

2012

The Bicycle in Western Literature: Transformations on Two Wheels

Nanci J. Adler

Rollins College, njadler@cfl.rr.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.rollins.edu/mls>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Adler, Nanci J., "The Bicycle in Western Literature: Transformations on Two Wheels" (2012). *Master of Liberal Studies Theses*. 22.
<http://scholarship.rollins.edu/mls/22>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Rollins Scholarship Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Liberal Studies Theses by an authorized administrator of Rollins Scholarship Online. For more information, please contact rwalton@rollins.edu.

The Bicycle in Western Literature:
Transformations on Two Wheels

*A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Liberal Studies*

by

Nanci J. Adler

May 2012

*Mentor: Dr. Edward H. Cohen
Reader: Dr. Patricia A. Lancaster*

*Rollins College
Hamilton Holt School
Master of Liberal Studies Program*

Winter Park, Florida

“On a bicycle you feel a different person.”

**– Miriam Henderson
in *The Tunnel* by Dorothy Richardson**

Introduction

“A bicycle is a splendid thing,” remarks Bartolomeo Aymo in Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, and many can appreciate this sentiment (207). The childhood memory of the exhilarating moment when one first learns to balance and ride on the two wheels of a bicycle is unforgettable. Bicycling provides a sense of freedom and mobility, a means for exploration and discovery. It is faster and more efficient than walking, and riders are exposed to nature’s elements and social interaction. While for some individuals bicycles are nostalgic reminders of childhood, for others they are used for daily transportation or machines for exercise or competition. The ubiquity of bicycles in our collective experience allows for an easy transition from its utilitarian role to its integration into literature, poetry, song, film, history, and commercial advertising.

Modern media use bicycles to connote a variety of messages, many of which communicate love, carefree lifestyles, health, escape or nostalgia. In the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, Paul Newman and Katharine Ross share a delightful five minute scene on a bicycle which evokes love, friendship and happiness. In *E. T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, the powers of E.T. allow bicycles to soar through the sky (1982). The movies *Breaking Away* (1979), *American Flyers* (1985) and *The Triplets of Belleville* (2003) feature bicycles prominently. Although no bicycles appear in the original novel *The Wizard of Oz*, in the 1939 film version the evil Miss Gulch rides a bicycle to take Toto away from Dorothy; when she turns into a witch, the bicycle becomes her broom.

Television and music also employ bicycles for their emotional impact. In an episode of *Seinfeld*, Elaine sees a small girl’s bicycle in a store that reminds her of her

childhood and is emotionally compelled to buy it; the bicycle later becomes an object of desire and dispute among other characters. Episodes of current television series such as *The Office*, *Bones*, and *Modern Family* include bicycles in their storylines and themes. Bicycles are featured in the 1892 lyrics of *Daisy Bell* by Harry Dacre, which ends: “you’d look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two”; likewise, in lyrics written over a hundred years later by English rock band Queen, their popular hit *Bicycle Race* with the repeats: “I want to ride my bicycle, I want to ride my bike.”

Bicycles are commonly used devices in advertising campaigns. Regions Bank ran a multiyear advertising campaign featuring smiling adults on bicycles and based on the slogan “banking should be easy as riding a bike.” Residential and retirement communities often feature bicycles in advertisements to market family-friendly and safe environments. Bicycles are also found in advertisements that market a wide range of products including pharmaceuticals, investments and food.¹

Western literature from the 1890s to the mid 20th century makes use of bicycles from a variety of perspectives. Fiction writers probe the cultural significance of bicycles; they create bicycle-riding characters who upset social conventions, fall in love, throw bombs, and create new destinies. In some cases, the failure of a character to ride a bicycle reflects a failure to embrace life fully or is a path to tragedy. Often referred to as “machines” by authors of the bicycle boom years between 1890s and 1910, the literary bicycle is a vehicle not merely for transportation, but transformation. Although powered by human muscle, they empower characters searching for personal freedom or growth. Bicycles in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, Émile Zola, Ernest

¹ Specific examples are print advertising for State Street Global Advisors, Celebrex pain relievers, Alli Orlistat weight-loss capsules, Lennar Homes, Jensen Communities, and Soyjoy nutrition bars.

Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Simone de Beauvoir, L.P. Hartley, Samuel Beckett and others are used as either catalysts for or symbols of social and personal transformation.

The bicycle boom of the 1890s that influenced the works of Doyle, Zola and Wells was directly caused by the public's enthusiastic embrace of the newly invented form of bicycle. The modern bicycle, originally called a "safety" bicycle, consisting of two equivalent-sized wheels and a geared pedal and chain system, resulted from a lengthy process of evolution of human powered vehicles. Throughout the nineteenth century, the precursors to the modern bicycle were constantly redesigned and improved. These

vehicles included velocipedes and draisines without pedal systems, precarious high wheels, tricycles and quadricycles. But David V. Herlihy in *Bicycle: The History* explains that it was the invention of the safety bicycle in the 1880s, and the near simultaneous introduction of the pneumatic inner tube and tire system developed by Edouard Michelin, that caused the bicycle explosion (252). Herlihy states that with rapidly improving designs to the low

mounted bicycle, "men and women around the world began to appreciate its vast and varied possibilities, [and] a veritable boom exploded" (251).



Figure 1 - Arthur Conan Doyle on a safety bicycle.
<www.musicbicycles.blogspot.com>

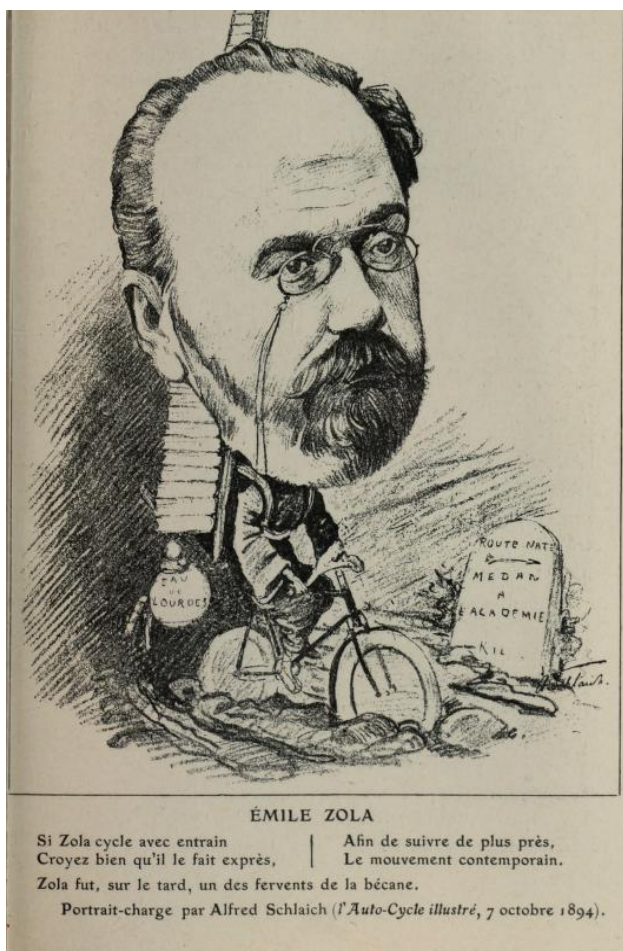


Figure 2 - Émile Zola riding a bicycle by Alfred Schlaich, 1894. Zola en images. Paris: Société d'Édition et de Publications Libraire Félix Juven, 1908, p. 205.

The bicycle's significant impact on western culture was not limited to a particular class or economic status, for individuals from all levels of society took up the increasingly popular activity in the late nineteenth century (Woodforde 92; Herlihy 272-73). Initially the newly designed safety bicycle was eagerly embraced by the well-to-do but was cost prohibitive for the poor and working classes. Mass production, however, quickly created a supply of affordable bicycles (Herlihy 7).

Prominent authors of the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not have to write about cycling from secondary research; they were cyclists themselves. Notably, Émile Zola, H. G Wells, Mark Twain and Arthur Conan Doyle were active participants in the cycling phenomenon. Zola was frequently seen cycling in Paris and Médan, and numerous cartoon sketches from 1892-1894 depict the author on a bicycle (Grand-Carteret 146, 205, 234, 246). H. G. Wells cycled along the very roads he wrote about in *The Wheels of Chance*, and his cycling experiences are the basis of the protagonist's (Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography* 459). Mark Twain wrote in comical fashion about his efforts learning

to ride a bike in his essay “Taming the Bicycle,” while Doyle cited his own favorable cycling experiences in *Scientific American* in 1896 to promote its benefits of health and relaxation (*Cycling Notes* 38). Doyle frequently rode with his wife on a tandem tricycle, a style in vogue with upscale cyclists (Herlihy 227). Drawing on their own cycling experiences, these authors incorporated bicycles into their fictional works in both realistic and symbolic ways.

Doyle, like Wells, Zola and their contemporaries, frequently refers to bicycles as “machines.” Bicycles of this era were not toys but vehicles for adults, and learning to ride them was a serious business (Woodforde 107). The introduction of the safety bicycle in 1885 made it a practical machine whose use extended beyond recreation to everyday transportation, and the machine’s efficiency and safety even prompted postal services, police forces and military units to embrace their utility (Herlihy 258). While the vernacular use of the term “machine” for a bicycle during its early years stressed its value as a tool of progress, in literary works the term illustrates the significance of the bicycle: as a machine it has power, not only to transport individuals, but to transform them.

Later, as the cultural significance of the bicycle diminished following the rise in popularity of the automobile, the literary bicycle evolved. Although automobiles became the fashionable trend and the latest machine of progress, bicycles remained literary devices, but their symbolic use changed. No longer at the forefront of a progressive movement, the bicycle’s transformative powers of independence and social change were mitigated. Post World War I authors still appreciated the value and potential power of bicycles, but the bicycle was not a guaranteed means of positive transformation.

Post-bicycle boom twentieth-century authors such as Ernest Hemingway and Simone de Beauvoir were skilled cyclists. Hemingway cycled frequently while living in Europe and had a deep appreciation of bicycle racing. Beauvoir, in addition to cycling in Paris, took multi-day cycling vacations with Jean-Paul Sartre. The use of bicycles in their works, and the works of Flann O'Brien, Samuel Beckett and Luigi Bartolini, reflects the era in which they wrote, an era impacted by war and technological development. Although the bicycle is still capable of transforming their characters, the potential transformation is often unrealized or is tempered by skepticism or pessimism.

Literature of the Bicycle Boom Years

During the last decade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, authors created characters who rode bicycles, or disapproved of bicycles, or even manufactured bicycles. Eugen Weber, emphasizing the importance of bicycles at the time, states that “an emblem of Progress and one of its agents at the *fin de siècle* was the bicycle” (195). Literary works of the time reflect this commentary. While bicycles are often incorporated into scenes of novels, in some cases they are a fundamental element of the plot structure. Three novels published between 1895 and 1900 are constructed completely around bicycle tour vacations: *The Wheels of Chance* by H. G. Wells (1895), *A Bicycle of Cathay* by Frank R. Stockton (1900) and *Three Men on the Bummel* by Jerome K. Jerome (1900). Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes solves two cases in which bicycles are essential elements of the mystery. In “The Adventure of the Priory School” (1904) Holmes displays his considerable knowledge of modern bicycle technology. In “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist” (1904), Holmes’ case arises from

the fact that Miss Violet Smith cycles to and from her teaching position on a lonely country road.

Arthur Conan Doyle: Beyond the City

Doyle's *Beyond the City*, published in 1893, is one of the earliest novels to incorporate the bicycle machine in a symbolic and meaningful way.² Unlike his later Sherlock Holmes short stories, in which bicycles are primarily plot devices, Doyle has the freedom in the novel to integrate cycling in distinct subplots as both a catalyst for character transformation and a reflection of the rapidly changing social culture of the time. *Beyond the City* is set in a suburb of London where three families have settled into enjoyable neighborly camaraderie. The families consist of Retired Admiral and Mrs. Hay Denver and their son, the elderly spinster Williams sisters, and the widowed Dr. Walker and his two daughters of marriageable age. In this quiet neighborhood the principal characters avail themselves of the benefits of living outside of London: tranquility, clean air, and outdoor exercise such as walking and tennis. Cycling is introduced to the story with the arrival of a newcomer to this close-knit community and is used as a reflection of the changing society and as an agent of change in two ways: first, through the newcomer, an emancipated activist female character and her impact on other characters; and second, in the development of a courtship.

The comfortable and conventional community suburb is disrupted upon the arrival of Mrs. Westmacott, a widow, and her nephew, Charles. Mrs. Westmacott is portrayed early in the novel as a strong and fiercely independent woman who can fend for herself

² Bicycles appear, very briefly and comically, in a famous scene from an earlier work, Mark Twain's 1889 *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Lancelot comes to the rescue of King Arthur and Hank with a band of five hundred "mailed and belted knights on bicycles" (490).

against impertinent cabmen and who undertakes regular and strenuous exercise (13, 20). She is a forthright character who believes that women should be able to work in professions reserved for men and supports women's suffrage (21, 47). She also loves to cycle.

In his article "Cycling in the 1890s" David Rubinstein states: "In a period marked by sharp changes in social attitudes, cycling provided not only a practical means of transportation, but a symbol of emancipation" (47). By establishing Mrs. Westmacott as an enthusiastic cyclist, Doyle emphasizes her progressive ways and her energetic and independent nature³. In one cycling scene Admiral Hay Denver and Dr. Walker see a cloud of dust rolling down the road. The Admiral is amazed at the speed of the object coming toward them and when he recognizes her, he exclaims "why, by George, it is that woman!" (43). To stress the correlation of cycling to emancipation, Mrs. Westmacott rides around town to distribute pamphlets promoting an upcoming meeting she has organized for the "improvement of the condition of women" (43-45).

According to Phillip MacKintosh and Glen Norcliffe, "women's adoption of cycling in the 1890s represented not the continuity of a craze so much as a fundamental change and reversal of accepted norms...the bicycle helped transform timorousness and recidivism into confidence and respectability" (18). Mrs. Westmacott epitomizes both ideas: she pushes accepted norms and exudes confidence with her progressive ideas, but she also gains the respect of those around her by her sensible arguments. Her modern perspective is initially contrasted to the traditional views of Admiral Hay Denver. The Admiral first admits that he is "old fashioned" and dislikes these "new-fangled ideas," but

³ During the nineteenth century, three wheeled cycles of many variations were often ridden by adults (Herlihy 208-214). In *Beyond the City*, the cyclists ride adult tricycles.

he is soon convinced by Mrs. Westmacott's arguments to reconsider his opinions of women's rights and role in society (46, 50).

Mrs. Westmacott's influence further extends to Dr. Walker's daughters. The friction caused by the changing social mores of the turn of the century is exhibited in a scheme devised by Dr. Walker's two daughters when they realize that their widower father has become romantically interested in this lively widow. To derail the romance, they devise a plot wherein they zealously adopt her emancipated manner to give their father a taste of living with a liberated woman, one who cycles for exercise, wears divided shortened skirts, prefers a career to housekeeping, smokes cigarettes and drinks alcohol. The daughters' change in behavior is superficial, however. Unlike the male characters, whose opinions of women's rights are altered during the novel, the daughters remain conventional and ultimately find happiness in their roles as wives in traditional marriages. Doyle's conventional path for the daughters may reflect some of the cultural ambivalence toward the modern cycling females or possibly the expectations of his reading audience.

Doyle also uses bicycles as means to advance romantic relationships. In a theme that is echoed in other literary works of the time, bicycles give young adults an escape from the confines of society to enjoy the company of members of the opposite sex. Chaperonage was difficult if not impossible when young people took to their bicycles, and without it women gained freedom of mobility (Rubenstein 61-62). But the end of the chaperon, as bemoaned by social critic Mrs. F. Harcourt Williamson in *The Complete Cyclist* (1894), put women in peril not only of vicious tramps, but also amorous young men (61). In *Beyond the City*, an entire chapter is devoted to a tandem tricycle ride

initiated by the infatuated Charles Westmacott. Charles has previously ridden the tandem with the lovely Ida Walker, but for this ride, he sends her a formal written invitation. Charles' awkward invitation and his subsequent clumsy marriage proposal during the ride is contrasted with his athletic prowess on the tricycle which is described in sexual diction: "a few moments later they were flying along the beautiful, smooth suburban roads...the great limbs of the athlete [Charles] made the heavy machine spring and quiver with every stroke" while Ida thrills in the excitement of the experience (60). Permitted to nurture their romantic relationship in privacy while cycling along country roads, Charles and Ida evolve from individuals into a bonded, loving couple.

Émile Zola: *Paris and Fruitfulness*

In two novels written by Émile Zola, bicycles are similarly used in meaningful ways to reflect, first, the changing culture of the time and, second, the transformation of main characters. Zola was an active proponent of sports for women; he wrote that good health through sport was elemental to happiness and recommended bicycling along with swimming, riding and gymnastics as part of a young woman's education. (Zola "Why Modern Sports" 77). Zola bicycled to such an extent that he was noted in the newspapers: "Even M. Émile Zola, who lives like a philosopher, exclusively for the development of his own individuality by means of unceasing literary labor, has submitted to the demands of the time and takes his exercise on a bicycle" ("Zola's Locomotion," *International Herald Tribune*). When Zola published *Paris* in 1898 and *Fruitfulness* one year later, bicycles were part of the fabric of French life and, as a reflection, bicycles are ridden by energetic females and male characters in both works.

Paris is the final novel of a trilogy, *The Three Cities*. Published just four years before Zola's death, *Paris* follows the fortunes of Pierre Froment, a young priest, who has lost his Christian faith and finds a new faith based on reason, science and the teachings of life (Vizetelly vii). Froment's loss of faith mirrors the decline of Christianity in France, yet Zola's message is one of hope, optimistic about secular man's ability to improve his own world without reliance on religious faith (Vizetelly x).

In contrast to Doyle's *Beyond the City*, in *Paris*, bicycling is a widespread activity. This difference resulted perhaps from the fact that *Paris* was published five years later and from its urban setting. As in the city of Paris, the sight of bicycles or the



Figure 3 - Jean Béraud, "Le Chalet du Cycle au Bois du Boulogne" c. 1900
<www.histoire-image.org>

sound of bicycle bells are commonplace in the novel's city roads and in the Bois de Boulogne (388, 393, 411, 443). While bicycles sometimes provide a sense of normality in outdoor scenes or are simply a mode of transportation, Zola

also uses bicycles in three distinct roles that reinforce or create social or character transformation: to demonstrate the constant progress of technology, to emphasize the emancipated status of a woman, and as the impetus for Pierre's crucial decision to leave the priesthood: romantic love.

In Zola's earlier novels, technological progress was not unambiguous. In *Germinal* (1885), workers are virtually enslaved by mining enterprises. In *Paris*, however, Zola emphasizes the benefits of technological advances. The Grandidier metal works and bicycle factory reflects Zola's optimism in man's ability to adapt and improve technology to the benefit of society. The factory plays a role in the novel, both as a place of employment (208) and as a means for Zola's discussion on capital and labor (231). When Grandidier's metal works business begins to decline, the owner, recognizing the bicycling craze as a business opportunity, retools the factory to mass produce bicycles (224). The factory struggles with this conversion, but continual perfection and simplification of processes improve its profitability. Even as bicycle production proves to be successful, Grandidier is already exploring the idea of manufacturing small motors in anticipation of the transition to and triumph of motorized vehicles and the automobile (224, 454).

By the novel's end, Grandidier has realized a large fortune from his mass-produced "bicycle for the million," and his research and development efforts in small motors allow him to look optimistically toward future success and fortune (665). In a novel written during a decade of rapid technological progress that produced inventions such as diesel engines, x-rays, vacuums, movie projectors, wireless radios and electric toasters (Anzidon 617), Grandidier's enterprise, with its ability to constantly update technology to meet the changing demands of society, reflects the late nineteenth century optimism of rapidly changing technology and its potential for positive impact.

In *Paris*, the bicycle also demonstrates and develops the emancipated character of Marie, Pierre's eventual wife. Marie, like Mrs. Westmacott in *Beyond the City*, is a

healthy, lively and independent-minded woman. But whereas Mrs. Westmacott is an ardent social activist, Marie's belief in emancipation is more private. Marie is practical, frank, intelligent and educated. In expressing her views on the status of women, she states: "My views are simple enough... woman is man's equal so far as nature allows it" (451). She believes in the value of life experiences for women and in the ability of the modern invention, the bicycle, to teach them how to exercise good judgment: "If I ever have a daughter I shall put her on a bicycle as soon as she's ten years old, just to teach her how to conduct herself in life" (512).

Marie is capable of interacting with men as equals. Rubinstein notes that, in the 1890s, "cycling brought the sexes together on equal terms more completely than any previous sport or pastime" (68). Men and women were able to enjoy the exhilaration of cycling together in physical and social parity and Marie exemplifies this sexual equality. Unlike the tricycle tandem in *Beyond the City* where Ida Walker is primarily a passive rider while Charles Westmacott exerts himself, men and women cycle in Zola's novels as equals. When Pierre and Marie spend a day cycling together they ride "side by side, like birds of equal flight" (Zola *Paris* 516). Their attire further reinforces this state of sexual parity. Pierre, drifting further from the priesthood, has recently started wearing a jacket and trousers instead of his priest's cassock. On their bicycle ride, Marie wears a jacket and "rationals" and believes that women who continue to wear long skirts on bicycles are foolish and obstinate (509). Consequently, at the beginning of the ride, Pierre finds himself thinking of Marie as a friend of his own sex: "their costumes, which were so much alike, conduced to the brotherly feeling Pierre experienced" (508).

The deepening friendship Pierre and Marie experience while on bicycles leads directly to love. Although Marie is Pierre's brother's fiancée, Pierre now sees her in a new light: as an adventurous lover. Of the two cyclists, Marie is the more expert rider, and she is healthy, supple and strong (508). She is exhilarated by the ride and finds pleasure in overcoming physical obstacles while riding: she likes rough surfaces, hills and even rain. As they ride, Pierre is drawn to her sense of adventure, optimism and practicality. By the end of the afternoon's excursion, they realize their long term friendship has transformed into romantic love. Although the ride started innocently at first, on the return trip Marie blushes and her heart beats quickly with love (517). By that evening, Pierre acknowledges that his true feelings for his brother's fiancée are those of intense, romantic love (524).

In addition to encouraging love, this crucial bicycle excursion serves as a catalyst for self-realization and fulfillment. When the bicycle excursion triggers the provocative realization that Pierre loves his brother's fiancée, Pierre is finally induced to leave the priesthood. The shift from religious faith to hope in secular progress is the principal theme of Zola's *Three Cities* trilogy. Pierre has long ago lost his faith and now performs his priestly duties solely as a matter of convention, but it is the open acknowledgment of his love for Marie that finally provides the motivation to break his bonds with Catholicism. Pierre's brother eventually agrees to end his engagement to Marie to allow Pierre and Marie to marry, placing things in their "natural order" (564). In a novel of many layers and themes, bicycles not only reflect the decade's rapidly changing technology and social conventions, but also play an important role as the catalyst for transformation of the principal character into a secular optimist.

Zola's *Fruitfulness*, which immediately followed *Paris* in publication, is the first of a four-book series, *The Gospels*. Only the first two books of this series were published in Zola's lifetime; the third was published posthumously and the fourth novel was never finished. The series was intended to embody the four principals of human life which Zola considered the new religion: fruitfulness, work, truth and justice (Vizetelly I). Although the role of bicycles here is not as significant as in *Paris*, Zola again uses bicycles to reflect societal changes, particularly for women, and to develop personal relationships. *Fruitfulness* follows the fortunes of the Froment family, descendants of Pierre and Marie Froment from the earlier novel *Paris*. Bicycles are used in the novel in a minor way for transportation and during festive outings (236) but more importantly as a mechanism to connect two discordant families through their rebellious youth.

The Froment family members are neighbors of the jealous Lepailleur family, who resent the Froments' happiness and prosperity. Both families have independent, strong-willed youngsters: Gregoire Froment, a son of Pierre and Marie, is undisciplined and adventurous (294) while Thérèse Lepailleur, at age ten, is impulsive, willful and shares Gregoire's love of adventure. Thérèse desperately wants a bicycle, but her parents contend that bicycles are machines for the bourgeois and are not appropriate for well-behaved girls (297). Bicycling by women during this decade was not without critics, and the attitude of Thérèse's parents reflects this conservative opinion (Rubenstein 55, Herlihy 245). Although it was a minority opinion, some felt that women on bicycles were indecent, reckless, immoral, and subjected to adverse health conditions (Aronson 308). Thérèse, however, represents the ideals of modern, progressive young women who want the freedom to enjoy life's adventures.

Contrary to the wishes of Thérèse's parents, Gregoire teaches Thérèse how to ride a bicycle. The furtive bicycle lesson forges a bond between them that is never broken. Their forbidden friendship and shared secret makes their young relationship even more exciting. A decade later, when Gregoire and Thérèse reconnect after each spends time away from their hometown village, Mathieu Froment once again asserts his disapproval of the friendship. Gregoire counters his father's rebuke, reminding him that he and Thérèse have long been friends, and specifically recollects the long-ago bicycle lesson (387). Eventually, Gregoire and Thérèse mature and marry. Thérèse becomes a charming, determined, alert, pretty and energetic woman while Gregoire's willfulness has matured into wisdom, although he retains "just enough audacity" to be successful in business (389, 398). The independent spirits of these bicycle-loving youths are rewarded with a strong and happy marriage.

Bicycles also play a role in the death of the eldest Froment daughter, Rose, a young woman full of enthusiasm and gaiety who is engaged to be married. Rose insists on a pre-wedding festivity that includes a bicycle parade into town with her fiancé and siblings because "that is the most modern style" (291). The event turns to tragedy, however, when a hard rain falls. Although most of the group seeks shelter, Rose is adamant that she and her fiancé ride their bicycles home, insisting that riding in the rain is fun, laughing and looking like a "fairy of the springs" (305). Upon arriving home, Rose catches a chill, becomes disoriented during the night and dies the next morning. The wedding, which was to be the "supreme blossoming of years of prosperity" and a crowning moment of happiness for the Froment family (289) turns to tragedy. Given Zola's approval of bicycling as exercise and the fact that her death was not caused by a

bicycle accident, the message is not one of cycling's danger. Instead, the bicycle ride is a mechanism used to bring about Rose's untimely death and cause her father Mathieu to fear for his family's future: with her sudden death, his optimism for the prosperity and fruitfulness of the family is shaken (293). But, to support Zola's theme, Mathieu's doubt is short lived and his profound belief in hard work and family is eventually rewarded; years later, at the time of their joyous 70th wedding anniversary celebration, Mathieu and his wife Marianne have one hundred fifty-eight descendents in attendance, including a young great-grandchild named in memory of Rose (460, 466). Rose's death after the bicycle ride inserted misfortune into the lives of the principal characters, but the fortitude of the Froment family allows them to overcome this suffering and validate their moral beliefs.

In both *Paris* and *Fruitfulness*, Zola incorporates bicycles as a reflection of the technology of the era but also uses them in a purposeful way. The cycling characters, particularly the women, are able to express and explore new found freedoms. The bicycle provides the physical ability to ride about town freely and also to engage in social interaction with the members of both sexes. Bicycles are the catalyst for the romantic relationships between Pierre and Marie and between Thérèse and Gregoire. And for Pierre in particular, the bicycling expedition with Marie is the turning point of his adult life, the impetus to leave the priesthood and embrace secular life and romantic, sexual love.

The Bicycle Ride as a Plot Device: Wells, Stockton, Doyle

Some literature of the bicycle boom years used bicycles as primary plot devices.

Detective mystery writer Arthur Morrison wrote the short story *The Affair of the Avalanche Bicycle and Tyre Co., Ltd.* in 1897. Morrison takes advantage of the fashionable bicycle movement and bases the mystery story on a sham bicycle manufacturing business. According to the narrator, the wild popularity of bicycles enabled unscrupulous individuals to take advantage of small investors because “any company with the word ‘cycle’ or ‘tyre’ in its title was certain to attract capital, no matter what its prospects were like in the eye of an expert” (Morrison 153). The mystery’s central plot relates to a bicycle manufacturing investment scam. The story is infused with cycling: bicycle production and assembly, brand labeling, retail sales, training, racing and even betting. Although the story could have been about any business, the cycling aspect gives it relevancy and currency to the era in which it was published.

Three novels written during this same period are based on adventures of vacationing bicycle tourists. Like *The Affair of the Avalanche Bicycle and Tyre Co., Ltd.*, the bicycle sets up the entire premise of the plot in each of these novels: H. G. Wells’s *The Wheels of Chance* (1895), Frank R. Stockton’s *A Bicycle of Cathay* (1900) and Jerome K. Jerome’s *Three Men on a Bummel* (1900). In these works, particularly *The Wheels of Chance* and *A Bicycle of Cathay*, the bicycle reflects the shifting conventions of a culture adjusting to independent-minded young adults and unchaperoned courting. The bicycle also acts as a powerful catalyst for personal growth in the transformation of the main characters.

H.G. Wells: Blurring Social Hierarchies in *The Wheels of Chance*

H. G. Wells gives bicycles a minor role in many of his novels, including *The War of the Worlds* (1898). In this work, people flee besieged towns, send messages, or survey devastation on bicycle. Wells uses bicycles more notably in his novel *The Wheels of Chance*, in which a young man's cycling vacation exposes him to a wide range of new experiences and personal growth. Mr. Hoopdriver, the main character, is a shop clerk who tours the south of England on bicycle while on vacation, hoping only for a respite from his menial employment. Wells alludes to the bicycle's transformative power early in the novel in a brief scene where Hoopdriver meets a gentleman cyclist who has stopped for a meal at an inn. The gentleman cyclist complains to Hoopdriver that he is disgusted with himself; while he considers himself a quiet, dignified, unhurried, philosophical man, when he gets on his bicycle (which he refers to as a machine), his personality is completely altered. The bicycle, that machine of transformation, changes him into an uncharacteristically belligerent man, who must ride furiously, and rush about, and then finds himself "dancing with rage and swearing like a drunken tinker" (17-18). Although Hoopdriver does not recognize it at the time, the bicycle will have a powerful impact on him.

Hoopdriver's excursion presents the opportunity for recurring chance encounters with two other traveling cyclists, Jessie Milton, an eighteen-year-old woman, and Mr. Bechamel, a teacher in his mid-thirties. When Hoopdriver first sees Jessie, he considers her a well-to-do young lady, but suspects that she is one of those "New Women" and is captivated by her keen bicycle skills, her bright eyes, and how she looks "flushed with the exertion of riding, breathing a little fast, but elastic and active" (15). To Hoopdriver,

her rational⁴ dress is not a bit unwomanly (16). Jessie's independent nature is evident from her willingness to travel on bicycle with her married male teacher, but it quickly becomes apparent that her motivations differ from Mr. Bechamel's. While Jessie wants to escape from an overbearing stepmother and begin to lead an independent life, to "earn my living, to be a free woman, to live without conventionality" (41), Mr. Bechamel, a married man, is looking for a sexual relationship. As Jessie realizes the nature of his interest and begins to rebel against Bechamel, Hoopdriver recognizes her need for assistance and comes to her aid.

In *The Wheels of Chance*, it is the bicycle's ability to blur the traditional social hierarchy that allows Hoopdriver to perceive himself as a man worthy of befriending and saving Jessie. Because cycling crossed over all levels of society, the bicycle was a social equalizer, one that did not differentiate between dukes and tradesmen (Woodforde 92, Herlihy 274-5, Rubenstein 58). When the safety bicycle made cycling suitable to both sexes and most ages, the roads were shared by all in a democratic movement. The British Cyclists' Touring Club catered to the cyclists from the "titled, fashionable, and the professional and business classes" but these cyclists shared the roads with riders from the lower and middle working classes (Rubenstein 50-51). Rubenstein notes that one of the most interesting aspects of the bicycling boom was that cycling was popular throughout so many levels of society (58). The ability to ride a bicycle, and the joy derived from riding, is classless.

When Hoopdriver sets off for a ten-day cycling vacation from his job as a draper in a London shop, he is merely seeking a respite from drudgery of his job. But because

⁴ The term "rational dress" typically referred to knickerbockers, long leggings and a coat long enough to look feminine but not long enough to interfere with movement (Woodforde 133).

cycling was not subject to class distinctions, Hoopdriver finds that, while bicycle touring, he is able to escape his societal limitations as a shopman; on a bicycle, Hoopdriver becomes anyone he pleases to be. The bicycle tour gives him “an opportunity for independence and adventure never previously known to his class” (Rubenstein 60). On the first day of his cycle tour, he realizes how the bicycle and his cycling costume create a new identity when a heath-keeper, who thinks Hoopdriver is unsociably quiet, calls him a “bloomin’ dook, ‘e is... ‘e don’t converse with no one under a earl” (10). Shortly after this encounter, a nursemaid refers to him as a “gentleman wizzer bicitle” and a distinguished “swell” speaks to him as an equal (16, 17, 20). With this blurring of social strata, he feels worthy and capable of coming to the aid of Jessie; no longer a mere shop clerk, he is nothing less than a knight-errant (67).

This blurring of social distinctions is crucial to Hoopdriver’s transformation. On the bicycle, he realizes that others do not classify him as a lowly draper, and his identity becomes malleable. When he inquires of Jessie if he can be of assistance, he first speaks meekly as a shop keeper, but then “remembers his emancipation...and assumes his most aristocratic intonation” (22). Later, when Mr. Bechamel confronts Hoopdriver and accuses him of being a private detective, Hoopdriver happily takes on the role and imagines himself “Mr. Hoodriver, Private Inquiry Agent, a Sherlock Holmes in fact...” (48). His bicycle gives Hoopdriver a freedom from class identify that he readily embraces.

Hoopdriver and Jessie, escaping from Bechamel, become equals as they cycle together. Having liberated himself from his identity as a lowly draper, Hoopdriver comes to believe that he is worthy of Jessie. When they ride side-by-side in the

moonlight, Hoopdriver is alive with sexual feelings towards a woman who would heretofore been outside his social station: “How they rode! How their hearts beat together and their breath came fast, and how every shadow was anticipation and every noise pursuit! For all that flight Mr. Hoopdriver was in the world of romance” (64).

Hoopdriver reinforces his change in identity as he travels with Jessie. When she asks his name, he gives her a pseudonym, asking himself “who would Hoopdriver be on a night like this? (67). He changes his name yet again when they both have trouble recalling it (80). Hoopdriver also develops a false past, based predominantly on Jessie’s suggestions, of having lived in South Africa. Near the end of the novel, when Hoopdriver finally confesses his true identity and occupation to Jessie, she gallantly understands and forgives him: “‘You did it’, she said, ‘because you wanted to help me. And you thought I was too Conventional to take help from one I might think my social inferior.’” Instead of berating him, she calls his lies noble (115). He is her knight-errant.

The bicycle’s ability to distort social hierarchy also occurs during Hoopdriver’s encounters with a clergyman and later with the male friends of Jessie’s stepmother. Hoopdriver and the clergyman meet during a lunch, and initially the clergyman’s demeanor and vocabulary give off an air of superiority. Hoopdriver finds himself “trying to seem intelligent” (120). But the clergyman explains that he, too, is a cyclist and when Hoopdriver hears his story and translates “the stoppage necessitated an inversion of the entire apparatus, an inversion in which I participated” into “meaning, that you went over?” Hoopdriver becomes genuinely amused and relaxed in the conversation (120). Finally, bicycles erase, at least temporarily, the righteous attitude and pompous manner of the men who come with Jessie’s stepmother to “rescue” Jessie. As a well-known

author, the stepmother Mrs. Milton has a circle of educated male followers. When told of Jessie's flight, three of the men offer to assist Mrs. Milton in finding Jessie. Eventually, two of them ride a tandem bicycle in pursuit of Jessie and Hoopdriver. Mrs. Milton's rescue party is no longer the poised and pretentious group of men who first decided to launch a rescue party; instead, as relative amateurs on bicycles, their lack of skill is a comedic episode (122). In the country, on bicycles, it is Hoopdriver who is competent and reliable. Competence on a bicycle is a matter of physical ability; when pedaling, social status, wealth and gender are irrelevant distinctions.

The social tensions of the period, however, are evident in the resolution of the story. Jessie, who hoped to lead an independent self-sufficient life, returns to live with her overbearing stepmother because she has no immediate source of income. While she has great aspirations, she believes her chances are limited and wishes she had the same opportunities that men have (116). Although Jessie still aspires to live independently and become a writer or teacher, she knows that, for the near future, she must return to live with her stepmother on whom she is financially dependent (121). Her stepmother, a writer of stories about emancipated women, doesn't believe a young woman like Jessie should actually be emancipated or unconventional (95-96). Jessie is castigated by her stepmother's cronies who believe that she may be ruined, that no man will want to marry her if they find out about this escapade, and that she belongs back with her stepmother (96, 130). When Jessie argues that she wants to go about more freely, as women in America do, she is told: "Social conditions are entirely different in America...here we respect Class Distinctions" (130). Jessie is able, however, to win some concessions for some freedoms that are acceptable to her stepmother.

Hoopdriver, whose transformation was at first superficial, begins to believe he is capable of improving himself and his career. During the bicycle tour, his maturation process began when he was able to see himself as someone other than a mere draper, even if the identity he created was false. When, towards the end of the bicycle tour, he is praised for stepping up to fight against a tough man who insults women cyclists, he has a new-found bravery: “It was nothing more than my duty – as a gentleman” who has a habit of walking straight into the face of danger (107). Inspired by Jessie’s career aspirations, Hoopdriver resolves to further his education and change his own life (108, 116). When his vacation ends, he returns to the drudgery of his shop position, “- but with a difference, with wonderful memories and still more wonderful desires and ambitions” (136).

Frank Stockton: *A Bicycle of Cathay*

The bicycle craze was not limited to Europe; America, too, was swept into the cycling fad. In 1896, Steven Crane wrote that New York City’s Broadway Boulevard is now a “great thoroughfare for bicycles” and that on gorgeous spring days this once quiet street is now flooded by thousands of bicycles and their “glittering wheels” (149). Crane reflects on the disputes between bicycles and horses, between “scorching”⁵ cyclists and police, and on his conviction that America was entering “an age of bloomers” for women (150-51).

⁵ The term “scorcher” referred to cyclists whose sole purpose was to ride fast and would “scorch” past the more leisurely riders.

American author Frank R. Stockton, best known as the writer of fairy tales such as *The Lady, or the Tiger?*⁶ published the first known American cycle-touring novel titled *A Bicycle of Cathay* in 1900. The theme of the novel is reminiscent of a fairy tale, complete with lessons of life and love, and the unnamed narrator grows wiser from his experience. In Stockton's novel a bicycle is the vehicle, both literally and figuratively, that causes the substantive transformation of the main character.



Figure 4 - W. A. Rogers, 1985. New Yorkers taking a spin on Riverside Drive during the height of the bicycle boom < <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/11/03/gossip-of-the-cyclers-and-other-news-of-the-wheel/>>

Like H. G. Wells' *Hoopdriver*, Stockton's protagonist is a young unmarried man, this one a village school teacher. He is disheartened about his situation and believes that few people care about him and even fewer respect him (2-3). When embarking on his cycling vacation he visits with the village doctor's daughter, to whom he explains that his vehicle is named a "bicycle of Cathay," the name evokes the allure of adventure in a foreign land. In actuality, the name is derived from a Tennyson poem having

⁶ Two of Stockton's works, *The Griffin and the Minor Canon* and *The Bee-man of Orn* were recreated as picture books by bestselling author/illustrator Maurice Sendak.

nothing to do with bicycles⁷ (4). The brief visit foreshadows a relationship, but one that is as yet unseen by the narrator.

The transformative nature of the narrator's cycling vacation is attributable to his physical removal from his village and the personal interactions that occur while cycling. Away from home, he is forced to change his attitude about his encounters. In an uncomfortable situation he tells himself: "I had now entered into my Cathay, and I must take things as I found them there" (33). Touring the foreign land of "Cathay" (in reality the neighboring countryside) the cycling narrator rescues an injured female cyclist, stops a runaway horse, escorts a circus bear to another town, and has romantic encounters with five women in different towns en route. Two of his romantic interests also ride bicycles (10, 61, 222)

The experiences of Stockton's bicycle tour include the blurring of social and economic rank similar to that experienced by Hoopdriver in Wells' England. In *A Bicycle of Cathay* the narrator initially feels that in his lowly position as school master he barely exists in the minds of others. However, he finds that, by virtue of his cycling routine, many know him and think of him in high regard (23, 38). His confidence grows as he learns that he is not completely invisible to his community.

Having started on the vacation feeling gloomy, isolated and uninspired, he returns from the bicycle tour with new insight and ambition. Happy to return to his quiet village away from the unpredictable Cathay, the narrator concludes that village life suits him well, as does the doctor's daughter (233, 237). The theme is similar to that of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* published in the same year, in which an unsettling

⁷ The line from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem *Locksley Hall* is: "Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day; Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." Here, "cycle" refers to a time period.

adventure in a foreign land leads to a greater appreciation for ordinary home life.

Instead of a cyclone and a concussion, Stockton uses the exciting modern bicycle as the means for transporting his character so that he can achieve this insight.

Numerous other novels written at the turn of the century include bicycles. As a widely embraced innovative technology, it is natural that writers used bicycles in their works. Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men on a Bummel* (1900) is yet another cycle touring novel, this one about three Englishmen who, looking for a break from their families and work routine, take a bicycle trip to Germany. The book is more of a travelogue than a character study, providing observations on contemporary German life. The novel's opening line, "What we want," said Harris, "is a change" sets up an adventure, but unlike the characters of Zola, Doyle or Wells, the only change realized is a superficial, short term change in scenery.

Alfred Jarry, best known for his play *Ubu Roi*, creates a bicycle-versus-train contest in *The Supermale* (1902). Set nearly twenty years in the future from its publication, the novel centers around a five-man bicycle team, fueled with "Perpetual Motion Food" which races against a train for over ten thousand miles. Jarry, an ardent cyclist, uses the story to explore the idea of the bicycle as an inanimate hero as well as human physical potential and perceived limitations (Wright vi, xiii).

Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories

Shortly after the turn of the century and subsequent to the bicycle touring novels of Wells, Stockton and Jerome, bicycles played key roles in two of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures. Similar to Arthur Morrison's 1897 "The Affair of the

Avalanche Bicycle and Tyre Co., Ltd.," bicycles play primary roles in the plots of these detective stories. Doyle's use of the machines continues to reflect their impact on society of the period as it did in his early novel *Beyond the City*. In *The Solitary Cyclist*, published in 1904, Violet Smith is placed in a situation that would have been unlikely for a woman of her station in past eras: transporting herself alone on deserted country roads. In order to see her mother on weekends, she travels by train and by bicycle between Farnham and Chiltern

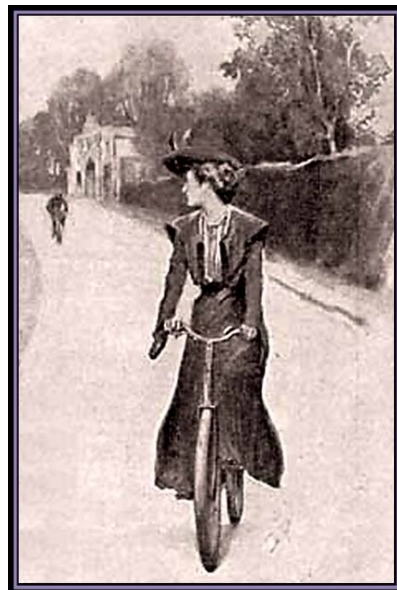


Figure 5 - Miss Violet Smith on her bicycle. Illustration by Sidney Paget for "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist" published in *The Strand* January 1904.

Grange. One section of road is particularly secluded and although her employer, Mr. Carruthers, has ordered a horse and trap to convey her, it has not yet arrived and she must ride her bicycle along this lonely stretch. When she notices a strange man repeatedly following her on this road, she appeals to Sherlock Holmes for help. It is in this perilous country setting that Holmes must save her from "the worst fate that can befall a woman" (503).

Doyle is cognizant of the potential threats to female cyclists. The dangers of women cycling alone were specifically addressed in an essay by Mrs. F. Harcourt Williamson in *The Complete Cyclist* (1894). Mrs. Williamson wrote:

The beginning of cycling was the end of the chaperon in England, and now women, even young girls, ride alone or attended only by some casual man friend for miles together through deserted country roads. The danger is apparent; but parents and guardians will probably only become wise after the event. Given a lonely road, and a tramp desperate with hunger or naturally vicious, and it stands to reason that a girl, or indeed any woman, riding alone must be in some considerable peril. (61)

Interestingly, Violet Smith is not abducted while she bicycles, but rather while riding the horse-powered dog-cart. *The Solitary Cyclist* acknowledges the possibility of danger for young women who ride solo, but Doyle does not aim to dissuade female cyclists. Rather, Violet is portrayed in a positive manner as a woman of good health and energy who is an accomplished musician and is worthy of many suitors. The danger is averted, and Miss Smith, with virtue intact, attains happiness with the inheritance of a large fortune and a successful marriage (506).

In *The Adventure of the Priory School* (1904), Holmes uses his formidable intellect and displays his knowledge of modern bicycling technology. When young Lord Saltire is abducted from his boarding school and the school's German master has suspiciously disappeared along with his bicycle, Holmes is called to the case. Examining bicycle tracks, Holmes tells Watson that he is "familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tyres" and then determines the direction of the bicycle based on the difference in depth between the impressions of the two tires (515).

These Sherlock Holmes adventures were published a decade after *Beyond the City* in which the emancipated, bicycle riding Mrs. Westmacott disrupts her small, quiet community. In the world which Holmes and Watson inhabit, the bicycle is no longer a novelty but a routine component of ordinary lives. While characters continue to enjoy the freedom and mobility which bicycle riding permits, cycling no longer places them at the forefront of social progress. Yet cycling did not completely lose its panache or its ability to make a statement. In George Gissing's 1906 short story *A Daughter of the Lodge*, the stylishly modern Mrs. Lindley loves to converse about anything progressive, whether a new religion or a new cycling costume (181). In H. G. Wells's 1905 novel

Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul, working-class Kipps learns of his large inheritance from a series of coincidences set in motion when a bicycling playwright knocks him down. The consequence of Kipps' surprise prosperity is a study of wealth, status and happiness.

Early post-bicycle-boom literature: D. H. Lawrence and Dorothy Richardson

When H. G. Well's character Kipps considers how to spend his newfound wealth he thinks of buying, among other things, either a motor-car or a bicycle and a cyclist suit (104). Kipps' mingling of the bicycle with the motor-car is a portent of the course of transportation. The raging popularity of the bicycle boom era did not last long and, ironically, the bicycle played a role in its own demise. Methods of mass production developed for manufacturing bicycles led to similarly efficient factories that mass produced automobiles (Aronson 310, Herlihy 5). The roads that were improved to meet demands for smooth bicycling byways created a network that would be used for cars. Herlihy states: "Literally and figuratively, the bicycle paved the way for the automobile" (5). After the rise of the automobile, the bicycle was often relegated to the status, particularly in America, of a poor man's vehicle or a child's toy (Herlihy 8). The novelty of setting a story based on a bicycle tour wore off as did the ability to use cycling as the means of portraying cutting-edge progressive characters. According to Herlihy: "Whereas the press had once eagerly followed the exploits of daring cyclists who pedaled their way across Europe, America, and Asia, it now told similar tales of intrepid motorists" (343). The automobile became the symbol of modernity.

Automobiles did not completely displace bicycles, however. In Europe especially, cycle touring continued to remain a popular recreational pastime and bicycles also remained utilitarian vehicles for deliveries (Herlihy 316). The bicycle was still valued by some as the means for healthy, outdoor exercise and exploration. Cycling continued as a competitive sport. In 1903 a race encompassing the entire country of France was initiated; over a hundred years later, *Le Tour de France* is still the premier international cycling race.

Literary works of the post bicycle boom era reflect the reduced influence bicycles had on culture. No longer are bicycles brash statements of modernity or progressive thinking; instead they play more subtle roles. But the themes of transformation continue to manifest themselves and bicycles persist as a means of freedom, whether it is freedom from restrictive families or suffocating environments.

D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*

In D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, notable as one of the first English novels that genuinely focuses on the middle class, Paul Morel uses a bicycle to travel between his working class town and the rustic, rural Willey Farm which belongs to the family of his young lover, Miriam. Bicycles in this novel, published in 1913, are used for practical transportation and make no progressive social or political statements⁸. But, like the bicycle touring draper in H.G. Wells' *The Wheels of Chance*, Paul Morel takes advantage of the freedom that a bicycle bestows. The draper's bicycle allows him to escape the drudgery of work in London and, similarly, Paul's bicycle allows him to escape from his

⁸ The bicycle's ordinary place in society is further supported when Paul asks his mother to conceal the real reason for his injuries (a fight) and suggests the injuries be explained as the result of a bicycle accident (414).

suburban working life to the bucolic world of Willey Farm. The ability to escape physically from his home, his mother and his work plays a role in Paul's growth and transformation.

Paul's transformation as a protagonist is not dependent solely upon the bicycle like that of H. G. Wells' draper; *Sons and Lovers* is a much more complex and perceptive work than *The Wheels of Chance*. As a *Bildungsroman*, the novel chronicles Paul's growth including his personal relationships, his work experience, his artistic endeavors, and his mother's death. Yet the bicycle is specifically employed to both separate and connect the two parts of his life: the ordinary, stifling life at home with his family and the comfortably pleasurable, supportive life at the rural Willey Farm.

The bicycle's ability to connect urban and rural areas played an important role in Europe in the twentieth century. According to Pryor Dodge, the bicycle "widened the horizons of the cultural landscape of rural Europe, allowing peasants a degree of mobility that had never before known" and contributed to a wider range of marriageable partners for rural dwellers (180). Dodge notes that, in some countries, governmental policies specifically encourage the creation of bicycle routes between rural and urban areas to integrate the national culture and economy (180). In *Sons and Lovers*, it is the urbanite Paul, not the country girl Miriam who travels by bicycle, but the end result is the same: a romantic and sexual relationship between geographically and culturally separated people.

Paul's working life is spent in the city of Nottingham where he is employed by a surgical appliance manufacturer. His health suffers from the long hours, darkness and lack of fresh air in the factory (126, 140). The countryside of Willey Farm, on the other hand, rejuvenates him. For Paul, even the route to Willey Farm is remote, wild and

beautiful (143). Miriam and her family thrive in nature, living among birds, flowers, orchards and animals, and Paul is drawn to them because of this connection to the natural world (171-72). Miriam's family is geographically isolated from society, and their daily routine occurs in a pleasant and nurturing enclave of their own making. Paul thrives in this environment, and even his bicycle is animated: as he calmly walks toward their house "his bicycle went with him as if it were a live thing" (196). As emphasis, while Paul visits the family his bicycle is kept, like an animal, in the barn (196, 257).

Its role as a transporter between town and country not only reflects the contemporary usage of bicycles but also makes possible the experiences that result in Paul's growth as a character. At the farm, the family's attention to and affection for Paul "kindled him and made him glow to his work" (172). His aptitude for repairing a bicycle's flat tire gives Miriam reason to admire his physique and desire him sexually (217). And, as their relationship turns from friendship to romance, a return ride home on a bicycle reflects his heightened sense of sexuality and attachment. Leaving Miriam that evening, he rides his bicycle with passion and energy through the darkness:

He felt a pleasure as the machine plunged over the second, steeper drop in the hill. 'Here goes!' he said. It was risky, because of the curve in the darkness at the bottom...his bicycle seemed to fall beneath him, and he loved it. Recklessness is almost a man's revenge on his woman. He feels he is not valued, so he will risk destroying himself to deprive her altogether. (218)

Paul's maturation is not simply a matter of escaping from the city to the countryside; instead it is his process of coming to terms with the conflicting attractions of the two locales. Although the city is gloomy, it provides him with dependable employment and is where he practices his art. It is also the home of his mother, to whom he remains steadfastly attached. The pleasantness of the countryside, on the other hand,

is tempered by the demands placed on him by young Miriam. Paul is deeply torn between his mother and Miriam; he knows that his deepest love belongs to his mother and that he is the center of her life (242, 246). He berates Miriam for her neediness: “Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them?” (248). He is alternately cruel and tender toward Miriam, conflicted in his own desires. When he finally breaks with Miriam, Paul’s artistic career becomes more successful, an indication of his improved state of mind (339-41). The bicycle, the vehicle that connects the countryside with the city, is also the vehicle that creates the tensions between these two conflicting interests. The reconciliation of these tensions is an integral part of Paul’s personal growth.

Other factors play a role in Paul’s maturation, but the freedom provided by the bicycle establishes the foundation for his transformation. His sexual maturity develops more from his relationship with Clara (Paul’s second lover) than with Miriam, and his transformation into adulthood is complete only upon the death of his mother and the termination of his relationships with both Miriam and Clara. But the bicycle plays a crucial role in *Sons and Lovers* for it is this means of transportation that gives Paul his initial autonomy from his mother and his home. This new level of freedom sets the stage for Paul’s transformation by diminishing his dependence upon his mother and fosters his connection to the country where he finds not only Miriam, but a place of emotional comfort and encouragement. By giving the bicycle a role that mirrors its status as a common, ordinary vehicle during the second decade of the twentieth century, Lawrence uses it not merely as a symbol, but as a crucial catalyst for character transformation.

Dorothy Richardson: *The Tunnel*

British author Dorothy Richardson was one of the first prominent female novelists to meaningfully incorporate bicycles into her work. Bicycles play a role in her 1919 novel *The Tunnel*, one part of her thirteen-volume work, *Pilgrimage*. In *The Tunnel* (1919), the central character, a young woman, moves to London where she is exposed to new ideas, intellectual discourse and modern city life. Treading slowly in this intriguing but sometimes frightening environment, she eventually finds herself drawn to cycling for its sense of independence, freedom and strength. The bicycle is used as a symbol of character transformation that reflects not only her initial insecurities but also her ability to overcome them on her path toward intellectual and spiritual growth. And while male novelists Zola, Wells, and Doyle understood the bicycle's impact on women in general, Richardson experienced it personally.

Born in 1873 in Abingdon, England, about sixty miles northwest of London, Richardson was seventeen at the beginning of the bicycle boom. Miriam Henderson, the central figure of *Pilgrimage*, is based on Richardson's experiences from 1891 to 1913 (Podnieks 67). This time period covers the peak years of the bicycle's radical impact on women's mobility, independence, and gender equality. Based on personal experiences that occurred two decades prior to its publication in 1919, this novel could be considered alongside *fin de siècle* literary works, yet its stream of consciousness technique and lack of rigid structure situate it stylistically in the post World War I period.

The first three novels in *Pilgrimage* center on Miriam's life when she leaves her parents' home to work as a governess and teacher. Bicycles do not appear in these three works. *The Tunnel*, the fourth book of the series, begins when Miriam moves to London,

where she makes a career change and takes a job in the city as an assistant for a dentist. Her life is altered in a fundamental way because the move to the city and the job outside of the traditional sphere of women expand Miriam's worldview and broaden the scope of intellectual and artistic influences on her life.

Miriam is not a self-confident woman with aspirations to change the world. Unlike the self-assured and even willful female cyclists of Zola's *Paris* and *Fruitfulness*, and unlike Doyle's emancipated Mrs. Westmacott of *Beyond the City*, Miriam is simply embarking on a new life and absorbing and learning from her fresh experiences. Portrayed primarily in stream of consciousness⁹, Miriam is in a constant state of contemplation about her environment and the experiences to which she is exposed. Under the guidance of her employer, she is introduced to the intellectual life of London and absorbs the latest in arts and scientific discoveries (99-100). She is stimulated by this environment but considers herself initially to be a mere novice and onlooker. During one social engagement, Miriam makes an awkward attempt at conversation that leads her to remark suddenly that she would like to learn to ride a bicycle. She is embarrassed by her hasty comment and she feels that she is "like the man who proposed to the girl at the dance because he could not think of anything to say to her" (143). But the remark leads to the offer of free cycling lessons and another new experience.

The first cycling lesson is nearly a disaster. Miriam feels incompetent, helpless, and miserable, and her clumsy attempt to ride makes her feel that it's "no use to try to do anything. It always exposes me and brings this maddening shame and pain" (146). Yet, the recollection of a single moment of pleasure makes her determined to learn. As she

⁹ Richardson is noted as a pioneer in the stream of consciousness technique and her earliest works predate those of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce ("Dorothy Richardson," *Continuum Encyclopedia of British Literature*).

walks home alone after the lesson, she imagines how wonderful it would be to ride these same streets by bicycle:

I must learn somehow to get my balance. To go along, like in that moment when he [her instructor] took his hands off the handle-bars, in knickers and short skirt and all the summer to come...Everything shone with a greater intensity. Friends and thought and work were nothing compared to being able to ride alone, balanced, going along through the air. (148)

After Miriam admits to her progressive female friends that she took a cycling lesson, they share a secret with her: they cycle at night in their knickers for the sheer joy of it. The friends encourage Miriam, sharing their enthusiasm for cycling and for wearing knickers, and she is inspired by their energy (151). Miriam recognizes that being able to ride a bicycle is transformative: “to be able to bicycle would make life utterly different; on a bicycle you are a different person; nothing can come near you, you forget who you are” (152). With her new determination to master the bicycle, Miriam begins to perceive herself as a modern, emancipated woman who may even cut her hair short, wear divided skirts and never marry (152).

Later, when Miriam tells her employer about the lesson, she amuses him with a description of her ineptitude, describing how other cyclists gave her a wide berth, how she was afraid to move her hand from the handlebars to ring the bell, how she was unable to dismount (178-79). In retelling the adventure, Miriam is less embarrassed than pleased with herself and her adventure. Although she tells him that she had never been so frightened in her life, she immediately accepts when he offers to teach her how to get on and off the bicycle.

In part because the stream of consciousness technique reveals her fears and insecurities, Miriam’s early encounters with a bicycle have a sense of introspection and

realism often lacking in the descriptions of other fictional cyclists. Her ability to overcome her feelings of shame and incompetence make her transformation even more significant. This young woman, often insecure and introverted, resolves to learn to ride even in the face of her embarrassment in her first attempt. She has strength of character and a willingness to grow, learn, and progress. Miriam accepts the opportunities and experiences the city offers her, and she learns to question traditional social structures, educational concepts, and religious beliefs (99, 205, 235, 251, 303).

Miriam's competency as a cyclist improves and she embarks on a multi-day bicycle trip to visit her sister. In a stream of consciousness, Miriam describes her feelings of fatigue and her knees "heavy with effort" much sooner than she expects. Her clothing is damp from the mist and she feels bedraggled but rides on with determination. Even in this tired state she is thrilled with her newfound freedom. When she shouts to a passing cyclist, "is this Reading?" he smiles and shouts back at her. She muses:

He knew she knew [that it was Reading]. But he liked shouting too. If she had yelled Have you got a *soul*, it would have been just the same. If everyone were on bicycles all the time you could talk to everybody, all the time, about anything...sailing so steadily along with two free legs...how much easier it must be with your knees going so slowly up and down...how funny I must look with my knees racing up and down in lumps of skirt. (243).

She is enthused by her independence and her introduction into the egalitarian world of cyclists – even though she has yet to adopt the cycling attire of progressive women. As the journey continues and her skills improve, her confidence in her own abilities allows her to truly enjoy cycling: "I've got my sea-legs...this is riding – not just straining along trying to forget the wobbly bicycle, but feeling it wobble and able to control it... being able to look about easily" (245). A whole new world has opened for

her. During a roadside respite, Miriam closes her eyes and relives the ride. It is an eloquent description of cycling in the countryside:

Within her eyelids fields swung past green, cornfields gold and black, fields with coned clumps of harvested corn, dusty gold, and black, on either side of the bone-white grass trimmed road. The road ran on and on lined by low hedges and the strange everlasting back-flowing fields. Thrilling hedges and outstretched fields of distant light, coming on mile after mile, winding off, left behind... 'it's the Bath Road I shall be riding on; I'm going down to Chiswick to see which way the wind is on the Bath Road' ...the land stretching serenely out again, rolling along, rolling along in the hot sunshine with the morning and the evening freshness at either end. (244)

Even after this breakthrough as a proficient cyclist, Miriam's narrative retains her introspective contradictions which keep her account as a female cyclist authentic. As she travels further from London, she becomes fearful in this unfamiliar territory. She is afraid of a drunken stranger on the road, worries about her physical limitations, and is anxious about finding lodgings on her own (245-46). Even in the face of these concerns, however, Miriam is resolute in traveling on to her destination.

Miriam's feminist perspective comes more sharply into focus during this excursion as she deliberates about the differences between male and female roles in her culture and the limitations placed on women. She is conscious of the burden placed on women who feel compelled to cycle in long skirts. As she rides into a small town late one evening she is greeted by the words "*Good Lord – it's a woman.*" Affronted, she reflects: "Why not? Why that amazed stupefaction?" But she acknowledges that this man can envision a woman riding in only daylight on suburban streets (247). At the end of a long day of riding, she is acutely aware of being alone in a strange place in an inn for

chance travelers. Instead of feeling triumphant for completing the ride, she remains apprehensive, but also notes: “everything’s alive all around me in a new way” (251).

The Tunnel uses bicycles to reflect Miriam’s exposure to new ideas and experiences as she embarks on her independent life in London. Like her chance acceptance of the cycling lessons, she is willing to let a variety of experiences shape her worldview and sense of self. As a modern novelist experimenting with the stream of consciousness technique, Richardson focuses not only on the social implications of emancipation but also on how these experiences impact Miriam’s psyche (Kaplan 914). Miriam does not purposefully seek provocative encounters; her first cycling lessons result from an off-hand remark during a moment of social awkwardness. Although she reacts with ambivalence to new challenges she is willing to give bicycles, and progressive ideas, a chance to transform her.

The novel does not have a traditional climax and resolution, but the final chapter depicts Miriam in the same boarding house common area from the novel’s opening paragraphs. In this final scene Miriam peers into a downstairs room that she had never seen before and she regrets seeing it: “the hall and the stairs and her own room would be changed now that she knew what this room was like. In her fatigue she looked about half taking in half recoiling” (305). Miriam’s experience in *The Tunnel* is one of constantly looking into new rooms and being exposed to new ideas. She both absorbs and recoils from them as she processes them internally and changes with her new knowledge. Miriam’s experiences with bicycles reflect not only these contradictions, but also her transformative process as she matures and formulates her emerging adult values and beliefs.

Literature after World War I and the Automobile's Proliferation

By the 1920s the bicycle's status as a symbol of progress and fashion diminished as the automobile became the preferred vehicle for modern, affluent, style-conscious consumers. But even though its popularity as transportation waned, bicycles never disappeared from use or our collective consciousness, and literature continued to reflect its place in culture. A 1923 Raleigh advertisement demonstrates the manufacturing company's shift in marketing tactics and appeals to those who want to improve their health and escape the pressures of the working world by cycling in a refreshing pastoral setting (Woodforde 168). In the opening scene of Aldous Huxley's first novel, *Chrome Yellow* (1921), the protagonist, Denis, travels on a train headed out of the city and brings his bicycle with him: "he always took his bicycle when he went into the country. It was part of the theory of exercise" (9). Bicycles appear in the works of post-World War I novelists Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Simone de Beauvoir, Flann O'Brien, Samuel Beckett, and L. P. Hartley in significant ways, but their transformational roles are less transparent than in the *fin de siècle* novels.

Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*

Like many authors who employ bicycles in fiction, Ernest Hemingway was a cyclist. But Hemingway had a unique passion for bicycle racing, a sport he enjoyed as a spectator while living in Paris. From the beginning, bicycles, even in their earliest forms, were used for racing. By the mid-1800's France had established itself as the epicenter of bicycle racing, hosting a multitude of races throughout the country, and became the home of the world's premier race, *Le Tour de France*, in 1903. (Herlihy 176). In *A Moveable*

Feast, the author's memoirs of his life in Paris in the 1920s, Hemingway briefly mentions riding a bicycle for errands in Paris. But it is bicycle racing that truly intrigued and exhilarated the author and is what he uses symbolically in fictional works. Writing about the actual bicycle races at the Vélodrome d'Hiver¹⁰ in Paris, Hemingway eloquently reveals his ardor for the sport:

I have started many stories about bicycle racing but have never written one that is as good as the races are both on the indoor and outdoor tracks and on the roads. But I will get the Vélodrome d'Hiver with the smokey light of the afternoon and the high-banked wooden track and the whirring sound the tires made on the wood as the riders passed, the effort and the tactics as the riders climbed and plunged, each one a part of his machine...the riders elbow to elbow and wheel to wheel up and down and around at deadly speed..." (*A Moveable Feast* 64)

He describes various different types of races and illustrates his thorough knowledge of the sport.



Figure 6 - Start of a bicycle race at Le Velodrome d'Hiver, Paris, circa 1920.
<<http://www.ciclisucarta.it/images/paris1.jpg>>

¹⁰ A vélodrome is an oval bicycle track with steeply banked sides, usually 250 to 400 meters in circumference. The Vélodrome d' Hiver, an indoor stadium, was used infamously by the Nazis in 1942 in the mass arrest of thousands of Parisian Jews.

The title of his 1927 short story “A Pursuit Race” is a reference to a specific type of cycling track race¹¹. While bicycles play no actual role in this text, the title reflects Hemingway’s knowledge and love of the sport. The pursuit race is a metaphor for the life of the main character, an advance man for a traveling burlesque show. When the story opens, the main character has just been caught by his pursuer, the manager of the burlesque show, and fired from his job. His race is lost and he is in a state of emotional and physical despair.

In *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), Hemingway uses bicycle racers to draw attention to



Figure 7 - Ernest Hemingway on a bicycle
<<http://www.indybikehiker.com/2010/02/hemingway-on-riding-bicycle.html>>

the transformation of the narrator, Jake Barnes.

Jake is much like Hemingway himself: an American expatriate writer living in Paris who is enthralled with bullfighting. As a journalist, Jake is an observer of human interaction as much as he is a participant. When he travels to Spain to watch bullfights with several of his friends, the vacation becomes a muddle of drunken squabbles and emerging jealousies. After the group disperses in tatters, Jake travels by himself to San Sebastian.

Alone, his role as observer intensifies and he

distances himself from his environment and those around him. At his hotel, the dining room is filled with bicycle racers from France and Belgium who have stopped for one night during their multi-day race of the *Tour du Pays Basque* (236). Jake watches closely

¹¹ In a pursuit race, two riders start simultaneously at opposite sides of an oval the track, each trying to catch the other.

as they dine and is particularly struck by their camaraderie and good natured banter, the type of interaction that he and his companions lack. The racers sincerely enjoy each others' company as they drink wine and tell private jokes. They are colleagues as much as competitors and he notes that they have "raced among themselves so often that it did not make much difference who won" (236). It is a stark contrast to Jake's social circle of argumentative, superficial friends who compete for women.

That evening, a racing team manager befriends Jake and suggests that they meet early the next morning to watch the six o'clock departure of the race. Jake is interested and agrees, but the next morning he oversleeps. When he awakes, the racers have departed three hours earlier. The cyclists, with their genuine camaraderie and shared physical prowess, illustrate the authentic relationships that Jake has only observed from a distance. He misses the bicycle race, but recognizes what he is truly missing: honest relationships and authentic friends. This is Jake's transformation: the recognition of his false personal relationships. When, in the final scene, Brett mourns their lost potential for an intimate relationship, Jake replies: "isn't it pretty to think so?" Jake finally recognizes that his friendship with Brett, as with the others, is merely illusory — a pretty façade for a relationship that lacks genuine rapport.

The Sun Also Rises uses bicycles in a unique way and yet they continue to be symbols of transformation. Hemingway admires bicycles as machines and is impressed by the talent and physical strength of the men who race them. But it is the bonds of friendship that the racers have forged among themselves that is the crucial element to the story. Jake does not need to watch the race the next morning; he learns what he needs to from watching the cyclists share a meal together in a hotel dining room.

Bicycles appear briefly in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* in an exhibition of their military use. Italian soldiers, tired from traveling slowly on foot, wish they had bicycles to ease their journey (207). These same soldiers watch silently when a German bicycle troop passes, the enemy appearing strong and healthy, moving smoothly along, armed with guns and stick bombs (211). Bicycles were widely used in the Great War because they could move easily through crowded roads, and soldiers on bicycles could travel nearly one hundred miles in a day, much further than on foot.¹² Although in trench warfare they were ineffective, they were efficient transportation away from the front (Fitzpatrick 89-95). Hemingway's incorporation of the scenes simply acknowledges the bicycle's value to ordinary soldiers.

F. Scott Fitzgerald: *Tender is the Night*

The automobile and its symbolic use by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) has been analyzed exhaustively. For affluent members of American society in the Roaring 20s, such as Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway and the Buchanans, bicycles are a lowly form of transportation; automobiles are tangible symbols of money and status. Fitzgerald's 1934 novel *Tender is the Night* is set in Europe, but its use of the bicycle as a symbol exposes Fitzgerald's American perspective toward both bicycles and automobiles. Although the automobile had become a familiar mode of transportation in Europe by this time, the bicycle was still widely used for pleasure and utility. Europeans retained their interest in and affection for bicycles even decades after the bicycle boom whereas the fascination of Americans turned more markedly away from bicycles and

¹² Military forces put bicycles to use for conveying messages and moving troops as early as the 1880s (McGonagle 103, Herlihy 258).

toward automobiles (Dodge 180). The difference in the popularity of bicycles between the two continents was dramatic: while Americans owned seventeen cars for every bicycle owned in the 1930s, Europeans owned seven bicycles to every car (Herlihy 328). For Fitzgerald's characters in *Tender is the Night*, the bicycle is a provincial machine unsuitable for the rich and successful. Dick Diver's penchant for cycling categorizes him and his proper place in society; he is, regardless of any temporary pretense, middle class.

Diver's transformation begins with a rise to prominence and ends with a fall into obscurity. As a promising psychiatrist he marries a beautiful and wealthy woman and lives in a rarified world of European glamour. After his marriage falls apart, he returns to the United States and he is simply a lonely, divorced, small-town doctor in upstate New York. His transformation is foreshadowed by and reflected in bicycles. Bicycles make their initial appearance when Dick recollects his first encounter with his future wife Nicole. Dick is walking across the clinic grounds on his way to retrieve his bicycle when he crosses paths with Nicole, a patient, who is leisurely walking with a nurse (120). Dick is drawn to her beauty and her fragile state but, at least initially, tries to retain a professional distance.

When Dick sees Nicole outside of the clinic for the first time, it is a chance glimpse that emphasizes her wealth and societal position. Nicole and her sister are near a luxurious hotel, seated in a Rolls Royce, a car with "gigantic proportions, and buoyed up by the power of a hundred superfluous horses" (145). Dick is a foreigner in this world of the exceptionally wealthy. His lower social status is reaffirmed when he encounters Nicole again in a funicular near Montreux, Switzerland. Dick is taking a bicycle tour of the area and has his bicycle with him; Nicole is traveling with a friend and her sister,

Baby, but she has eschewed the funicular's first class seats and finds herself sitting near Dick. This is Baby's initial meeting with Dick but she is familiar with his professionally friendly relationship with Nicole. Baby immediately classifies Dick as a "shabby-snobby" intellectual and, although he is attractive, she cannot see "how he could be made into her idea of an aristocrat" (157). For Baby, the bicycle-riding psychologist is not of their class and never will be. When Baby asks him to escort Nicole back to Zurich, he is offended; Baby knows he is traveling by bicycle and purposefully ignores his middle class arrangements (157).

Nicole and Dick marry in spite of Baby's misgivings but the marriage eventually collapses under the weight of infidelities, alcohol and Nicole's mental illness. From Baby's perspective, during the marriage Dick was living outside the realm in which he truly belonged, a realm where one rides bicycles rather than extravagant automobiles. Discussing the divorce, she tells Nicole: "we should have let him confine himself to his bicycle excursions...when people are taken out of their depths they lose their heads, no matter how charming a bluff they put up" (312). Years later, Dick's post-divorce life is summed up briefly as a drab existence as a lonely small-town medical practitioner with no professional aspirations and an unfulfilling personal life, and, befittingly, he is often seen riding his bicycle (314). Dick's final transformation, his reversion to his origins as a middle class professional working man, is a predestined return to his true identity, an identity which, for Fitzgerald, is circumscribed by his preference for bicycle-riding

Fitzgerald's use of bicycles as a means of classification of social strata in the 1930s is contrary to the bicycle's early role as a class-obscuring vehicle. The allure of the powerful automobile, particularly in America, made the bicycle, for some, a mundane

vehicle unsuitable for the upper classes. Fitzgerald includes a brief scene in which bicycle racers appear in *Tender in the Night*, but they are a show for spectators, speeding past a café where Dick, Nicole and Nicole's lover, Tommy, discuss divorce (309-10). The bicycle of the 1920s is unable to lift Dick Diver from his natural social status and, in fact, predicts his destiny.

World War II and Beyond: Beauvoir, O'Brien, Bartolini, Beckett and Hartley

Fitzgerald's use of the bicycle anticipates its symbolic representation in novels written during World War II and thereafter. Literature after the late 1930s often reflects the profound changes precipitated by the onset of World War II¹³. The tragedy and horrors of war and the burgeoning atomic age were directly incorporated into some novels, while others reflect its impact in more subtle ways. Existential, absurdist and postmodern philosophers and writers of the era — such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien — questioned pre-war cultural values and the meaning of existence. Bicycles continue to appear in novels as transformative vehicles, but they no longer play the straightforward role as vehicles of liberation from the constraints of cultural mores, gender restrictions or social hierarchies. Bicycles often continue to be symbols of freedom, happiness and love, but they lose their irrefutable power to transform characters in permanently positive ways. Literature of this time such as Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Blood of Others*, Luigi Bartolini's *Bicycle Thieves*, Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* and L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*, reflect bicycles as beloved articles, useful vehicles, and potentially

¹³ Although the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 is often considered the beginning of World War II, the war between China and Japan had begun in 1937.

positive transformative machines, yet they are unable to overcome the disquieting times; bicyclists are no longer destined for eternal happiness.

Flann O'Brien: *The Third Policeman*

In his surreal and darkly humorous novel, *The Third Policeman*, Irish author Flann O'Brien¹⁴ uses bicycles in ways that contrast sharply with their roles in earlier literary works. Written between 1939 and 1940¹⁵, the novel incorporates numerous contemporary societal issues: fear of emerging atomic energy, suspicion of governmental authority and distrust of mechanization. Bicycles play two distinct transformative roles in the work. First, as an extreme and comically bizarre example, characters in *The Third Policeman* physically exchange atoms with the bicycles they ride. According to one policeman's explanation of atomic theory, the physical contact between cyclist and bicycle while riding on the bumpy Irish roads causes atoms to pass between the two and result in hybrid forms of bicycles and humans. The atomic exchange causes curious changes in behavior and personality as well as subtle changes in physical characteristics of both people and bicycles (85-89)¹⁶. And in a second and perhaps more significant role, bicycles symbolize the transformation of scientific understanding of matter and energy at the dawn of the atomic age.

Most of the novel is set in an unnamed afterlife dwelling place, perhaps hell.

Having committed murder, and subsequently been murdered by his criminal partner, the

¹⁴ Flann O'Brien is the *nom de plume* of Brian O'Nolan.

¹⁵ Although written during these years, *The Third Policeman* was not published until 1967, one year after O'Brien's death.

¹⁶ O'Brien reprises his theory of atoms and molecules, including the interactions between men and bicycles, in his fifth and final novel *The Dalkey Archive* published in 1964. Because *The Third Policemen*, written two decades previously, had not yet been published, this may have been an attempt to get the humorous concept into a published work.

narrator's experience in the surreal world of the three policemen is posthumous (although the reader is not aware of this fact until the end of the story) and he must navigate through a place of mystical energy, confusing logic, time warps, and atomic particle exchanges.

O'Brien's descriptions of atomic particle exchanges between bicycles and humans are comical. The more time spent on a bicycle, the greater the transformative exchange. A man who becomes more than fifty percent bicycle "will walk smartly always and never sit down and he will lean against the wall with his elbow out and stay like that all night in the kitchen instead of going to bed. If he walks too slowly or stops in the middle of the road he will fall down in a heap and will have to be lifted and set in motion again by some extraneous party" (90). Bicycles that take on human characteristics are never actually seen eating or moving autonomously, but they show up unaccountably in unexpected places and stay near humans, listening to their conversations (89).

Sergeant Pluck, one of the three policemen in this strange world, worries about the immorality of men riding bicycles that belong to women, especially when they take the bike for a ride on lonely country roads (89). In another scene, the unnamed narrator finds himself enthralled by a female bicycle with its perfect proportions, its prim, flawless tires and graceful handlebars. He touches the saddle sensuously, sees "her pump resting warmly against her rear thigh" and is overcome with desire (171). In this sexual context, the line between bicycles and humans is blurred even further. Unlike other literary works, bicycles in *The Third Policeman* have an observable transformative impact and raise the question of human and technological boundaries.

Although the perceptible consequences of the atomic level exchange between bicycles and humans is the most obvious transformative experience of *The Third Policeman*, these consequences do not specifically impact any major character nor do they result in character development. Instead, the primary purpose of the bicycle/human atomic interchange is to symbolize the momentous and transformative scientific research of the 1930s. Scientific understanding of atomic energy was at a nascent stage during this decade, but the power and dangers of an atomic bomb were already recognized¹⁷. The interaction of atoms between humans and bicycles in *The Third Policeman* is a comedic reflection of the somber and unknown realm of atomic science and its potential consequences (Maslen 102). The weird but seemingly innocuous atomic theory espoused in *The Third Policeman* acknowledges the contemporary scientific developments that were fundamentally altering human understanding of matter and energy. The unknown consequences of atomic research were not the only cause for concern; this environment in which the normal rules and laws of science do not apply challenges real-life philosophical and intellectual systems of understanding (Murphy 8).

The exchange of atoms between people and bicycles causes no immediate harm to any of the characters except as a personal nuisance. But it serves as an example of the strange and confusing laws of nature that the narrator encounters and emphasizes his inability to fully understand the world he now inhabits. The new and strange “realities” of the narrator’s afterlife reflect the new and strange realm of a real world in which scientific truths were being radically transformed by the proliferation of scientific discoveries. The march of scientific and industrial progress, in O’Brien’s view, was

¹⁷ The atom was first split in 1932; in 1938 nuclear fission was generated by German chemists and by 1939 scientists calculated that an atomic fission weapon was only a few years away from production.

fraught with danger. According to R. W. Maslen, O'Brien's work reflects the opinion that "the acquisition and exploitation of knowledge in Ireland of the 1930s and 1940s is likely not only to kill you but to damn you to perdition" (87). The narrator, who believes at one point that he has found a bounteous life through a newly found miraculous element, is ultimately left empty handed.

The bicycle also plays a third and much more traditional role in *The Third Policeman*: a means of escape. In the 1930s bicycles are not necessary to liberate characters from the conventions of society as they did decades earlier, but can be functional vehicles to escape physical captivity. While jailed in the afterlife by the policemen and sentenced to death (although he is dead already), the narrator plots his escape by sending a message to a potential liberator the night before his scheduled hanging. It is only by bicycle that the message will reach his rescuer in time (150). When this rescue attempt fails, a bicycle with human characteristics makes herself available to the narrator and he pedals her away to freedom (169, 173).

Pedaling in high spirits toward his home village, the narrator finally feels happy and fulfilled, but these feelings are fleeting (195). The narrator unwittingly scares his former criminal partner to death, literally, and when he turns to leave, he is unable to find his bicycle. The bicycle, and its promise of freedom and hope, is lost. Walking down the same road that he trod at the beginning of the hellish adventure, the narrator once again heads toward the strange police station. Arriving there, the policeman asks the same question he posed when they first met: "is it about a bicycle?" Thus the grim and futile cycle begins anew. The narrator finds himself once again in the alien, illogical and confusing world of the three policemen. In a period of complex mechanization and

atomic capabilities, the narrator, like mankind, flounders in a world beyond his depth of understanding.

Simone de Beauvoir: *The Blood of Others*

During the Great Depression and World War II, demand for bicycles in both Europe and America rebounded due to their affordability and utilitarian value (Dodge 178, Herlihy 8, 330, 332). Automobile production was curtailed as factories turned toward the war effort; the result was a shortage of cars and spare car parts. This shortage, in addition to gasoline rationing, made the bicycle an important transportation option during the war years. Bicycle usage is well documented during World War II not only for the daily routines of civilians, but also as a vehicle of courageous escapes and fleeing troops (Levine 5, 117, Fuchs 9, Marriott).

The military appreciated the bicycle's simplicity, size, maneuverability and lack of need for fuel. Bicycles were used by American, German, British, Italian, Belgian and Swiss armies for their efficiency, speed and carrying capacity. A folding bicycle design was employed by the military due to its ease of transport and some allied paratroopers were equipped with bicycles. Although military use of the bicycle met with limited success in major war campaigns, it was more successfully employed in guerilla warfare, specifically in conflicts in Ireland, Malaya and Vietnam (McGonagle 102-5, 108-11).

Simone de Beauvoir's 1945 novel *The Blood of Others* (*Le sang des autres*) reflects civilian use of bicycles in France, including the pre-war enjoyment of bicycles as a leisure activity and the bicycle's utilitarian value during the Nazi occupation. Beauvoir's use of bicycles reflects their genuine resurgence in popularity in Europe. A

July 1940 article in the *The New York Times* notes that bicycles constitute the bulk of traffic in Paris because “gasoline is more precious than the rarest couture perfumes nowadays” and that everyone old enough to ride a bicycle uses one (Cannell 18).¹⁸ In 1944 bicycles continued to be the main mode of transportation in Paris and women cycling in flowing skirts, regardless of class or wealth, were common on the city streets. The lack of private cars, taxis and buses gave bicycles full use of the roads (Long 36).

Like earlier author-cyclists such as Zola, Doyle, Wells and Hemingway, Beauvoir was an enthusiastic bicyclist. Author Deirdre Bair wrote of Beauvoir and her bicycle:

The bicycle that Natasha Sorokine gave her [Beauvoir], like that of most Parisians, became her most treasured possession throughout the war. She was delighted to see how swiftly she learned to keep her balance, and, like skiing, cycling soon became a passion. Soon she was taking off on her own, at first only to pedal cautiously round and round the Cimetière Montparnasse, then making longer forays in and around Paris. In peacetime, she had vented her frustrations by walking; in wartime, she rode her bicycle and waited for Sartre (239).

After receiving her first bicycle in 1940, Beauvoir used her bicycle not only for transportation in Paris but also for long distance travels with Jean-Paul Sartre. The two philosophers took several multi-week cycling trips in France’s Free Zone, carrying backpacks and a tent while Sartre searched the countryside for Resistance groups and supporters. The trips were not cycling idylls: food was often scarce; they were often exhausted; and Germans imposed numerous restrictions on travelers (Bair 257, 265-56). On one of these trips Beauvoir was injured in a bicycle accident and lost a tooth, but the experience did not dampen her enthusiasm for cycling (Fullbrook 136, Bair 257).

¹⁸ Cannell also writes that the week before the German occupation began, bicycle prices soared to outrageous levels due to high demand. After the Germans entered the city, many bicycles were abandoned at railway stations by owners who had boarded trains to leave the city. Prices quickly returned to normal levels.

The Blood of Others reflects Beauvoir's first-hand knowledge of cycling. The author weaves bicycles throughout the novel as a reflection of their commonplace role in France: some refugees lash suitcases and bicycles to their cars while others flee German invaders by bicycles, as well as in trucks or carts (193, 196). Additionally, the bicycle is used to differentiate the hardships of the French from the relative affluence of the Nazis: formerly busy roadways outside of Paris stand empty, disturbed only by a few bicycles (185) and, as the war progressed, the Germans "lived at the level of motorcars and planes; we had only our feet, and at best, our bicycles" (187).

In more prominent roles, bicycles are used by Resistance fighters who ride to prison camps to communicate with captives (235) and to carry out bombing missions against a German-occupied building in Paris (222). The bicycle machine, in previous decades a symbol of modernity and personal freedom, takes on a more solemn role as a machine of the French Resistance.

Most importantly, Beauvoir employs a bicycle as the symbol for the transformation of the main character, H  l  ne. Beauvoir's existentialist philosophy is woven throughout the work, as H  l  ne struggles with questions about the meaning, purpose and value of life. The novel's second chapter, set in 1934 before the start of the war, is almost entirely devoted to a vignette about H  l  ne's self-indulgent personality and focuses on her child-like desire for a bicycle. In this pre-war setting, H  l  ne is a selfish young woman, absorbed in her own needs. According to bicycle historian Pryor Dodge, the bicycle in France during the late 1930s symbolized the leisure and paid holidays introduced by the Popular Front government (178). And H  l  ne's initial desire for a bicycle is simply a whim of fancy: she wants a bicycle for its beauty and because it

symbolizes material wealth and leisure. The chapter's opening sentences describes her palpable desire for the machine sitting unattended near her shop:

The bicycle was still there, brand new, with its pale-blue frame and its plated handlebars which sparkled against the dull stone of the wall. It was so lissome, so slender, that even when not in use it seemed to cut through the air. H  l  ne had never seen such an elegant bicycle. ‘I’ll repaint it dark green, it’ll be even more beautiful,’ she thought (36).

She admires its gleaming handlebars and beautiful yellow saddle and decides simply, like a spoiled child, “Yes, I want it and I must have it” (37). Its importance to her is exaggerated far beyond its actual value, as if it were something much more meaningful. In her desire for the bicycle, H  l  ne’s lips and hands tremble as she contemplates theft (37)¹⁹. Afraid to commit the theft herself, she contrives to have a new acquaintance steal it for her, and when he does, she feels momentarily satisfied: “My bicycle, it is really mine! By and by I’ll go through the streets, I’ll go right across Paris. I’m sure it runs perfectly.’ It seemed to her that her whole life was transfigured” (46).

But the joy derived by the theft, the satisfaction of her childish desire, is short lived. A mere few hours later, she is burdened by the bicycle and bored by its faithful obedience: “She looked at the bicycle in disgust: just where she had left it, like a patient and unwelcome dog” (51-52). H  l  ne’s life has no purpose or accountability, and the bicycle emphasizes both her childish demeanor and her lack of self-understanding.

¹⁹ Beauvoir’s pupil and friend, Natasha Sorokine, stole, re-painted and then sold the bicycles to make money during the war. Beauvoir’s fictional character H  l  ne is partly based on Sorokine (Bair 237).

Hélène is slowly transformed from a selfish irresponsible young woman to a committed Resistance fighter. This transformation is the result of personal encounters with the Nazis: the attempted arrest of her Jewish friend, Yvonne, and the witnessing of a young Jewish girl being separated from her mother when they are rounded up by the Nazis. Hélène's experiences and slow maturation enable her to feel profound compassion for the child and feelings of obligation to Yvonne, both of which are the manifestations of her transformation.

Carolle Gagnon argues that de Beauvoir's use of food, specifically chocolate and sweets, symbolizes Hélène's transformation, but the bicycle is an equally significant symbol of this transformation. Early in the novel, when Hélène contemplates her existence, she responds to an inquiry about what she wants in life: "I like chocolate and beautiful bicycles" (71). Later, as Resistance leader Jean Blomant agonizes over Hélène's suffering after an abortion, he thinks: "my poor child, my poor little child. How young she was! She liked chocolate and bicycles and went forward into life with the boldness of a child" (100). Her love of sweets and bicycles is that of a simple child, someone who needs protection and lacks self knowledge or purpose.

As the war progresses, Hélène and her bicycle age and mature concurrently. While the bicycle was once an object of frivolous desire, during the occupation it becomes a useful machine. Like Hélène herself, this object of leisure and temporary joy has aged but has become more valuable and substantial through the passage of time. When Hélène pedals her bicycle to meet a Nazi officer whom she has befriended, the bicycle's durability symbolizes her own

emerging inner strength: “The bicycle sped along the boulevard Saint-Michel. It was dirty and rusty; the layers of blue and green paint were coming through the black varnish, but it was still a good machine” (209). At this pivotal meeting with the German officer, H el ene’s transformation is solidified: with newfound self-understanding she assesses her situation honestly and resolves to stay in Paris to actively resist the Nazis. H el ene becomes, like the worn but trustworthy bicycle, a part of the machinery of the Resistance. Her purposeful life is brief; soon after joining the Resistance, H el ene dies of wounds suffered during a dangerous nighttime raid.

Beauvoir rode bicycles for practical purposes and so do her characters; *The Blood of Others* reflects the utilitarian role bicycles play in Nazi-occupied France. But the bicycle is also a symbol of H el ene’s transformation from self-absorbed child to purposeful adult. While young, H el ene has a selfish and whimsical desire for a pretty bicycle that she carelessly casts aside. The mature H el ene, riding a worn but reliable machine, has resolved her Existential need for meaning and purpose.

1946 Luigi Bartolini’s *Bicycle Thieves*

War time reliance on bicycles due to the shortage of automobiles and petroleum is the principal reason bicycles are so important to the characters in Luigi Bartolini’s 1946 novel, *Bicycle Thieves*²⁰. The novel is set in Rome in 1944, after the Allied liberation of the city, when citizens live among poverty,

²⁰ Bartolini’s novel was used as the basis for the 1948 critically acclaimed film “*The Bicycle Thief*” by director Vittorio De Sica. The plot of the film differs substantially from that of the novel.

price inflation, food shortages and rationing stemming from four years of war. Under these conditions Bartolini describes a society in which thievery and black markets thrive, one that lacks effective law enforcement and where justice is elusive.

Bicycles are necessary transportation for Italians in 1944, both law-abiding and criminal. While the law abiding citizens need bicycles for work and shopping, criminals need them for thievery (93). Like many pre-war literary characters, the narrator also uses his bicycle as a means of escape from the city “to get away from human society” or to shake off his bad humor (9, 24, 88). He compares his bicycle to bread; both are forms of nourishment, one for the body, the other for his spirit (8). But the primary use of the bicycle by Bartolini is as a symbol of transformation in an existential sense: its theft and the subsequent search for it provide the unnamed narrator with meaning and purpose, even if his transformation is temporary.

The entire plot of *Bicycle Thieves* focuses on the narrator’s exhaustive attempts to recover his stolen bicycle, his “metal and rubber steed” (7). For him, it is a beloved article: beautiful, light, equipped with racing handlebars, a basket and an aluminum pump and almost-new tires (3). He values it not only for its usefulness and its ability to take him far from the city, but also for its intrinsic beauty.

The narrator’s initial attempts to find his bicycle in the streets and shops of the unruly markets at the Piazza del Monte and Porta Portese are unsuccessful. Bicycle theft is so commonplace that is not worth reporting to the police;

hundreds of bicycles are stolen in the city each day (77-78). The business of stealing bicycles, repainting or modifying them, and then reselling them, is a thriving enterprise. The narrator finally notifies the police only after a physical skirmish with thieves but, as he anticipates, they provide no assistance. In the end the narrator resorts to bargaining with the thieves through an intermediary, a prostitute, and pays to have his bicycle returned.

The narrator is rational, realistic and introspective. As an anti-Facist, he had been assaulted and imprisoned prior to the overthrow of Mussolini; now, he lives in poverty as a poet and writer, is troubled by corrupt law enforcement, and has little hope that the world will change for the better (24, 62). And although the search itself is challenging, for the narrator the most offensive problem is that “honest folk, the bourgeois who pass by or shop in the streets of thieves, tolerate them and let them rob their neighbors, and sometimes cover up for them” (7). He inhabits a world in which the values of integrity and justice have eroded and wrestles with the concepts of personal ethics and responsibility. As he delves into the world of thieves, the narrator explores and clarifies his own set of ethics as he carefully considers the issues of justice, punishment and vindictiveness (25, 102,105).

But his personal transformation caused by the bicycle theft is clear. The theft does not dishearten him; in fact, he is energized by his mission to reclaim his stolen bicycle and takes great joy in finding lost objects. As he searches for his bicycle among the markets of Rome he opines:

If you have never experienced the joy of finding something that was lost, such as a wallet or a dog, I hope you will. I’m not wishing you any bad

luck, which would be unkind, but I hope that you will lose your dog and will experience the happiness of finding him again. The joy is such that it increases the value of the object lost. (96)

When his intermediary is successful in arranging the return of the bicycle (for a price) the narrator reiterates: “there is no more subtle pleasure than that of finding a lost or stolen object” (148-49). But he understands that this pleasure is fleeting, as is his human passage through life. His philosophy is pessimistically existential. His actions are based on his internal set of values, and the purpose he finds is transitory:

Life consists in looking for what has been lost. It can be found, once, twice, three times, as I twice have succeeded in finding my bicycle. But a third time will come, and I shall find nothing. It is like this with all existence, which is like a race through and over obstacles, only to be lost in the end; a race that starts the moment of birth when the infant leaves the womb, weeping for the protection that has been lost. (149)

For the narrator, personal authenticity is essential. That he highly values authenticity is underscored by the fact that the purchase of another bicycle early in the plot is of no consequence to his search (28). He readily finds a utilitarian substitute, but this replacement bicycle is irrelevant to his goal of finding his genuine, original, beloved bicycle. Throughout the story, the narrator is confronted with multiple falsities: counterfeit money, dried beet leaves sold as tobacco, Facists masquerading as anti-Fascists, police who fail to enforce laws, and duplicitous citizens. In his search for his stolen bicycle, the narrator must find the one, true item; for him as an individual, a false replacement is not acceptable. This is what converts a mere search for a stolen bicycle into a purposeful mission.

While the narrator wrestles with his existence amid the poverty, hunger and corruption of war-weary Italy, the loss of his bicycle gives him an immediate sense of purpose. As he delves through the streets of Rome, investigates leads and negotiates with thieves, the narrator is confronted with the realities of his degenerate culture. But the search is transformational, even if the transformation is temporary: it gives him a sense of purpose and its success brings him joy. He is able to find meaning in the present moment, even while knowing that someday a future search will be lead to nothing.

1951 Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*

Samuel Beckett employs bicycles in several of his novels and plays: *Molloy*, *Mercier and Camier*, *More Pricks than Kicks*, and *Endgame*. Like the novels of Bartolini and Beauvoir, his works are heavily influenced by existential philosophy. Born in 1906 in Ireland, Beckett learned to ride at a young age and, according to biographer Deirdre Bair, engaged in neighborhood games of bicycle polo and took cycling vacation trips as a young man (15, 26, 48). Motorcycles and automobiles were alluring to Beckett, who was a member of the Dublin University Motorcycle Club, but bicycles were part of ordinary life (42). Beckett spent most of his adult life in France and, like Beauvoir, worked with the Resistance during the Nazi occupation.

Molloy is a postmodern work in both its existential inquiry and the structure of the novel²¹. While characters in *The Blood of Others* ask

²¹ *Molloy* is the first book in Beckett's trilogy that includes *Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1951) and *The Unnamable* (1953).

existentialistic questions, the structure of the entire novel *Molloy* leads to the questions of reality, identity and purpose. Similar to the *The Third Policeman*, in which the unnamed narrator fails to escape his strange hell, characters in *Molloy* also fail in their goals. Bicycles in *Molloy* offer the *potential* for character transformation but the potential remains unrealized.

Molloy is written in two parts, the first narrated by Molloy, a rapidly deteriorating man who ventures out to find his mother. The second half is narrated by Moran who sets out to find Molloy under assignment for an unknown agency. The narratives are vague, confusing and often contradictory. It is unclear whether Molloy's mother is dead or alive, and even if Molloy is alive (8, 32, 38, 47, 109, 153). Frequent misuse of names questions the identity of characters; Molloy and his mother use different names for one another, and Molloy constantly mistakes the names of other characters (21). As Moran's narrative progresses, he gradually becomes crippled (like Molloy) and the parallels between the two narratives increase. Boundaries between the characters distort, and fantasy blends into reality. Moran increasingly resembles Molloy, and the ultimate truths of human consciousness are questioned (Groves 54). Exploring themes of physical decline, identity and isolation, characters in *Molloy* struggle in a surreal world that bears more similarities to the afterworld of *The Third Policeman* than the Europe of Beauvoir, Wells or Zola.

Although *Molloy* does not have a traditional plot line, the work is based on the journeys of the two principal characters, Molloy and Moran. Mobility is a crucial element of any journey, and the physical disabilities of both Molloy and Moran make

bicycles important to the successful completion of their quests. By purposefully providing and then eliminating these tangible vehicles with which either Molloy or Moran may succeed in their quests, the hopeful optimism of the journey fades to despair. The complex issues that cause each man the loss of his bicycle prompt the themes of reality and personal identity, but without a bicycle and the mobility it provides, failure is inevitable.

Molloy, who is lame from the outset, uses crutches and walks with difficulty but he is able to ride his bicycle and is fond of it. Molloy affectionately describes his bicycle's green frame, its red horn and gear mechanisms. He explains in detail his particular method of fastening his crutches to it, propping up his one bad leg and pedaling with the other (19-20). Because of his problems with mobility, Molloy lives an insular life and never strays far from home, but the bicycle gives him the freedom to embark on what he considers as his imperative to see his mother. He is able to navigate the dark and narrow routes near town on bicycle and the achievement instills a sense of union with the bike: "we cleared these difficult straits, my bicycle and I, together" (25). Molloy's bicycle provides the means not only to set out to see his mother, but also to successfully experience the world.

But Molloy's journey is not easy. In addition to the normal difficulties of travel, he is jailed for loitering, runs over and kills a dog, and then is detained by the dog's owner with whom he stays for many months. During all of these incidents, Molloy is concerned about his bicycle and its whereabouts. When he makes an early unsuccessful attempt to leave the home of the dog's owner, he finds his bicycle half buried in a bush, but its wheels are locked and he is unable to get it moving. He gives up out of weariness

and resigns himself to stay (62). When, months later, he more firmly resolves to continue his journey, he leaves the bicycle behind with the dog's owner but with conflicting deliberation: "I left her my bicycle which I had taken a dislike to, suspecting it to be the vehicle of some malignant agency and perhaps the cause of my recent misfortunes. But all the same I would have taken it with me if I had known where it was and that it was in running order. But I did not" (80). Molloy's thoughts are often ambiguous, and in this case his association of the bicycle with misfortune seems a vague excuse for leaving the bicycle behind and reflects his growing delusional state; he knows that he should have taken it with him and with any effort would have found it. But Molloy makes no active attempt to locate the bicycle and, by leaving it behind, condemns himself to failure and death.

As Molloy's physical condition continues to worsen, the lack of a bicycle becomes increasingly serious. He loses his teeth, his toes, and his sight in one eye, and he grows extremely weak as his asthma and arthritis worsen. Even if he had kept his bicycle, the journey would have been arduous, but without one it becomes impossible. His second leg weakens and as he travels through a forest he merely hobbles and falls (106). His progress is painfully slow, and he eventually realizes that soon he will be unable to move at all (118). As Molloy crawls on the ground, he believes he hears a noise in the distance and, having retained only one part of the bicycle, its red horn, honks it with a flicker of hope for rescue. The horn's strange appearance at this moment is a grim reminder of the vehicle he abandoned. No rescue occurs, and the forest eventually ends beside a moor. Molloy knows he cannot cross it, even by rolling, and realizes he can go no further. When all forms of locomotion end, Molloy's life ends, too.

The second narrator, Moran, also embarks on a journey, having been given the assignment by an unexplained agency to find Molloy. Moran takes his son along with him as they travel by foot toward Molloy's region. Moran cannot recall what he is supposed to do once he finds Molloy, but he dutifully sets off. After weeks of slow progress, Moran becomes lame, so he sends his son to the nearest town, fifteen miles away, to buy a used bicycle with a sturdy carrier. The bicycle is crucial; he realizes that, with a bad knee, his ability to travel is now severely limited.

When father and son manage to coordinate themselves and the bicycle, son pedaling, father in the carrier, there is a moment of exhilaration:

The bicycle swayed, righted itself, gained speed. Bravo! I cried, beside myself with joy. Hurrah! cried my son...his heart was beating under my hand and yet my hand was far from his heart. Happily it was downhill. Happily I had mended my hat, or the wind would blow it away. Happily the weather was fine and I was no longer alone. Happily, happily. (216)

But this joy is not sustained. Father and son do not have a solid relationship; Moran's parenting style is authoritative and mean-spirited (140, 148, 173). After a violent quarrel, Moran's son leaves him, taking most of their money and the bicycle (220). And although it is his son's departure that thwarts the quest to find Molloy, it is Moran who caused this departure. Eventually Moran laboriously makes his way home. Like Molloy, Moran is able to continue onward even without a bicycle, but the process is slow, painful and lonely. Once home, Moran's life resembles the life Molloy led before his journey to his mother: living alone and lonely, infirm and with limited mobility, walking only through the use of crutches (240).

Molloy and Moran are given the potential means to complete quests, but critical character flaws result in the loss of their bicycles, the ensuing loss of mobility and

ultimately failure. Each loses his bicycle for different reasons: Molloy, through muddled decision making; Moran, because of his mistreatment of his son. It is possible that the bicycles may have offered false hope: Molloy's deteriorating body and unstable mind may have ended his journey regardless. Moran's journey was questionable from its onset; he was searching for a vague and moving target and never had a clear objective. Unlike the bicycles of Zola, Wells and Lawrence which often transform characters by liberating them either socially or personally, Beckett's bicycles offer transformational possibilities, but his characters, trapped in existential angst of identity and purpose, are not assured of success, and indeed they fail.

Bicycles are a common motif in Beckett's work. They also appear in *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934), *Watt* (1953) and, more substantially, in *Mercier and Camier* (1946). Mercier and Camier are two men who set out on a journey to leave their city and, like Molloy and Moran, lose their bicycle. Although they lock it to a railing when they stop for drinks at a pub, they are unable to find it when they leave. A week later Mercier locates it, still locked to the same railing, but it has been dismantled. The wheels, saddle, bell, carrier and tail light have all been stolen; only the frame and pump remain (85). Like the bicycles of Molloy and Moran which initially offer the promise a successful journey, the bicycle of Mercier and Camier hints at the potential for escape but they are unable to realize its potential. In the end, the two hapless men return to their homes and part ways. Like *Molloy*, *Mercier and Camier* is a novel of existential inquiry, and the characters fail to fulfill the optimistic transformation that bicycles promised.

L. P. Hartley: *The Go-Between*

The symbolic use of bicycles as a powerful transformative force is superbly effective in L. P. Hartley's novel *The Go-Between*. This work uses the bicycle in a skillful amalgamation of the optimism of the *fin de siècle* bicycle boom with post-WWII philosophical uncertainty. Published in 1953 but set primarily in 1900 as a retrospective, the novel incorporates the bicycle as a plot device (as a gift for the young go-between who delivers letters between lovers of different social classes), but does so from a post-WWII perspective. While bicycles in novels of the early 1900s were catalysts for positive personal and social transformation, Hartley's bicycle takes on the same complexity of Beckett's bicycles: the decisions made by characters, or their personality flaws, interfere with the bicycle's role as a positive transformational force.

Leo Colston, the narrator of *The Go-Between*, is the young "postman" for star-crossed lovers Marian and Ted. Marian Maudsley is the sister of Leo's boarding school friend, Marcus, with whom he is spending his summer vacation. Class distinctions are important: the Maudsleys are a wealthy upper class family, while Leo's family is middle class. And Ted, Marian's lover, is a tenant farmer on the Maudsley's estate. Leo's story is retrospective; acknowledging the fifty-year gap since the pivotal summer of 1900, Leo begins his story, "the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there" (17).

During the summer of 1900, the adolescent Leo is seduced not just by the attention of the charming Marian, but also by the prospective gift of a bright green bicycle. The story is set at the peak of the bicycle boom and, Leo a boy without the means to purchase one, a bicycle was a wondrous object, an object of longing.

Approaching his thirteenth birthday, Leo is just beginning to form an understanding of

intimate relationships; his understanding, however, is fundamentally affected by his complicity in Marian and Ted's disastrous love affair. Leo's longing for the bicycle and his subsequent refusal of it symbolizes his youthful longing for love and the fullness of life's potential and his ultimate rejection of loving and meaningful personal relationships.

Long before Marian decides to give Leo a bicycle for his birthday, bicycles are briefly yet notably mentioned twice in contrasting perspectives: as a cautionary road sign, and as a symbol of the hopeful possibilities life. In the first reference, Leo and the Maudsley family are returning from a picnic outing in a horse-drawn carriage. Leo notices a sign at the top of steep hill: "To Cyclists / Ride with Caution" and reflects momentarily and humorously on the sign, making a play on the homonyms "to" and "two" (113)²².

In the second brief reference to bicycles, Leo is visiting with Marian's lover Ted when he offers to oil Ted's cricket bat. Leo vividly recalls the label on the oil tin as "a picture of a lady and a gentleman bicycling gaily along a country road, looking at me and at the future with surprised but pleased and confident expressions" (205). The picture on the label depicts the companionship and joy that Ted and Marian have together, the type of mature intimacy for which Leo can only hope.

Both the oil can label and Leo's witty contemplation of the caution sign's "to/two cyclists" underscore the correlation between bicycles and human relationships. The joy associated with cycling is not simply in the freedom and excitement it brings, but in the satisfying relationships between those who share in the cycling adventure (and life) together. In short, bicycling is love.

²² To emphasize its significance to the reader, the sign is formatted in page-centered capital letters

While Leo lives with the Maudselys, Marian uses him as a go-between, secretly passing messages to her lover Ted. Although the class differences between Marian and Ted would make their covert relationship unacceptable to her family and to society, Marian's impending engagement to a viscount makes it even more perilous. As the weeks pass and Leo gradually begins to understand the nature of Marian and Ted's relationship and his complicity in it, he becomes uneasy in his role.

When Leo learns that Marian intends to give him a bright green bicycle for his birthday, he is initially elated and claims it is "the thing I wanted most in the world" (222). However, by this point Leo is caught up in a stream of uncontrollable events. He is torn between his intense desire for a splendid bicycle and the guilt associated with lending support to a relationship that he believes is wrong. Although the bicycle represents love, joy, and the pleasures of "soaring and floating" through life, Leo decides to reject it (228). In a moment of excruciating conflict he posts a letter to his mother requesting his immediate departure from Brandham Hall. He believes his departure will end the illicit relationship, even though it also means forfeiture of the bicycle (229). His actual complicity in Ted and Marian's love affair is immaterial; what matters is his innocent and inflated belief in his ability to end the affair.

The love affair ends disastrously: the lovers are exposed and Ted commits suicide. Leo suffers a breakdown and returns home. Even though the bicycle is sent to his home, he rejects it and gives it away, unused (312). Leo's self-imposed blame and immature perspective do not permit him to move forward and find happiness or love in his own life. After the devastating summer of 1900, Leo lives a life of solitude and creates an existence centered on facts rather than people.

When, decades later, Leo understands that Marian's gift of the bicycle was a selfish gift, one that would simply enable Leo to more easily continue his role as the go-between to deliver love letters, he acknowledges that he should have kept and used the bicycle (312). By abandoning the bicycle and the prospects of love and hopefulness it represented, Leo chose a life in which he ended up alone in a drab room, a life which lacked love and meaningful relationships (19, 308-309). With the perspective of age, he recognizes that different choices would have led him to a place where he could be "sitting in another room, rainbow-hued, looking not into the past but into the future" (19).

The bicycle caution sign, the first mention of bicycles in *The Go-Between*, is an early alert as to the significance of bicycles as symbols in the story and a warning to Leo to be aware of the consequences of the summer's events. Leo's rejection of the gift of the green bicycle represents his rejection of happiness, love, and meaningful relationships in his life. Rather than maturing and transforming into a well-adjusted adult, Leo's transformative growth path is permanently thwarted. Leo misunderstands the road sign; rather than riding with caution, he decides not to ride at all.

The Go-Between, with Hartley's 1950's perspective on a 1900 event, is a neat bookend to this period of cycling literature. By the end of the 1950s, automobiles became increasingly affordable to both Americans and Europeans, and they continued to displace bicycles as a means of transport. After 1950, the primary focus for the bicycle market in the United States was children. Although some American adults ride bicycles for exercise, and periodic events such as oil shortages, gasoline price spikes, or environmental concerns temporarily elevate bicycle usage, we think of bicycles primarily as toys, not machines. In Europe, while demand also declined after 1950, governmental

support and infrastructure planning kept bicycles embedded in the culture as a mode of transportation. (Dodge 180-82, Herlihy 336). Although at different levels, on both continents the bicycle's use and appeal persists.

Conclusion

The invention and mass production of the safety bicycle in the 1890s helped to bring about an era of increased mobility and personal freedom, a period that advanced the burgeoning women's emancipation movement and fostered the decline of class boundaries. The bicycle's role in these changes was considerable. In 1896, Susan B. Anthony spoke passionately about the bicycle and its significance to women: "Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world" (qtd. in Harper 859). This newfound spirit of freedom and self-reliance applied to male cyclists, too. Although bound by a different set of restrictions, men on bicycles experienced the world from a new perspective. Cycling created an egalitarian community: when both dukes and drapers took to the road similarly attired and on similar machines, class distinctions were obscured.

Fin de siècle fiction writers quickly recognized the bicycle's transformational impact on individuals and the culture at large, and incorporated bicycles into their works. Whether their characters are women wearing split skirts and pushing the boundaries of cultural expectations or men seeking an escape from their static social positions or a stifling city, these cycling characters embrace a modern technology and the new ideas it represents. As the bicycle's appeal as a novelty waned due to the passage of time and the advent of the automobile, so did its use as a symbol of progressive thought. The bicycle

retained its role as a transformational force but worked in more subtle ways by exposing characters to new places or people. World war and the early implications of the atomic age changed the nature of the bicycle's role in literature. Characters were no longer promised lifelong happiness or fulfillment during an age when long term cultural values were questioned and past illusions of happiness seemed hollow. Bicycles in these midcentury works retained their potential to transform, but that potential is often unrealized.

Over one hundred years after the modern bicycle was designed, it remains an integral part of western culture. For children, learning to ride without training wheels is a rite of passage. As adults, this machine continues to intrigue us and summon us to escape, even if it is only in memory or wistful thinking. On a bicycle, even for a short



Figure 8 – From the film "The Day I Became a Woman" (2000) in which an Iranian woman asserts her independence and defies her husband by participating in a bicycle race. Directed by Marziyeh Meshkini.
<<http://dryden.eastmanhouse.org/films/2007/02/the-day-i-became-a-woman>>

while, we feel different:

independent, empowered,
adventurous.

Today, bicycle symbolism is perhaps more prevalent in film than literature²³. The fluid motion of bicycles makes them ideally suited for modern motion pictures and the bicycle has not

²³ Bicycles remain consistently popular in children's literature and story books. The New York Times Book Review notes four children's books published about bicycles in 2011: *New Red Bike!* By James E. Ransome, *Wheels of Change* by Sue Macy, *Along a Long Road* by Frank Viva and *Tillie the Terrible Swede* by Sue Stauffacher.

lost its ability to inspire and transform characters in films such as *Breaking Away*. Furthermore, its influence reaches beyond western culture. The Iranian film *The Day I Became a Woman* (2000) evokes the bicycle's role as transformational force seen in western culture a century ago. In another culture, during another era, the bicycle is once again a symbol of independence and self-reliance and is a catalyst for personal transformation.

Works Cited

- “Atom and Atomic Theory.” *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*. Florida Electronic Library, Jan. 13, 2012.
- Anzovin, Steven and Janet Podell. *Famous First Facts, International Edition*. New York: H. W. Wilson, 2000.
- Aronson, Sidney H. “The Sociology of the Bicycle.” *Social Forces* 30.3 (Mar. 1952): 305-312.
- Babb, Genie. “H. G. Wells’s Fin-de-Siècle: Twenty-first Century Reflections on the Early H. G. Wells.” *Utopian Studies* 21.2 (2010): 364-367.
- Bair, Deirdre. *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
- . *Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography*. New York: Touchstone, 1990.
- Barrett, William. *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*. 1958. Garden City: Doubleday, 1962.
- Bartolini, Luigi. *Bicycle Thieves*. Trans. C. J. Richards. New York: Macmillan, 1950.
- Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Chicago: G. M. Hill, 1900. 11 Nov 2011 <<http://books.google.com/ebooks/reader?id=qbV65PabTEYC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader>>.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Blood of Others*. 1945. Trans. Yvonne Moyses and Roger Senhouse. London: Penguin Books, 1964.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Mercier and Camier*. 1946. Trans. Samuel Beckett. New York: Grove Press, 1974.
- . *Molloy*. 1951. Trans. Patrick Bowles. New York: Grove Press, 1955.
- . *More Pricks Than Kicks*. 1934. New York: Grove Press, 1972.
- Cannell, Kathleen. “Parisians Return Air Raid Trenches.” *New York Times* 14 July 1940: 18.
- Cirino, Mark. “A Bicycle is a Splendid Thing: Hemingway’s Source for Bartolomeo Aymo in A Farewell to Arms.” *The Hemingway Review* 26.1 (Fall 2006): 106-16.

- Crane, Stephen. "New York's Bicycle Speedway." *The New York Sketches of Stephen Crane, and Related Pieces*. Ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hageman. New York: New York University Press, 1966. 149-51. Originally published in "The New York Sun" 5 July 1896.
- "Cycling Notes." *Scientific American* 74. 3 (18 Jan. 1896): 38. 23 Feb. 2012 <<http://www.archive.org/stream/scientific-american-1896-01-18/scientific-american-v74-n03-1896-01-18#page/n5/mode/1up>>.
- Dacre, Harry. Shapiro, Fred R. *Yale Book of Quotations*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006: 183.
- Dodge, Pryor. *The Bicycle*. Paris-New York: Flammarion, 1996.
- Dotterer, Ronald L. *Flann O'Brien, James Joyce and The Dalkey Archive*. *New Hibernia Review* 8.2 (Summer 2004): 54-63.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *Beyond the City*. 1892. London: The Electric Book Company, 2001. 5 June 2011 <<http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.rollins.edu:2048/lib/rollins/docDetail.ction?docID=2001814>>.
- . "The Solitary Cyclist." 1904. *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes*. Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1976. 495-507.
- . "The Adventure of the Priory School." 1904. *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes*. Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1976. 508-525.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *Tender is the Night*. 1934. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962.
- Fitzpatrick, Jim. *The Bicycle in Wartime: An Illustrated History*. Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1998.
- Frost, Adam H., ed. *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells. New York: Dover Publications, 1997.
- Fuchs, Rachel G. *Crossing Borders in Love, War and History: French Families during World War II*. *Pacific Historical Review* 79.1: 1-22.
- Gagnon, Carolle. "Resistance and Rescue in Beauvoir's *The Blood of Others* and *The Mandarins*: A Semiotic Contribution to the Thinking of the 'Being-for-Other' Existential Category." *Semiotica* 172 (2008): 233-259.

- Galvin, Peter and André Morkel. "The Effect of Product Modularity on Industry Structure: The Case of the World Bicycle Industry." *Industry and Innovation* 8.1 (April 2001): 31-47.
- Garvey, Ellen Gruber. "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising-Support Magazines and Scorching Women." *American Quarterly* 47.1 (Mar 1995): 66-101.
- Gissing, George. "A Daughter of the Lodge." *The House of Cobwebs and Other Stories*. London: A. Constable and Co., 1906. 13 Nov 2011
<<http://books.google.com/books?id=f3whAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA301&dq=the+house+of+cobwebs+archibald+constable&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false>>.
- Grand-Carteret, John. *Zola en images*. Paris: Société d'Édition et de Publications Libraire Félix Juven, 1908. 20 June 2011. <<http://www.archive.org/stream/zolaenimages280i00gran#page/n5/mode/2up>>.
- Groves, David. "Beckett's Molloy." *Explicator* 41.3 (Spring 1983): 53-4.
- Harper, Ida Husted. *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*. Vol. 2. Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill, 1898. 2 vols.
- Hartley, L. P. *The Go-Between*. 1953. New York: New York Review of Books, 2002.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. 1929. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957.
- . *A Moveable Feast*. 1964. New York: Scribner, 1992.
- . "A Pursuit Race." 1927. *Men Without Women*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.
- . *The Sun Also Rises*. 1926. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.
- Herlighy, David V. *Bicycle: The History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Chrome Yellow*. New York: G. H. Doran, 1922. 12 Jan 2012
<http://books.google.com/books/about/Chrome_yellow.html?id=mUBI9-3srcsC>.
- Jarry, Alfred. *The Supermale*. 1902. Trans. Ralph Gladstone and Barbara Wright. Cambridge: Exact Change, 1999.
- Jerome, Jerome K. *Three Men on the Bummel*. 1900. London: Penguin Books, 1999.
- Josephson, Matthew. *Zola and his Time*. Garden City NY: Garden City Publishing, 1928.

- Kaplan, Sydney. "'Featureless Freedom' or Ironic Submission: Dorothy Richardson and May Sinclair." *College English* 32.8 (May 1971): 914-917.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Sons and Lovers*. 1913. Ed. David Trotter. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Levine, Alan J. *Captivity, Flight and Survival in World War II*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Lewis, Jeremy, ed. *Three Men in a Boat and Three Men on the Bummel* by Jerome K. Jerome. London: Penguin Books, 1999.
- Long, Tania. "It's Still the Same Glowing Paris." *The New York Times* 10 Sept 1944: SM8.
- Mackintosh, Phillip Gordon and Glen Norcliff. "Flâneurie on Bicycles: Acquiescence to Women in Public in the 1890s." *Canadian Geographer* 50.1 (Spring 2006): 17-37. *ProQuest*. Web. 23 Sep. 2011.
- Marriott, Karin. *Snowbird Recalls her Escape from France During World War II*. Press-Enterprise, Nov. 26, 1999.
- Maslen, R. W. "Flann O'Brien's Bombshells: At Swim-Two-Birds and The Third Policeman." *New Hibernia Review* 10.4 (2006) 84-104.
- McGonagle, Seamus. *The Bicycle in Life, Love, War and Literature*. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1968.
- Menzies, Janet. "Beckett's Bicycles." *Journal of Beckett Studies*. 6 (Autumn 1980) <<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num06/jobs06.htm>>.
- Morrison, Arthur. "The Affair of the Avalanche Bicycle and Tyre Co., Ltd." *The Dorrington Deed-Box*. London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1897. <<http://books.google.com/ebooks/reader?id=9P8kAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader>>.
- Murphy, Neil. "Flann O'Brien." *Review of Contemporary Fiction*. 25.3 (Fall 2005): 7-42.
- Nolan, Charles J. "Hemingway's Puzzling Pursuit Race." *Studies in Short Fiction* 34.4 (Fall 1997): 481-92.
- O'Brien, Flann. *The Third Policeman*. 1967. Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1999.
- . *The Dalkey Archive*. 1964. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1997.

- Paul, Pamela. "Bookshelf: Wheels." *New York Times Book Review*. 15 May 2011: 19.
- Podnieks, Elizabeth. "The Ultimate Astonisher: Dorothy Richardson's 'Pilgrimage.'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 14.3 (1994): 67-94.
- Poole, Robert. "Bloomsbury and Bicycles". *English Literary History* 56.4 (Winter 1989): 951-966.
- Rahn, Suzanne. "Life at the Squirrel Inn: Rediscovering Frank Stockton." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 12.2 (Dec. 1988): 224-237.
- Raunig, Gerald. *A Thousand Machines: A Concise Philosophy of the Machine as Social Movement*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011.
- "Richardson, Dorothy M." *Continuum Encyclopedia of British Literature* 2006. <www.credoreference.com.exproxy.rollins.edu:2048/entry/britlit/richardson_dorothy_miller>.
- Richardson, Joanna. *Zola*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978.
- Rubinstein, David. "Cycling in the 1890s." *Victorian Studies* 21.1 (Autumn 1977): 47-71.
- Smith, Robert A. *A Social History of the Bicycle: its Early Life and Times in America*. New York: American Heritage Press, 1972.
- Starrs, James E., ed. *The Literary Cyclist*. New York City: Breakaway Books, 1997.
- Stockton, Frank R. *A Bicycle of Cathay*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900. 3 Oct 2011 <<http://www.manybooks.net/titles/stockton12331233412334-8.html>>.
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord. "Locksley Hall." *The World's Best One Thousand Poems*. Vol. IX. Ed. Berton Braley. Funk & Wagnalls: New York, 1929. 42-56.
- Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. New York: Charles L. Webster & Co. 1889. 12 Nov 2011 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/86/86-h/p8.htm#c38>>.
- . "Taming the Bicycle." 1884. *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*. Ed. Charles Neider. Garden City NJ: Doubleday, 1963.
- Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred. Translator's Preface. *Paris* by Emile Zola. New York: MacMillan, 1898.

- Weber, Eugen. *France: Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ, 1986.
- Wells, H. G. *Experiment in Autobiography*. 1934. Project Gutenberg Ebook Feb 23, 2012 <<http://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/wellshg-autobiography/wellshg-autobiography-00-h-dir/wellshg-autobiography-00-h.html>>.
- . "Filmer." *Twelve Stories and a Dream*. Project Gutenberg Ebook 1743, Sept 21, 2008 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1743/1743-h/1743-h.htm>>.
- . *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul*. 1905. Kindle Edition.
- . *The War of the Worlds*. 1898. Ed. Adam H. Frost. New York: Dover Publications, 1997.
- . *The Wheels of Chance*. 1896. Lexington, KY: CreateSpace, 2011.
- Wexelblatt, Robert. "F. Scott Fitzgerald and D. H. Lawrence: Bicycles and Incest." *American Literature* 59.3 (Oct 1987): 378-388.
- Williamson, Mrs. F. Harcourt. "The Cycle in Society." *The Complete Cyclist*. Ed. B. Fletcher Robinson. London: A. D. Innes & Co. 1894. 47-61. 21 Sept. 2011. <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001732189>>.
- Wordsworth, Araminta. "Underneath de Beauvoir's Surrealist Skin." *The Financial Post* 20 Apr. 1992: S12.
- Wright, Barbara. Introduction. *The Supermale*. By Alfred Jarry. Cambridge: Exact Change, 1999.
- Zola, Émile. *Fruitfulness*. 1899. Trans. Ernest A. Vizetelly. New York: Doubleday, 1900 <http://books.google.com/books?id=R7krAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
- . *Paris*. Trans. Ernest A. Vizetelly. New York: MacMillan, 1898.
- . "Why Modern Sports Benefit Woman." *Woman's Physical Development*. Ed. Bernarr A. Macfadden. New York: Woman's Physical Development Co. 1.2 (Nov. 1900): 76-77. 1 Oct. 2011 <<http://books.google.com/books?id=EglQAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=woman's+physical+development&hl=en#>>.
- Zola's Locomotion*. "In Our Pages 100 Years Ago." Opinion Section. International Herald Tribune 6 June 1993.