication. Grasping the

¹²Marx, *Capital*, 875.

¹³Marx, *Capital*, 303.

¹⁴William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9 (Spring 1985): 5–17 and "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 13 (Spring 1987): 23–45.

relation between these developments and experiences of “surface” mysticism in emergent Pentecostalism, or of the “weird” in Lovecraft’s terms, will in turn allow new perspectives on the culture of modernism. In this way, the phrase “Pentecostal modernism” should become legible as a tautology rather than as an oxymoron.

Approaching religious and aesthetic transformations alike as distinct but related aspects of the period’s world-system and its dynamics, we simply but insistently contend that any approach separating the two cannot ultimately provide a sufficient perspective on the social and cultural experience of what we call modernism. We have previously argued that “today we are familiar with distinctions between religion as a cultural and social collectivity (a way of life informing ethnicity, family, foodways, and humor), as a set of institutional practices (officiating rituals such as weddings and funerals), and as sanctioned doctrinal beliefs (theologies and specific doctrines).”¹⁵ All these elements intertwine with contending sociohistorical forces in ways that point to our second claim, which concerns the need to rethink commonplace definitions of and approaches to modernism, and to re-envision it as a period term covering the entire spectrum of cultural productions and practices seen from a long-wave perspective.

2. Modernism is the cultural registration of the thresholds marking new class geographies resulting from the boom period between the Long Depression of 1873–96 and the Great Depression of 1929–40s

The literature seeking to define or categorize modernism is predictably voluminous. When *modernism* is linked to debates about *modernity* and its correlate *modernization*, the thicket becomes a forest. Our path begins with Raymond Williams, who considers modernism

¹⁵Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro, “Introduction,” in Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: Abridged with Related Texts*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Cambridge, MA: Hackett, 2013), xxiv.

initially through the experience of newcomers to the metropolis.¹⁶ For Williams, the newcomer's initial experience of the city creates a "structure of feeling" that registers or responds to conditions of an unknowable community, a "crowd of strangers" in which the isolated individual finds her or himself afloat in a state of alienation. The novel social uncertainty that results from an urban immigrant's loosening from the topography of past certainties produces an urban fetish, whereby the city appears to the viewer as if it is a subject-unto-itself, an intentional organism. Challenging metropolitan conditions, as Poe, Baudelaire, and Benjamin before Williams had noted, frequently motivate the newly urbanized individual to take on the role of a detective. This gesture of voyeuristic policing in search of "new possibilities of unity" is one, however, that paradoxically combines nostalgia for an assumed pastoral lifeworld, untainted by corrupt urbanity, with "an emphasis on the vitality, the variety, the liberating diversity and mobility of the city."¹⁷ According to Williams, however, this experience of urban modernity as a space of dis- and re-location does not, in and by itself, catalyze modernism; the particularity of modernizing movement into the city is a long-standing experience in so-called Western societies and predates modernism properly speaking. Rather, Williams situates this experience as one moment or effect of a larger geo-spatial context that sutures together European hierarchies and the non-European world through the dual pressures of late nineteenth-century colonialism *and* competitive stratification among European nation-states. The metropolis "had much to do with imperialism: with the magnetic concentration of wealth and power in imperial capitals and the simultaneous cosmopolitan access to a wide variety of subordinate cultures. But it was always more than the orthodox colonial system. Within Europe itself there was a very marked unevenness of development."¹⁸ For Williams, the modernist metropolis is not simply the ensemble of core imperial city and its peripheral colonies, but also the modernist capital's place in the hierarchy of its own and other European cities and nation-states.

¹⁶Raymond Williams, "Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism," in *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989), 37–48, especially 39.

¹⁷Williams, "Metropolitan Perceptions," 43.

¹⁸Williams, "Metropolitan Perceptions," 44.

This “combined and unevenness,” which we will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, and which occurs when capital accumulating from both European and colonial semiperipheries flows to the metropolis, is for Williams the “key cultural factor of the modernist shift.” It has decisive and “direct effects on form,” since “it is not the general themes of response to the city and its modernity which compose anything that can properly be called Modernism. It is rather the new and specific location of the artists and intellectuals of this movement within the changing cultural milieu of the metropolis.”¹⁹

The effects of this geocultural dynamic on “form” will concern us centrally in what follows. The Russian Formalist critic V. N. Voloshinov argued that even a single “word has the capacity to register all the transitory delicate, momentous phases of social change.” Form can register social change because “production relations and the sociopolitical order shaped by those relations determine the full range of verbal contacts between people, all the forms and means of the verbal communication . . . by an intersecting of differently oriented social interest within one, in the same sign community, i.e. *by the class struggle*.”²⁰ If a single word can function as a lens onto larger social complexity, Williams’s further insight is that the experience of movement from semiperipheral regions to urban cores as a result of imperialism creates a structure of feeling that finds expression in the modernist use of the fragment and collage, registering the experience of transhumance as well as the combination of hopes and disappointments produced by this circulation.

The modernist city, as an urban receptacle of adult immigrants, is initially experienced by newly arriving subjects as a series of ruptures in conventional speech and visual productions. When immigrants to western European or North American capitals learned new dominant languages (usually English or French), they did so as adult learners who acquire new languages less spontaneously and more formally than children, and who thus move forward with heightened awareness of linguistic rules for constructing and conveying meaning, and with

¹⁹Williams, “Metropolitan Perceptions,” 45, 44.

²⁰V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), 19.

greater focus on words and fragments of words as building blocks. To the immigrant, and even to the native speaker in the midst of immigrants, “language was more evident as a medium—a medium that could be shaped and reshaped—than as a social custom. Even within a native language, the new relationships of the metropolis, and the inescapable new uses in newspapers and advertising attuned to it, forced certain productive kinds of strangeness and distance: a new consciousness of conventions and thus of changeable, because now open, conventions.”²¹ The defamiliarizing dynamics of language acquisition in the modernist metropolis particularly effected or benefited individuals, such as artists, who dealt in modes and forms of communication.

If modernist productions challenge high–low cultural distinctions, then, this is at least partly related to the experience of immigrants who encounter street posters, advertisements, and popular writing that long-standing residents might more easily ignore. If adult–young adult distinctions blur in modernist productions, leading to a fascination with juvenile objects and tastes, from toys to popular fiction, this is not unrelated to the experiences of adults navigating new language environments through more “simple” materials. If modernist productions register greater awareness of the power relations embedded within the syntax of linguistic and visual communication, this correlates with adult entrants’ new encounters with state regulations, bureaucratic form-filling, and police presence in everyday life. “Native” residents of longer standing may be accustomed to or sheltered from this environment, while newcomers in urban immigrant or working-class neighborhoods often experience the caprice of disrespectful authorities or the sly manipulations of the housing and employment marketplace as the shock of the new. For Williams, this historical experience of adults trained in more traditional modes of representation, but structurally inserted into a disempowering urban ecology, finds expression in the fragmentation of narrative, plot, or words and visual forms, including new uses of montage and collage, Cubist perspectives, and Dadaist word poems. Modernist form thus challenges “the metropolitan interpretation of its own processes as universals.”²²

²¹Williams, “Metropolitan Perceptions,” 46.

²²Williams, “Metropolitan Perceptions,” 47.

Metropolitan modernism thus has to be understood through the history and experience of displaced populations being drawn along predetermined paths (often those created by imperialism and its consequences) that tend to remove them from socializing communities and isolate them as individuals. This species of modernist transhumance, therefore, is not exactly *diaspora*, another preferred term for collective population flows, insofar as the nature of capitalist freedom and alienation is to break down social bonds and effect separations that, for most, create a hyper- and meta-conscious sense of individuality and isolation.

Williams's account includes or implies another still underused insight and concept as he situates the modernist metropolis within an extra- and intermural context that may more accurately be called the capitalist world-system. The concept of the world-system, basic to our perspective in this study, is primarily developed in the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and his colleagues, who argue that the early-modern world saw the rise of a capitalist inter-state system based on linkages of inequalities. For Terence Hopkins, "If, now, one were to try to give the main ideas informing the construct of 'the modern world-system' in a highly abbreviated form, they might run as follows. First, there is the 'structure' of this social system, consisting of: (a) one expanding economy; (b) expanding multiple states; and (c) the capital-labor relation. Second, there is the social system's 'development' . . . [involving] definite, alternating periods . . . of the system's overall expansion-stagnation."²³

Wallerstein and his associates' insistence on hyphenating the keyword world-system (rather than world system) highlights the *relationality* of its elements, none of which exists independently or autonomously within the larger system that constitutes them. Indeed, in this model, belief in such autonomy or structural independence constitutes its own fetish error. Finally, the world-system perspective

²³Terence K. Hopkins, "The Study of the Capitalist World-Economy" in *World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology*, ed. Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 9–38. For Wallerstein's précis, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *Modern World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke, 2004), 23–4. Another useful short summary is Christopher Chase-Dunn, "World-Systems Theorizing" in *Handbook of Sociological Theory*, ed. Jonathan Turner (New York: Plenum, 2001), 589–612.

is profoundly dynamic (in keeping with its roots in historical materialism), since it understands the world-system's development and continual transformation in terms of capitalism's recurring long waves of expansion and contraction.²⁴

Building on Williams, then, we contend that modernism is best understood as the cultural registration of the lines of transformations within the world-system (of the interrelations of its core, semiperiphery, and periphery) between the Long Depression of 1873–96 and the Great Depression extending from 1929 into the 1940s.

Jürgen Osterhammel has usefully listed significant characteristics of this period, which reaches new phases on several fronts, including:²⁵

- Energy and environmental thresholds: “around 1890, minerals (coal and petroleum) moved ahead of biomass in estimates of global energy use . . . The fossil fuel age began after 1820 [but] around 1890 . . . this technology gained the upper hand quantitatively on a world scale.”
- Global industrialization: Japan and Russia see developmental “takeoffs,” industrialization in other previously peripheral regions advances significantly, and new electrical and chemical advances move beyond steam to produce new clusters of inventions.
- The organization and structure of capitalism: a new phase of cartel, combination, or monopoly capitalism emerges through the financial (or fictitious) capital of loans and stocks, and new corporate managerial structures that no longer depend on family owners. The rise of managerial corporations was facilitated by information and communication revolutions (telegraphs, railroads, steamships) that allowed multinational corporations to span the globe, rapidly shift

²⁴Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994).

²⁵Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 63–6.

labor from European semiperipheries and non-European peripheries to the core nations, and transport greater quantities of commodities over longer distances.

The period's new age of finance and corporate capital renewed inter-imperial tensions, political orders, and allowed new nationalist–racist collective identities to emerge. The flip side of core racialism was anticolonial resistance and “new forms and levels of protest that emerged among the laboring classes and women in many parts of the world,” ranging from the “great waves of strikes of the 1880s and 1890s in the United States” to changes in the form of agrarian protest, from “the premodern militancy of spontaneous uprisings (*jacqueries*) to peasant leagues or organized rent strikes.” Additionally, for Osterhammel, the period witnesses a cultural shift away from earlier forms of realism and naturalism to “classical modernism.”

Utilizing the accumulated insights of a world-system perspective that were not fully available to Williams, we want to extend his initial claims about modernism and the metropolitan perception of immigrants in three ways. First, while Williams considers modernism in a way that still privileges elite textual and visual art over other forms and levels of cultural practice, we envision modernist culture in broader terms. We build on the Warwick Research Collective's (WReC) definition of “‘world literature’ as the literature of the world-system—of the modern capitalist world-system” beyond the narrower parameters of world-literature, or even world-religion, and speak of world-culture (in the spirit of Wallerstein's formulation of “geoculture”) as a category that extends beyond conventionally textual or visual media.²⁶

Second, we take up Williams's challenge to develop analytical tools that can capture cultural transformations outside momentous or dramatic crises. Discussing his hesitation about overemphasis

²⁶WReC (Warwick Research Collective), *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 9. While we share many of WReC's perspectives (given Shapiro's inclusion), *Pentecostal Modernism* also insists on an expanded meaning of combined and uneven development (see below). For geoculture, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *Essays on Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).

on “heroic periods of struggle,” Williams highlighted “two kinds of formulation”: class conflict and class struggle.

The term “class struggle” properly refers to the moment at which that structural conflict becomes a conscious and mutual contention, an overt engagement of forces . . . But if you define the whole historical process as struggle, then you have to elude or foreshorten all the periods in which conflict is mediated in other forms, in which there are provisional resolutions or temporary composition of it . . . [periods] of marked diminution of class struggle in a situation in which there was nevertheless class conflict.²⁷

Thus we aim to focus on cultural manifestations that are more elusive than the relatively evident or spectacular documents of capital in heightened, systemic crisis. This discussion will thus examine aspects of the culture of resilient capital during times of seeming plenty, during periods when class tensions appear to be less acute if only because the magnitude of accumulation makes prosperity seem available to all. It has been easier to examine culture in moments of heroic confrontation that lend themselves to claims of periodization and the splitting of one historical period from another. Instead, we hope to develop new (or renewed) terms and concepts for registering ongoing transformations and social conflict at moments when these do not appear to be especially significant and thus lack familiar or legible form. How can we study cultural moments and movements that, to use one of Williams’s preferred keywords, exist *in solution*, and are thus not sedimented, precipitated, congealed, crystallized, or materialized in distinctive or consecrated forms? The moments and movements of modernization before visible crisis are our object here.

To bring this period into focus brings us to our already intimated third extension. Binary models of urban–rural and metropole–colony tensions, and of corresponding tensions within infra-European hierarchies, need an additional and more precise term: the semiperiphery. While world-systems scholarship has tended to focus

²⁷Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1979), 135.

on the core, as a collection of leading nations that may or may not at any time stand beholden to a single power, or global peripheries, it has also tended to downplay the mediating, transmitting role of semiperipheral nodes and arteries. As Shapiro writes:

Because the social action of the core region is too incommensurate with that of the periphery, the world-system requires a calibrating zone that can mediate and “translate” the cultural and commodity economies of each sphere to one another . . . the semiperipheries are the sites where the experience of trauma by peripheral peoples and the speculative entrepreneurship of the core collide to produce new forms of representation, especially as it receives both the oral, folk beliefs of the periphery and the core’s printed matter and institutionally consecrated notations, objects, and behavioral performances.²⁸

Accounts of modernism have frequently been *one-sided* insofar as they foreground either its “capital” cities (Paris, New York, Berlin, Moscow) or the “*musée imaginaire*” of its peripheries (à la Malraux or Goldwater), where many accounts leap “out” of the core by appropriating the legacy of Africa or Asia.²⁹ We argue instead for the importance of modernism’s constitution in the widespread transistors of semiperipheral cities. For us, in this instance, the US cities of Topeka (Kansas), pre-Hollywood Los Angeles (California), Providence (Rhode Island), and Rochester (New York) provide examples of cultural dynamism in newly urbanizing areas that must figure in any comprehensive account of modernism as a whole.

The now customary focus, in Williams and a long tradition of scholarship, on artistic avant-gardes or self-selecting urban enclosures, inevitably leads this commentary to focus on privileged locales of evaluation such as museums, art galleries, or publishing houses and editorial offices, and minimizes the impact and significance of

²⁸Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2008), 37–8.

²⁹See, for example, the now classic considerations of “primitive art” in André Malraux, *Le musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale* (Paris: La Galerie de la Pléiade, 1952), or Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, revised edition with illustrations (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

more broadly existing cultural phenomena such as religious practices or pulp fiction, and away from a wider frame of plebian agents, such as the otherwise unremarkable middling people that Bayly and others identify as important historical actors. Williams's focus on capital cities leads his astute commentary to minimize the presence of semiperipheral modernism as the mixture or collision of residual (latent, potential, seemingly virtual, or pneumatic) with emergent elements, or what we will explore as the dynamics of combined and uneven development in *pentecostal modernism*.

If modernism is a feature of the capitalist world-system, why do we focus here solely on semiperipheral cities in the United States? A weak answer is simply that we are most familiar with American evidentiary materials and that this study's brevity requires self-imposed limits. The wider implications of the perspectives on modernism outlined here, however, should be applicable to other regional and semiperipheral locales, and our short afterword on Social Gospel is meant to illustrate an indicative extrapolation for other regions.

Moving from metropolitan locales (New York, Paris, etc.) toward a wider mesh of semiperipheral cities not only liberates the study of modernism from a suspect top-down model of cultural consecration, diffusion, and emulation, but also allows for the recognition of a map of analogous locales in mutual relation, rather than exceptional opposition, to one another. Similarly, different cultural forms, be they religious fundamentalism, weird fiction, or the middlebrow exposition of progressive theology, can be seen as differentially intertwined, as variants related to class position in a shared (albeit conflicted) web of social capital. This alternate map of modernism leads away from an *axis mundi* of sacred aesthetics to present a broader map of social engagement. Additionally, such a move re-poses the question of reading, of how the period's texts ought to be read. And this question leads to our third axiom about modernism, if not culture in general.

3. The culture of modernism is neither deeply allegorical nor essentially reflective

Raymond Williams describes a "late-born ideology of modernism" that aligns a canon of writers with

Freud's discourse and imputes to them a view of the primacy of the subconscious or unconscious as well as, in both writing and painting, a radical questioning of the processes of representation. The writers are applauded for their denaturalizing of language, their break with the allegedly prior view that language is either a clear, transparent glass or a mirror, and for their making abruptly apparent in the texture of narrative the problematic status of the author and his authority. As the author appears in the text, so does the painter in the painting.³⁰

Just as we are dissatisfied with traditional approaches to a presumptively high and metropolitan modernism, so too do we question the primacy of the hermeneutic, allegorical, or deep-seeking ways of *reading* associated with it. It has been difficult to advance an understanding of modernism as the cultural dimension of the upswing between two economic contractions (the Long Depression of 1873–96 and the Great Depression of 1929–40s) partly because this version of modernism is not articulated principally through interiorized subjectivity, but rather by way of non or weakly hermeneutic forms such as those found in the weird fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, or in new religious practices like those of emergent Pentecostalism in early twentieth-century Los Angeles. Indeed, as we noted earlier and will suggest in the next chapter, the sort of depth-interpretation that dominates much twentieth-century cultural commentary may be itself a symptom of the cultural formations belonging to the combined and uneven development of the inter-depression period.

To be clear, our argument against the primacy of allegorical reading in understanding modernism does not lead us to the opposite extreme, perhaps best represented by the recent model of "surface reading" initially proposed by Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus. As self-identified "heirs of Michel Foucault," Best and Marcus categorically reject hermeneutic or "symptomatic reading" and the way it "took meaning to be hidden, repressed, deep, and in need of detection and disclosure by an interpreter."³¹ Instead, Best

³⁰Williams, "Metropolitan Perceptions," 49.

³¹Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108:1 (Fall 2009), 1–21, 1.

and Marcus propose a new practice of surface reading that attends to “what is evident, perceptible, apprehensible in texts . . . A surface is what insists on being looked *at* rather than what we must train ourselves to see *through*.”³² They propose a practice of “description” that “sees no need to translate the text into a theoretical or historical metalanguage in order to make the text meaningful” and affirms “literal meaning” or a practice of “‘just reading’ which accounts for what is in the text ‘without construing presence as absence or affirmation as negation.’”

While sympathetic to Best and Marcus’s desire to move beyond an exclusive focus on hermeneutic or depth reading, we see two major drawbacks to this response to the dilemma. First, most generally and basically, we concur with Ellen Rooney’s conclusion that this argument’s version of “description as a mode of reading doesn’t work at all and that, one might say, it is precisely because of the failures of description that we have something called ‘the problem of method’ in literary studies.” Rooney argues persuasively that this model depends on unexamined assumptions concerning the possibility of readerly objectivity, and attempts to substitute “surface” for “depth” in a way that serves “to reinscribe the myth of ‘reading at first sight,’ a myth that these two apparently opposed modes of reading share.”³³

The second difficulty concerns this model’s use of, or version of, Foucault’s claims concerning interpretive method and the type of insights or “truth statements” that archives and their surfaces may be said to produce.³⁴ Foucault’s arguments in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* insist, contrary to Best and Marcus’s claims for surface reading, that an archive (and by “archaeology” he means the study of an archive) does not produce an unmediated surface “truth,” but rather a “truth-statement” based on the archive’s preconditioned structure. Archives and their constituent elements do not function, for Foucault, as surfaces for which no “reading” is necessary, but themselves are constituted by processes of filtering and selection that

³²Best and Marcus, “Surface Reading,” 2, 9.

³³Ellen Rooney, “Live Free or Describe: The Reading Effect and the Persistence of Form,” *differences* 21:3 (2010), 115–16.

³⁴Best and Marcus, “Surface Reading,” 13.

create what we now call “confirmation bias,” and that themselves require interpretive consideration. Foucault does not suggest that we abandon hermeneutics, but, to put a complex question crudely, that we historicize and socialize it.

Foucault’s outline of the matter is worth considering for how it can intertwine with Williams and Wallerstein. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault defines discourses as “practices specified in the element of the archive.”³⁵ As a product of an archive, a discourse should be approached as a “positivity.” This positivity (what Best and Marcus call a surface) requires an approach in which “the description of statements does not attempt to evade verbal performances in order to discover behind them or below their apparent surface a hidden element, a secret meaning that lies buried within them,” and so on.³⁶ However, while he asserts that archaeology “is not an interpretive discipline,” he does not conclude that discourses or statements are *merely notable* in the way that Best and Marcus contend, since “although the statement cannot be hidden, it is not visible either . . . It requires a certain change of viewpoint and attitude to be recognized and examined in itself.”³⁷

Foucault thus suggests an enlarged perspective, attuned to the limits of discourses and the archive as he presents them. The change of perspective is necessary because, while the “archive” is “*the general system of the formation and transformation of statements,*” a statement also has “its own conditions of appropriation and operation; . . . that . . . from the moment of its existence . . . poses the question of power . . . [it is] by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle.”³⁸ Put another way, the notion that an archive is autonomous and available to unmediated surface reading may be the (anti)hermeneutic equivalent of the commodity-fetish’s fantasy of a self-valorizing object.

If statements are “not gauged by the presence of a secret content” embedded within them, then what is the nature or source

³⁵Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 131.

³⁶Foucault, *Archaeology*, 76, 109.

³⁷Foucault, *Archaeology*, 139, 110–11.

³⁸Foucault, *Archaeology*, 130, 120.

of the effects of “power” nevertheless legible in them?³⁹ Foucault’s answer leads us back to the interface between statements, archives, discursive formations and sociohistorical processes. The formation of a discourse “must not be confused with the expressive operation by which an individual formulates an idea, a desire, an image.” It is, rather, an objective process determined by “anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.”⁴⁰ These sociohistorical rules exist *alongside*, rather than *beneath* discourse, so that “archaeology also reveals relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains (institutions, political events, economic practices and processes).” Foucault insists that archaeology ultimately seeks “to determine how the rules of formation that govern [a discourse]—and which characterize the positivity to which it belongs—may be linked to non-discursive systems: it seeks to define specific forms of articulation.”⁴¹ Archaeology, then, is the project of studying discourses as the *articulation* (in both senses of combination and enunciation) of the archive’s rules with that which lies outside the archive, which Foucault, perhaps somewhat unhelpfully, calls the *non-discursive*, by which he means the power relations of political, economic, and social structures.

The “joint articulation” between the discursive and non-discursive was formulated by Foucault in one of his final lecture courses as the “focal point of experience.”⁴² There Foucault states that his entire corpus of work concerns the politics of *experience*, insofar as “the problem of politics” is ultimately that of “experience.”⁴³ He argues that he sought to replace a conventional history of ideas, notion of repressive domination, and assumption of authentic, interior subjectivity, with a counter-history of veridiction, governmentality, and the pragmatics of the self, in order to present “the history of what could be called ‘experience’ . . . of madness . . . disease . . .

³⁹Foucault, *Archaeology*, 120.

⁴⁰Foucault, *Archaeology*, 117.

⁴¹Foucault, *Archaeology*, 162.

⁴²Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, 3.

⁴³Foucault, *Government*, 158–9.

criminality . . . sexuality.”⁴⁴ Here Foucault straightforwardly affirms that his methodological development was consistently organized around the effort to coordinate evidentiary materials, statements, or texts, with the social and historical structures and experiences that these texts may be said to register.

Given this connection of questions concerning methodologies of interpretation with those concerning cultural politics and the ways in which “experience” is registered, let us juxtapose Foucault’s manner of articulating the discursive and the non-discursive with Raymond Williams’s remarkably congruent concept of the *structure of feeling*. While *structure of feeling* may be Williams’s best known contribution to literary and cultural studies, it is often used in a commonsensical way that loses sight of the specific questions and phenomena with which it was initially connected. In a lengthy discussion of the term’s development, Williams makes it clear that he proposed it as a means of considering tensions between dominant, institutionally approved speech and emergent experience, that which lay “between the articulated and the lived.”

This was an area of interaction between the official consciousness of an epoch—codified in its doctrines and legislation—and the whole process of actually living its consequences . . . the point of the deliberately contradictory phrase with which I have never been happy, is that it was a structure in the sense that you could perceive it operating in one work after another which weren’t otherwise connected—people weren’t learning it from each other; yet it was one of feeling much more than of thought—a pattern of impulses, restraints, tones, for which the best evidence was often the actual conventions of literary or dramatic writing.⁴⁵

Williams’s structure of feeling is the manifestation of “all that is not fully articulated, all that comes through as disturbance, tension, blockage, emotional trouble,” or the appearance of whatever is “precisely a source of major changes in the relation between the signifier and the signified, whether in literary language or

⁴⁴Foucault, *Government*, 5.

⁴⁵Williams, *Politics*, 159.

conventions."⁴⁶ In other words, Williams looked to disturbances within dominant forms that register emergent experiences. In a distinction to which we will return, with our discussion of the nearly instantaneous global spread of speaking-in-tongues, Williams recognized that

there are cases where the structure of feeling which is tangible in a particular set of works is undoubtedly an articulation of an area of experience which lies beyond them. This is especially evident at those specific and historically definable moments when very new work produces a sudden shock of *recognition*. What must be happening on these occasions is that an experience which is really very wide suddenly finds a semantic figure which articulates it. Such an experience I would now call pre-emergent.⁴⁷

Thus, the "structure of feeling" was a term encompassing a range of registered experience, "a term for that which is not fully articulated or not fully comfortable in various silences, although it is usually not very silent. I just don't know what the term should be."⁴⁸

Writing during the postwar rise of critical models drawing on forms of (primarily anthropological and linguistic) "structuralism," Williams may have settled upon this phrase, "structure of feeling," as a dialectical yoking of social conditions (structure) and the more affective and spontaneous (that which is loosely or even nonstructured). He hesitated, however, before settling on the keyword *feeling* rather than *experience*. In the discussion previously cited, he suggests that he ultimately chose *feeling* over *experience* because he considered the latter term too closely associated with F. R. Leavis and "the whole *Scrutiny* tradition" that "was very weak in all consideration of formal questions, particularly when it was a question of deep formal structures which had undergone historical change."⁴⁹

⁴⁶Williams, *Politics*, 168.

⁴⁷Williams, *Politics*, 164.

⁴⁸Williams, *Politics*, 168.

⁴⁹Williams, *Politics*, 164.

The upshot of this methodological excursus through Best and Marcus, Foucault, and Williams is, first of all, that, while rejecting the unquestioned privilege long granted to high modernist models of depth-interpretation, neither depth (symptomatic, hermeneutic) nor surface (descriptive, mimetic) models of reading provide adequate approaches when taken univocally. Instead, following Foucault and Williams's suggestions about the importance and difficulty of articulating the discursive and non-discursive, the structural and experiential, the textual and the historical, we propose to explore the cultural productions and practices we address here in terms of what we have described elsewhere as a "herme-mimetic" mode. A herme-mimetic text or practice is "weakly transcoded, if at all, and requires little or no hermeneutic labor or need for interpretation to see it for what it openly and actually displays."⁵⁰ But if such discourses may be said to do without the high modernist model of depth interpretation, they are nevertheless not, for all that, "purely mimetic, or a reflection of actual, everyday life." The herme-mimetic articulates and occurs along the fault lines between experiential immediacy and hermeneutic translation.

In seeking a third path between symptomatic and surface readings, we propose "experience-system" as a cognate for Williams's "structure of feeling." Williams's keyword "structure" tends now to connote rigidity and predetermination, and retains echoes of reflection theory and base-superstructure models. Thus we prefer "-system" and its implicit emphasis on historicized relationality, in keeping with the world-systems perspective. And while Williams preferred "feeling" over "experience" as a keyword signifying transformations or "disturbances" that eluded structural registration, the reverse may be the case today. At present, in the early twenty-first century, "experience" has become an important sociohistorical keyword for feminist and gender studies, and "feeling," with its proximity to affect, now tends to connote the merely subjective.⁵¹

⁵⁰Stephen Shapiro, "Zombie Health Care," in *The Year's Work at the Zombie Research Center*, ed. Edward P. Comentale and Aaron Jaffe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 193-226, 214.

⁵¹Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry*, 17:4 (Summer 1991), 773-97.

If “experience-system” introduces a neologism, such a keyword nevertheless helps focus and clarify some of the questions raised by Foucault’s discussion of archaeology as the articulation of the discursive and non-discursive, and relate them to Williams’s search for the articulation between rapidly changing historical experiences and far less rapidly changing dominant forms. While Foucault affirmed that this articulation took place in the context of a “body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area,” he unexpectedly did not give a name to this body of rules or spatiotemporal and cultural context.⁵² Perhaps this is because such a term or name was not yet conceptually available to Foucault at the time of his writing, but is one that we can provide at present: the capitalist world-system. Affirming the capitalist world-system as the context for Foucault’s archaeology and Williams’s cultural materialism, we take up the latter’s challenge to define a new set of critical tools. The analytical instrument we will use to grasp this system’s dynamics will be that of *combined and uneven development*.

⁵²Foucault, *Archaeology*, 117.

2

Combined and uneven development: World-system dynamics

Trotsky's initial model of combined and uneven development

Leon Trotsky developed the concept of “combined and uneven development” to understand how a peripheral and underdeveloped Russia (or any analogously situated region) could advance toward a developed or even a post-capitalist threshold without passing through the stages that led to the current state of capitalism in western Europe.¹ He sought to dispense with the reductionism of diffusionist, social-stage historiography, which held that lesser industrialized nations must necessarily follow and repeat the same sequential pathways or stages experienced in the world-system’s

¹We follow Michael Löwy and use “combined and uneven development” rather than “uneven and combined development.” While Trotsky’s early formulation in *The History of the Russian Revolution* (“From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*”) may be read to support the latter formula, his detailed narrative of Russian development, from which the theory was derived, suggests the temporal reverse, combination before unevenness. Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. Max Eastman (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008), 5; Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981).

“developed” core. Trotsky’s model provides a basic template with which to consider the dynamics of semiperipheral locales that, in mediating and translating the inequalities of core and periphery, give rise to new cultural forms and experience-systems that resonate through the larger geoculture.

Trotsky’s account considers the interrelation of advanced (core) western socioeconomic forms, an archaic (peripheral) Tsarist state, and an underdeveloped (semiperipheral) local bourgeoisie. While capitalism in western Europe developed over centuries in an extended process that required time and space for re-equilibrium after multiple crises, its relatively abrupt emergence in Russia resulted in a collision of disjunctive social and cultural geographies and temporalities, and, notably, in new cultural gestures that respond to specifically semiperipheral pressures and forces. In late-feudal Europe, Trotsky observes, relatively concentrated geography and population pressures facilitated the rise of a manorial estates system that encouraged the formation of alliances against the central state, and this system operated without supervision by the region’s monarchies. Because this manorial localism encouraged tariff controls that reduced the profitability of the long-distance trade underpinning the growth and consolidation of mercantile capitalism by the nascent urban bourgeoisie, the latter, in its drive for hegemony, aligned itself with the Absolutist State to break the spatial-political structure of the landed, feudal, and aristocratic interests.² The western European Absolutist State pretended to autonomy above competing social interests, but this pretense (or fetish) of sovereignty arose as an operative fiction that belied the existence of a *de facto* compact between the classes of aristocratic privilege and of profit-generating ownership against the power of feudal-manorial estates. When, in due course, the western European middle classes gained experience and confidence in their own management, they disposed of the *ancien régime*, and their insurgency ultimately resulted in the constitution of a new mesh of bourgeois liberal states.

The situation in Russia was entirely different. Its history, vast landmass, topography, and climate did not allow for the western

²Leon Trotsky, *1905*, trans. Anya Bostock (London: Penguin, 1972), 3–11; see also Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: NLB Books, 1974).

European pattern of gradual modernization toward bourgeois liberalism and industrialism. Instead, the Tsarist state, acting more or less on its own, sought to knit together disjointed regions in ways that the aristocracy had not, while simultaneously and abruptly modernizing existing social relations. Thus, Trotsky observes that it was the Tsarist state, rather than the Russian bourgeoisie, that became the "accomplice of European capitalism."³ Continually buffeted by winds blowing outward from the western core, Russia was menaced by the highly funded armies of European nation-states such as Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and later France and England. Its relative military weakness meant that the state could not wait for its middle class to arise, and thus the Tsarist regime was forced to devote resources to military technology and advisors, rather than developing commodities for international trade.⁴

To finance these expenditures, the Tsarist state "balked at nothing" and imposed burdensome new taxes. These measures had the effect of stunting both rural and urban classes: "peasants ran away from the land; the merchants emigrated."⁵ Because Russia developed neither an industrial base nor a mass consumer market, the West was "deprived of the possibility of dumping its products on Russia." Consequently, "European capital crossed the Eastern frontier in its most invulnerable and attractive hypostasy: in the form of money."⁶ An "autocratic government made the European Stock Exchange its exchequer, and the Russian taxpayer thus became a hopeless tributary of this European Stock Exchange. Thus, in the eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century, the Russian Government confronted the world as a colossal military-bureaucratic and fiscal-Stock-Exchange organization of invincible power."⁷ Thus, Russia was both separated from the European core in technological and developmental terms and forced into economic and financial dependency on it.

³Trotsky, *1905*, 9.

⁴Trotsky, *1905*, 5.

⁵Trotsky, *1905*, 5.

⁶Trotsky, *1905*, 16.

⁷Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, trans. John G. Wright and Brian Pearce (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969), 43.

At the same time, Trotsky writes, the state's need to find the "material means" to pay off military purchases acquired by recourse to Western finance obliged it to "create industry and technology at home."⁸ Since the Russian middle classes lacked the resources and corporate capacity to generate these, the state once more had to secure them on credit from Western markets and implant them on Russian soil.⁹ Relatively free from the peasant and guild resistance that slowed capitalist development in the West and forced it to emerge over centuries, "the Russian textile industry developed entirely on the basis of ready-made English models" so that "new branches of handicraft, machinery, factories, big industry, capital, were, so to say, artificially grafted on the natural economic stem."¹⁰ A nearly instantaneous local adaptation of advanced forms of Western capitalism catapulted Russia over stages that had previously occurred in the West.

If conditions in western Europe allowed the Absolutist State to *appear* autonomous, the Russian situation of state-led foreign investment eventuated in the western-capitalized and increasingly indebted Tsarist state separating itself from any dependence on (or support from) its own comprador or managerial bourgeoisie, thus depriving that local class of the benefits and new prestige experienced by the core bourgeoisie, and inducing gaps and ruptures between what might have been an alliance of ruling interests. As Gramsci would later put it in his *Prison Notebooks*, "In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous," whereas in the West there was a "sturdy structure" of relation and interconnection between civil society and the State.¹¹ The implantation and imposition of developed capitalist productive forces and regimes of accumulation in Russia were state-sponsored initiatives that ran ahead of the local bourgeoisie's ability to create domestic capitalism. As Trotsky formulates it,

⁸Trotsky, 1905, 5.

⁹Trotsky, 1905, 6.

¹⁰Trotsky, 1905, 14; *Results and Prospects*, 41.

¹¹Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 238.

[b]y the time that our developing bourgeois society began to feel a need for the political institutions of the West, the autocracy, aided by European technology and European capital, had already transformed itself into the largest capitalist entrepreneur, the largest banker, the monopoly owner of railways, and of liquor retail shops.¹²

Operating between an advanced core and an undeveloped periphery, Trotsky observes, the Russian state forged a compact or procedural alliance with foreign capital, creating a situation in which “the most concentrated industry in Europe [was] based on the most backward agriculture in Europe,” and in which “[t]he most colossal state apparatus in the world [was] making use of every achievement of modern technological progress in order to retard the historical progress of its own country.”¹³ In particular, new telegraph communications and railroad transportation technology allowed the State to quickly organize military repression.¹⁴ Thus “Russian bureaucratic autocracy” created an “intermediate form between European absolutism and Asian despotism” as it acted in one sense despotically, by constraining hinterland movements and bourgeois civil society, but in another, like an Absolutist State, as the incubator for capitalist investment.¹⁵

In this manner, the imposition of advanced speculative capitalism in less developed regions created conditions that Trotsky attempted to theorize with a law of *combined development*: “a drawing together of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.” The term *combined* has specific reference here to the finance capitalism of the late nineteenth century, dominated by monopolies and cartels enabled by the stock market’s fictitious capital, and thereby takes account of the twin vectors involved in Russia’s incorporation into a capitalist world-system already swiftly centralizing its own capitals. Trotsky writes that “without this law, to be taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible

¹²Trotsky, *1905*, 9.

¹³Trotsky, *1905*, 36.

¹⁴Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*, 43.

¹⁵Trotsky, *1905*, 8.

to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class.”¹⁶ Inasmuch as any such nation or locale is, at the same time, forcibly accelerated (in terms of industry, transportation, and communication networks) and retarded (agriculturally, and in the development of capitalist class relations), Trotsky speaks of *uneven* development.

The structural production of unevenness leads, of course, to what Andre Gunder Frank would famously term “the development of underdevelopment”; but what is at issue here is not simply the comparative or “uneven” gap between more and less developed social formations in competitive relationship, when the less is brought within the orbit of the more developed. Trotsky is equally interested in how the process of incorporation creates unevenness *within* the less developed countries or regions thus combined or, in other words, between different sectors of the same country or region.¹⁷ In economic terms, Trotsky illustrates the consequences of combined and uneven development by describing a primitive landscape structured by modern forces: “Hence the appearance in Russia of modern capitalist industry in a completely primitive economic environment . . . a huge Belgian or American industrial plant surrounded by dirt roads and villages built of straw and wood which burn down every year” presented a case of the “most primitive beginnings and the most modern European endings.”¹⁸ New transportation and communication networks (railroads and telegraphs) now linked previously isolated Russian peoples, many of whom had only recently been unchained from the limits of serfdom, and organized them in subordinate relationships to the metropolises. Foreign capital created a collision of different sociohistorical structures and experiences, as it suddenly brought new economic relations to what hitherto had seemed like an unchanging countryside, while also hurtling peoples from the backcountry toward Russian and foreign cities with the period’s overall transfer of populations across the globe.

¹⁶Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 5.

¹⁷Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966).

¹⁸Trotsky, *1905*, 339.

The political reading here is that (western European) capitalism's strategic appropriation of Russian underdevelopment had the effect of concentrating power within the Tsarist state, while simultaneously weakening the latter's authority to rule, its sovereignty, as it became ever more isolated from the agrarian countryside and the relatively weak urban middle class. Trotsky argues that, in this dual context of a mass agricultural labor force in the process of structural decline and a prehensile bourgeoisie, an opportunity arises in Russia for the industrial proletariat, notwithstanding their small number, to leverage the current social disjunctions and "overleap" a bourgeois revolution in favor of an immediately pronounced proletarian one. A historically smaller Russian working class could opportunistically interpose itself to control a larger, but incoherent, political terrain in ways not available to the Western proletariat.

A transformation taking place in Russia and emerging, in these terms, from the circumstances of combined and uneven development might then, he speculates, project itself outward, wave-like, to unsettle the world-system's homeostasis and inaugurate revolutionary transformation. This dynamic would reverse the classical Marxist expectation that proletarian revolutions would necessarily occur first in Germany, England, or other core areas and instead point toward struggle in the peripheries as the avant-garde of global revolution.

The culture of combined and uneven development

Whatever the utility of this analysis for revolutionary practice, Trotsky's argument and model suggest useful tools for cultural analysis when he points to processes through which new cultural perspectives and practices may emerge from such backward conditions. He identifies how new, semiperipheral groups of cultural producers emerge, in the circumstances of combined and uneven development, from the weakness of the domestic capitalist class and the complicity (both cause and effect of this weakness) of the domestic State with foreign capital. Trotsky argues that, due

to the local capitalist class's inability to withstand the influence of a distant one's domination, and the domestic State's willingness to service foreign markets, a new cultural process unfolds. Because the Russian State mediated "European towns, European gunpowder. . . and the European stock exchange," the Russian bourgeoisie felt it "came up against the hostile or partially hostile property-owning classes of Europe," which denied it the opportunity to manage its own pathways of modernization.¹⁹

Because Russia lacked a "sturdy middle class which first lived through centuries of schooling in self-government and political struggle," an otherwise less important fraction of the middle class was frustrated by its inability to profit from conditions that benefitted bourgeois elements elsewhere. Trotsky calls this group "the 'new middle class,' the professional intelligentsia: lawyers, journalists, doctors, engineers, university professors, schoolteachers." An essentially parasitic fraction, this cluster, "deprived of any independent significance in social production, small in numbers, economically dependent . . . rightly conscious of its own powerlessness, keeps looking for a massive social class upon which it can lean. The curious fact is that such support was offered, in the first instance, not by the capitalists but by the landowners."²⁰

In other words, the Russian situation causes a weak fraction of the bourgeoisie—the personnel especially trained and engaged in cultural practice and exchange, comprising what is sometimes referred to as "the public sphere" or "the republic of letters"—to lose confidence in its proximate class allies and seek a new means of aggrandizing itself. This group starts to appropriate otherwise backward, obsolete, or archaic themes, genres, narrative devices, and slogans as a means of articulating its perspective on and frustration with local conditions. Such a response to local conditions is something that the larger local bourgeoisie (from which this fraction has emerged) cannot accomplish, given its structural subordination to (capitalist) developments that are initiated and controlled from afar. For Trotsky, the chief example of this backward resuscitation of obsolete or

¹⁹Trotsky, *1905*, 342.

²⁰Trotsky, *1905*, 41.

“traditional” elements in turn-of-the-century Russia is Slavophilism, which he labels “the messianism of backwardness.”²¹

The cultural elements seized upon by “traditionalist” intellectuals of this kind are perceived as materials that have not yet been appropriated by foreign interests and are typically culled from backcountry or peasant practices. Additionally, these often customary—and thus weakly institutionalized—elements become all the more available for appropriation and transcoding when the (lower-prestige or subaltern) social groups responsible for their production and maintenance themselves experience a crisis of semi-coerced disorganization and resulting mobility based on new financial burdens, thus bringing countryside actors in the cities, where they become newly visible to otherwise cloistered metropolitan groups. The new transportation and communication technologies give urban interests renewed contact with rural peoples and their practices, which were previously held at a distance and scorned as deadening, provincial forms of ignorance.

The use of such newly valorized cultural elements by professional intellectuals, members of the commentariat, and other cultural producers, is not a “resurrection” or “authentic” revival of their residual energies, but rather their transformation or repurposing in new circumstances. This cultural recycling is a secondary processing of the archaic in a modern form by a semiperipheral faction. In this process we can observe a specifically cultural dimension of economic and political combined and uneven development, which occurs with the overlapping of forms (genres, media, practices) introduced by “forward-moving” global cultural markets and resurrected “backward” status devices (local or “traditional” contents). The cultural expression of a semiperipheral intelligentsia whose members are familiar with core fraction tastes, but who look to periphery status markers to differentiate themselves from the global elite, enables the cultural middle class to parlay “the privilege of historic backwardness” into an advantage.²² Semiperipheral modernism is thus a tactical means of expression that mixes contemporary conditions with residual elements to create what might be potentially

²¹Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 6.

²²Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 4.

usable elements within a local compound counter- or alternative hegemony.

The use of reprocessed cultural elements by a frustrated or contained class fraction that desires forward agency, but is held back by its regional subordination, may be manifested in a variety of forms, ranging from the promotion of a national imaginary and the reconstitution of languages (e.g., the revival of modern Gaelic or Hebrew) to a new fascination with folkloric elements and the immixture of premodern forms with modern meanings (from the romantic-era vogue for *völkisch* fairy tales to the idealization of ersatz “folk” forms in popular recorded music).

How, then, can we use this model to shed light on the cultural productions of other regions characterized by combined and uneven conditions? Thus, to propose a brief example, Frida Kahlo might be viewed as a Mexico City—rather than simply Mexican—artist who resists North Americanism by schooling herself in the patterns and palette of regional Mexican vernaculars that she herself does not know and must learn since she belongs to a semiperipheral, metropolitanized formation and not a peripheral peasant one.

Gramsci analyzed Turkey under Atatürk in similar terms. Addressing Islamic Turkey’s relation to Christian Europe, Gramsci positioned the former as a society that resurrected early religious texts only as a response to the collision of an advanced European Christian State with an Islamic “society in a state of torpor through centuries of isolation and a rotten feudal regime . . . [that] has been put into too brusque a contact with a frenetic civilization already in its phase of dissolution. Christianity has taken nine centuries to evolve and adapt, doing so a little at a time and so on, while Islam has been forced to run at break-neck speed. But in reality it is reacting just like Christianity . . . [with] the return to the purity of the first religious text as opposed to the corruption of the official hierarchy. The Wahabites represent just this, and, by means of this principle . . . [in] Kemel Pasha’s reforms in Turkey, we are not witnessing a ‘novelty’ but a return to the old ways, to purity and so on and so forth.”²³

²³Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Derek Boothman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 134.

Cultural aspects of combined and uneven development appear on the edges of the European core. For instance, this model may help explain why *fin-de-siècle* Austro-Hungarian alienists exemplified by and organized around Freud abandoned modern anatomical research and looked backward to classical mythology for their analytical terminology. From this perspective, the Central European psychoanalytic fascination with classical mythology can be seen as a structure of feeling that registers the simultaneous sense of insecurity and aspiration by professionals located in an empire that was rapidly losing power and dynamism. The psychoanalytic discourse of Oedipal revisions might be seen less as an autonomous interpretive mechanism than as illustrative evidence of the cultural expression of combined and uneven development.

Michael Löwy argues similarly about the production of a critical theory that fused “egalitarian community, libertarian socialism, anti-authoritarian rebellion and a permanent revolution of the spirit” by a group of mainly Jewish Marxists, exemplified for him by Walter Benjamin.²⁴ The context for this formation’s emergence was

the dizzying growth of capitalism and the rapid industrialization that took place in Germany, Austria and Hungary during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1914, Germany was transformed from a semi-feudal and backward country into one of the world’s principal industrial powers . . . [I]n 1860 Germany was behind France, and far behind England in steel production (a typical sector of modern industry); in 1910 Germany produced more steel than France and England combined! Banking and industrial capital were concentrated, and powerful cartels were formed in the textile, coal, steel, chemical and electrical industries, among others . . . the speed, brutality, intensity and overwhelming power of this industrialization drastically changed Central European societies, their class structures (flourishing bourgeoisies and ongoing formations of the proletariat), their political systems and their hierarchy of values.²⁵

²⁴Michael Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe: A Study in Elective Affinity*, trans. Hope Heaney (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2.

²⁵Löwy, *Redemption*, 27–8.

Yet while “from the middle of the nineteenth century up to 1933, the culture of the central European Jewish community blossomed in the most extraordinary way, experiencing a *Golden Age* comparable to that of the Judeo-Arab community in twelfth-century Spain,” tangible limits became evident during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁶ Hence European Jews looked backwards to German Romanticism and combined it with a nearly obsolete Jewish mysticism to create

a cultural critique of modern (capitalist) civilization in the name of pre-modern (pre-capitalist) values . . . For revolutionary Romanticism the aim is not a *return* to the past, but a *detour* through the past on the way to a utopian figure . . . [I]t expresses itself through multiple attempts at *re-enchanting the world*, in which the “return of the religious element” plays a pre-eminent role.²⁷

Reading Löwy, we can construe particular features of this form of critique as cultural manifestations of combined and uneven development.

Bloch’s combined and uneven historicity

If combined and uneven development is widely applicable in a geographic or spatial sense, its relevance for modernism has often been considered primarily in terms of temporality, especially involving populations forced to undergo the transition from agrarian to industrial modes of experience. For example, Fredric Jameson writes:

Modernism must thus be seen as uniquely corresponding to an uneven moment of social development, or to what Ernst Bloch called the “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous,” the “synchronicity of the nonsynchronous” (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*): the coexistence of realities from radically

²⁶Löwy, *Redemption*, 1.

²⁷Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin’s “On the Concept of History,”* trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005), 5.

different moments of history – handicrafts alongside the great cartels, peasant fields with the Krupp factories or the Ford plant in the distance.²⁸

Relying on an earlier translation of Bloch, which uses synchronism and nonsynchronism for what has been later, and more adequately, translated as contemporaneity and non-contemporaneity, this first translation privileges temporality over historical class relations in a text that is primarily concerned with seeking to explain why the contemporary German petit bourgeoisie (sardonically characterized as “Saxons without forests”) became fascinated with medievalism during the late 1920s and 1930s.²⁹ Because this basic context is often ignored or misunderstood, it remains useful to review the outlines of Bloch’s argument.

Bloch insisted that revivalism of “the archaic element does not recall really archaic conditions, communal property or common land,” but is a response to the economic crisis of “employees,” or the relatively new German group that Bloch calls, using the English phrase, “white-collar workers.”³⁰ Substantively different from the older (nineteenth-century) petit bourgeois of shopkeepers, this group consisted of those whose careers were embedded within the larger managerial firms that emerged as a result of corporate monopolies and trade cartels. This cluster of “young people of bourgeois origin, yet without bourgeois prospects,” faced a grim reality beyond their control as German companies became increasingly unable to provide the promises of middle-class lifetime security amidst the Weimar Republic’s economic collapse.³¹ This group is thus an “impoverished *middle stratum*” that cannot achieve a wished-for return to the

²⁸Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 307. Jameson’s quote is from Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and Dialectics,” trans. Mark Ritter, *New German Critique* no. 11 (Spring 1977), 22–38. Our preferred translation appears as “Non-Contemporaneity and Obligation to Its Dialectic” in Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 97–116.

²⁹For issues of translation, see prior footnote. Bloch, “Saxons without Forests” in *Heritage*, 43–7.

³⁰Bloch, *Heritage*, 50, 22.

³¹Bloch, *Heritage*, 98.

securities of the prewar past because that world has disappeared, but does imagine such a return via a reprocessed fantasia of a fantasized, distant Saxon past. It is specifically this situation of a class resisting recognition of its present catastrophe through recourse to a hyper-idealized past, a tiger's leap backward in time, that Bloch calls the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous as a feature of post-WWI Germany's combined and uneven development:

The employee's *desire* not to be proletarian intensifies into an orgiastic desire for subordination, for a magical bureaucratic existence under a duke. The employee's ignorance, which seeks past stages of consciousness, transcendence in the past, intensifies into an orgiastic hatred of reason, into a "chthonism" in which there are berserkers and crusade images, indeed in which—with a non-contemporaneity which becomes extraterritoriality in places—negro drums rumble and central Africa rises . . . Of course, however wild it pretends to be, this land is always inhabited only by employees.³²

This pseudo-traditionalist revival of (racial) mythologies is thus a re-creation that does not stand in any authentic relation to the countryside of the cultural elements' ostensible origin: "The peasants occasionally still believe in witches and exorcizers of witches, but not nearly as often and strongly as a large-stratum of city dwellers do in the ghostly Jews and the new Baldur."³³

These atavistic returns occur, Bloch reasons, because Germany is structurally dependent on other, more powerful forces. Given its failure to achieve bourgeois revolutions like those that occurred in England or France, Germany is "the classical land of non-contemporaneity."³⁴ This leads Bloch to his distinction between the *objectively* non-contemporaneous, by which he means something like Jameson's description earlier, in which weakly industrialized workers are faced with new technologies, and the *subjectively* non-contemporaneous, which occurs when the (lower) middle strata are

³²Bloch, *Heritage*, 102–3.

³³Bloch, *Heritage*, 102.

³⁴Bloch, *Heritage*, 106.

unable, because of the combined and uneven conditions generated by “late” or “*modern capitalism*,” to acquire what their international class compeers can.³⁵ While the objectively non-contemporaneous group develops a culture in relation to a “*prevented future contained in the Now, the prevented technological blessing, the prevented new society*,” the subjectively non-contemporaneous group experiences a culture of “*accumulated rage*.”³⁶

Citing eighteenth-century revolutionary Ludwig Börne, Bloch observes that, because “world history . . . is a house which has more staircases than rooms,” we need to recognize the presence of a “multi-temporal and multi-spatial dialectic” that can capture a variety of possible outcomes, since (capitalist) history has no “laws” or predetermined “shapes.”³⁷ Collective responses to the logistics of capital take on different forms that are contingent on the sociopolitical organization of various classes in varying times and places.

We take Bloch’s corrective against historical homogeneity and stage determinism seriously because, as with many of the most powerful insights of cultural materialism, the challenge with deploying *combined and uneven development* is not in getting it to work, but in getting it to stop, or in other words in recognizing its limits and boundaries. Like many powerful conceptual models, it can easily be made to seem ubiquitous, especially as it describes general features of capitalist activity in spatiotemporal terms.

Hence, combined and uneven development can produce promiscuous or overly universalizing results—for example, Löwy using it to explain Left theoretical formations, Bloch using it to explain the Right and reactionary nativism—when used or applied in isolation. We insist therefore on its applicability as a *relational* concept, one that helps outline a class syntax composed by different regional competitive fractions within the capitalist world-system. Our aim is not to ascribe positive or negative evaluations to this or that cultural manifestation of combined and uneven development, but to shape a tool for surveying the expression of class composition and decomposition in specific situations and locations.

³⁵Bloch, *Heritage*, 109–10.

³⁶Bloch, *Heritage*, 113.

³⁷Bloch, *Heritage*, 114–15.

The goal here in using Trotsky's claims for Russia as a means of comprehending American conditions is to consider his concept's *translatability* as a means of ascertaining the contours of world-system culture at the same time as the Russia of his concern. Here we use combined and uneven development as a guide, not a master plan or cliché. What interests us most particularly, in socioeconomic terms, is the concept's utility in overcoming the national and urban exceptionalism surrounding modernism, as it can illuminate the experience-system and cultural productions of recently de-ruralized but aspirational populations coming into contact with topographies of advanced fixed capital investment, especially with regards to communications, transport, and related energy input industries that have emerged due to the centralization of capital and the proliferation of fictitious and speculative capital. Combined and uneven development helps us cast light here onto a hitherto poorly discerned map of modernism involving a set of analogous semiperipheral cities—Topeka, Houston, Los Angeles, Providence, and Rochester. Combined and uneven development may not predict political outcomes, but it may nonetheless contribute to a better hermeneutic understanding of inter-depression modernism throughout the capitalist world-system.

PART B

Modernisms

3

Pentecostalism and the protolanguage of racial equality

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2: 1–4.)¹

On April 18, 1906, the Great Earthquake devastated San Francisco. This cataclysm continues to haunt the popular and ecocultural imaginary as it evokes the specter of superhuman forces overwhelming the lifeworld of urban modernity. Yet that same month, in the same US state, a tectonic cultural event of arguably equal or greater significance occurred farther south in Los Angeles: the Azusa Street 1906–09 revival that is conventionally seen as the eruption of

¹*The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 201.

modern and hence contemporary global Pentecostalism. Within two years of Azusa, Pentecostalism had become widespread in the United States, and had begun its international expansion.² The spectrum of practices included under the rubric of Pentecostal, Charismatic, or Renewalist faith now reaches some 500 million followers, a bit less than one-third of contemporary Christians, and has emerged as likely the fastest growing strand of Christianity today, especially outside Europe and North America.³

This discussion will consider the social and cultural history of early Pentecostalism as a constituent of modernism via the lenses of Trotsky's combined and uneven development and Thomas Szasz's notion of protolanguage. We take Trotsky's rubric, not as an inflexible law stamping out identical answers without regard to regional or temporal particularities, but as a set of guidelines from which to explore dynamic sociocultural formations and practices. We are, therefore, especially interested in complicating Trotsky's model with questions of race and gender that are otherwise absent from his consideration, in asking how combined and uneven development helps us chart out an experience-system's cartography, and how it may help account for expressive forms that demand critical analysis even as they require little hermeneutic sophistication. Addressing Pentecostalism, the weird pulp fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, and Social Gospel through the lens of combined and uneven development, and as registrations of the dynamics of a modernist world-system, we insist on one of Trotsky's primary motivations and goals with the concept of combined and uneven development, which is the need to be attentive to the progressive, emancipatory, and revolutionary

²Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42.

³Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan, "Introduction," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 1; Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 18; *World Christian Encyclopedia*, ed. David B. Barrett, George Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Synan, however, places the number as less than half of Barrett's: Vinson Synan, "The Pentecostal Movement in North America and Beyond" *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 25:2 (August) 2004, 164.

potentials within events, texts, and practices that otherwise may seem solely conservative, regressive, or complicit with the maintenance or expansion of domination and exploitation.

Histories of Pentecostalism tend to periodize it in terms of three moments or phases of increasing activity: (1) the emergent or "classic" phase of Pentecostalism from 1901 to the 1920s; (2) a charismatic revival in other denominations, including the Catholic Church and mainline Protestantism beginning in the 1960s; and (3), from the 1980s onward, "a new 'third wave' of evangelicals who experienced Pentecostal phenomena and worship styles, but who did not necessarily accept the labels 'Pentecostal' or 'Charismatic'."⁴ In the early twenty-first century, a fourth and overlapping phase may well be the explosive growth of Global Pentecostalism in South America, Africa, and Asia.⁵ The contemporary expansion of Pentecostalism is accompanied by the rise of Pentecostal Studies in Europe and North America, primarily produced in research-oriented seminaries and universities, along with the work of Pentecostal theologians such as the prolific Amos Yong and Nimi Wariboko, who combine a sophisticated awareness of secular critical theory and interdisciplinary matters with their own considerations of pneumatology (the study of the Spirit).

After historical and critical reflections on how a relatively small body of personal accounts and textual records were composed and circulated to support the interests of particular factions within Pentecostalism, it is no longer possible to assert a *simple* history of Pentecostalism, as might have been the case a few decades ago. There is considerable contemporary debate over the precise understanding or location of the movement's originary moment and genealogical derivation. Did Pentecostalism originate with white minister Charles Parham's laying of hands on white Agnes N. Ozman in Topeka, in the early hours of January 1, 1901? Or is the real beginning the larger scale event launched in a Black American's Los Angeles home on April 9, 1906, and moved three days later to a former African Methodist Episcopal Church on Azusa

⁴Synan, "Pentecostal Movement," 162.

⁵See Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism*, and *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Street, under the guidance of Black minister William J. Seymour? Or again, is the genesis of Pentecostalism best understood and depicted as a movement not to be identified with a single individual, event, or site at all?⁶ Does a linear narrative extending from Parham to Seymour downplay or erase the importance of Black American soteriology and its cultural contribution?⁷ Is a diffusion narration leading outward from Azusa little more than

⁶Older accounts of Pentecostalism include Klaude Kendrick, *The Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1959); Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Books, 1964); John Thomas Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); and Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R. W. Wilson (London: SCM Press, 1972 [1969]). A later generation includes Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971); Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); James R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988); Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901–2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); and David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). More recent accounts are Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006); and Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). A useful overview of the historiography is found in Espinosa, 1–37 and Augustus Cerillo, Jr. and Grant Wacker, “Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism in the United States,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

⁷For discussions about the suppressed significance of Black American contributions, see Leonard Lovett, “Black Holiness-Pentecostalism: Implications for Ethics and Social Transformation” (Dissertation, Emory University, 1978); Douglas J. Nelson, “For Such A Time as This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival, A Search for Pentecostal/Charismatic Roots” (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, 1981); Ian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988); Amos Yong and Estrelida Y. Alexander, eds., *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2011); Estrelida Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011); and Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*.

a tale that reinforces American exceptionalism and Eurocentrism writ large?⁸

To foreshadow our argument, we reject simple lineage and diffusion claims, even as we uphold the importance of a chronology emphasizing Parham in Topeka and Houston, and Seymour in Houston, Los Angeles, and beyond. Instead of an Azusa-centric narrative, we propose an Azusa-systemic account that understands the explosive rise of American Pentecostalism and speaking-in-tongues as the constitutive phenomenon of a semiperipheral modernism that allowed, to use Raymond Williams's phrase, a preemergent experience to become apparent and almost instantly ubiquitous, once it had found a tenable form (speaking-in-tongues) that could bear and convey its social energies.

Evangelist Charles Fox Parham (1873–1929) remains a necessary vantage point because his insistence on speaking-in-tongues as the embodied initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit provided the most effective “solution” to a prolonged and schismatic search for a form that would instantiate a third post-sanctification stage of grace. This new cultural expression was sought for mainly, but not solely, by a constellation of “come-outers” increasingly dissatisfied with and then marginalized by the Methodist Church from the 1880s on. Parham was not the only one to advocate for the necessary role of charisms, “corporeal manifestations of the experiential and theological affirmation that life always involves the all-encompassing reality of God's Spirit.”⁹ He was, however, the crucial figure who emphasized speaking-in-tongues as the *particular* charism that would conclusively illustrate the presence of the Baptism in the Spirit by a physical manifestation, in the para-public setting of a revival. It is not the event of tongues alone that makes the 1900–01 Topeka revival different, for tongues appeared sporadically through the nineteenth century and again after Topeka in the Welsh Revival of 1904. Parham's achievement was to cement an object-practice, speaking-in-tongues,

⁸On the question of Eurocentrism, see: Joe Creech, “Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History,” *Church History* 65.3 (September 1996), 405–24; Anderson et al. *Studying Global Pentecostalism*; Robeck and Yong, *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*.

⁹Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 33.

as the foundation that would stabilize a domain-discourse of writings by a varied group of pastors searching for proof of the existence of a third crisis stage of Christian faith, the Baptism in the Spirit, which would serve the purposes of social transformation, primarily through (foreign) missionary work rather than individual amelioration.

Before the 1920s, as Robert Mapes Anderson notes, instances of speaking-in-tongues appeared primarily as xenoglossy, or “speaking in a language previously unknown to the speaker,” but always a known, human language.¹⁰ Only after Pentecostal missionaries discovered abroad that they could not be understood by their target audiences did tongues become acceptable as glossolalia, which is received as a “dead language, the language of angels, or a divine language.”¹¹ Because the distinction was not considered ultimately important, we use the term “speaking-in-tongues” to indicate either xenoglossy or glossolalia as a motor mechanism occurring within a Pentecostal context, from the early 1900s on, and without reference to preceding historical occurrences. Speaking-in-tongues, as we use it here, is a historically specific dynamic, and we make no attempt to define or account for ecstatic speech in a transhistorical or universalist fashion.

While Parham’s modern recovery of a seemingly archaic, rarely used, and often denigrated form in the service of resolving a theological conundrum is noteworthy, it was not historically transformative considered by itself. As Peter Hocken notes:

If the developments with Charles Parham had not been followed by the outbreak at Azusa Street, the former would have probably only been another variation on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a personal experience . . . hav[ing] no greater claim to validity than many interpretations of individual experiences in Holiness circles.¹²

Without the subsequent events at Azusa, Parham’s work would likely be understood as just one example, and not even the most

¹⁰Anderson, *Vision*, 15.

¹¹Anderson, *Vision*, 15.

¹²Peter J. Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the Twentieth-Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford, UK: Eagle Press, 1994), 53.

significant, emerging out of a cluster of late nineteenth to early twentieth-century US Holiness regional associations led by, and overly dependent on, the organizational acumen and personal prestige of individuals: for example, Daniel S. Warner's Church of God (Evening Lights Saints), Martin Wells Knapp's God's Bible School, Benjamin Hardin Irwin's Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, A. B. Crumpler's Pentecostal Holiness Church, Phineas Bresee's Peniel Mission and Church of the Nazarene, or the pre-tongues Church of God in Christ led by Charles Mason and C. P. Jones. While these and others were noteworthy events in the record of American religious leadership, none achieved the immense national and international impact of Pentecostalism after it coursed through the Azusa revival of 1906–09. Without Seymour's Azusa, the various come-outers might never have combined into a larger and more durable movement.

Parham's contribution to speaking-in-tongues is more than a curious footnote because he taught it to fellow minister William J. Seymour (1870–1922) in Houston, from late 1905 to early 1906. Yet, while Seymour was briefly a student and junior associate of Parham in Texas, he was not simply a more successful imitator when he came to Los Angeles. As a Black American with his own theological and social goals, Seymour emphasized one particular element of Parham's ministry (speaking-in-tongues) while downplaying or subordinating some (faith healing, premillennialism) and wholly discarding others, notably the racial theory of Anglo-Israelism.¹³ But because Seymour sought out Parham for his teaching on speaking-in-tongues and initially continued to see himself as a student, the 1900–01 Topeka revival remains significant, not least for its role in highlighting later tensions.

Speaking-in-tongues had occurred before Azusa, including elsewhere than Topeka under Parham, but previous incidents were sporadic and never achieved Azusa's "lightning in a bottle" effect, which almost instantaneously spread Pentecostalism across the

¹³On Anglo-Israelism, see Charles H. Roberts, *Race Over Grace: The Racialist Religion of the Christian Identity Movement* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003), 4–17; and Jacob S. Dorman, *Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

United States and throughout the world within a few short years. Because Azusa was taken as an origin-event for Pentecostalism in ways that Topeka was not, Seymour and the conditions that converged in Los Angeles deserve emphasis as the site where an experience-system became apparent.¹⁴ What was it about Azusa that had this effect, and thus effectively ended the 1880–1900s phase of radical Holiness as these organizations either became Azusa-fied as they accepted speaking-in-tongues, or faded in significance by refusing it? In posing the question in this manner, the issue is less about what Azusa had that others did not than what conditions did the Azusa configuration highlight and thereby make more easily recognizable elsewhere, in other contexts. As Douglas Jacobsen notes, Azusa is less significant as a genealogical influence than as the tracer of a wider social cartography or system of Pentecostalism.

There is no doubt that the Azusa Street Mission played the role of Grand Central Station for the pentecostal movement. Almost everyone who was anybody in the early pentecostal movement had some connection with the revival, and it was in Los Angeles that pentecostals first began to build the national and international networks of acquaintance that would define the movement – but those connections should not be misconstrued as unity. People moved in and out of the Azusa orbit carrying different concerns and convictions into that arena with them and taking different lessons away from the meetings. Pentecostals may have had a common point of contact in the Azusa revival, but that did not mean that they all experienced the Azusa revival in the same way or saw eye to eye on all the details (or even all the core beliefs) of pentecostal faith.¹⁵

Pentecostalism's notoriously schismatic nature means, consequently, that "there is no meta-model of pentecostalism—no essence of pentecostalism or normative archetype—that can provide an infallible rule against which to judge all the various particular renditions of

¹⁴Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 1–37.

¹⁵Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 10.

pentecostal faith and theology to determine precisely which is the most pentecostal and/or the least pentecostal."¹⁶

For this reason, we prefer the term *emergent*, rather than *classic*, Pentecostalism, since the latter implies a homogeneous or ideal formation that can be fixed in typological traits, rather than a historic process in which multiple elements reach a density that condenses various social interests into a *movement* with confrontations and systemic features, the elements of which are not *exactly* repeatable, but do resonate onward from its early phase. One difficulty in treating the culture of religious movements by highlighting doctrinal differences is that such a categorical imperative fails to appreciate that the heart of the matter lies in what brought different groups *together*, however loosely, rather than in what *separated* them.

One challenge in understanding this period of Protestant variation is the difficulty of grasping a constellation of beliefs that were not uniformly upheld or emphasized by all groups to the same degree. For example, Fundamentalism, as a grouping, congealed in the 1920s and shared many features with emergent Pentecostalism. But Fundamentalism denounced Pentecostals over the matter of speaking-in-tongues as a sign or gift of the Baptism in the Spirit, and the two movements differed radically in the fundamentalist desire to fight science and liberalism in the public, political, and juridical spheres. Edith Blumhofer argues that "for Assemblies of God adherents, the 'full' gospel was fundamentalism with a difference" (faith healing and speaking-in-tongues). But this assertion of Pentecostalism's "essential unity with fundamentalists" holds only for the post-emergent phase of Pentecostalism in the 1920s, and downplays the Assemblies of God's revisionary attempts to deny the historical role of Azusa for its own aggrandizement.¹⁷ B. M. Pietsch argues, from a different perspective, that (fundamentalist) dispensational thought, today mainly known through "Rapture" claims, should be considered as part of modernist culture rather than its rejection, since dispensationalists invoked the kind of taxonomic obsession with separation that was shared by emerging corporate scientific

¹⁶Jacobsen, *Thinking*, 12.

¹⁷Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 5–6.

management practice associated with Taylorism and eugenicist racism.¹⁸ Yet, while Pentecostals did entertain dispensational, premillennial claims, their use of these ideas went in a direction opposite to that embraced by the white business elites discussed by Pietsch. Pentecostals relied on Scofield's Reference Bible notations, but dispensationalism in their hands was treated differently and speaking-in-tongues emerged as a practice that would incorporate and not separate individuals. In particular, Black emergent Pentecostals tended to downplay dispensationalism for ecumenical reasons we will suggest below.¹⁹ Jacobsen argues that dispensational-eschatological thought "seems to have been, at best, a second-order theological concern at the [Azusa] mission."²⁰ Furthermore, the dispensationalist strain of fundamentalism rejected speaking-in-tongues as a superseded practice. Because it held "gifts of the Spirit to have been withdrawn from the Church," tongues could not exist in the modern period.²¹

Our approach, then, is to insist on the significance of speaking-in-tongues, not in terms of its taxonomic difference from other practices, but in such a way as to consider its power as a hegemonic phenomenon, its ability to bring together, if only for less than a decade, a coalition of variegated forces seen most clearly in the linkage of urban Black Americans and small town whites.

While our immediate topic remains the moment and situation of *emergent* Pentecostalism, the resulting tale can also be taken to suggest the conditions under which new waves of Pentecostalism subsequently appear in time (in the 1920s, 1960s, 1980s, and so on), and why the movement is stronger today in certain locales globally (Nigeria, Korea, South Africa, some parts of South America, and so on) due to their analogous situations within the world-system.

¹⁸B. M. Pietsch, *Dispensational Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁹"African American Pentecostals were much less likely to accept dispensational ideas"; Pietsch, *Dispensational*, 204.

²⁰Jacobsen, *Thinking*, 81.

²¹Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, Volume 1 To 1941* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing, 1989), 193; Mark Snoeberger, "Second-Blessing Models of Sanctification and Early Dallas Dispensationalism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 15:1 (Spring 2004), 93–105.

Here Ernst Troeltsch's church-sect distinction (and H. Richard Niebuhr's use of it) continues to exert an influence in discussions of Pentecostalism. As Liston Pope explains:

In his monumental work, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Ernst Troeltsch formulated a distinction, which has become classic, between the Church type and the sect type of religious institution. He defined the Church as being, in essence, an objective institution into which an individual is born, and by which, under the direction of duly constituted ecclesiastical officials, he is trained and disciplined for life in the religious community. Desiring to cover the whole life of humanity and to be coextensive with society, the Church accepts the secular order and becomes an integral part of existing social structures; it correspondingly becomes especially dependent on the upper classes and overwhelmingly conservative in outlook. It invests authority in religious matters in an established ecclesiastical hierarchy, in the precedents of tradition, and in the sacraments, while it seeks to dominate and to use political institutions for authority in secular matters. The sect, on the other hand, was defined by Troeltsch as a small, voluntary community, aiming at the inward perfection and fellowship of its own members, who have joined it by conscious choice. Rather than seeking to penetrate or dominate other social spheres, the sect is indifferent, tolerant, or antagonistic toward secular matters, and attempts to be a moral community separate and sufficient unto itself. Rather than locating religious authority in the religious institution or its officers, it appeals directly to the Scriptures and to Christ, practicing within itself the priesthood of all believers and criticizing the Church for apostasy from the original charter of Christianity. It is especially connected with the lower classes, working "upwards from below, and not downwards from above."²²

²²Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 117. Pope cites Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon (New York, 1931), I, 331–6. These ideas are reinforced in H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Holt, 1929). See Pope's list of the twenty-one ways in which Pentecostalism is sect-like: Pope, *Millhands*, 122–4.

For Troeltsch, writing in 1912, Protestant denominations, with their emphasis on individualism, are overly “bound up with modern bourgeois society” and increasingly unable to bear the pressures of “Capitalism, the modern Nationalist and Imperialist State, and the vast increase in the population of the world.”²³ Consequently, he understands the onset of modern sects as a response to mainline Protestantism’s increasing inability to unify the varied social strata it bound together from the early modern period into the nineteenth century. From this perspective, Troeltsch discounts the utility of studying religion by emphasizing abstract doctrines in favor of a study of social pressures informing its transformations, for “the social position and relations of the sects reveal the hidden reasons for sudden changes of religious thought, which could not have been explained from their merely intellectual dialectic.”

Two exemplary points illustrate the inability of this period’s mainline Protestantism to maintain its coherence with gestures intended to shore up a system in transformation. First, the “World’s Parliament of Religions” at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition was orchestrated as a grand attempt to affirm the rise of US hegemony in the world-system by assembling representatives of the great faiths and framing world-spirituality under the totalizing banner of mainline American Protestantism. But this event is now taken to have facilitated the opposite perspective, as it failed to produce a new (Protestant) unifying ground for spirituality, and instead legitimated Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and other non-Christian perspectives, including “Eastern” practices such as yoga, under the umbrella of US ecumenism. To make matters worse, the event further underscored US mainstream commitment to racism by denying admission to Black American ministers.²⁴ Second, and contemporaneous with this failed project, were equally unsuccessful attempts by the southern branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church to squelch the Holiness movement’s innovations and objections to the Church’s “heartless” institutionalization. This group’s 1894 General Conference banned Holiness ministries as the first in a series of attempts to contain their

²³Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 1003.

²⁴Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 19–43.

teachings. The Conference refused to engage with liberated Holiness advocates' calls to "come-out" of establishment Methodism or with their creation of autonomous regional associations that pursued social and theological claims in ways that would open the path to Azusa.²⁵

In discussing Pentecostalism as a modernist experience-system, we want to focus on three particular aspects of its emergent phase: *speaking-in-tongues*, *modern restorationism*, and *racial ecumenism*. Recent studies indicate that speaking-in-tongues is no longer a majority experience even for those in churches most clearly linked to founding Pentecostal congregations.²⁶ Hollenweger, for example, argues that the fascination with tongues is Eurocentric. He reasons that, since many cultures in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America already have features similar to speaking-in-tongues, this practice should not serve as a special reference point in distinguishing Pentecostalism from other cultural practices.²⁷ Indeed, there may currently be a disinclination, in the scholarly literature, to emphasize bodily charisms as opposed to more generalized senses of communality and the projection of spiritual energies throughout the everyday.²⁸

Nevertheless, we want to reassert a central significance for speaking-in-tongues in emergent Pentecostalism, given that this

²⁵Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 50–1.

²⁶Pew Research Center, *Spirit and Power: A 10 Country Survey of Pentecostals* (Washington, D.C. 2006); Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 87; Corwin E. Schmidt, Lyman A. Kellstadt, John C. Green, and James L. Guth, "The Spirit-Filled Movements in Contemporary America: A Survey Perspective," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 111–30.

²⁷*Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, ed. Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 20; Candy Gunther Brown, "Introduction: Pentecostalism and the Globalization of Illness and Healing," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3; Douglas Jacobsen, ed. *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 4.

²⁸For example, see Nimi Wariboko, *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Urban Life* (London: Palgrave, 2014).

was the element, in contemporary discussions, that was taken to exemplify and differentiate Pentecostalism from other denominations and strands. Regardless of doctrinal disputes—as to whether it was necessary for all Pentecostals to achieve speaking-in-tongues or as to whether it was evidence of Baptism in the Spirit or a gift distinct from that baptism—Pentecostal leaders felt a pressing need to experience tongues, especially since many did so only after members of their own congregations. Speaking-in-tongues was the experience-form that gained greatest notice and notoriety from both allies and antagonists of early Pentecostals. Seymour was locked out of the mission that brought him to Los Angeles because of his teachings on speaking-in-tongues. It was speaking-in-tongues that electrified Los Angeles Holiness congregations and brought the daily crowds to Azusa, including those who came at first to mock, but then, as many recounted, to emulate and enact.

Certainly Pentecostalism shares other aspects of the period's religious innovations, from *biblical inerrancy* or belief in the literal truth of the Bible, to *premillennialism* and *dispensationalism*, or belief in radical, often apocalyptic, events preceding Christ's return, and *faith healing*. Fundamentalists shared overlapping concerns with Pentecostalism, as we have noted, but agreed with the movement's secular antagonists in condemning speaking-in-tongues.²⁹ In the context of these common features, it was, precisely, speaking-in-tongues that early Pentecostals saw as the sign (or gift) of grace that made them unique. Thus, regardless of its status (or neglect) in current global Pentecostal thinking and practice, one cannot displace the centrality of speaking-in-tongues as an experiential feature of emergent Pentecostalism, and any attempt to consider this moment needs to ask how this phenomenon functioned for those who were attracted, repulsed, or otherwise intrigued by news of Pentecostalism. Speaking-in-tongues differentiated Parham from others, it drew Seymour to him, and it made Azusa renowned throughout the world.

We have noted how, in the cultural dynamics of combined and uneven development, a sense of relative disempowerment in certain

²⁹Gerald Wayne King, "Disfellowshipped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906–1943" (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, 2009).

groups who aspire to status and expect reward in the capitalist world-system leads to a modern invention or reclamation of older, residual, or seemingly obsolete elements. This invention has little to do with “authentic” or traditional culture, since the material presented as organic and foundational is actually of modern construction, even though aspects of it may have existed in the past. This modern restoration or “invented tradition” is exemplified by Pentecostalism’s “return” to what are perceived as foundational elements of (“primitive”) Christianity in the name of apostolic faith (the name often used before the term Pentecostal became normative).³⁰ It should come as no surprise that we understand this gesture not as a return to prior conditions but as a complex response to modern experience. Indeed, from this point of view, Pentecostalism’s emphasis on the book Acts of the Apostles rather than the synoptic gospels makes a great deal of typological sense. For Acts is indeed the book of “modern” experience insofar as it addresses the question of what Jesus’ followers should do after his post-Ascension absence. Rather than focusing on the initial phase of Jesus’ earthly presence Acts reflects on an experience of belatedness and secondariness, structurally mirroring the Book of Joshua, which narrates events after Moses and thus, in modern versions, stands outside the five Mosaic books.

If Troeltsch is right and turn-of-the-century mainline Protestantism was an institution in deep crisis, unable to maintain its past coherence, then the Pentecostal return to the originary scene of Apostolic community—the creation of community through tongues, a communion of strangers brought together by overcoming the barriers of language—functions as an attempt to reinvent or return to earlier authenticity by reaching backward in time. If combined and uneven development is a useful analytic instrument for grasping the conditions of emergent Pentecostalism, Pentecostalism, in turn, may provide an important corrective and addition to the model of combined and uneven development in its concern for ethnic and racial ecumenism and relative opening for female authority.

³⁰Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Our interest in focusing on Azusa and the Los Angeles revival is not simply in grasping how its explosive dissemination of speaking-in-tongues and new reformulation of Holiness movements (see below) are related to the dynamics of the world-system considered generally and sociologically. Rather, we want to highlight a more culturally specific relation between the revival and its central feature, on the one hand, and its remarkable inter- or multi-racial communion on the other, an episode of racial mixing between Black and white Americans primarily, but also including Mexican Americans. Speaking-in-tongues at Azusa enacted the movement's commitment to overcoming racial distinctions. As Frank Bartleman, a white Holiness evangelist present during this early phase, wrote in an oft-quoted line: at Azusa "the 'color line' was washed away in the blood."³¹ Azusa's dedication to racial ecumenism, along with its empowerment of women, was perhaps the crucial element that pushed Azusa over the threshold to become a significant and influential experience-system, and distinguished it from a host of the period's competing Holiness developments.

How has Azusa's interracialism been viewed? Vinson Synan has argued that

the Azusa movement seems to have been a merger of white southern American Holiness religion with worship styles derived from the African American Christian tradition which had developed since the days of chattel slavery in the South. The expressive worship and praise of Azusa Street, which included shouting and dancing, had been common among Appalachian whites as well as Southern blacks. The admixture of tongues and other charisms with black music and worship styles created a new and indigenous form of Pentecostalism that was to prove extremely attractive to disinherited and deprived people, both in America and in other nations of the world.³²

³¹Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1980), 54.

³²Synan, "Pentecostal Movement," 157. Hollenweger lists five "black roots" of Pentecostalism: orality of liturgy; narrativity of theology and witness; maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer, and decision-making and therefore a form of community that is reconciliatory; inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship where they function iconically for the individual and the community; and an understanding of the mind-body relationship informed

Thus Synan recognizes a racial “merger” at the core of the Azusa phenomenon but, because he does not situate it in a wider social context, he arguably overemphasizes a particular form of worship and incompletely perceives the features that made Azusa so magnetic. Certainly it was not Black worship styles alone that made the event stand out, for white Americans had many opportunities to witness and incorporate these well before 1906. Additionally, this account oversimplifies the nature of the mixing that occurred. As Estrela Alexander notes, Azusa was not simply an addition or “merger” of past elements but a reinvention of them. The Azusa street mission “was a product of . . . Seymour’s restructuring of slave religion and not just a product of slave religion generally defined.”³³ It bears emphasizing, moreover, that there is no *one* homogeneous form of African or African American slave religion. Gastón Espinosa takes a related tack in arguing that it was the singing at Azusa that “stood out to most visitors,” but even that was not the sole element.³⁴ For example, while Seymour allowed exuberant parishioner activity, he was not himself a minster in the exhorter style, and the few accounts of him during Azusa services often describe him sitting in isolation and quiet meditation. While congregants were occasionally “slain in the spirit” and fell prone, many spoke in tongues for the first time on Azusa’s second story, its “Upper Room,” where parishioners lay quietly on the floor as Seymour and others helped them “tarry” the Spirit in practices as close to Pietist traditions as to former plantation ones.

The catalyzing aspect of Azusa, we contend, was not a worship style, but rather the intersection of the particular conditions of modernism with a social ecology of post-emancipation racial equality. Indeed, a map of the manifestations of Pentecostal speaking-in-tongues is a chart of those regions where Black American social aspirations in the early twentieth-century, often engaged in the struggle against Jim Crow segregation, seemed to be increasingly

by experiences of correspondence, the most striking example of which is ministry of healing by prayer. Walter J. Hollenweger, “After Twenty Years’ Research on Pentecostalism,” *Theology*, 87:720 (November 1984), 405.

³³Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15.

³⁴Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 62.

within reach, in locales that combined new industrial development with immigrant-driven population growth. As Iain MacRobert put it: "For black Christians . . . the experience of the Spirit was more than personal holiness, it was also power from God to triumph over injustice and oppression in the social sphere."³⁵

William J. Seymour's personal trajectory through various locales is not merely a series of steps in his spiritual journey, but his pursuit of specific sites in which racial desegregation and equality could be enacted. In studies of Black America it has become conventional to triangulate available strategies for antiracist practice in the early twentieth century US by invoking three names: Booker T. Washington and his early defense of (Southern) regionalism and vocational training against the pull of Northern metropolises; W. E. B. Du Bois and his belief in the need to cultivate artistic and professional black elites; and Marcus Garvey and his later advocacy of pan-Africanism. To these options, we should add William Seymour's search for spiritual communion outside of political and market mechanisms. If Du Bois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) strategy for gaining equality was through public education and juridical intervention, if Washington's was through reliance on the marketplace, and if Garvey's was through centrifugal separation and Black nationalism, then Seymour's path to equality proceeds through rituals outside the realms of the bureaucratic State, education (whether secular or religious), or the marketplace.

Seymour merits comparison with Du Bois especially. Almost exactly contemporaneous in biographical terms (Du Bois was born in 1868, Seymour in 1870), their activities synchronize to a remarkable degree. The Azusa revival ran from April 1906 to 1909 and grounded a national movement from Los Angeles. Du Bois' Niagara Movement, a forerunner to the NAACP, began at the Erie Beach Hotel near the Niagara Falls, in July 1905 and lasted until 1909. In what is not merely a pun, Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) deployed a version of the Hegelian philosophy of Spirit, while Seymour's ministry operated through the Holy Spirit. These two strands of the period's search for a racially unifying culture, one based on elite education directed

³⁵MacRobert, *Black Roots*, 50.

to a professionalizing middle class, the other on demotic faith taken up by the working lower middle class, came together on April 3, 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his final “I’ve been to the Mountain Top” speech in support of public sanitation workers at Memphis’ Mason Temple, the headquarters for the largest Black American Pentecostal organization, the Church of God in Christ.

Before one hastens to compare Seymour’s vision unfavorably to that of Du Bois, let us consider what Seymour’s Azusa achieved in relation to what Du Bois’ Niagara Movement did not. For students of American history, specifically, and the “west” in general, Azusa’s significance goes well beyond the simple fact that it created a mixed-race social formation, however short-lived. As far back as eighteenth-century abolitionism, there were social movements and organizations in which Blacks worked with whites. Yet as many Black abolitionists, like Frederick Douglass, discovered to their detriment, white willingness to grant Black participation within movements was not the same as establishing actual relationships of equality or accepting Black leadership. Azusa deserves special notice as the *first* US social movement in which whites not only collaborated with Blacks, but did so “under” the leadership of William J. Seymour and in spaces where Blacks initially outnumbered whites. Perhaps not until the late 1950s, with the rise of postwar Jazz culture and early civil rights movements, would whites accept leadership from Black Americans, at precisely the same time, interestingly enough, as the charismatic revivalism of Pentecostalism’s second phase.

A primary question, as we see it, in considering emergent Pentecostalism and speaking-in-tongues, is thus not the matter of hermeneutic authenticity—did they believe it—but, what were the conditions that created, *for the first time*, a mixed-race community in which American Blacks, however momentarily, functioned as undisputed leaders?

American Studies and Modernist Studies often reinforce a homogeneous narrative about the resilience and inevitability of racism in the United States. Yet such a history sometimes underestimates moments when racial antagonism was not only overcome, but overcome through non-State, non-judicial mechanisms. Because these instances often appear in the cultural and social realms, they are typically presented as spontaneous

rather than systemic. But it seems clear that preexisting socioeconomic conditions for nonwhites in Los Angeles facilitated Azusa as the origin-point of Pentecostalism's subsequent ubiquity. Los Angeles had an active Holiness network in a state of revival, in ways matched perhaps only by Chicago, but it was also a city of Black class advancement in ways that extended beyond conditions in Chicago and elsewhere.

Fittingly, the key passage of Acts 2 foreshadows the events at Azusa and their far-reaching resonance. For Acts "devotes considerable importance to the inclusion of Gentiles among the peoples of God," and points to the future of a community in which distinctions between Jew and Gentile have been overcome. Envisioning a faith community of universal appeal, that is, "it creates new categories for those who believe in Jesus as resurrected Messiah and those who do not," thus replacing "an ethnic distinction with a theological distinction."³⁶

The historical window propitious to the improvement of racial relations that opened in Los Angeles in the 1890s and 1900s began to close again by the mid-1910s, as early Pentecostal churches increasingly split into strongly segregated organizations. This foreclosure belongs to larger American trends toward renewing racial segregation at that time, as seen with the Ku Klux Klan's revival. Rather than simply accept racism's return as inevitable, however, one can ask what initial conditions made interracial solidarity possible and how they might have been made more powerful or long-lasting. This sort of questioning, we can recall, was the goal of Trotsky's analysis of the rapidly overwhelmed Revolution of 1905. We consider Azusa and Los Angeles as a variant of such constellations, a partial world-historical and cultural analogue to Moscow 1905. With such an analogy, we confront Robert Mapes Anderson's oft-cited phrase according to which Pentecostalism is the "vision of the disinherited," those deprived and expelled from modernity or recoiling backward in horror from it. While we share much of Anderson's analysis, we see Pentecostalism's dynamic energy as a manifestation of aspirations toward modernity and expectations of progress frustrated by the systemic logic of capitalist competition.

³⁶Levine and Brettler, *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 198.

Pentecostalism initially spread in urban areas in the North or the “northern” South that permitted relatively greater opportunities for equality, even while limits to that equality were simultaneously emerging. And speaking-in-tongues, as we will see later with Thomas Szasz’s notion of protolanguage, or what we will call *semiperipheral speech*, becomes a fit form of expression for the experience-system of being caught between the possibilities of core privilege and riptide of peripheral disempowerment.

Such a perspective may help explain why Pentecostalism grew so rapidly, especially among newly urbanized whites in industrializing regions of the South. Pentecostalism, on this reading, emerges as an expression of a population’s desire to become incorporated within the capitalist world-system, while unhappily recognizing that the cost of this entry is to arrive at and be compelled to accept a structurally subordinated position. When Antonio Gramsci considered the ways in which new alliances of anticapitalist opposition could be produced, he spoke of the national-popular as a mechanism that might achieve what he felt the Catholic Church had accomplished, that is, bringing together otherwise disparate social elements, namely the agrarian peoples of Italy’s South and the industrialized populations of the northern cities. Pentecostalism, with its speaking-in-tongues, achieved such a coalition in its emergent phase when mobile, working-class, small-town Southern whites adopted the idioms and practices of urbanized Black Americans. Why this alliance, the American equivalent to the conditions that Trotsky described in 1905 Russia, did not endure is a question beyond the compass of this discussion. Instead, our goal here is to better situate the significance of Azusa as an event in the history of modernism.

The road to Azusa

In broad strokes, the threshold that was crossed when the precedents of Topeka 1900 emerged explosively in the events of Azusa 1906 involves a cultural ley line formed by the intersection of two overarching processes: on the one hand, modern population flows that helped create and service the fixed capital implantations of new technologies, especially the transport, communication, and

extraction industries (energy and raw materials); and, on the other, the ongoing search for configurations within religious doctrine and practice that would best respond to new social possibilities resulting from a world-systemic reconfiguration of class composition. In the United States, the effects of the first process appeared in the rise in foreign immigration at the end of the nineteenth century, as it collided with post-Civil War migrations of Black and white Americans from rural conditions to more urbanized environments. All of these newcomers were catapulted by, and many worked within, expanding mass transportation and communication networks, and related industries producing raw materials for this new industrial geography.

The religious history involved with the second of these processes, intertwining human movements and capital implantation, largely concerns Methodism's encounter with extra-denominational elements, some Calvinist and others Pietist. This is not a linear developmental history but a matter of uneven phases with varying configurations of elements. Over time, a shuffling of variations occurred until one variant that bound multiple elements into a tenable form was discovered. This constellation of evolving religious variation is best approached with the formula that became known as the fourfold Gospel: "Christ as savior, Christ as sanctifier, Christ as healer, and Christ as coming King."³⁷

The elements of born-again conversion, sanctification, faith healing, and dispensational premillennialism appear in a loose chronological sequence. The first, born-again conversion, emerges throughout the eighteenth century and downplays child or paedobaptism in favor of a new, adult birth, being born again in Christ as an act of conversion or justification, and the use of faith to accept Christ's salvation. The second element, emphasizing sanctification, involves Holy Ghost (or Spirit) baptism as another phenomenon taken to cleanse the individual from sin. This element has multiple variants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, initially in the wake of John Wesley's 1735 journey to America, when he noticed the greater shipboard calm of

³⁷William Kostlevy, *Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20. See also Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 21–5.

Moravian Pietists.³⁸ Impressed by their rootedness as a result of an “experience of conversion and perfect holiness,” Wesley began his own journey from “sacramental Anglicism to evangelical Methodist Christianity,” where, in contrast to Calvinist theology, salvation was open to all through a personal experience. As part of this personal transformation, he developed the notion of Christian perfection as a second work of grace. If one “became” a Christian through a first crisis-experience resulting in conversion, then a second experience was perfection, or sanctification, which “purified the believer of inward sin and gave him ‘perfect love’ toward God and man.”³⁹ The theology of the second blessing was later developed more concretely by Wesley’s chosen successor John Fletcher, who called it a “baptism in Holy Spirit” that “would not only cleanse from sin but would empower the recipient through the indwelling Spirit.”⁴⁰

Overlapping with this Methodist doctrine of perfection, typified by evangelists such as Phoebe Palmer, were strands of reformed Calvinist thought delivered through antebellum revivalists like Charles Grandison Finney and institutionalized in centers such as Oberlin. Oberlin Perfectionism linked individual to social transformation and consequently energized “many reform movements designed to perfect American life, such as women’s rights, the abolition of slavery, anti-masonry, and prohibition.”⁴¹ This movement reached an initial crescendo in 1857–58 urban and Northern revivals, but, as a result of its ties to abolition, had little impact in the South where Methodists were institutionally divided along regional lines.⁴² Even when a renewed wave of the Holiness crusade and emphasis on sanctification seemed to be gaining ground around 1870, after the Civil War, it still had limited influence in the South because sanctification campaigns continued to be tainted by association with Northerners and had

³⁸Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 16.

³⁹Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 18.

⁴⁰Synan, “Pentecostal Movement,” 154.

⁴¹Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 28.

⁴²Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 31; Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 29–38.

little commitment to the mythology of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy.⁴³

The third and fourth elements of the pre-Azusa Holiness mix, introducing John Nelson Darby's form of dispensationalism, premillennialism, and practices such as faith healing, begins in earnest with the transatlantic Higher Life movement that was consolidated in an 1875 conference in Keswick, England. A key reformulation of Keswick was its rejection of "'orthodox Holiness' contentions that sanctification and Baptism in the Holy Spirit were one and the same experience."⁴⁴ While Keswick began to open the door to a third stage after sanctification, its Calvinist roots held it back from ecstatic acts of motor motion, and its adherents believed that faith and works, rather than physical charisms, would denominate this state.

In and after the 1880s, as the Long Depression (1873–79) began to recede and as new forms of social organization emerged to replace a phase of capitalism that had reached its limits, something happened within Holiness movements. Factions became increasingly unhappy with the perceived cold-heartedness of mainline Methodism, with its embourgeoisement and participation in new forms of the establishment after the Long Depression. During this period, religiosity rose in the United States—reversing the decline in religiosity that took place in the wake of the Civil War—and the number of congregations increased by 130 percent. From 1880 to 1890 church membership was increasing faster than the rate of the population.⁴⁵ But this shift was increasingly directed toward the middle class, as "the focus of evangelizing efforts shifted from the frontier regions and the urban working-class neighborhoods to the upper and middle classes . . . [so that] in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the identification of Protestantism with middle-class culture was almost complete."⁴⁶ Groups that were not as successful in becoming incorporated within the new establishment initiated a movement against this turn, and their discontent was articulated partly through the search for a post-sanctification state: "A more radical phase of Holiness first appeared in

⁴³Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 78; see also 15–17, 80–1.

⁴⁴Anderson, *Vision*, 41.

⁴⁵Anderson, *Vision*, 29–30.

⁴⁶Anderson, *Vision*, 30.

rural areas of the Midwest and South in the late seventies . . . [where evangelists] began to concentrate on the externals of holiness—dress and behaviour—and to exhort the faithful to come out from among the ‘world’ churches.”⁴⁷ For the first time, during the 1880s, Holiness began to make inroads in the South.

Radical Holiness groups like Daniel S. Warner’s Evening Light Saints led the call to come out of the more formal church in favor of what was claimed to be a purer Church retrieving its “primitive” roots. Holiness advocates pronounced teachings that “seemed new and strange to many ecclesiastical leaders. They included the pre-millennial rapture of the sanctified ‘Bride of Christ’ in the second coming, divine healing without the aid of doctors or medicine, and a ‘third blessing’ called ‘the Holy Ghost and fire’ after sanctification.”⁴⁸ Charisms including shouting, bodily jerking, or laughter were now permitted, prompting nicknames such as Holy Rollers or Holy Jumpers. Significantly, the come-outers of the 1880s and 1890s connected back to antebellum abolitionist positions and often allowed mixed-race congregations.

These new come-outers provoked resistance, and their drift toward a “third Blessing” produced fear and loathing in the period’s Methodist institutions. A series of exclusions began, most notably when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South’s 1894 General Conference moved to disavow radical Holiness.⁴⁹ These exclusions produced a contrary effect, however, when Holiness leaders began to sever ties with established Methodism and create their own institutional structures. Instances of this development include the Metropolitan Church Association (Chicago, 1894); Benjamin Hardin Irwin’s Fire-Baptized Holiness (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1895); Phineas Bresee’s First Church of the Nazarene (Los Angeles, 1897); Charles Price Jones and Charles Mason’s Church of God in Christ (Arkansas, 1897); Martin Knapp’s International Holiness Union and Prayer League (Cincinnati, 1897); and Abner Blackmon Crumpler’s Pentecostal Holiness Church (North Carolina, 1898). By 1895 around

⁴⁷Anderson, *Vision*, 32.

⁴⁸Synan, “Pentecostal Movement,” 156.

⁴⁹Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 50–1.

twenty white Holiness groups existed. By 1900, twenty-three new ones had appeared.⁵⁰

The 1890s thus give rise to a spectrum of what might be called experimental forms and institutions, some even using the name Pentecostal, which looked to the existence of a Third Blessing, a Baptism in the Spirit that would empower missionizing and social transformation. The increase in Holiness groups was often due to expansion through schismatic differentiation, with each group promoting their own view about sanctification. Typical of these variants was a new reliance on charisms, for example in Irwin's Fire-Baptized Holiness Association, which held that Baptism in the Spirit would be experienced as a physical surge, a "baptism of fire." This search for a new spirit-charism form reached its inflection point with Charles Parham's advancement of "Apostolic Faith." Parham claimed that "tongues are always the initial evidence of a person's receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit" and that "this baptism, including the resulting tongues, should be seen as part of every Christian's experience, something to be used in normal life and worship, and not just something that would appear during times of great religious fervor" [like revivals]. He further insisted on "the necessity of being baptized with the Holy Spirit as the only way to escape the coming end-time Great Tribulation, and that speaking in tongues was the only assurance of this."⁵¹

Tongues and Holy Spirit Baptism were by no means original with Parham. In the early 1830s, London Presbyterian minister Edward Irving presented a woman speaking-in-tongues. Irving explained that this was a "standing sign" of baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁵² Expelled from his church, he created a Catholic Apostolic Church in America and carried the principle of sanctification through motor actions, such as weeping and trembling, from Virginia into the South. But Irving's claims did not hold. Similarly, tongues emerged at an 1896 South Carolina revival. Thus, it was neither tongues by themselves nor their initial appearances that marked a turning point but the role

⁵⁰Calvin White, Jr., *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2012), 10.

⁵¹Synan, *Century*, 43.

⁵²Synan, *Century*, 154.

that Parham gave them within Holiness discourse. The conditions for this event to become a widespread practice were not yet present though Parham alone. That conjunction had to wait until Seymour's intervention, but this threshold would not have been possible without Parham's contribution.

Charles Fox Parham and the 1901 Topeka Revival

Parham was born in Muscatine, Iowa and grew up in rural Cheney, Kansas. His mother's death, when he was thirteen, led to a crisis-experience that resulted in his becoming born again. He enrolled in a Methodist college in Kansas, hesitating between ministry and medicine. After a severe illness, he came to believe in faith healing and became a Methodist pastor in 1892. Compelled by a belief in ecumenism, he left the Methodist Church in 1894 to conduct revivals in the Lawrence, Kansas area, married a birthright Quaker in a Friends' ceremony in 1896, and addressed Holiness audiences in Kansas and Missouri. Moving to Topeka, he opened the Bethel Healing Home in fall 1898. At this juncture, Anderson considers Parham a "typical Holiness preacher of the Keswick variety."⁵³

Parham then began to visit centers of radical Holiness, like Frank W. Sandford's Shiloh in Durham, Maine and Alexander Dowie's Zion City in Chicago, becoming what Anderson less generously describes as a "catch basin for many of the ideas germinating on the fringes of the revivalist-holiness tradition since the days of Finney and before."⁵⁴ Returning to Topeka, Parham discovered that he was locked out of his Healing Home and Mission by the man he had left in charge during his absence.⁵⁵ With money from the American Bible Society of Philadelphia, however, he acquired "Stone's Folly," an abandoned mansion left unfinished by a failed businessman, and there opened the College of Bethel in October 15, 1900, ministering to about three

⁵³Anderson, *Vision*, 49.

⁵⁴Anderson, *Vision*, 86.

⁵⁵Anderson, *Vision*, 50.

dozen persons of different denominations, most of whom had prior experience as Holiness activists.⁵⁶ The school had no tuition, the Bible was the only book studied, and continuous praying in shifts was conducted. Parham gave extemporaneous talks on Bible verses in the morning, students evangelized in residential neighborhoods during the day, and services were held in a downtown mission at night. The college was communitarian, with all participants sharing money, objects, and work.⁵⁷

In December, convinced that a third stage lay beyond sanctification, Parham instructed his students to consider Acts 2 (with its narration of the originary event of speaking-in-tongues) and ask themselves what might constitute evidence of having received the Baptism in the Spirit. Returning to Topeka on December 30 from nearby Kansas City, he was (supposedly) told by the students of their belief that the “indisputable proof” of spirit baptism was speaking-in-tongues. With a group of seventy-five, who had come for New Year’s, a twenty-four-hour fast and prayer session began. On New Year’s Day, Agnes Ozman, who came to Parham’s school after experiencing other Bible schools and missionary groups, asked Parham to lay hands on her head during prayer.⁵⁸ She then spoke in tongues and believed herself to be speaking and writing in Chinese continuously for three days. On January 3, Parham himself experienced tongues, along with several others.

With this breakthrough, speaking-in-tongues became Parham’s solution to the decades-long search for a sign of the third blessing, the Baptism in Holy Spirit. Parham’s group, as noted, was not the first to experience tongues, but it did so as part of a premeditated, *intentional* search for a practice and experience that would illustrate modern restorationism and consequently become accepted as a normative appearance and requirement.

Thus the Topeka group was conceptually primed for speaking-in-tongues. Viewed through the lens of combined and uneven development, the event registers a key modernizing juncture. In Topeka and northeastern Kansas, industrialization was fueled by

⁵⁶Anderson, *Vision*, 70.

⁵⁷Anderson, *Vision*, 52–3.

⁵⁸Goff, *Fields White*, 70; Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 65.

immigration, and mobile populations experienced both the promise and frustration of newly heightened desires for fulfillment and autonomy. At the intersection of several railroad lines, Topeka and its surrounding area experienced a real estate and population boom through the 1880s.⁵⁹ Kansas was linguistically diverse to a surprising degree, as in 1870 more than 15 percent of the population was foreign and, as late as 1910, more than a fifth of these immigrants still did not speak English.⁶⁰ Topeka was also undergoing industrialization with, for example, Terry Stafford's automobile production that became the Smith Automobile Company in 1902, before being driven out of business in 1911 by Ford's competitive pricing.⁶¹

Topeka was additionally a site for Black Americans striving for uplift. It was a former stop on the Underground Railroad for fugitive slaves, and its significance for the Black community was already considerable. After the Civil War, former slaves called "Exodusters" founded new Black towns in the area to experience the benefits of emancipation.⁶² The Black population had educational aspirations and enjoyed the first kindergarten for Black Americans west of the Mississippi, created by white minister Charles Sheldon in 1893.⁶³ Sheldon was a pastor of Topeka's Central Congregational Church and his bestseller *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* (1896) was an early foundational title for Social Gospel, as well as the origin-point for the still-popular phrase. In 1900, the Kansas Industrial and Educational Institute (organized in 1895) opened its doors as a Booker T. Washington supported, Tuskegee-like institute for vocational training in the Black community.⁶⁴

⁵⁹Federal Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration for the State of Kansas, *Kansas: The Sunflower State* (New York: Viking, 1939), 282.

⁶⁰Goff, *Fields White*, 77.

⁶¹Spencer L. Duncan, *Historic Shawnee County: The Story of Topeka & Shawnee County* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2005), 49.

⁶²Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 292. See Nell Irvin Painter, *The Exodusters* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976).

⁶³Sherrita Camp, *African American Topeka* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2013), 44; Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 1865–1915: A Social History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 146.

⁶⁴Kim Cary Warren, *The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 133.

This constellation of industry, immigration, and Black moves toward equality may explain why Parham had difficulty replicating speaking-in-tongues after he was forced to leave Topeka following the loss of the mansion that housed the group. Parham had little success in replicating speaking-in-tongues until fall 1903 when he organized a revival in Galena, a booming mining town in southeastern Kansas. The Galena revival experienced tongues, but was mainly remarkable for faith healing. In the summer of 1905, Parham was invited to Houston, then the largest city in Texas, where the new oil business was booming in the aftermath of the Spindletop oil gusher in 1901 in nearby Beaumont. In December 1905, Parham opened “The Bible Training School” which attracted his most famous student, the Black American William Joseph Seymour.

William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival, 1906

Seymour’s steps toward Azusa are guided by his pursuit of freedom from the return or further entrenchment of racial inequality in the South following the foreclosure of Reconstruction. The future Pentecostal minister was born on May 2, 1870 to former slaves living in Centerville, Louisiana, one hundred miles west of New Orleans. Seymour’s father Simon was the mixed-race son of a slave owner and had been one of 15,000 Black volunteers who fought in the Union Army to gain emancipation.⁶⁵ Simon was able to purchase a small farm and, perhaps partly because his father and former owner had been a lawyer and jurist on the Louisiana State Supreme Court in the 1840s, was briefly appointed as a municipal judge and parish constable during Reconstruction’s short-lived enfranchisement of Blacks.⁶⁶ Seymour’s father was killed in nearby Loreauville in a

⁶⁵Charles R. Fox, “William J. Seymour: A Critical Investigation of His Soteriology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology” (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, 2009), 22; Rufus Gene William Sanders, “The Life of William Joseph Seymour: Black Father of the Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movement” (Dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2000), 24.

⁶⁶Sanders, “The Life Of William Joseph Seymour,” 24.

spectacular incidence of the region's racialized violence on November 1, 1884. Hostile whites came to protest a Republican party election rally for Black candidates. Shots broke out and panic ensued. In the aftermath, Simon was found dead from pistol fire. Three days later, Democrats swept the local elections, local (Black) Republicans were arrested and briefly jailed, and Seymour's mother took the children back to Centerville where Seymour worked in a lumberyard and sawmill business owned by his mother's former masters.⁶⁷

In 1896, at a time when 90 percent of American Blacks still lived in the Jim Crow South, Seymour left his family in Louisiana and moved to Indianapolis alone.⁶⁸ In contrast to the deep South, Indianapolis was a "relatively progressive" destination city for Blacks and a former stop on the Underground Railroad.⁶⁹ Soon after his arrival, Seymour secured an attractive job as an upscale hotel waiter and joined one of the first Black unions, "The Head, Second, and Side Waiters Association." The union was formed to protect employment for Blacks at a time when hotels began to shift from set plate to *à la carte* menus and assumed that Blacks often lacked the literacy skills necessary for a menu service system.⁷⁰ While opposed to strikes, the Association held annual conferences, provided instructional manuals, and printed a regular column in *The Freeman* that advocated for educational opportunities and promoted a "new school" of "aspiring, progressive" waiters.⁷¹ While in Indianapolis, Seymour attended the Simpson Chapel Methodist Episcopal church, a congregation

⁶⁷Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 41–6. Robeck's *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (2006) asserts that Simon passed away after an illness on November 14, 1891(25). Because Robeck provides no source and his bibliography does not list Sanders' work, it is difficult to explain the variance. Possibly Robeck has confused Seymour's brother, also named Simon, with his father. In any case, it is incontestable that Seymour and his family were exposed to traumatic racial violence in Louisiana.

⁶⁸B. Scott Lewis, "William J. Seymour: Follower of the 'Evening Light' (Zech. 14:7)" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39:2 (Fall 2004), 168; Nelson, "For Such a Time," 159.

⁶⁹Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 61.

⁷⁰Jerry Dickey, "African American Waiters and Cakewalk Contests in Florida East Coast Resorts of the Gilded Age" in *Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor*, ed. Elizabeth A. Osborne and Christine Woodworth (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 132.

⁷¹W. E. Tucker, 2nd waiter Chittenden Hotel, Columbus, "The Waiter," *The Freeman*, January 24, 1903.

affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, which had refused to segregate their services. That Seymour chose to attend this church, even though the all Black Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was closer to his residence, attests to his desire to leave behind the conditions of his childhood and participate in the interracial life enacted by Holiness congregations.⁷²

In early 1900, as racial divisions became more pronounced in Indianapolis (when the Northern Methodist Church began to abandon its commitment to interracial practices, for example), Seymour moved on to Cincinnati, another city with a large Black population and abolitionist history. There he became attracted to the Holiness movement and began attending come-outer Martin Well Knapp's interracial God's Bible School.⁷³ Additionally, Seymour became attracted to a local ministry of Daniel S. Warner's Evening Light Saints.⁷⁴ Warner's Saints were dedicated to overcoming racial divisions: they "saw interracial worship as a sign of the true church, and people of both races worshiped and ministered regularly in the services. More importantly, they gave racial prejudice a theological critique. Instead of testifying that they were 'saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost,' Saints asserted that they were 'saved, sanctified, and prejudice removed.'"⁷⁵ Their message was carried in the movement's newspaper, *The Gospel Trumpet*, which had a staff of over 100 and a circulation of nearly 35,000. In 1901, the Saints publishing house printed their leader William G. Schell's *Is the Negro a Beast?*, a refutation of Charles Carroll's aggressively racist *The Negro: a Beast*.⁷⁶

In 1902, after becoming blind in one eye and suffering facial scarring in a smallpox epidemic, Seymour became a pastor at Knapp's Bible School and left Cincinnati for Houston, in search of his

⁷²Nelson, "For Such a Time," 160–1; Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 63; John M. Giggie, *After Redemption Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875–1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 166.

⁷³Lewis, "William J. Seymour," 169; Nelson, "For Such a Time," 163; Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 65–6.

⁷⁴Lewis, 170.

⁷⁵Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113.

⁷⁶Nelson, "For Such a Time," 164.

family members who had left Louisiana.⁷⁷ In Houston he continued his engagement with the Holiness movement and, in summer 1905, accepted an offer from Lucy Farrow to cover her ministry while she travelled to Kansas with Charles Parham. A former slave from Norfolk, Virginia, Farrow claimed to be the niece of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and was several decades older than either Parham or Seymour. Farrow was presented as Parham's "governess" in Kansas (explaining her presence there with a white man), and there experienced speaking-in-tongues. On her return to Houston she related her experience to Seymour and, in December 1905, he began attending sessions of Parham's Bible School, where Farrow was now working as a cook. In a widely accepted but anecdotal tale, Parham allowed Seymour to follow his class, but only on condition that Seymour sit just outside the room, so as to not violate Texas's segregation laws. In the afternoons, Seymour and Parham preached together among Houston's Black population; Parham believed in reaching out to the Black community but was not willing to make his Houston mission interracial.⁷⁸

Shortly afterwards, Seymour received an invitation to lead a small Black holiness ministry in Los Angeles. Neely Terry, a recent newcomer to the Holiness movement from Los Angeles, had heard and appreciated Seymour's preaching in Houston during Farrow's absence. Terry had been excommunicated from her Baptist Church and shifted to the interracial Holiness Church of the Nazarene, founded by Phineas Bresee, a church that accommodated 900 in the working-class Peniel district.⁷⁹ After attending the Peniel mission, she joined a small, all Black Nazarene Holiness Church mission led by Julia Hutchins, a woman who, like Terry, had been expelled from her Baptist church for espousing Holiness claims.⁸⁰ Hutchins and eight other families founded their own ministry, but Hutchins decided it would be better if an outside man led the group. Thus, on Terry's word, she invited Seymour to Los Angeles. Against Parham's wishes, Seymour accepted the offer and left Houston, perhaps

⁷⁷Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 69.

⁷⁸Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 91–2.

⁷⁹Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 88, 105.

⁸⁰Nelson, "For Such a Time," 186; Sanders, "The Life Of William Joseph Seymour," 91.

partly because of the city's and Parham's lack of commitment to racial equality.

In Los Angeles, much to Hutchins' dismay, Seymour began teaching speaking-in-tongues as a sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. After one Sunday service, Seymour was invited to dinner at the home of Edward S. Lee, a Black American janitor in the First National Bank.⁸¹ Returning to Hutchins' church after the meal, he learned that Hutchins had padlocked him out and rejected his teaching. With nowhere to stay, the Lees made Seymour a guest in their home and allowed him to organize small prayer sessions there, even though they did not endorse his position either. Eventually, another couple, Richard and Ruth Asberry, who were cousins of Terry and members of Hutchins' ministry, allowed Seymour to host prayer meetings at their home, at 214 (now 216) North Bonnie Brae Street.⁸² Asberry had previously worked as a Pullman railroad porter, but, like Edward S. Lee, was now a janitor at the Wilcox Building downtown.⁸³

At first Seymour had little success in leading parishioners to experience speaking-in-tongues, and wrote to Houston for help. Lucy Farrow and a male fellow-congregant, J. A. Warren, consequently travelled to Los Angeles to join Seymour, and Farrow lodged with the Lees. Aiming to recreate the Topeka experience, Seymour's group began a ten-day fast and prayer session on April 6th 1906.⁸⁴ On April 9th, while about to walk to the Asberry house, Edward Lee asked Seymour and others, including Farrow, to lay hands on him in order to help him recover from illness.⁸⁵ Under their touch, Lee began speaking-in-tongues. The group then rushed to

⁸¹Some accounts, like Synan's *Century of Spirit*, confuse Edward Lee with Owen S. Lee, an Irish immigrant who became an early white speaker-in-tongues at Azusa.

⁸²There is confusion in the scholarly record as to whether the family's name is spelled Asbury (Synan in 1971, Anderson in 1979), Asberry (Synan in 2001, Alexander in 2005, Robeck in 2006), or Asbery (Espinosa in 2014); even recent accounts, for example, Espinosa, give both of the latter. In 1910, the city renumbered 214 Bonnie Brae as 216 (Nelson, "For Such a Time," 68, note 16). For Terry's relation to the Asberrys, see Alexander *The Women of Azusa Street* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 22.

⁸³Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 64.

⁸⁴Nelson, "For Such a Time," 189.

⁸⁵For Farrow's involvement, see Alexander, *Women of Azusa*, 43; and Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Fell* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2006), 159.

the Asberry house to announce the good news. Once the service there had begun, Lee explained what had happened and again lapsed into speaking-in-tongues. Seven others suddenly followed, including Jennie Evans Moore, a relative of the Asberrys who lived across the street at 217 North Bonnie Brae and would later become Seymour's wife. Moore began playing the piano, a skill she claimed not to possess previously, while singing in what was said to be Hebrew. April 9, 1906 is thus taken as the conventional date for the "birth" of speaking-in-tongues Pentecostalism. In a familiar pattern of congregation members experiencing speaking-in-tongues before their ministers, Seymour himself would not speak-in-tongues until April 12th.

As news of the event spread, so many people congregated at Bonnie Brae that the house's porch collapsed. Searching for a new and larger meeting place, Seymour found a former church at 312 Azusa Street, which had been a First African Methodist Episcopal Church until 1903. Located in a formerly Jewish, but now mainly Black business district, the structure had become decrepit after being rented by various enterprises, including, recently, a horse stable. Seymour and his followers cleaned the building's two stories and laid planks across barrels to create impromptu seating. Subsequently taken as the founding site of Pentecostalism, Azusa ran nearly round-the-clock services. The revival operated in this fashion from 1906 until 1909, when it began to falter (achieving a revived but shorter spurt of interest in 1911). Services were unstructured, mainly consisting of group singing and testimony. Seymour spoke occasionally. Afterward the group went to an upstairs "Upper Room" where parishioners, intermixed white and black, men and women, lay on the floor, with quiet prayer, concentration, and having hands placed on them by Seymour and others to experience speaking-in-tongues.

Azusa's numbers grew rapidly as its events were publicized throughout the local Holiness network. On Easter Sunday, April 15, 1906, Jennie Evans Moore, still a member of Joseph Smale's Holiness New Testament Church, brought Ruth Asberry to that mixed-race congregation. Joseph Smale had witnessed some of the Welsh revival in 1904 and had been conducting his own Holiness revival. Almost simultaneously with the events at Bonnie Brae on April 9th, Smale's congregation experienced charisms,

but not speaking-in-tongues.⁸⁶ When Moore attended Smale's Sunday service and began to speak-in-tongues, she touched off the experience among many of that congregation, who then began attending Azusa. Perhaps because of this event, The *Los Angeles Daily Times*, which had often reported on Smale in their weekly column on the city's various Sunday sermons, sent a reporter to Azusa.⁸⁷ On April 18th, the newspaper published a second section headline article, on the day of the San Francisco earthquake. Because of the piece's significance for Azusa and the way it constitutes a classic lay presentation of emergent Pentecostalism, it is worth presenting here in its entirety, especially in relation to our broader discussion of modernism.

WEIRD BABEL OF TONGUES

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New Sect of Fanatics is Breaking Loose.

-----●-----

Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street.

-----●-----

Gurgle of Wordless Talk by a Sister.

Breathing strange utterances and mouthing a creed which it would seem no sane mortal could understand, the newest religious sect has started in Los Angeles. Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, near San Pedro Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal.

Colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth

⁸⁶Timothy Bernard Welch, "'God Found His Moses': A Biographical and Theological Analysis of the Life of Joseph Smale (1867-1926)" (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, PhD 2009), 207.

⁸⁷Welch, "'God Found His Moses,'" 20.

and back in a nerve-racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have "the gift of tongues," and to be able to comprehend the babel.

Such a startling claim has never yet been made by any company of fanatics, even in Los Angeles, the home of almost numberless creeds. Sacred tenets, reverently mentioned by the orthodox believer, are dealt with in a familiar, if not irreverent, manner by these latest religionists.

STONY OPTIC DEFIES

An old colored exhorter, blind in one eye, is the major-domo of the company. With his stony optic fixed on some luckless unbeliever, the old man yells his defiance and challenges an answer. Anathemas are heaped upon him who shall dare to gainsay the utterances of the preacher.

Clasped in his big fist the colored brother holds a miniature Bible from which he reads at intervals one or two words—never more. After an hour spent in exhortation the brethren present are invited to join in a "meeting of prayer, song and testimony." Then it is that pandemonium breaks loose, and the bounds of reason are passed by those who are "filled with the spirit," whatever that may be.

"You-oo-oogou-loo-loo come under the bloo-oo-oo boo-loo," shouts an old colored "mammy," in a frenzy of religious zeal. Swinging her arms wildly about her she continues with the strangest harangue ever uttered. Few of her words are intelligible, and for the most part her testimony contains the most outrageous jumble of syllables, which are listened to with awe by the company.

"LET TONGUES COME FORTH"

One of the wildest of the meetings was held last night, and the highest pitch of excitement was reached by the gathering, which continued to "worship" until nearly midnight. The old exhorter urged the "sisters" to let the "tongues come forth" and the women gave themselves over to a riot of religious fervor. As a result a buxom dame was overcome with excitement and almost fainted.

Undismayed by the fearful attitude of the colored worshipper, another black woman jumped to the floor and began a wild

gesticulation, which ended in a gurgle of wordless prayers which were nothing less than shocking.

"She's speakin' in unknown tongues;" announced the leader, in an awed whisper. "Keep on, sister." The sister continued until it was necessary to assist her to a seat because of her bodily fatigue.

GOLD AMONG THEM

Among the "believers" is a man who claims to be a Jewish rabbi. He says his name is Gold, and claims to have held positions in some of the largest synagogues in the United States. He told the motly [*sic*] company last night that he is well known to the Jewish people of Los Angeles and San Francisco, and referred to prominent local citizens by name. Gold claims to have been miraculously healed and is a convert of the new sect.

Another speaker had a vision in which he saw the people of Los Angeles flocking in a mighty stream to perdition. He prophesied awful destruction to this city unless its citizens are brought to a belief in the tenets of the new faith.⁸⁸

The *Times* article's foreboding conclusion was underscored when evangelist Frank Bartleman simultaneously distributed 10,000 copies of a tract titled *The Earthquake!!!*, and proceeded to print over 75,000 more copies.⁸⁹ The quake provided ideal, if paradoxical, advertising for the revival, situating Azusa as evidence of the onset of dispensational signs concerning end times and Christ's imminent return. But from the more secular perspective of US race relations, Azusa is remarkable for its special contribution to institutionalizing integration in the same period that saw the setback of the September 1906 race riots in Atlanta, Georgia.⁹⁰ Occurring in the city that Booker T. Washington had long upheld as his ideal for Black integration in

⁸⁸Anonymous, "Weird Babel of Tongues." *Los Angeles Daily Times* (April 18, 1906), II: 1.

⁸⁹Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 78.

⁹⁰David Fort Godshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Rebecca Burns, *Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2006).

the South, the shocking riots were a pivotal point in the turn against Washington's racial strategy by a new generation of Black leaders, most explicitly Du Bois, but also, as we argue, including Seymour and the Azusa Saints.

Institutionalizing racial ecumenism

Azusa represents the highlight and culmination of William Seymour's lifelong pursuit of spiritual transcendence *along with and through* racial equality. The rise of Azusa's precursor Holiness movements prior to speaking-in-tongues Pentecostalism cannot be separated from their involvement with the period's struggle against racialized divides. As Randall Stephen notes and we have emphasized earlier, Holiness movements faced local hostility in the post-Civil War South because of their association with Northern revivals and their refusal to mythologize the Confederacy.⁹¹ When Holiness movements began to spread in the 1880s and 1890s, "the movement was strongest in north Georgia, northwest South Carolina, the western half of Kentucky, Tennessee, and northeast Texas . . . areas that had not contained a large slave population."⁹² The "southern upcountry" contained regions where the Unionist Republic party drew support, in which there were spaces of resistance to the legacy of plantation aristocracies, and which experienced industrial transformation. The onset of combined and uneven factors led these Southern regions beyond earlier cultural and religious horizons.

At roughly the same time that perfectionism crossed over the Mason-Dixon line, new modes of transportation, consumer culture, urban growth, and political upheavals contributed to the breakdown of traditional society. Before the 1870s America had remained remarkably decentralized. Now, what one historian describes as island communities, insulated by geography and

⁹¹Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 15–17, 80–1.

⁹²Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 65; John B. Holt, "Holiness Religion: Cultural Shock and Social Reorganization," *American Sociological Review* 5:5 (October 1940), 740–7.

culture, were fast becoming connected in innumerable ways. While many resisted the change to a translocal culture, some courageous souls embraced it wholeheartedly and began to identify "community" with something other than one's immediate surroundings and interests . . . Holiness advocates across the United States . . . came to think of themselves as part of a religious family that obliterated sectionalism.⁹³

As part of this overcoming of a regionalized past, many Holiness churches had interracial congregations. If Holiness extra-regionalism and extra-nationalism had developed a tendency to ignore racial difference, or had encouraged preliminary commitments to inclusion, Azusa Street drove the train to its destination as Blacks ministered to and prayed alongside whites.

Several influential white Holiness ministers, on hearing the news about the breakthrough in achieving Spirit Baptism, made the pilgrimage to Azusa only to be forced through a secular crisis in which they had to overcome their racism to achieve the gift of speaking-in-tongues. The most notable of these was Gaston Barnabas Cashwell (1862–1916), the so-called Apostle of Pentecost to the South. A large, blond man, Cashwell left the Methodists to join the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1903. In November 1906, as news of the Azusa revival spread through Holiness networks, Cashwell decided to come to Los Angeles and receive the Baptism in Spirit. Heading immediately from the train station to Azusa, Cashwell opened the door and was stunned to see Seymour preaching to a mixed-race congregation. Previously unaware of Azusa's interracial composition, the strongly prejudiced minister left immediately after a young Black man placed his hands on Cashwell's head and prayed for him to be Spirit baptized. Later that night, however, he experienced what he called a "crucifixion" and Damascene conversion. Returning to Azusa the following day, Cashwell "lost his pride" and asked Seymour and other Blacks to lay their hands on his head to facilitate the gift of speaking-in-tongues, which he received.⁹⁴

⁹³Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 74.

⁹⁴Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 123.

Returning to North Carolina, Cashwell rented an old tobacco warehouse and, on December 31, began a revival that would “result in the conversion of most of the holiness movement in the Southeast to the pentecostal view.”⁹⁵ Cashwell invited the majority of the ministry for the South’s three largest Holiness groups—the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the Free-Will Baptist Church—and brought them and their congregations into Pentecostalism-with-tongues.

When public journalism reported on Pentecostals, it was not only to mock, but also to stir up moral panic over its racial mixtures, often suggesting that whites, and especially female whites, were degraded through association with Blacks. The *Los Angeles Daily Times* article quoted above, for example, is juxtaposed in the paper’s print layout with another above-the-fold story, headlined “Pretty White Wife Weary of Black Husband / Friendless Girl’s Story of Sorry Match / Claims She Loved Negro when Married.” Yet this reportage was less as a statement of anxiety among Angelinos in general than a sign of the approaching limits of tolerance among Los Angeles elites, given that the articles appeared in a newspaper that had been largely supportive of the city’s Black population and had previously opposed segregation.⁹⁶ Before the major influx of white migrants in the 1920s, Los Angeles was perhaps the metropole most amenable to overcoming racial divides in the United States.

While Los Angeles grew slowly throughout the 1890s, the city’s population doubled between 1900 and 1906; in 1906, nearly a quarter of all religious congregations belonged to foreign language and ethnic groups.⁹⁷ A spike in the city’s Black population occurred in April 1903, when Henry E. Huntington brought in 2000 laborers, many of whom were Black, to break a strike by Mexican workers on his Pacific Electric Company’s local railroad, and by 1910 Los Angeles

⁹⁵Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 124.

⁹⁶Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 52–5.

⁹⁷Cecil M. Robeck Jr, “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches: Two Worlds in Conflict in Los Angeles’ African American Community,” in *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*, ed. Amos Yong and Estrelida Y. Alexander (New York: NYU Press), 21–42; 22–3.

had the largest Black urban population west of Houston.⁹⁸ General Harrison Gray Otis, the fiercely antiunion editor of the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, encouraged Blacks to come to Los Angeles in support of Huntington and helped finance the local Afro-American League.⁹⁹

Black Americans arriving at this time encountered a city that was exceptionally welcoming by contemporary US standards. California had civil rights legislation dating back to the 1880s.¹⁰⁰ Los Angeles had racially integrated classrooms (which nearly all Black children by 1910 attended), hospitals, and a significant professional and small-business Black population.¹⁰¹ It was also the first American city to have Black firemen and policemen, and did not practice hotel or restaurant segregation.¹⁰² The city's white Republican elites had made a successful alliance with the Black community and often advocated for them.¹⁰³ After some hotels and restaurants began to refuse service to Blacks in August, 1906, Mayor A. C. Harper persuaded the city council to pass a May, 1907 ordinance prohibiting the use of segregationist signs in "saloons, restaurants and other places of public convenience."¹⁰⁴ Pullman porters likely preferred to live in Los Angeles not only because the city was a line terminus but also because this mobile group had a unique ability to see and experience the broad horizon of conditions for Blacks in the United States at the time.¹⁰⁵

These conditions meant that when W. E. B. Du Bois visited Los Angeles in May 1913, as a guest of the African Wesley Chapel

⁹⁸Robeck, "The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches," 23; Quintard Taylor, "Urban Black Labor in the West, 1849–1949: Reconceptualizing the Image of a Region" in *African American Urban Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present*, ed. Joe W. Trotter with Earl Lewis and Tera W. Hunter (London: Palgrave, 2004), 99–120; 105.

⁹⁹Taylor, "Urban," 105; Vivian Deno, "Holy Ghost Nation: Race, Gender, and Working-class Pentecostalism, 1906–1926" (University of California, Irvine, PhD, 2002), 40–1.

¹⁰⁰Robeck, "The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches," 25.

¹⁰¹Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 56; Marne L. Campbell, "The Newest Religious Sect Has Started In Los Angeles: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and the Origins of the Pentecostal Movement, 1906–1913," *The Journal of African American History*, 95:1 (Winter 2010), 5.

¹⁰²Nelson, "For Such a Time," 183.

¹⁰³Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 329.

¹⁰⁴Robeck, "The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches," 25.

¹⁰⁵Deno, "Holy Ghost Nation," 42.

and as part of a highly successful and well-attended speaking tour at white majority universities, he wrote in *The Crisis* about “the hospitality of all its races” there. According to Marne Campbell, Du Bois “deemed Los Angeles among the best places for African Americans to live in the entire nation because of the relative freedom from overt discrimination in housing, employment, and the political arena.”¹⁰⁶ “The California Number” (August 1913) of *The Crisis* is in fact an early example of Los Angeles boosterism with the cover photograph of a Black middle-class family sitting in front of a palm tree on the grass front lawn of an elegant home as if to visually insist on the historic transformation of Blacks from being property to self-sufficient property owners. In contrast to Blacks in San Francisco (criticized as “listless”) and Stockton (“somewhat stagnant and dull eyed”), Black Angelinos “are pushing and energetic. They are without doubt the most beautifully housed group of colored people in the United States. They are full of push and energy and are used to working together.” While admitting that instances of racial prejudice against Blacks do occur in Los Angeles (his examples are discrimination in clothes stores and restaurants), Du Bois notes that “the better class of people, colored and white, can and do meet each other. There is a great deal of co-operation and good will and the black folk are fighters and not followers of the doctrine of surrender.”¹⁰⁷ Acknowledging the presence of anti-Asian attitudes and legislation, he nevertheless paints an optimistic picture: “California is a country where men and things move rapidly, and they usually go ahead.”¹⁰⁸

While Du Bois’ vision was, unsurprisingly, concerned primarily with professional and bourgeois citizens, conditions were also relatively promising for those lower on the economic scale, especially for the groups just above hard manual labor, in what might be called the upper working-class or blue-collar middle class. Los Angeles was relatively welcoming for racial minorities; there was as yet no clearly marked ghetto and Blacks lived in mixed-race quarters around the city, where class was more telling than race in the logic of social

¹⁰⁶Campbell, “The Newest Religious Sect,” 1; Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 77.

¹⁰⁷W. E. B. Du Bois, “Colored California,” *The Crisis* (August 1913), 192–5.

¹⁰⁸*The Crisis* (August 1913), 174.

organization.¹⁰⁹ Bonnie Brae and the early Azusa circle are emblematic in this respect. Descriptions of the early Black members of Azusa identify them as working-class washerwomen, railway porters, and janitors, but in terms of the period's intersections of race and class categories, these vocational titles imply relative respectability and aspiration. Flammig notes that despite the period's characteristic structures of subordination, "still, Los Angeles was a good place to find work, because the city's phenomenal growth generated so much employment, including many of the service and labor jobs that black urban southerners were accustomed to. (Black Angelenos experienced no 'proletarianization'—no shift from farmwork to factory labor—such as that experienced by many blacks who followed the Great Migration north.)"¹¹⁰

Many college-educated Black women took posts in domestic service, but overall fewer Black women had to find work in Los Angeles than elsewhere in the United States, given the city's better job opportunities and class establishment for Black men.¹¹¹ Pullman porters were a relatively privileged stratum and janitorial jobs were often patronage work, given to community leaders by white Republican party elites.¹¹² When janitor Richard Asberry purchased 214 Bonnie Brae, he also kept ownership of his previous home two lots away (the lot in between was empty). With both properties, Asberry owned two lots, each with a front house and back cottage. Seymour's future wife Jennie Moore bought her house, across from Asberry at 217 North Bonnie Brae, with 500 dollars cash in 1896, when she was in her early twenties and working as a cook.¹¹³ A single woman able to purchase her home outright or a man buying a new home without having to sell his old is not a picture of working-class precarity. In general, home ownership for Blacks in Los Angeles was far greater than elsewhere.¹¹⁴ The Bonnie Brae neighborhood was racially mixed;

¹⁰⁹Deno, "Holy Ghost Nation," 20; Flammig notes that there was no effective real estate segregation until after 1910. Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 66–7.

¹¹⁰Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 70.

¹¹¹Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 70–1.

¹¹²Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 73.

¹¹³Robeck, "The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches," 38.

¹¹⁴"In 1910, a striking 36 percent of Los Angeles's black families owned their homes. Few cities in the North or Midwest had black home-ownership rates of even 10 percent, and none exceeded 15 percent." Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 51.

for example, the white surgeon Henry Sheridan Keyes, who had come to Los Angeles from the South in 1900 and was in Smale's Holiness congregation, also lived on the street before he spoke-in-tongues.

Du Bois noted that there was more discrimination against Asians than Blacks in Los Angeles, but even here the period saw new efforts at overcoming racial divides. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Arts Students League of Los Angeles, dedicated to modern styles, was founded on April 18, 1906 (the same day as the *Los Angeles Daily Times* article on Azusa). One of the first institutions of Japanese and Anglo-American cooperation in the arts, the League moved in December of that year to Blanchard Hall, which, at 231–235 South Broadway, was only a few blocks from Azusa Street.¹¹⁵ Thus, the Azusa revival took place in an environment marked by both racial equality and initial instances of being blocked from greater opportunity as new signs of housing, employment, and service discrimination began to appear.

Azusa's vision of racial ecumenism worked to counter creeping attempts at segregation. Frank Bartleman said of the revival, "Brother Seymour was recognized as the nominal leader in charge. But we had no pope or hierarchy. We were 'brethren.'"¹¹⁶ If Azusa began as a mainly Black congregation and sparked cross-racial ecumenism, it nevertheless became "a majority white event with 300 whites and about 25 African Americans by September 1906."¹¹⁷

But cracks started to appear. Responding to letters from Seymour, Parham came to Los Angeles in October 1906, doubtless to assume personal command. Yet while Parham was willing to affirm an interracial ministry, he was not an advocate of racial equality.¹¹⁸ A believer in Anglo-Israel theory, which describes Anglo-Saxons as descendants of the "lost" tribes of Israel, Parham spoke against racial intermarriage, which he claimed had been the sin leading to Noah's flood. Parham's disgust at Azusa's interracialism became quickly evident, and after a few sermons he was effectively asked

¹¹⁵Will South, Marian Yoshiki-Kovinick, Julia Armstrong-Totten, *A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles, 1906–1953* (Berkeley: Heyday, 2008).

¹¹⁶Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 57.

¹¹⁷David Daniels III, "North American Pentecostalism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press), 73–92: 77.

¹¹⁸Goff, *Fields White*, 131.

to leave. His stance on race then hardened, so that the “paternalistic racism which he had practiced prior to Azusa Street gave way to a harsher, more blatant racism.”¹¹⁹ Writing about Azusa in 1912, Parham complained:

Men and women, whites and black, knelt together or fell across one another; frequently a white woman, perhaps of wealth and culture, could be seen thrown back in the arms of a big “buck nigger,” and held tightly thus as she shivered and shook in freak imitation of Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame!¹²⁰

Parham’s jeremiad against Azusa was limited, in effect, as he soon fell from grace. After failing to wrest control of Dowie’s Zion City, whispers about his personal behavior were confirmed when he was arrested in Texas in July 1907 on a felony sodomy charge with a Jewish man half his age.¹²¹ The other was possibly a prostitute, as he had been previously arrested for the theft of 60 dollars from a man at San Antonio’s Hotel Arthur. Both charges were dismissed but Parham’s reputation was left in tatters. His reputation sank even further after a murder by a Zion convert at a time when Parham was seeking to wrest control of the northern religious community.¹²² By the late 1920s, a diminished Parham was trying to find new audiences by praising the reconstituted Ku Klux Klan.¹²³

A more serious blow to Azusa came through Clara Lum, a Holiness adherent who had moved to Los Angeles and worked as Smale’s stenographer, became a crucial part of Seymour’s administrative and communication team, coediting the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, answering a steady stream of letters concerning Azusa, and communicating with the leadership of Holiness affiliates.¹²⁴ Seymour considered marrying the white and previously divorced Lum, but hesitated because he disapproved of divorce. When the pastor later married Jennie Moore, a Black woman, on May 13, 1908, Lum is said

¹¹⁹Goff, *Fields White*, 131–2.

¹²⁰Goff, *Fields White*, 132.

¹²¹Goff, *Fields White*, 136–7, 138

¹²²Goff, *Fields White*, 143.

¹²³Goff, *Fields White*, 157.

¹²⁴Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 47–53.

to have been consumed by sexual jealousy. She moved to Portland, taking with her the organization's mailing lists, which included over 20,000 regional, national, and international contacts. This left Azusa with a much diminished publicity machine.¹²⁵ The marriage also roiled Azusa's congregation and points elliptically at fraying interracialism. When Seymour consulted Charles Mason, a founding pastor of the Church of God in Christ, about the advisability of marrying Lum, Mason is anecdotally reported to have cautioned against an interracial union. As Jennie Moore described herself as "Ethiopian" on her marriage certificate, the distinctive keyword suggests she might have been leaning to pan-Africanism.¹²⁶

By 1909, the revival had flagged and only a small and mainly Black core remained, many from the original Bonnie Brae group. Services were held once a week, as opposed to the continuous services of 1906. In the space of three years, the Pentecostal group had splintered through doctrinal disputes over the status of the Trinity and questions as to whether speaking-in-tongues was a necessity for, or an instantaneous and conclusive sign of, Baptism in the Spirit. Whatever the motivations behind the doctrinal disagreements, the result was to reinforce and establish racial divides. These divisions subsequently became institutionalized in separations leading to the formation of overwhelmingly racially separated groups. After the 1908 split of the now speaking-in-tongues Fire-Baptized Holiness Association into white and black organizations, others followed: the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1913, the Church of God in Christ in 1914, and Assemblies of God in 1914, to cite a few of the larger organizations. By 1915 Seymour had to insist that no white person could occupy a leadership role at Azusa until the divide was resolved, and that such measures were necessary "to keep down race war" and "friction" in the churches.¹²⁷ By 1924, the racial divide within Pentecostalism was nearly complete.¹²⁸ Jennie Moore soldiered on

¹²⁵Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 51–3; Alexander, *Black Fire*, 143–4; Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 319.

¹²⁶Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 310; Chas. H. Barfoot, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Making of Modern Pentecostalism, 1890–1926* (London: Routledge, 2011), 137; Nelson, "For Such a Time," 217.

¹²⁷Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 129; see all of 128–33.

¹²⁸Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 147–9; Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 221; Alexander, *Black Fire*, 156.

after Seymour's death in 1922, but eventually lost both Azusa and her personal home to the bank during the Depression. When asked if they would rescue the original Azusa building from destruction, the now all-white Assemblies of God refused, saying that they were "not interested in relics," a response now seen as their means of erasing collective memory of their debt to Black Americans.¹²⁹

Yet, by focusing on the mid-1910s as a return to racial (and gender) discrimination, we overlook the century's first decade as a time of popular antiracism within emerging institutions. While the Azusa revival lasted only three (or more) years in its initial phase, this was far beyond the duration of most single-location revivals, and the event achieved extraordinary public visibility. Azusa's ability to expand speaking-in-tongues Pentecostalism came from their commitment to appropriating and building durable institutional resources.

Emergent Pentecostalism may have had a greater tolerance for spontaneity within its services and loosely defined leadership structures, but it was not institutionally incompetent or weak. Azusa was fortunate to have occurred in a city with one of the largest and most active Holiness activist networks, rivaled only by Chicago's, which provided crucial personnel and infrastructure for its growth. According to Bartleman, the revival attracted experienced personnel from its earliest days: "One reason for the depth of the work at 'Azusa' was the fact that the workers were not novices. They were largely called and prepared for years, from the Holiness ranks, and from the mission field, etc. They had been burnt out, tried and proven. They were largely seasoned veterans . . . pioneers, 'shock troops,' the Gideon's three hundred, to spread the fire around the world."¹³⁰ Phineas Bresee's Church of the Nazarene and Joseph Smale's First New Testament Church were not only active but committed to church or mission planting. Bresee and Smale attracted over 1000 worshippers each to their Sunday services, and Bresee's Church of the Nazarene, founded in 1895, had about a dozen congregations in the area by 1906.¹³¹ As word of the revival's startling success circulated, many from these churches went over to Azusa. Thus

¹²⁹Bloch-Hoell, *Pentecostal Movement*, 39.

¹³⁰Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 81.

¹³¹Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 85–6.

Seymour's revival was amazingly successful in hegemonizing and incorporating the preexisting leadership of Holiness ministries, and these other leaders, after initial doubt or hesitation, swiftly transformed themselves into hubs of Pentecostal organization. After visitors like Cashwell or Charles Mason experienced Azusa, they returned to pentecostalize their home congregations, adding their organizational resources to the cause, so that the movement was not dependent on a *single* minister as had been the case with earlier Holiness churches. Additionally, many declining Holiness organizations were greatly renewed as they joined in Pentecostalism's surge. The Church of God, for example, increased from twenty members in 1902 to over one thousand in thirty-one churches by 1910.¹³²

The Azusa saints were equally effective in mobilizing secular resources to advertise their presence. The sensationalizing *Los Angeles Daily Times* account helped fuel news about the mission, especially given its promotional benefit in appearing to prophesy the Great Earthquake in San Francisco. The first waves of outward missionizing from Azusa correlate with the final stops of Los Angeles' streetcar network at the time, so that Otis and Huntington incidentally provided powerful structural mediums for the spread of Pentecostalism.¹³³

Capitalizing on the talent and experience of seasoned editors and managers such as Clara Lum, Azusa also developed extensive mailing lists, epistolary communications, and newspaper circulation. Pentecostalism is often approached as an oral faith, but this emphasis overlooks its profound commitment to print distribution. Malcolm John Taylor notes Azusa's dedication to publishing its newspaper *The Apostolic Faith*.¹³⁴ By March 1907 it was distributing the monthly publication to more than 40,000 and to overseas destinations including Great Britain, without any subscription requirement.¹³⁵ Bartleman ultimately distributed more than 75,000 copies of the earthquake tract. Azusa's newspaper was echoed by others and,

¹³²Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, 88.

¹³³Robeck, *Azusa Mission*, 95, 205–6.

¹³⁴Malcolm John Taylor, "Publish and Be Blessed: A Case Study in Early Pentecostal Publishing History: 1906–1926" (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, 1994).

¹³⁵Taylor, "Publish," 85.

by 1908, the Apostolic Faith Directory listed more than twenty-one different Pentecostal magazines, including fourteen in the United States, two in Britain, and single outlets in the Netherlands, South Africa, India, Hong Kong, and Japan.¹³⁶ The movement's publications spread the message effectively and took advantage of the jump in literacy levels among Black and white Americans at the end of the nineteenth century. Southern Pentecostals became avid readers of ministry publications at a time when illiteracy levels were quickly falling.¹³⁷ Many had their first experience of being within a community of readers through these largely free texts, rather than purchased newspapers or magazines.

Pentecostals were likewise committed to building permanent educational and architectural structures. While itinerant revivals in open-air canvas tents were retained from the Methodist tradition, Pentecostals created fixed buildings when possible. Similarly, while the Bible college may have been an invention of the late nineteenth-century Holiness movement, Pentecostals were quick to embrace the idea, especially as it modeled itself on secular and prestigious universities rather than the older and less firmly institutionalized form of Methodist Sunday School class meetings.

The sophistication of Azusa's institutional initiative within pockets of relative prosperity and possibility for Black Americans suggests the need for a different account of what enabled emergent Pentecostalism's dizzying growth from 1906 to the mid-1910s. More specifically, from our perspective: how can speaking-in-tongues be integrated within, or alter, our understanding of modernism, and how can we understand its expressions in that context?

Understanding Pentecostalism and speaking-in-tongues

Pentecostalism has often been read in sociological terms as an instance of "social strain," and speaking-in-tongues consequently

¹³⁶Taylor, "Publish," 71.

¹³⁷Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 100, 113.

seen as a device generated by subjects who are simultaneously confused and repelled by their entry into urban and modernized conditions.¹³⁸ Following Niebuhr's use of Troeltsch's church-sect distinction, Pentecostalism is presented as a case of social dislocation or strain, cultural shock, and psychological distress.¹³⁹ Henry Holt's 1940 discussion of Holiness and Pentecostal churches in the American South articulates such claims in their classic form, arguing that Pentecostalism is "the natural product of the social disorganization and cultural conflict which have attended the over-rapid urbanward migration and concomitant urbanization of an intensely rural . . . population" who experience "acute social maladjustment" and seek to "recapture their sense of security through religious revival and reform." The form is thus "reactionary and reformist" and "its beliefs and ethics are drawn from a disintegrating rural agricultural tradition" that seeks to "raise their individual or group status above that of their class."¹⁴⁰ Yet social strain accounts often conflict with actual practices, as seen in a classic deprivation account like Liston Pope's 1942 *Millhands and Preachers*.

Pope spent several months in 1938–39 in Gaston County, North Carolina, asking about the role of religious leaders in containing the Communist-led Loray Mill strike, in the months before the 1929 crash, when ministers used the perceived threat of Communist atheism to persuade mill workers not to support the efforts of union activists. Pope presents the region as an ideal test case for examining the interrelations between "the simplicity of its economic forms and diversity of its religious forms." Further, Gaston County had experienced exemplary conditions of combined and uneven development: "within the memory of its oldest inhabitants, an agricultural economy has been superseded by phenomenally

¹³⁸The most comprehensive survey of sociological approaches to Pentecostalism remains Kilian McDonnell, *Charismatic Renewal and the Churches* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976). For a more recent bibliographic survey, see Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 403–5, 413, 676–7.

¹³⁹For a survey of this line of criticism, see Sean McCloud, *Divine Hierarchies: Class in American Religion and Religious Studies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁰Holt, "Holiness Religion," 741.

industrial development . . . Though it had been devoted almost exclusively to agricultural pursuits in 1870, the county was able in 1939 to claim a larger number of textile plants than any other county in the world and was manufacturing 80 percent of the fine combed cotton yarn produced in the United States."¹⁴¹

Dividing the county into three social strata—the rural classes, the formerly rural but newly industrialized millhands, and the uptown bourgeoisie—he discounts a reading based on social strain, and argues that it cannot fully account for the county's particular social and religious dynamics.¹⁴² Much like E. P. Thompson decades later in *The Making of the English Working Class*, Pope proposes a social control interpretation, noting the way the local ministry worked to dampen labor resistance and align their congregations with the mill owners' interests.

Pope's meticulous argument encounters difficulty, however, when he becomes fascinated by the Pentecostal Holiness and Church of God ministries, even though they made up less than 10 percent of Gastonia's churches and were vastly outnumbered by Baptists and Methodists. Pope rejects the thesis that Pentecostals are retreating from the modern world, despite their reluctance to become involved in the play of formal public politics, and argues instead that they are enacting a compensatory response to a world that will not have them.

The sects substitute religious status for social status, a fact which may help to account for their emphasis on varying degrees of Grace . . . Because they have no jewellery to wear, they make refusal to wear jewellery, including wedding rings, a religious requirement. They transmute poverty into a symptom of Grace . . . Many of them cannot take baths at will, because of lack of facilities, but they can practice the washing of the feet of the saints, and rejoice thereby at their superiority to older denominations which have come to regard such practices as uncouth and unesthetic.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹Pope, *Millhands*, viii.

¹⁴²Pope, *Millhands*, 134.

¹⁴³Pope, *Millhands*, 137–8.

Pope's account suggests that it is not cultural alienation but economic deprivation, even during the 1920s boom years, that leads the millhands to reject consumer markers as a "form of reassurance or of escape."¹⁴⁴ This claim about the compensatory otherworldliness of the sects appears to be more contradictory than Pope claims, however. When his account turns to events during the strike, he acknowledges that the Pentecostal and Holiness ministers were the *exception* to the local ministry as they supported the strike despite their natural antipathy to unions, let alone Communists.¹⁴⁵

In what is still one of the most comprehensively historicized efforts to explain the motivations and dynamics of emergent Pentecostalism, Robert Mapes Anderson upholds social strain and deprivationist claims. He observes that "the period from about 1890 to 1925 during which the [Pentecostal] movement emerged and took shape . . . were the years of transition from the competitive, entrepreneurial phase of capitalism to its monopolistic, bureaucratic phase." In this context, he reasons that Pentecostalism emerges from "the specific circumstances of the working poor . . . mostly semi-skilled and unskilled workers" who are brought into the cities as part of the period's "transportation revolution" and general "urban-industrialization."¹⁴⁶

For Anderson, Pentecostals "came largely from rural-agrarian origins and experienced either the cultural shock of transplantation to urban areas or, in the case of those who remained on the land, the pain of adjustment to conditions of rural decay stemming from urban-industrialization." In this situation, "they faced all those social or psychological problems involved in either breaking into modern urban culture or in its breaking in upon them in rural environments."¹⁴⁷ Their "adjustment . . . was exacerbated by their generally low social status" and their religious expression was "one small part of a widespread, long-term protest against the whole thrust of modern

¹⁴⁴Pope, *Millhands*, 89.

¹⁴⁵Pope, *Millhands*, 277. For more on worker radicalism and Pentecostalism, see Jarod Roll, *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁶Anderson, *Vision*, 225–7.

¹⁴⁷Anderson, *Vision*, 226. Cheryl Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, emphasizes Black Pentecostalism as a mode in which "exile" is represented.

urban-industrial capitalist society . . . a many-sided reaction against 'modernity,'" a "withdrawal from the social struggle and passive acquiescence to a world they hated and wanted to escape."¹⁴⁸

Whereas Pope frames Pentecostal styles as compensation for primarily economic marginality, Anderson emphasizes the cultural dimension of this alienation. Speaking-in-tongues achieves success as an ideal compensatory form of complaint against the modernization of a society in which "a standardized but rapidly changing mode of verbal communication has become increasingly important . . . But those who became Pentecostals were lacking in verbal skills because of their minimal access to education and to other social institutions that produce and distribute culture . . . most . . . were handicapped by regional, ethnic, racial, and foreign accents, and many who were recent immigrants could hardly speak English at all."¹⁴⁹ Anderson notes that, while early Pentecostals might be able to alter some of the "putatively adverse characteristics of their racial-ethnic, regional, and cultural heritage such as clothing and eating styles, and norms of behaviour and belief . . . language was more intractable. Southern whites and blacks could not readily overcome their accents and dialects . . . In short, language was a central problem in the day-to-day lives of many of those who were drawn to the Pentecostal movement. Virtually powerless and speechless in the larger society, they found in Pentecostalism power and speech, however illusory, beyond their fondest dreams."¹⁵⁰ Although it was "a form of regressive speech," according to Anderson, speaking-in-tongues also constituted a "common Pentecostal 'language,' bridging the gaps between the many accents, dialects, and languages of the Pentecostals, and providing a 'linguistic' basis for a new community of spirit."¹⁵¹

Anderson, then, provides a compelling account of how a recently urbanized and weakly educated white and Black population found itself barred from entry into the American Dream of middle-class ascent, not least because of regional and racial dialects, and turned

¹⁴⁸Anderson, *Vision*, 222–3.

¹⁴⁹Anderson, *Vision*, 233–4.

¹⁵⁰Anderson, *Vision*, 234.

¹⁵¹Anderson, *Vision*, 234–5.

to speaking-in-tongues as a practice in which “improper English” becomes transvalued as a means of empowerment and not exclusion. On this reading, Holy-Roller jerks and spasms likewise become legible as inverted citations of disrespected comportment.

However, rather than understand Pentecostalism and its speaking-in-tongues as a primarily compensatory strategy, a strategy of rejection, we see it as a cultural consequence of combined and uneven development in which the intentionally pursued restoration of ostensible primitive activities appears in a new light, as the tactic and marker of a social faction that seeks to *embrace* capitalist modernity but is prevented from achieving its full fruits due to the hierarchies embedded within the world-system. Rather than understanding the turn to Apostolic faith as an alienated retreat from or rejection of the modern, that is, we see it as the sign of aspirational frustration, the experience-system of *desiring and being denied incorporation and ascent*. Unlike Anderson, who describes Pentecostalism as a vision of the disinherited, we see it as a vision of those obstructed from entering the fold. Emergent Pentecostalism occurs in mixed social spaces where groups are simultaneously offered class aspirations while also being made aware of the limits of these aspirations.

Hence our disagreement with Anderson does not concern his many astute insights but his approach to class and related status categories, as evidenced, for example, in the slippage that occurs when he uses subaltern vocational categories (e.g. domestic or custodial service) to describe (multiple) property-owning citizens as marginal proletarians. The term *deprivation* sutures together economic poverty and social exclusion, but these are not always socially cemented as a homogeneous whole. We contend that Pentecostalism’s energy does not shift its actors away from the modern world-system, but registers their disappointed expectations of achieving a more advantageous position within it, and thus their active and desiring engagement with it. If Pentecostals revive older or “primitive” aspects of religious culture, they are not engaging in conservative organicism, but repurposing old possibilities to construct new and otherwise improbable alliances that may allow them a better base from which to leap forward. For Trotsky, this is the fraction of cultural workers, broadly defined, searching for new partners in the countryside. For the Pentecostals, this is the fusion

of urban Blacks with whites in the industrializing semiperiphery or backcountry.

Azusa happens in Los Angeles precisely because conditions there for Black Americans were among the most promising then available, even if they were not truly enabling. The weakness of equality, for instance, was witnessed not only with the race riots in Atlanta, as a “best case” city for Black uplift in the South, but also in early efforts to discriminate in consumption and housing.¹⁵² Azusa’s congregants were not simply disinherited proletarians, as Du Bois had noted when he contrasted the social environment of Los Angeles Blacks with that of San Francisco, which was “in the grip of labor folk and radicals.”¹⁵³ The Azusa saints were not disgusted by what Los Angeles had to offer, but the reverse: their initial experience of enfranchisement collided with the understanding that it would not be fully granted, and produced a compensatory culture of restoration.

Simultaneously, a host of whites were also, inexplicably to themselves, failing to achieve the social ascent promised in the California dream. If Azusa was a moment when whites were willing to be led by Blacks, the attraction that these whites felt in experiencing its worship style was not a result of its Blackness received as putative primitivism, but a recognition that these gestures were already surrounded by the nimbus of a struggle for social ascent that was deeply compelling. Pentecostalism spread throughout the northern, industrializing South because of its paradoxical nature: it was not a product of the deep rural South, but was also denied the developmental velocity that marked the industrialized North. These regions embraced speaking-in-tongues not because they were backward or repelled by the new, but because they were poised frustratingly on the threshold of the modern and offered only a partial or incomplete version of its benefits.

If recurrent Pentecostal energies are strongest in times of *ostensible prosperity* and not economic downturn, then Pentecostalism’s

¹⁵²*The Colored American Magazine* on May 12, 1907 was already listing instances of the incipient residential discrimination in Los Angeles by 1907. E. H. Rydall, “California for Colored Folks,” *The Colored American Magazine*, 12–13 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1964), 386–8.

¹⁵³*The Crisis*, “Colored California,” 195.

waves of restoration—in the 1920s, 1950s, and 1980s—predictably occur during phases of economic boom and putative wealth, at times when the gap between aspirational possibilities and enacted returns are greatest. Similarly, Pentecostalism thrives in the contemporary moment in global zones—Nigeria, Korea, South Africa, and parts of South America—precisely in up-and-coming nations in the global market, those seeking to enter the club of the core from the semiperiphery.¹⁵⁴

In this light, we can begin to explore speaking-in-tongues as a mode in which an inconvenient truth is communicated in a protected fashion. To do so, we turn to Thomas Szasz's account of the way that protolanguage, or what we call semiperipheral speech, conveys the experience-system of obstructed aspiration.

Protolanguage and semiperipheral speech

From the beginning, journalistic and secular academic commentary have often regarded speaking-in-tongues as a form of collective suggestion and mimetic hysteria.¹⁵⁵ As he became hostile to Seymour, Parham claimed that Azusa relied on hypnotism to achieve speaking-in-tongues.¹⁵⁶ Such reactions, even more than the sociological approaches we have reviewed, beg the question of how we can “read” or respond to speaking-in-tongues. But rather than putting Pentecostalism on the psychoanalytic couch as a subject for hermeneutic interpretation, we can take its speech-acts seriously as a form of pragmatic representation in a manner akin to Thomas Szasz's analysis of behavior previously categorized as (female) hysteria.

¹⁵⁴Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 71–82.

¹⁵⁵Frederick Morgan Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals: A Study in Mental and Social Evolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1905); Frederick G. Henke, “The Gift of Tongues and Related Phenomena at the Present Day,” *The American Journal of Theology* 13:2 (April 1909), 193–206; and Charles William Shumway, “A Critical History of Glossolalia” (Dissertation, Boston University, 1919).

¹⁵⁶Charles Fox Parham, “The Difference between the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Anointing-Spooks,” in Charles Fox Parham, *The Everlasting Gospel* (Baxter Springs, KS: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1911), 70–3.

Szasz's fullest treatment of his opposition to the depth hermeneutics of the self, epitomized by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, comes in his 1966 monograph *The Myth of Mental Illness*.¹⁵⁷ The book unhelpfully shares the same title as an earlier 1960 essay, although that essay nowhere appears as either a chapter or section of the monograph.¹⁵⁸ The two texts are nevertheless linked in that the 1960 essay presents a succinct, manifesto-like version of the argument that is more fully developed in the later book. The essay argues that mental illness is not an actually existing object or concrete phenomenon, but a group of theories or constructs that have been mistaken for "'objective truths' (or 'facts')." ¹⁵⁹ Mental disturbances should not be categorized as "illness," Szasz insists, and the term should be reserved for symptoms that have a biological or neurological origin. Rather than approach questions of cognitive or behavioral dysfunction from the conventionally physiological-medical perspective, he reframes them as primarily relational and communicative questions concerning "the social intercourse of persons."¹⁶⁰ As he considers "people's troubles" to be "caused by conflicting human needs, aspirations, and values, opinions, social aspirations, values, and so forth," he replaces the term "mental illness" with "*problems in living*." Insisting that "problems in human relations can be analyzed, interpreted, and given meaning only within given social and ethical contexts," Szasz contends that "what people now call mental illnesses are for the most part *communications* expressing unacceptable ideas, often framed, moreover, in an unusual idiom."¹⁶¹

Concluding with "the proposition that mental illness is a myth, whose function it is to disguise and thus render more palatable the bitter pill of moral conflicts in human relations," Szasz asserts the fundamental anti-psychiatry view that the conceptual systems currently defining mental illness function as "social tranquilizers."

¹⁵⁷Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (London: Paladin, 1972).

¹⁵⁸Thomas Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," *American Psychologist* 15:2 (February 1960), 113–18.

¹⁵⁹Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," 113.

¹⁶⁰Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," 117.

¹⁶¹Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," 116.

They are complicit with the maintenance of normative social order and regulation, silence the expression of “problems in living” by labeling awkward observations and behavior as deviant, and misrepresent such problems in terms of medical rather than social-relational causation.¹⁶²

For most readers, the basic thrust of Szasz’s early claims will appear nearly self-evident and commonsensical after the wide acceptance of Michel Foucault’s arguments on social discipline and normalization. But his view of the role of what he calls “protolanguage,” developed in the subsequent *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1965), can help us propose another way of hearing speaking-in-tongues in Pentecostalism, one that does not depend primarily on the depth-interpretative mode of modernist hermeneutics.

Szasz argues for the distinction between two broad categories of speech: one, the symbolic, is directed to abstract claims that can ultimately be phrased as yes/no questions; the other, what he calls protolanguage, attempts to constitute and repair social relations without resort to true/false propositions. For Szasz protolanguage cannot be understood by the rules of symbolic language. We will argue, consequently, for comprehending speaking-in-tongues as a protolanguage, which appears weird only when evaluated through the lens of symbolic language’s codes.

Szasz begins by invoking Hans Reichenbach’s definition of three kinds of signs: indexical, iconic, and symbolic. Indexical signs function “through a *causal connection* between object and sign: smoke, for example, is a sign of fire” and require little interpersonal or intercultural interpretation. Iconic signs “stand in a relation of *similarity* to the objects they designate: for example, the photograph of a man or the map of a terrain.” The third category is the type of arbitrary sign emphasized in the so-called linguistic turn of the human sciences: “signs whose relation to the object is purely *conventional* or *arbitrary*: for example, words or mathematical symbols. These are called *conventional signs* or *symbols*. *Symbols* usually do not exist in isolation, but are co-ordinated with each other by a set of rules, called the rules of language . . . In the technical idiom of the logician,

¹⁶²Szasz, “The Myth of Mental Illness,” 118.

we speak of language *only* when communication is mediated by means of systematically coordinated conventional signs. According to this definition, there can be no such thing as a 'body language.' If we wish to express ourselves precisely, we must speak instead of *communication by means of bodily signs.*"¹⁶³

Just as Szasz rejected the term "mental illness" because it obscured problems in living that were not physiological, he rejects the term "body language" because "phenomena such as so-called hysterical paralyses, blindness, deafness, seizures, and so on" are not "conventional linguistic symbols." These phenomena use the body and voice to articulate indexical and iconic meanings, or communications outside the forms of symbolic language: "ordinary speech, *using socially shared symbols* (called language)."¹⁶⁴ Those with extreme problems in living tend to rely on iconic and indexical signs far more than symbolic signs and language.

Additionally, Szasz explains, within symbolic language there is a more abstract level involving what he calls metalanguage or "signs referring to signs. The words 'word,' 'sentence,' 'clause' and 'phrase' are signs belonging to (the first-level) metalanguage." Szasz asserts that the "so-called ordinary language consists of a mixture of object and metalanguages," and reasons that professionals speaking to one another will deploy a larger proportion of metalanguage.¹⁶⁵

Lower in the hierarchy of communication is what Szasz calls *protolanguage*, "a system logically more primitive than the operations of object language" that emphasizes iconic and indexical expression.¹⁶⁶ Thus hysteria (or the hysteric) appears to be confusing not because it (or she) has nothing to communicate clearly, but because it (or she) communicates in a radically different register than symbolic language. We mistakenly assume that communication that is not articulated in symbolic language is not communication at all. The adult use of protolanguage communicates outside of, or in retreat from, symbolic language, and consequently needs to be approached or heard differently than the way in which we approach or hear symbolic language.

¹⁶³Szasz, *The Myth*, 111–12.

¹⁶⁴Szasz, *The Myth*, 112.

¹⁶⁵Szasz, *The Myth*, 114.

¹⁶⁶Szasz, *The Myth*, 115.

When a hysteric employs protolanguage, for Szasz, she (or he) does so because protolanguage “makes communication about an important, but delicate subject possible, while at the same time it helps the speaker disown the disturbing implications of his message.” Consequently, when the psychotherapist attempts to translate a facial tic as a sign of something else, in the same way a symbolic sign refers to a signified, her or his hermeneutics effectively minimizes or ignores the motivation for using protolanguage, since “this type of body language is fostered by circumstances that make direct verbal expression difficult or impossible.”¹⁶⁷ In Szasz’s model, indexical or iconic body signs are used instead of symbolic language because the latter seems too dangerous a way to relate nondominant concerns, even while protolanguage often embodies a meaning that needs little or no symbolic or interpretive decoding to understand.

Protolanguage thus functions in a manner similar to the mode of communication or expression involved in self-cutting.¹⁶⁸ A subject cuts her or his body as a paradoxical twofold means of communication. On the one hand, the individual who is emotionally traumatized begins to wonder if they are alive or not. The pain received from the cut perversely functions as a form of self-communication, conveying the message that if the body can still feel pain, then the subject is still alive and not yet dead. On the other hand, the pain received allows the actual cause of trauma to be displaced and objectified, not because the real source of trauma is not known, but because the subject does not feel that it is possible or permissible to communicate it. In a situation in which the subject cannot communicate in conventional ways concerning experiences of sexual abuse, bullying, family trauma, and so on, the cut provides a way to explain the presence of pain (even if only to her or himself) as emanating from lacerated tissue rather than from tears in the protective social–relational fabric.

Motivation for using protolanguage is thus entirely different than for symbolic or metalanguage. For Szasz, protolanguage belongs to the register of *pragmatics*, rather than *semantics* or semiotics. Whereas semantics is “the study of the relationship between

¹⁶⁷Szasz, *The Myth*, 120.

¹⁶⁸Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London: Verso, 2002), 10. See Marilee Strong, *The Bright Red Scream* (London: Virago, 2000).

signs and objects" and ultimately refers to criteria of verifiability or facticity (the conventional or "informative use of language"), Szasz sees pragmatic speech as language used to establish interpersonal relations, without reference to a statement's verifiability.¹⁶⁹ To use the earlier language of Foucault, pragmatic speech has no concern for *veridiction*; it produces no truth-statement. Szasz's example is the functional difference between the semantic register of language used in a "teaching situation, in which the instructor must convey a certain amount of novel information to the students," and the pragmatic register of casual "small-talk," whose function "is to participate in an easygoing, pleasant human relationship."¹⁷⁰ When we meet someone on the street, we do not ask about the weather to determine if it is in fact a beautiful day. We ask the question to establish a form (however limited) of social relations. A subject experiencing problems in living will communicate more with pragmatic protolanguage than with semantic symbolic forms, since the pressing concern is not the need to verify referential statements, but to express felt damage or hurt.

This difference between the pragmatics of protolanguage and the semantics of symbolic language is crucial to Szasz's rejection of the Freudian distinction between unconscious "mentation" and conscious "knowledge." Freud's error, for Szasz, was to understand the unconscious "as nothing but a language or form of communication," and to model the unconscious as the source of a language operating in the mode of symbolic communication, albeit one in need of decoding.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Lacan's dictum according to which the unconscious is structured like a language would likewise be unacceptable to Szasz. Thus, the psychoanalytic model's dedication to symbolic language and depth interpretation, by failing to distinguish between protolanguage and symbolic language, leads to its misperception of and difficulties in treating hysteria, among other things. One cannot easily translate protolanguage into symbolic language *by means of* symbolic language.

When hysteria is approached or read as symbolic language, the question to be answered is whether the subject is ill. Are the

¹⁶⁹Szasz, *The Myth*, 120, 114.

¹⁷⁰Szasz, *The Myth*, 123.

¹⁷¹Szasz, *The Myth*, 117.

symptoms real, and what do they represent? Szasz sees hysteria differently, as a form of pragmatic speech, and thus first asks about its significance in terms of human relationships. Citing Reichenbach's three functions of protolanguage—informative, affective, and promotive—Szasz writes that the pragmatic syntax of a "typical hysterical body sign" can be paraphrased as: "I am disabled," sick, or hurt, and so on (informative); "Aren't you sorry for me now?" or "You should be ashamed of yourself for having hurt me so!" (affective); or "Do *something* for me!" (promotive).¹⁷² This approach affirms the need for a different clinical practice that attends to pragmatic modes of expression rather than the hermeneutic or symbolic modes that are privileged in classical psychoanalytic models.

In the same fashion, for Szasz, the clinician's goal in a therapeutic encounter is not to decode the patient as an emitter of symbolic speech, but to help the patient regain confidence in non-hurtful social relations, wherein the subject feels that their concerns are heard and considered worthy of interpersonal (and thus, by extension, public) recognition. Rather than make the therapeutic encounter a hermeneutic tribunal that interprets and judges the patient's oral testimony, the clinician aims to create conditions of secure social exchange, so that the patient, through repeated practice, gradually gains the confidence to express her or himself through symbolic language rather than protolanguage. As an example, Szasz comments that a fearful child is better served not by "speaking and listening" in the modes of symbolic rationality, but by "sophisticated forms of seeing, touching, or cuddling." A "few words in the dark" or "the parents' quiet conversation in another room" can do more to establish relationality, which is what the child fears may be lost.¹⁷³ Szasz calls this a "grasping" function of language in that it affirms communality through tactile connection rather than abstract truth-statements.

On this model, a hysteric's body communication is not a form of symbolic, semantic, or semiotic language (presenting a statement that can be answered with a "yes" or "no"), but a pragmatic communication using protolanguage to both highlight a disturbance in social relations and indicate fear about the

¹⁷²Szasz, *The Myth*, 121–2, 124.

¹⁷³Szasz, *The Myth*, 139.

consequences of speaking this “problem in living” in normative language. For the subject, a hysterical fit might be defined as “crazy,” but the punishment for speaking “rationally” is even worse. From this perspective, a patient should not be seen as lying, but as using misinformation to protect her or himself from potential pain or embarrassment. Szasz gives an example of pragmatic misinformation in flirting, where the speaker tries to convey sexual interest, but in ways that could be said to *not* be about sexual interest, lest the recipient is uninterested. The flirter employs a combination of informative, affective, and promotive speech in a safe fashion, rather than posing a directly semantic and hence more risky question (do you want to have sex with me, yes or no?).

By shifting its focus from the semiotic, semantic, or hermeneutic to the pragmatic, cultural studies would supplement the procedures of structuralist anthropology, exemplified by Levi-Strauss, which observes a practice and breaks it into constituent units and oppositional codes (raw/cooked, inside/out, pure/taboo, etc.) in order to understand it as a semantic statement. A protolanguage approach looks for the ways in which the ritual makes new kinds of social relations possible. Using this perspective, the question that arises is whether there are models of social institutions that accept the presence of pragmatic, embodied protolanguage. Are there alternative institutions that privilege tactile, sonic, and visual forms of social communication as a way of building community, such as the “many things that people do together” and modes of embodied interaction such as “dance, music, religious ritual, and the representative arts,” which are not chosen as media for verifiable information, but for the sake of establishing social relations?¹⁷⁴

The Pentecostal practice or event of speaking-in-tongues, as exemplified by Azusa, can be considered in this light, as an example of a social institution that foregrounds pragmatics. Speaking-in-tongues obviously entails much more than the act of utterance for which it is named, as it combines this with numerous other pragmatic features, from the musicality of its vocalizations to the tactility involved in laying on hands, the charged, physicalized, emotionalized interaction

¹⁷⁴Szasz, *The Myth*, 138.

and connection with others in the room, and the quiet repose on the floor in the Upper Room. Speaking-in-tongues pushed Holiness over the threshold and launched a global institution because it “solved” the problem of how to differentiate pragmatic purpose from semantics by highlighting nonsymbolic speech in a public display of motor embodiment.

Cultural Studies in the twenty-first century has seen the rise of a so-called affective turn, which looks to the circulation of feeling and emotion. Yet despite substantial efforts to show the role of the affective in social movements, the results of this scholarship have often been inconclusive, at least partly because, from the perspective we are outlining, the approach has limited itself to one of three aspects of protolanguage. For protolanguage does not simply convey feeling; it also informs as to the cause of the problem and is promotive, seeking intervention. These three elements form what we have called an experience-system.

Viewed as emergent Pentecostalism’s mode of protolanguage, speaking-in-tongues, also includes a promotive demand, even—or especially—if that demand refers to (racial) economic–political differences that cannot be spoken. If protolanguage insists that the receiver do something, the demands of those speaking-in-tongues articulate the aspirations of a lower middle-class group that chafes at its failure to achieve full inclusion within the middle class, but cannot use the language of class since one sign of being bourgeois is the prohibition against acknowledging the presence of class at all. Thus Pentecostalism does not articulate a rejection of or repulsion from modernism, but the disappointment of frustrated aspiration. Pentecostals aspire to but are barred from the modern world-system’s advances and “progress.” Put another way, Pentecostalism is not simply knocking at heaven’s gate, but announces a desire for change so that all may enter and gain a seat at the table of the middle class. This is why Pentecostalism thrives in times of prosperity, when there are hopes and real possibilities of socioeconomic ascent rather than inevitable decline. Downturn phases throw up different cultural productions that remain beyond the horizon of this study.

The Azusa saints, as exemplary emergent Pentecostals, were driven to a vision of incorporation within the bourgeoisie, less

through the acquisition of (elite) higher education credentials (which were beyond their reach) than through experiential fellowship and communality. Yet, if speaking-in-tongues solved one problem, it created another, since it denied itself the symbolic and metalanguage vehicles that might criticize racial, class, and gender exclusions. Nonetheless, speaking-in-tongues' protolanguage did *inform* and *promote* complaints and demands. If its information was not in (standard) English, that does not mean it was bereft of communicative purpose.

In advancing this perspective, we offer two final conceptual and terminological comments. First, because we see the culture of modernism as substantively expressed through protolanguage, we follow Szasz's critical conclusions about using the tools of symbolic language for interpreting protolanguage experiences. In terms of reading, then, we analogously feel a hermeneutic (fundamentally symbolic) approach poorly captures the pragmatics of herme-mimetics. Second, while we affirm protolanguage as a model that helps us construct an alternative approach to modernist signification, we nevertheless must reject the residual Eurocentric and patriarchal connotations that still adhere to the term in Szasz's initial proposal, as in his hands it does remain a fundamentally developmental concept. Thus we adopt the neologism *semiperipheral speech* to give a name to this pragmatic mode that is world-systemic in the way it captures an (experiential) state or cultural threshold that relates (both links and separates) rural peripherality and cosmopolitan coreness. Speaking-in-tongues is semiperipheral speech not only because it emerges within a matrix of semiperipheral cities, but also in terms of its intermediate class and racial position. How then to use this turn to further unfold the pragmatic culture of modernism? To do so, we now want to explore the emergence of semiperipheral speech in other guises, notably in H. P. Lovecraft's weird pulp fiction, where it occupies a state between the ghost tales of oral traditions and the print prestige of canonical high literary and visual modernism.