

**PEN INTERNATIONAL AND ITS
REPUBLIC OF LETTERS
1921-1970**

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ABSTRACT

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In 1921 a circle of writers formed a dinner club in London to welcome foreign writers visiting from abroad. Punningly dubbed the “P.E.N.”—for the poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists invited into its fold—the group argued that writers above all could best promote communication and civility across national lines. Over the years, PEN survived a series of onslaughts that undermined this humanistic idea: fascist infiltration, yet another World War, revelations of Holocaust, the shock of atomic warfare, and CIA meddling. By 1970 PEN had become global, transforming from a British club into an organization devoted to protecting freedom of expression and facilitating communication worldwide. In doing so, its members strove to create an institutionalized form of the Republic of Letters, a federation that aimed to model cultural civility to the wider world.

PEN survived challenges to its existence because it molded itself to evolving contexts while insisting on the stability of its core values. PEN justified its existence by arguing that its definition of literary values were universal. Yet PEN’s ideals needed to be protected and promoted by an institution precisely because they were neither universally accepted nor secure. PEN promoted a distinctly liberal, humanistic, and aesthetically middlebrow definition of literature and its social role. By claiming its values were universal, giving them institutional expression, and attracting the attention of funders and competing governments during the Cold War, PEN helped make liberal humanism seem synonymous with internationalism.

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For Paul and Maria

INTRODUCTION

“LITERATURE KNOWS NO FRONTIERS”

In 1921 a circle of writers formed a dinner club in London to welcome foreign writers visiting from abroad. Punningly dubbed the “P.E.N.”—for the poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists invited into its fold—the group argued that writers above all could best promote communication and civility across national lines.¹ The Great War, the war to end all wars, to borrow American President Wilson’s endlessly evoked phrase, had concluded a mere three years earlier. The conflict claimed thirty-seven million lives. Maimed soldiers limped through the streets of Europe’s grand imperial capitals. Literary movements devoted to romanticizing soldiers’ heroism gave way to melancholy screeds diagnosing the barbarism latent under civilization’s gloss. International covenants and governing bodies formed to regulate and tame great power politics. PEN joined their ranks. Mankind shared a common humanity, it insisted, a fundamental essence that flowered in art and culture. This universality found its chief expression in the medium of literature. PEN, and the literary writers it admitted, would protect the gates of Literature for the benefit of mankind.

Over the years, PEN survived a series of onslaughts that undermined this humanistic idea: fascist infiltration, yet another World War, revelations of Holocaust, the shock of atomic warfare, and CIA meddling. By 1970 PEN had

¹ Throughout this dissertation I use the acronym “PEN” instead of the abbreviation “P.E.N.” I believe it makes for more fluid reading, and it is the format used today by PEN International. Many PEN members, however—especially during the early years that I cover—were purists in relation to grammar, and preferred the abbreviated form. I have transcribed all archival material precisely, so at times my use of “PEN” can be found on pages where members themselves refer to “P.E.N.”

become global, transforming from a British club into an organization devoted to protecting freedom of expression and facilitating communication worldwide. PEN survived these challenges because it molded itself to evolving contexts while insisting on the stability of its core values. In doing so PEN created, for the very first time, an institutionalized form of the long-heralded Republic of Letters. Though it began only as an idealistic promise, by the end of its first fifty years, PEN's mission became a self-fulfilling prophecy. PEN members argued that cosmopolitan global citizenship offered the best means to secure a peaceful future. Through its sheer tenacity, its ability to survive multiple threats to its existence, PEN demonstrated that a cosmopolitan orientation provides the surest path to a flourishing global civil society.

Membership of PEN was available only to literary writers who accepted a common humanistic creed. "Literature knows no frontiers," PEN declared,

and should remain a common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals. Works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion... Members of PEN should at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations... and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace in one world.

Writers, the statement concluded, are uniquely qualified to "spread this creed."²

Such a broad declaration invited an immense array of interpretations over the decades. Perhaps as many interpretations as the one hundred and forty separate national branches that eventually comprised PEN's membership, or as

² Galsworthy quote stapled to PEN Newsletters during the 1960s. C0760, I. Governance, Box 5, Folder 4. PEN American Center Archives, Princeton University.

varied as the thousands of individuals who joined. My first goal is to elucidate these differences through the chapters of this dissertation. I wish to recover some sense of what it meant in practice to be “a writer” in different countries and at different points in time. And it meant many things, to the many people involved. Some insisted writers should remain impartial observers of politics. Others urged intervention. Some argued that government impingement posed the greater threat to art. Others feared the market. Most agreed on the need for exclusive entry requirements, yet seldom concurred about whether journalists, editors, translators or publishers ranked alongside writers as producers of “literary” work. Despite decades of disagreement on these questions, the group’s central idea has remained coherent for almost a century—not only despite, but because of, an ever-evolving praxis that allowed the PEN ideal to adapt to changing contexts.

My second goal in this project is to delineate this guiding ideal and to analyze why it proved so enduring. The PEN idea has proved tenacious because it affirms two notions that have been cast as antagonists since at least the Enlightenment: national difference and local contingency on the one hand, and a universal and united vision of humanity on the other. PEN encourages national and linguistic difference among its membership. Writers above all represent their “nation”. Nation here refers to a cultural, ethnic and primarily linguistic community. At the same time, PEN maintains, writers implicitly understand each other despite language and other practical barriers. True “literary” writers are artists. As artists, they supposedly share a commitment to expressing the overarching spirit of humanity. Writers, in short, provided a bridge between an ever-changing material

world and a pure and epistemologically stable notion of humanity itself. This insistence on the relationship between the local and the global—the contingent and the universal—expresses the essence of cosmopolitanism. PEN's history reveals a continuing redefinition of cosmopolitan ethics throughout the twentieth century.

The PEN idea was built around a distinct tension. PEN formed in London in 1921 on the basis of three premises. First, the world shares a certain set of universal, humanistic values. Second, these values have an aesthetic dimension best expressed through the medium of writing. Third, literary writers best protect and transmit these values to the world. The above set of assumptions reveal a circular form of logic. Humanistic values are supposedly universal. Yet, PEN argued, they manifest themselves most purely through art. Only true artists produced genuine art. Thus artists had to interpret and convey to the world the importance of art—something which had been considered universal in the first place. This contradictory logic is built into the very premise of PEN international. If PEN's values were so universal and so relevant, why did they need institutional expression and protection? PEN's ideals needed to be protected and promoted by an institution precisely because they were neither extensively accepted nor secure. By claiming they were universal, by giving them institutional expression, PEN played a pivotal role in helping to propagate its values worldwide.

PEN International is best understood as a secular church devoted to propagating the notion that Art—and more specifically, the denomination of Literature—can offer the world salvation. PEN was founded in 1921 at a point when many questioned the merits of Western civilization. To a civilized world growing

disillusioned with certainty, PEN offered the expertise of literary writers as veritable priests of culture. PEN members appropriated the language of religious proselytizing to reveal their errand to the world. Certain verbs ring from the pages of their proclamations, verbs which I in turn borrow to underscore the fervency of their mission. Such word choices will persist through this project. PEN will “elevate” literature to the status of an art. Members will “call forth” certain notions, will “condemn” shibboleths, will deliver speeches at world congresses that “resound” like sermons. To quote its charter, PEN has a “creed”, which it aims to “spread.” A providential tone inflects the group’s style, and a sense of mission shapes its practice. Unlike politicians and diplomats sullied by the failure of Great Power politics, writers might guide the international community to celebrate and yet transcend their material differences—be they in the form of language, politics, or ideology –so that mankind might revel in universal communion.

PEN’s institutional history is one of repeated destabilization and recovery, as the concept of humanism was itself battered by the ideological polarization of the 1930s, war, Holocaust, and atomic warfare in the 1940s, and the cultural Cold War of the 1950s and 60s. This process of continual adaptation grows from the tension built into the PEN idea. Writers help guide and instruct a fallen world. Yet this fallen world constantly changes. Writers themselves are fundamentally oppositional. Yet they portray their ideals as universal and tenacious. By the 1970s, as PEN gained a secure funding base and pursued cultural programs around the world, writers began to overcome this tension between the universality of their ideals and the inevitable morphing of material circumstances. The more authority

PEN gained through its institution-building, the more power it exercised in the world, the more its values did indeed come to seem universal.

Yet the PEN idea was never universal. The Republic of Letters that members often declared they were bringing to fruition has long been considered an Enlightenment project. Those Enlightenment values have been criticized throughout the twentieth century as totalizing, imperial, and hegemonic. Sometimes PEN members offered definitions of literature and the role of the writer that were indeed totalizing, imperial, and hegemonic. In practice, however, PEN exercised relatively little political or diplomatic clout, and enjoyed almost no financial security. The group instead possessed authority. It used this authority to create and protect shared spaces, usually in the form of international Congresses, where writers from around the world could gather and discuss what literature meant to them.

A growing numbers of writers attended Congresses over the decades. At these meetings they discussed the importance to mankind of these shared cultural values. Over time, more and more members tried to pin this supposedly transcendent culture down, to test its relevance in practice. PEN began to win attention from politicians, and money from funders. Writers from marginalized parts of the globe began to attend its meetings, probing PEN's Eurocentrism, insisting they be included. Crucially, however, outliers did not reject the PEN idea. They insisted it expand to include them. By asserting that the world should cherish art and literature, writers began to behave as if it really did. The PEN charter statement became a self-fulfilling prophecy. By 1975 PEN had created a global

space devoted—at least rhetorically—to the protection of literature and culture.

By asserting that local contingencies could be reconciled with a universal humanism, PEN members demonstrated that a cosmopolitanism ethos could work in practice. “[We] ought to make more possible a view of literature as literature, as an expression of universal human conditions,” argued Arthur Miller from the chair of the PEN Presidency in 1966. PEN was “the twentieth century realization of the Republic of Letters,” he declared—and “to universalize culture is our ultimate aim.”³ Exploration of how this Republic worked in practice, combined with elucidation of its “ultimate aim”, demonstrates the problems a cosmopolitan orientation faced during the twentieth century—but ultimately affirms its power.

The PEN Story and its Historiography

PEN, which stands for poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists, was born in London in 1921 to foster cross-cultural fellowship and heal the wounds of the Great War. Over the years it grew to be much more than its founders conceived. Branches formed around the world, counting among its membership over the decades such prominent members as Sinclair Lewis, H.G. Wells, Paul Valéry, Heinrich Böll, Arthur Miller, Susan Sontag, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Salman Rushdie. These writers have met almost every year since 1922 to hold Congresses that function as a veritable United Nations General Assembly for the literary world. As the rise of fascism, the

³ “Report on 1966 Congress.” PEN Newsletter, Autumn 1966. PEN English Centre Archives, Box 8 (uncataloged acquisition) Folder: No. 6-12, 1966-73. Harry Ransom Research Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Cold War, and globalization reshaped geopolitics, PEN members increasingly campaigned to defend writers persecuted by totalitarian governments, and to counter what they perceived to be the commercialization and homogenization of literary culture. Against each of these threats PEN members argued that literature “knows no frontiers” and remains above the profane matters of politics, governments, and markets.

PEN announced its arrival in 1921 by declaring that it represented “Literature as Art”. A now obscure Cornish novelist named Catherine Amy Dawson Scott conceived the idea. Writers—carefully screened, of course, to ensure they wrote in a *literary* and not popular style, and published regularly with *reputable* houses—should gather monthly in London for dinner. These dinners would be announced to the press. Foreign writers would be encouraged to attend whenever they passed through town. British writers, she reasoned, would benefit from exposure to their fellows from abroad. Visitors, in turn, would transmit this fellow-feeling back home to their native cultures. In this way, writers—who, by virtue of being artists, functioned naturally as cultural conduits—might help heal the wounds of the Great War.

Dawson Scott knew she needed a Name, a reputation much greater than her own, if the PEN Club was to win the attention it needed. She recruited the Edwardian novelist John Galsworthy to her cause. The potential internationalism of the idea immediately attracted the future Nobel Prize winner. The PEN should sponsor a series of dinners, he agreed. But it could also be much more. Branches should form around the world. Yet writers should remain strictly separate from

politicians, Galsworthy insisted. Culture should be a role model to politics, but never political itself. Galsworthy began to write letters to contacts in other countries, urging them to found centers. By 1922 branches existed in New York and Paris. By 1925, in Berlin and Barcelona. By the early 1930s, over thirty PEN branches met at international Congresses that convened yearly in different cities. The likes of Paul Valéry and Arthur Schnitzler attended these Congresses, alongside scores of names lost to posterity.

So what did members of this purported Republic talk about when they gathered? Writers joined PEN because of a concern about their *lack* of influence, not out of the confidence and self-importance their charter proclaims. They viewed joining PEN as a means of connecting with fellow writers, in an effort to protect literary culture from assault—ultimately to save "literature" itself. I purposely protect "Literature" by a battalion of quotation marks, for during the course of their activities PEN members battled over its very definition. Only "qualified" writers of truly "literary" works could join, the rules stipulated. Members disagreed about what this meant. Could membership include historians and journalists, or only creative writers? Who is a "creative" writer? This concern pointed to an underlying desire to define and codify a shared literary ideal.

As the PEN idea spread, questions about national representation also arose. Should branches form along state lines, or around the factor that really shaped writers' constituencies: their language? The group sought a compromise between the two positions. PEN branches formed to respect both the boundaries of the political state and call of the cultural or ethnic nation. Thus three branches, for

example, formed in Switzerland, one for French, German, and Italian speakers respectively. Representatives from all of these centers met yearly at international Congresses. While writers spent much of their time at these gatherings lamenting the fact that the wider world seemed to ignore them, the organization proceeded as if its importance went unquestioned. PEN Congresses provided models of cultural civility to a world growing now, by the turn of the 1930s, as weary of the failure of internationalism as it had been of the violence of the War.

Ideological polarization of the interwar period soon intervened to destabilize the group. By 1933, fascist persecution forced many German writers to flee their homeland. The question about language and loyalty that PEN had faced in its founding period assumed new connotations as German-speaking exiles flooded cities like Paris, London, and New York. Writers such as Lion Feuchtwanger and Erich Kästner insisted that loyalty to language superseded all other identity markers. A writer's community was best expressed through language, not place or political boundaries. German-speakers abroad formed their own PEN-in-Exile branches in foreign cities, where they could continue to meet and converse as Germans, separate from their hosts. The cultural or ethnic nation remained distinct from the political state. No matter how perverted the German state became under Nazi leadership, German writers embodied the real essence of German culture—which, many argued, they protected inside their souls, no matter where they lived.

The trickle of émigrés out of Germany during the 1930s turned into a flood of refugees from across Europe as World War II began. London remained the only city with an especially active PEN Center not to be invaded by fascists during the War.

The English PEN Center, led first by H.G. Wells and then by Storm Jameson, struggled to help stranded émigré writers. This effort that led the group to ally with the British government, breaking Galsworthy's "no politics" rule. The English branch's encounter with the British government, however, could be justified as exceptional given the circumstances. Humanitarian causes, the group reasoned, prompted writers to adopt a more assertive and vocal presence on the world stage.

This line of reasoning cleared a path after the war for the Hungarian head of the London-based Writers-in-Exile branch, Paul Tabori, to argue that even during peacetime PEN members owed an obligation to writers facing persecution anywhere in the world. By 1961 Tabori succeeded in founding PEN's Writers-in-Prison Committee, establishing what would become a key group practice from that point on. The PEN ideal—the protection and promotion of literature and universal culture—remained the same, but it was now framed using humanitarian discourses. In this sense, PEN took a cue from its wider international context. In 1946 it became the official adviser on all "international literary matters" to UNESCO—a supranational organization itself devoted to protecting the idea that a universal human culture did in fact exist.

Despite its encounter with the profane world of politics, PEN continued to argue through the war that it represented universal cultural values. While PEN's liberal humanism seemed to survive the challenge of fascism, soon after the war it began to face the competing universalism offered by the Soviets. The post-War PEN story followed the boundaries of the now-familiar *Kulturkampf*, or culture battle, of the Cold War period. PEN members renewed their commitment to a universal

world culture by affirming their opposition to Literature's two chief antagonists: politics and the market. Congresses throughout the 1950s and early 1960s were given over to discussion of the evils of the commercialization of literature, to jeremiads lamenting the influence of television and Hollywood on literary production. Lamenting market ethos proved a safe topic, allowing members to talk during the most hostile periods of the Cold War about a seemingly neutral topic.

Behind the scenes at the Executive level, however, a battle raged for control of the PEN idea. By the 1960s British and American branches, guided by a liberalism that allowed room for critique of their nations' foreign policy in places like Vietnam but that nonetheless resisted the Communist cause, faced off against the socialist French branch. While the French government had long openly funded French PEN, during the 1950s the American government had begun covertly to fund American PEN through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Allegations of government meddling on both sides prompted the group to begin a debate about what it truly meant to be international.

Writers from Latin America, one of the key battlegrounds for the Cold War *Kulturkampf*, arrived at the 1966 PEN Congress in New York and explained that, from their perspective, the imperative to internationalize suggested a completely different orientation both to the market and to politics. Yet while the likes of Pablo Neruda offered somewhat scathing critiques of the PEN practice, they did so in service to its higher ideal. They, too, believed that such a thing as "Literature as Culture" really existed, and that their duty lay with elucidating this ideal and propagating it to the world. Changing circumstances over fifty years provoked PEN

to adopt its practice to evolving material realities. Its guiding ideal—a faith that all people shared a common human spirit expressed through art—remained constant.

Considering PEN's size and the reputation of the writers it recruited, a surprising deficit of research exists on the topic. This deficit must partly be accounted for by the source-base itself. At first glance the organization's reach seems enormous: thousands of writers have been involved in scores of countries. Members cite a dazzling range of reasons for joining, from the minor ("I needed a contact in France") to the profound ("a way of life, indeed an addiction... exhausting, maddening, hilarious").⁴ Given the range and complexity of the membership, it makes sense that studies of PEN to date have examined the activities of branches only within national boundaries, have favored the most famous and active members, and have neglected cross-cultural comparison. Insiders, members closely involved with their branches and with a stake in its story, wrote the first generation of PEN histories.⁵ While these narratives provide invaluable information about branch activities, the authors' involvement limited their ability to synthesize impartially.

Greater perspective on PEN emerged in the 1970s, when the organization received notice from social historians interested in charting the diaspora of writers driven into exile by fascist and totalitarian regimes. Accounts thus exist of the

⁴ Elizabeth Paterson. *Postcards from Abroad: Memories of English PEN*. (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 2001), viii.

⁵ In addition to Paterson see Marchette Chute, *P.E.N. American Center: A History of the First Fifty Years* (New York: P.E.N. American Center, 1972), and Marjorie Watts, *P.E.N. – The Early Years 1921–1926*. (London: Archive Press Ltd., 1971).

activities of German, Austrian, Polish, and Czech PEN members.⁶ While much more measured than earlier work, these studies also hewed to national lines: historians interested in reconstituting the history of national circles related their subjects to wider networks of resistance in that country, instead of to PEN branches elsewhere. One historian in the 1970s placed English PEN in the context of post-WWII intellectual movements,⁷ but other than three excellent German studies released since 2001 that have used German PEN as a vehicle to reflect on the partition and subsequent reunification of that country,⁸ no academic investigations have been attempted since. This is the first history of PEN premised on its defining feature: its internationalism.

And internationalism provides the key to understanding the group. While the history of PEN International cannot be parsed from developments in separate branches, PEN is the only cross-cultural writers forum founded after WWI to exist to this day. Why has PEN alone survived, while comparable groups died? The answer lies, paradoxically, with the coupling of their lack of material power with their

⁶ On Austria see Klaus Amann, *P.E.N.: Politik, Emigration, Nationalsozialismus: Ein Österreichischer Schriftstellerclub* (Wein: Böhlau, 1984). On Poland see *Pen Club Polski: 1925-1975* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Polskiego Penclub, 1975). On Serbian speakers, see Palavestra, *History of the Serbian PEN Center*, Trans. Alice Copple Tasic (Belgrade: Serbian PEN Center, 2006). In some cases, records have been gathered but little historical analysis has been completed; such as Martin Gregor-Dellin and Elisabeth Endres. *P.E.N. Schriftstellerlexikon Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: Piper, 1982). Although one scholarly article on PEN appeared in 1979, it treated only the English branch and its formative years; see R.A. Wilford, "The PEN Club, 1930-1950," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14:1, Jan 1979, 99-116. The only notable academic work on PEN has been completed by Germans on the German branches, such as Helmut Peitsch, *No Politics? Die Geschichte des deutschen PEN-Zentrums in London 1933-2002* (Goettingen: V&R Unipress, 2006); and Sven Hanuschek, *Geschichte des bundesdeutschen PEN-Zentrums von 1951 bis 1990* (Tuebingen: Niemeyer, 2004), and Uwe Westphal, *Exil Ohne Ende: Das PEN-Zentrum Deutschsprachiger Autoren Im Ausland* (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1994).

⁷ R.A. Wilford, "The PEN Club, 1930-1950,"

⁸ See Sven Hanuschek, *Geschichte des bundesdeutschen PEN-Zentrums von 1951 bis 1990*, Helmut Peitsch, *No Politics? Die Geschichte des deutschen PEN-Zentrums in London 1933-2002*, and Uwe Westphal, *Exil Ohne Ende: Das PEN-Zentrum Deutschsprachiger Autoren Im Ausland*.

enormous rhetorical heft. As a voluntary membership organization representing no particular language or interest group, with no endowment or sustained relationships with governments or international bodies, PEN has no innate power of its own. It wields influence in proportion to the rhetorical force of its publications, members' words at meetings, the relative prestige of these members, and the transmission of their conversations into the public sphere. PEN's importance lies less with the social networks it fostered, and more with the claims these individuals made. The story of PEN International as whole, therefore, best comes into focus using the lens of intellectual history.

Methodology

Three concerns shaped the type of materials I gathered for this project, and the analytical tools I brought to them. First, I wished to engage with the types of questions about institution-building and cross-cultural exchange that typically interest political and diplomatic historians. This led me to scour PEN archives at the national level, across a range of states. Second, a desire to produce a work of interest to literary scholars, cultural and intellectual historians led me to pause at certain moments in the institutional account. During these pauses I aimed to drill deep and analyze writers' words themselves, either in the form of their speeches at Congresses or occasionally through their creative writing. Finally, given the nature of my subject matter, I aimed to tie my account together using a narrative prose style.

Over one hundred and forty PEN Centers exist today. The Harry Ransom Center contains almost five hundred boxes of materials pertaining to the English and International Offices alone. Thousands more boxes remain scattered around the world related to other centers. After scanning the inventories of the HRC and reading the few published primary source accounts of the group, I narrowed in on the branches that seems particularly important or active: the English, the American, the French, and the German.

As the founding branch and the seat to this day of the International Executive, the English branch controlled the group's international activities. The American branch remained relatively marginal until after World War II, after which it began a period of sustained institution-building and fundraising. By 1970 it had become the largest and best-funded branch of the entire federation, challenging London's hegemony as a the capital of the English-speaking literary world and attracting a particularly rich slate of writers to its meetings. The Paris branch formed the natural antagonist of the Anglo-American pole. French PEN was the only branch to enjoy public sponsorship from its inception, helping French writers maintain the centrality of French as the second of PEN's two *linguae francae*. German had been dubbed the third PEN language, but ceased to be used during the Second World War. After the War, German PEN members become more absorbed with national questions than with international PEN Congresses. The tribulations of the German PEN branch, however, often served as a microcosm of the larger questions facing all writers, and thus it remained one of my four selected branches. Together these four branches most centrally shaped PEN International.

Considering these Centers existed in cities that served as literary metropolises, their records also provide glimpses of writers from many other countries. Overall, I use the organizational history of PEN largely as a structuring device, allowing me to gather material from various places and times while retaining cohesion and control. My ultimate concern lays with using this organization to gain insight into the much more ineluctable question of how writers from around the world defined literary values differently throughout the twentieth century.⁹

PEN archival material falls into three categories: correspondence between individual members or centers; minutes and reports from larger group meetings; and programs, newsletters, and edited volumes of writing published by the organization. Combined, these sources provide a sense of both how writers related to each other and how the group as a whole presented itself to the wider world. I aimed to balance this self-presentation by consulting other sources. Archival material from organizations PEN dealt with extensively, such as the Society of Authors and UNESCO, helps situate PEN in its wider institutional context. Forays into key individuals' personal papers helped gauge how group membership featured among the constellation of interests that competed for writers' attention. Moments when PEN interacted with governments, from the British government during

⁹ The following works consider the role of the writer in twentieth century society, with specific reference questions of responsibility and community. Howard Fast, *Naked God: The Writer and the Communist Party* (New York: Praeger, 1957); Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: the Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Eugene Hollahan (ed.) *Saul Bellow and the Struggle at the Center* (New York: AMS Press, 1996); Gisèle Sapiro, *La Responsabilité de l'Écrivain: Littérature, Droit, et Morale en France, XIXe-XXIe Siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2011); Karoline von Oppen, *The Role of the Writer and the Press in the Unification of Germany* (New York: P. Lang, 2000); Andre Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant After Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Stephan Collini's subjects are creative writers. *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

wartime to the American government during Vietnam, necessitated brief excursions to additional archives. All of these primary sources, complemented by recollections of the group found in memoirs, newspapers, magazines, and other sources, helped shape a well-rounded view of an international organization at work.

Tracking how the group functioned in practice, however, does not necessarily illuminate how and why it espoused a certain set of guiding ideals. Given the nature of my subject matter, I have aimed to bring the best tools of the cultural studies movement to the analysis of intellectual exchange. Cultural Studies is used here in reference not to the Birmingham school¹⁰ but rather to the interdisciplinary moment that gave rise to American Studies, German Studies and the like.¹¹ These movements legitimated the use of cultural texts in historical scholarship, rescuing close readings from the exclusive provenance of English Literature, Germanistik, and their various national counterparts.¹²

Though their ideals took many different forms in practice, most prominent PEN members agreed that all men shared a common impulse. Mankind, PEN argued to the world, possessed a common humanity. This common humanity did not necessarily manifest itself in men's reason, but through their will to produce art.

¹⁰ While I am concerned in this project with questions of authority and influence, the insights about class and power that make the following exemplars of the Cultural Studies movements so important are less relevant: Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life* (Chatto and Windus, 1957); Stuart Hall, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* (Birmingham: CCS, 1973); Raymond Williams. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York, : Harper & Row, 1966).

¹¹ For an overview, see David L. Szanton, "The Origin, Nature and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States," in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (University of California Press, 2004). On American Studies see Leo Marx, "Reflections on American Studies, Minnesota, and the 1950s," *American Studies* 40.2 (1999): 39–51 and "Thoughts on the Origin and Character of the American Studies Movement," *American Quarterly* 31.3 (Bibliography Issue 1979): 398–401.

¹² Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

Unsurprisingly, writers expressed this will to art through their words. At certain points our story, therefore, I pause. I stop to tease out the preoccupations that guided particular writers in certain pieces of their work, be it an episode from a novel or a speech delivered to a Congress, to draw connections between the varied ways individuals used a particular image or term.¹³ This approach may at times disrupt the narrative, but I believe its payoff compensates for its detractions. Knowing that John Galsworthy, for example, had long struggled in his fiction to reconcile his loyalty to his nation with his desire for a more worldly life—some twenty years before he spoke at PEN meetings of similar problems—helps us to understand how the PEN model formed.

The subheading of the previous section refers to the PEN “story”. This deliberate word choice conveys the final aspect of my methodology. While they came from many national backgrounds and spoke numerous languages, most PEN members retained a commitment to linear narrative forms. A glance at the list of PEN Presidents contained in Appendix B demonstrates the group’s preference for novelists above all, followed by playwrights. Even members who were more experimental affirmed that, while reductive didacticism should always be avoided, literature needed to convey a distinct and powerful message. PEN’s assertion that art should guide the international community itself suggests a worldview shaped by

¹³ I borrow here Quentin Skinner’s distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions: the *illocutionary* intension of a statement refers to “what a writer *meant* by writing in a certain way”, while perlocutionary intension derives from the “what we actually *end up doing* by writing in a certain way.” Skinner argues for the importance of the first in pursuit of history that aims accurately to reconstruct a discursive context and intellectual world, but I argue the second stands as equally important in the case of PEN, as writers’ statements – once refracted through PEN’s organizational prism and put to work by international bureaucracies – often took performed crucial work quite distinct from their author’s intentions. Quentin Skinner. *Visions of Politics*. Volume I: Regarding Method (Cambridge: CUP, 2002 [2005]), 98-100. (my italics in the quotations).

a faith in progress. Taking my cue from PEN members, I aim to plot their history in a linear fashion, to tell their story in a narrative style.

A narrative approach should not be conflated with a slide into teleology. Writers have never reached their promised land. PEN members continue to this day to circle around the contradictory logic built into their charter. They still gather at Congresses and listen to keynote addresses that declare the universality of Literature, then break into smaller discussion panels to lament writers' marginal status. PEN still wins grants from foundations by arguing that literature is a universally understood and respected manifestation of humanity, only to use these funds to protect writers from those who would undermine freedom of expression. An inability ever to resolve the tension built into the PEN ideal—its effort to use a sacred literary art to save a profane world—gives rise to the ultimate never-ending story.

Literature Review

Engagement with three separate bodies of scholarship have guided me through this project. First, PEN's repeated declarations that it was the world's first international writer's organization led me to consider the recent paradigm shift within the historical profession towards international and global history. Second, my aspiration to produce a work that will interest both intellectual historians and literary scholars pushed me to consider work being done largely within English departments on literary networks and exchange. Third, my effort to understand

PEN's insistence that the local and the global could in fact be reconciled led me to the growing literature on cosmopolitanism, a field being shaped by scholars from multiple fields, but most notably philosophy.

The recent paradigm shift toward international, transnational, or global research has spawned an array of terms used in an equally vast array of contexts. This dissertation is not an *international* history, to the degree that this term grew out of the historiography of diplomacy.¹⁴ The existence of the word “international” on PEN's letterhead speaks to the fact that it formed in 1921 as part of the larger postwar effort to revive faith in the notion of civility between *states*. Though PEN was born of this internationalizing impulse, and the term “international” will be used here for historical accuracy, members argued most forcefully for a community constructed outside of the state. Their language, their culture, their community—their *nation*—shaped their senses of belonging, audience, and responsibility.¹⁵ To

¹⁴ For example see Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton University Press, 2006) and Akira Iriye, “The Internationalization of History,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 1. (Feb., 1989), 1-10.

¹⁵ I have in mind here the definition of a cultural “nation” that Rousseau discusses in Section 8, Book, IV of his *Social Contract*, where he notes cultural or ethnic nations held together by a civil religion may go on to form relatively more stable states than those states that try to exercise sovereignty over territories not bound by shared beliefs, histories, or practices. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract, Or Principles of Political Right* (1762). Modern states took form in the eighteenth century either around such pre-existing cultural nations, or made building a common culture a focus of their nation-building. A range of historical studies have made this process of conscious nation-building their subject, notably Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1701-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), David Waldstricker's *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), Hans Kohn's *Prelude to Nation-States: the French and German Experience, 1789-1815* (New York, 1967), or Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain* (Berkeley: 1989). For an overview of this topic see Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Britishness and Europeaness: Who are the British Anyway? (Oct, 1992) 309-329. When PEN members talked about native “cultures” (for example, John Galsworthy was often considered the archetypal “British” writer) they often referenced these constructs that were a mere century or two old. PEN members who disliked being confined by what seemed an arbitrary state denomination—for example, Serbian-speaking writers living in what was in 1921 the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs—and argued that language shaped their professional calling usually did so by appealing to the cultural or ethnic nation.

be sure, the reality of state power frequently intruded on writer's appeals to their cultural nations, as members themselves acknowledged. I therefore pay close attention to relationships with political interests, governments, and funding mechanisms.

The term *transnational* is similarly inapplicable to this story, because while this term often refers to alliances of expertise that transcend national lines, these alliances seem most often to have grown from a deep engagement with reform of the domestic state.¹⁶ Like Daniel Rodgers, I aim to produce a multi-national study which considers the ways people interpreted a set of ideas in different national contexts.¹⁷ Yet for all the dispute about whether Progressivism "really" existed,¹⁸ we still recognize it as an ideological movement, moment, and category of debate. The topic which most animated members of PEN—the desire to protect and promote literary values—is even more difficult to define, to the point that members themselves did not always conceive of their interests in relation to this question.

Members of PEN desired most earnestly to commune with the world, with the *global*. In current discourse, both scholarly and public, the term *globalization* refers to the forces that operate above both states and nations. These non-state, non-national forces are typically cast as either emancipatory or homogenizing. Globalization, proponents of this discourse of extremes tend to argue, works either

¹⁶ Daniel Rodgers. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998).

¹⁷ Rodgers. *Atlantic Crossings*.

¹⁸ Daniel Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism." *Reviews in American History* (Vol. 10, No 4, 1982), 113-132.

to unite or to standardize the world as a whole. Disease and capitalism (or the disease of capitalism, or the capital-driven motives of disease-fighters) feature prominently as the subjects of works about globalization.¹⁹

With a keen awareness of the baggage this concept carries, I still use the term “global” in preference to international or transnational. The dream of a worldwide, united globe above all animated PEN members. A shared fascination with the idea of a global Republic of Letters united PEN members but still provided space for national difference. Yet in practice the concept remained intangible and malleable. With this conclusion in mind, I use the term “global” partly to help compensate the currently fashionable tendency either to idealize or to condemn “globalization”.

A debate currently unfolding within Literary and Cultural Studies about the globalization of literature mirrors the historical profession’s preoccupation with the international. This debate has various strands, all of which juxtapose the terms “world” and “literature” in different ways. One approach casts world literature as a commodity. Taking his cue from a broader public interest in the genre of world literature, for example, David Damrosch has argued that a text becomes a piece of world literature when its translation and circulation through multiple markets catapults it to a worldwide audience.²⁰ This audience, united by their purchasing power, demonstrates an appetite for a certain kind of reading, usually “literary” fiction with an epic tone and an historical or humanist bent. Public desire

¹⁹ See for example Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

²⁰ David Damrosch. *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Sarah Lawall, *Reading World Literature: Theory, History, Practice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

stimulates the production of novels written specifically for international consumption, encouraging publishers with an eye to world markets to cultivate novelists, for example Umberto Eco, whose work embodies these attributes. These works often conclude with jeremiads lamenting the lowering of literary standards.²¹

Others critique the notion that literary standards exist at all. Building off the work of her mentor, Pierre Bourdieu, Pascale Casanova has posited the existence of a world literary field with its own sociologically and culturally constructed barriers of entry. Literary capital circulates according to rules entirely different to those governing the political world. But like its parallel realm, the literary world has its own metropolises (principally Paris, then London and New York to lesser degrees) populated by high-cultural tastemakers who control access to publishing houses, magazines that dole out career-making reviews, and levers of legitimation like prizes and fellowships. Writers from peripheries—Ireland and Latin America receive her particular attention—must learn to play by the rules of the center, of the world literary field itself, to gain an audience outside their national boundaries. Success in this field is counted not through books sold but through prestige gained. Literary success, in fact, often stands in diametric opposition to market success. Yet literary capital, she concludes pessimistically, is inescapably, structurally, perhaps eternally Eurocentric.²²

Attention to circulation demonstrates the influence of world systems

²¹ For a great example, see Tim Parks, “The Dull New Global Novel,” *New York Review of Books*, Blog, <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/feb/09/the-dull-new-global-novel/> (1/30/11)

²² Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

theory²³ on both these models. The first stresses the material commodification of literature; the second its counterpart, the commodification of prestige. Support of the conclusions offered by both these models may be found in the critiques PEN members themselves offered of the commercialization of literature and the unequal relationship between centers and peripheries. Yet I also aim to demonstrate that PEN's story challenges both these schools. The first casts literary capital purely as material product, the second as an ideal. Both ultimately assume that the literary field is radically independent. The commodity-model assumes the market rules with minimal ideological intervention. The prestige-model assumes that other forms of capital, be they commercial or political, do not intrude on the literary realm. The PEN story forces these two sides together. PEN members strove to reconcile their material realities with their ideals, with their conviction of what they thought literature should be. By analyzing their history, I hope to demonstrate how the PEN ideal worked to shape material realities.

Together, engagement with the respective international turns in both history and literary studies have led me to produce what I would term—reluctantly, for want of a less cumbersome formulation—a global intellectual history about the formation of literary authority.²⁴ This global organization used its literary authority to promote an ethos best understood as cosmopolitan.

The cosmopolitan person has long been maligned as a self-consciously worldly figure who moves in elite circles, looking down with an air of superiority on

²³ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

²⁴ See Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori's forthcoming book on *Approaches to Global Intellectual History* for a discussion of different models emerging in this field.

the putative provincial. A resurgence of interest in cosmopolitanism has occurred since the 1990s. Two factors have driven this interest. First, since the end of the Cold War, the idea that the world was divided by warring dualities has been replaced by the fear that it is instead being homogenized by one all-pervasive force. This worry partly motivated the international turn discussed above. Some have argued that to counter the totalizing force of capitalism, we need the influence of cosmopolitanism.²⁵ Casting cosmopolitanism as globalization's foe, however, runs the risk of totalizing the concept, leading us straight back to the cliché of the arrogant, rootless sophisticate.

Cosmopolitanism more fundamentally appeals to critics because it provides a corrective both to the Enlightenment conflation of the "human" experience with that of adult white males,²⁶ and because it helps counter the excesses of cultural relativism.²⁷ As the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, the cosmopolitan celebrates local distinctiveness without succumbing to the lure of logical positivism, to the fallacy that no universal truths about human life exist. "There are some values that are, and should be, universal," Appiah writes, "just as there are lots of values that are, and must be, local."²⁸ The cosmopolitan aims to retain local distinctiveness while finding common ground to meet on, to connect with others of

²⁵ Economists seem most prone to this turn. See Eatwell and Taylor *Global Finance at Risk: The Case for International Regulation* (New York: The New York Press, 2000) and Heikki Patomäki, *Democratising Globalisation* (London: Zed Books, 2001).

²⁶ Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism?" in *Respondents, for Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston, Beacon Press, 1996)

²⁷ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006), xxi.

²⁸ Appiah, xxi.

radically different backgrounds.

The term “cosmopolitan” was coined by the Cynics in the Fourth Century B.C.E. as a deliberately playful reference to precisely the type of paradox built into the PEN Charter. It meant “citizen of the cosmos”. Cosmos referred to the world not in the material sense of the earth, but rather to the universe—an ironic nod to the fact this represented the type of citizenship no polity could ever regulate.²⁹ While Stoics like Marcus Aurelius revived the concept five hundred years later,³⁰ our current understanding of the term owes its debt to Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant who resuscitated the idea in the Eighteenth Century. Kant proposed that a *ius cosmopolitanum* (cosmopolitan right) existed, requiring all foreigners abroad to be received by their hosts with hospitality. This principle would protect individuals from stumbling into war or persecution when they traveled to distant lands. In this way, the “use of the right to the earth's surface, which belongs to the human race in common”, according to Kant, would “finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution.”³¹

The German Martin Wieland elaborated on this idea in 1788, writing that “Cosmopolitans... regard all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of a single family, and the universe as a state, of which they... are citizens, promoting together under the general laws of nature the perfection of the whole, while each in his own

²⁹ Discussed in Appiah, xiv.

³⁰ In his *Meditations*, written on a military campaign between 170 and 180, Aurelius famously refers to “citizens of the highest state,” and declares himself “a citizen of the Universe.” Discussed in G. R. Stanton, “The Cosmopolitan Ideas of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius,” *Phronesis*, 13:2, 1968, 183-195.

³¹ Immanuel Kant. 'Toward Perpetual Peace' in *Practical Philosophy-Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. Trans. M.J. Gregor. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,. 1999), 329.

fashion is busy about his own being.”³² Wieland and his ilk—the Enlightenment thinkers who exchanged letters and books, across Europe and the oceans—are precisely the people Goethe had in mind when he posited that the world would soon be united by “*Weltliteratur*,” or a world literature.³³ Writers from around the world were developing a common literary culture, forming a sort of Republic of Letters. By its very nature, “Poetry,” Goethe decided, “is cosmopolitan.” Because it was cosmopolitan, it became more interesting “the more it shows its nationality.”³⁴

Almost every contemporary commentator on cosmopolitanism—from Appiah, to Martha Nussbaum, to David Hollinger, to Ross Posnock, to Bruce Robbins—suggests at some point that the cosmopolitan ideal finds its chief expression in art and culture.³⁵ And not only art and culture, but *literature*. “Folktales, drama, operas, novels, short stories; biographies, historians, ethnographies; fiction or non-fiction:... every human civilization has ways to reveal

³² Appiah, xv.

³³ This term appears over two dozen times in Goethe’s correspondence in the 1820-30s, all quoted in Fritz Stritch, *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* (Bern, 1946). See also Dena Goodman. *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*. (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

³⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. John Gearey. *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 3. (New York: Suhrkamp, 1986), 227.

³⁵ In the discipline of History, see: David Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); In English, see Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Ross Posnock, “The Dream of Deracination: The Uses of Cosmopolitanism,” *American Literary History*, 12:4 (2000), 802-818; Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). In philosophy, in addition to the Appiah and Nussbaum already cited, see John Rawls. *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), Peter Singer. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002); Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse. *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005) In sociology, see Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Color Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

to us values,” writes Appiah. “Fortified with a shared language of value, we can often guide one another, in the cosmopolitan spirit, to shared responses; and when we cannot agree, the understanding that our responses are shaped by some of the same vocabulary can make it easier to disagree.”³⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, Posnock’s favored cosmopolitan,³⁷ evoked a Kingdom of Culture, an idea that played on Kant’s Kingdom of Ends. Du Bois believed that the world remained divided by the material reality of race. Difference mattered. Du Bois did not wish to eradicate distinctions, but rather to celebrate them. But much more profoundly, he believed, human beings shared a capacity to transcend their embodied selves. This they achieved through reading great literature. “I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not,” du Bois wrote. “Across the color-line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls... I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn or condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil... [and] sight the Promised Land.”³⁸ Du Bois’s ultimate goal, the pinnacle of both his political and cultural program, was to be allowed “to be a co-worker in the Kingdom of Culture.”³⁹

PEN formed in 1921 similarly to argue that the world needed a Kingdom of Culture. It tried to achieve this ideal by bringing the Republic of Letters into existence. The contemporary advocates of a cosmopolitan orientation who have

³⁶ Appiah, 30.

³⁷ Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual*, Chapters Four and Five.

³⁸ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover, 1994 [1903]), 67.

³⁹ Du Bois, 3.

received the most attention from the wider public are philosophers and ethicists like Appiah and Nussbaum. These writers argue that cosmopolitanism can provide a way forward for the contemporary world, to combat the homogenization of globalization, the conflation of human rights with European values, and to counter the legacy of logical positivism. I stop well short of offering such bold advice, as no doubt any historian would do. I wish to suggest here instead that the history of PEN might provide a balancing antidote to these impassioned treatises, hindsight and instructive examples in the place of predictions for the future. The PEN story shows us how that the grand ambition of a cosmopolitan world federation has been able practically to adapt to the realities of an evolving material world. Only with the help of such a necessary instructive can the great hopes of any of these cosmopolitans—from PEN members to contemporary commentators—ever be realized.

Chapter Outline

The evolution of both PEN's doctrine and practice will be traced through the following seven consecutive chapters. Three sections divide the chapters, to mark three phases of the group's development: its formation period during the 1920s and early 1930s; the challenges of the 1930s and 1940s that almost led to obliteration; and the organization's post-War recovery. Each chapter discusses the circumstances that forced PEN to adapt its working model, offering an evaluation of how and why the individuals involved responded in distinct ways. These responses varied significantly across time, place, and culture. Each chapter thus zooms in on specific

branches and writers who most influenced the group at that particular moment. Each of these phases is then measured against the guiding PEN ideal: namely, that the drive to produce art most defined humanity, that all PEN members belonged to a common literary republic that modeled cosmopolitan global citizenship to the world.

Chapter One, “The PEN Club”, addresses the dialectical relationship PEN established between the categories of art and politics during the 1920s. This dynamic pivoted on a liberal, individualistic conception of the writer. Writers, argued founding PEN President John Galsworthy, should never intervene in politics. The PEN member should correct the folly of politicians, with the goal of helping stabilize geopolitics in the wake of the Great War. This strict separation between the ideal and the material also influenced PEN’s membership policies. The group sought only literary writers, not those driven by commercial success. These twin spectres—politics and the market—would resurface continually throughout the group’s history, rising to haunt each generation.

The distinctly British inflection of the PEN concept became apparent as branches opened across Europe and North America. Chapter Two, “PEN International”, traces the group’s transformation from a London dinner club to an international federation. This chapter uses the example of two new branches to illustrate how writers in other contexts reinterpreted the PEN ideal. First, the American branch pushed for more elasticity in membership standards. Publishers and editors were co-creators of literature, they insisted. The Americans also challenged the British assumption that each nation-state should possess one central

literary metropole, expressing their desire to open branches around the country. Yiddish writers in Poland offered an even more profound reinterpretation of the PEN concept. The Yiddish language most defined their identity, these writers argued, despite the fact that they lived in Warsaw. They should thus be allowed a separate Yiddish-speaking Center. The London Executive capitulated on both counts, establishing two precedents: writers could best decide for themselves what worked best at the local level; and a linguistically-defined cultural community, not nation-state, best organized the Republic of Letters.

The fear of political impingement rose to the fore in the 1930s and 40s, and PEN began to fall into disarray. In Chapter Three, "Hitler Émigrés", German writers began to insist that, in the face of Nazi persecution, PEN's "no politics" rule needed to be overturned. The German writer Ernst Toller was celebrated, instead of expelled, after delivering a fiery speech denouncing fascism at the 1933 Dubrovnik PEN Congress. PEN came to see criticism of totalitarianism as a necessary act of self-defense. As Nazis infiltrated the Berlin PEN branch, former members began to leave Germany. Yiddish-speaking writers had established the precedent that branches should form along language lines. Germans now pushed to establish separate German-speaking branches abroad. Yiddish and other language-based branches (those in the Balkans, for example) had separated because they possessed an autonomous culture. These branches, however, still remained rooted in distinct territories. The German example established a new precedent: writers carried their national culture with them, no matter their geographical location. The cultural community and the political state were two distinct entities.

What did these developments mean back home for the founding center?

Chapter Four, “War and the Refugees”, returns to Britain to examine how the English Executive confronted the waves of refugees who washed into the country during World War II. Led first by H.G. Wells and then by Storm Jameson, the English branch allied for a brief period with the British government to help writers stranded in internment camps. Ernst Toller’s speech in 1933 had mentioned politics, but only in the name of self-defense. The World War II relief efforts went one step further. They brought PEN into cooperation with a government. The justification proved similar. The group took refuge in an emerging discourse of humanitarianism, arguing that the benefits of helping needy writers far outweighed the costs. A struggle between Storm Jameson and the French writer Jules Romains (who had exiled himself from Paris to New York) for the right to be considered head of wartime PEN further pushed members to clarify what the War represented: the battle to save European civilization itself. References to civilization and humanity became conflated. While most disagreed as to how exactly writers should respond to war, all agreed the war represented the ultimate test of both European civilization, and thus humanity itself—revealing the contours of PEN’s decidedly Eurocentric iteration of humanism.

Chapter Five, “The Right to Write”, examines the group as it reconstructed itself in the immediate wake of the War. Despite the return of peace, refugee communities remained scattered across Europe. Many writers who had been refugees during the war chose to stay in their new locations. Exile, PEN came to acknowledge, could be a permanent condition. Exile was a state of mind. Yet

despite permanent dislocation from the homeland, because language and shared culture defined a writer's community, writers could still consider themselves connected—psychically rather than practically—to compatriots back home. The Hungarian writer Paul Tabori, who served as President of the London-based Writers-in-Exile branch, took this line of logic one step further. If writers could maintain cultural but not political bonds with people on the other side of the world, they likely also felt the plight of fellow writers suffering political persecution in distant places. Tabori's efforts led by 1961 to the establishment of the Writers-in-Prison Committee. Humanitarian discourses helped remove the stigma of political activity. PEN took its place alongside other internationalist bodies making similar moves in the post-War period, formalizing an advisory relationship with UNESCO during this period.

Yet no sooner did PEN regroup in the post-War period than new threats to writers' autonomy arose: commercialization, globalization and the *Kulturkampf* of the Cold War. Chapter Six, "Commercialization and Professionalization", analyzes members' jeremiads during the 1950s against the market forces that seemed to threaten literary values. Publishing houses began to merge in the early 1960s, and the same multinationals that owned Hollywood studios began to commission novels marketable as movies and other merchandise. Angry debates at meetings either for or against commercial culture functioned as neutral ground, allowing members from a range of ideological camps to gather at world congresses despite the polarization between American-led liberalism and Soviet-led communism that formed the period's backdrop.

While explicit discussion of the Cold War remained off-limits at PEN Congresses, at the Executive level the conflict threatened to implode the group from within. Chapter Seven “An International PEN” steps behind the congress curtain to examine the ideological struggle that threatened to divide writers. The election battle over the PEN Presidency in 1966, between the American- and British-backed liberal Arthur Miller and the French- and Eastern European-backed socialist Miguel Asturias, revealed the organization had become a veritable fighting “pen”. In the 1960s, PEN become an arena for the contest between competing universalist visions the writer. Both sides justified their actions by arguing they wished above all to make PEN truly international. As revelations of secret CIA funding and rumors of Communist infiltration shook the membership by the late Sixties, PEN’s leadership struggled to define and therefore control this “international” discourse. Yet the rhetorical turn to internationalism provided perfect grounds for writers from peripheries to challenge PEN’s leadership—which is precisely what Latin American writers did in 1966. Yet while writers like Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa described radically different material conditions facing writers in developing nations, they evoked literary ideals almost identical to their European counterparts. These ideals, moreover, remained relatively unchanged from the founding period. Literature, all involved affirmed, best expressed the human spirit and united mankind.

* * *

Shifts in the literary world can serve as a bellwether for larger political and social upheavals. Historians of the book have linked the spread of print culture after the invention of the printing press at the turn of the sixteenth century to the fomentation of rebellion.⁴⁰ The rise of the narrative novel in the early nineteenth century has been linked to the development of the nation-state.⁴¹ The destabilization of a unified perspective witnessed at the vanguard of Modernism may be cast an anticipation of the fragmentation of both empires and identities in the post-War period.⁴² These narratives implicitly assign writers a central role in the creation of loyalty and identity. PEN's legacy remains to be determined. Yet its story ultimately contributes to our own generation's version of the never-ending discussion about the ideal relationship between art and politics, the self and society, the local and the global—of the centuries old hope for a cosmopolitan world community.

⁴⁰ For example see Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), and a version of his argument intended for a non-academic audience, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

⁴¹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965). Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards, "Literary Texts," *Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. 3., 555-575.

⁴² Jameson, Frederic. "Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *Media and Cultural Studies Key Works*. Ed. Meenakshi Giri Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (London: Blackwell publishing, 2001), 550 -587.

CHAPTER ONE
THE PEN CLUB
1921-1927

PEN International arose in London in 1921 to heal the divisions of the Great War of 1914-1918. PEN's founding generation, led by the novelists C.A. Dawson Scott and John Galsworthy, sought to cordon off a safe space for art in the wake of the divisive international conflict. PEN argued that it allowed writers to bracket politics, the source of the world's troubles, so they could come together freely to discuss their ideas. While myriad groups professing to be non-ideological flourished in Britain during this period, from the Peace Pledge Union to the League of Nations Union, such groups grew by pursuing broad membership policies.⁴³ In contrast, PEN's founders insisted on their Club's exclusivity. Only successful writers could join PEN—individuals who could express insight not only into local circumstances, but into the universal human condition.

Yet PEN's advocacy of literature's radical independence instead underscored its political ambitions. PEN aimed from its inception to influence policy-makers and other men of influence. Like many coterie of experts who offered their specialized knowledge to men of power during this period,⁴⁴ PEN

⁴³ Arthur Marwick, "Middle Opinion in the Thirties: Planning, Progress and Political 'Agreement'." *English Historical Review*, vol. 79, no. 311 (Apr. 1964), 285-298.

⁴⁴ See for example Richard E. Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men: Medicine and Capitalism in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Gary Werskey, *The Visible College* (London: Allen Lane, 1978) James Colgrove, "'Science in a Democracy': The Contested Status of Vaccination in the Progressive Era and the 1920s", *Isis*, Vol. 96, No. 2 (Jun., 2005), 167-191. An unpublished paper by Dr. Vincent Legendijk of Leiden University, "To Consolidate Peace? The International Electro-Technical Community and the Grid for the United States of Europe, 1929-1937", argues that European engineers advocated the construction of a European electricity network as a means of united Europe ideologically

would help reshape the world after the War. From its London perch the group sought such influence precisely by denying a political identity. This chapter analyses the dimensions and roots of the apolitical self-image the PEN Club crafted during its founding period, an image it continues to project to this day.⁴⁵

The English PEN Club exhibited its own distinctive philosophy and group ethos. To grasp this ethos, we begin with an exploration of the circumstances leading to PEN's first dinner. We then move on to explore how John Galsworthy understood the tension between an ideal art and a fallen world—the tension inherent in the PEN project—in his novel *The Island Pharisees*. Galsworthy most powerfully influenced the PEN ethos, shaping the group's organizational aesthetics. PEN drew him because it represented an opportunity to explore issues concerning national identity that had long preoccupied him. Galsworthy considered this novel, his first, published in 1904, to be a work of cultural criticism that best expressed his worldview. Later generations of PEN members continually confronted Galsworthy's influence. The Edwardian novelist imprinted his values on PEN's rhetoric, politics, and organizational structure. Finally, from the pages of Galsworthy's novel we move back into PEN's organizational history itself, examining how the twin imperatives to universality and exclusivity played out in

as well as practically in the wake of the War.

⁴⁵ “Our primary goal is to engage with, and empower, societies and communities across cultures and languages, through reading and writing. We believe that writers can play a crucial role in changing and developing civil society. We do this through the promotion of literature, international campaigning on issues such as translation and freedom of expression and improving access to literature at international, regional and national levels./ Our membership is open to all published writers who subscribe to the PEN Charter regardless of nationality, language, race, colour or religion. International PEN is a non-political organisation and has special consultative status at UNESCO and the United Nations.” The “About Us” section of the PEN International website. <http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/go/about-us> (1/01/11)

relation to membership policies.

An understanding of the PEN Club helps illuminate some of the tensions between local and international concerns that plagued post-War projects of internationalism. The PEN Club of the 1920s has been overlooked by cultural historians. Studies of consumption, literary modernism, and the oppositional cultures crafted by minorities have been identified as problems requiring more urgent historical attention.⁴⁶ Political historians interested in internationalism, meanwhile, have focused their attention on states and the supra-national institutions like the League created to manage international relations.⁴⁷ PEN aimed to mediate between art and the practical world. Because its twin imperatives pulled in opposite directions, however, during this period it never fully represented either.

Conceived as a cultural antidote to the state-generated tensions that exploded between 1914-1918, PEN provided a way for literary writers to speak truth to politics. PEN's founding generation crafted a discourse of artistic nonalignment precisely to legitimate the authority of writers outside of the literary sphere. This reveals a paradox undergirding the organization's premise: PEN staked its potential for political influence precisely on denial of aspirations to

⁴⁶ On Britain, Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Boris Ford (ed.), *The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain*, vol. 8, *Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1992). On America, Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004); Just one good example of the sprawling literature on Paris in the 1920s is Shari Benstock's *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986); Peter Gay's *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Norton, 1968) is still considered classic.

⁴⁷ Susan Pedersen offers an overview of literature on the League in "Back to the League of Nations," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (October 2007), 1091-1117.

any such influence.

Post-War Ideological Context

The Great War, the “war to end all wars” as contemporaries called it, has been hailed so often as an historical turning point, to do so here would border on cliché. After the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, soldiers settled deep into damp trenches that stretched miles across Belgium and northern France. Empty space, a “no man’s land” ringed with barbed wire, separated the Allied and the Central troops from each others’ rapid-firing rifles, poison gas, improved explosives and smokeless bullets. The push to develop new wartime technologies had by 1918 given birth to the tank and the airplane. Yet the War of 1914-1918, the end of the “long nineteenth century” as some would have it, did transform international relations. Allied powers such as Britain owed staggering debts to the United States by war’s end. France led the charge to demand reparations from Germany, payments that economist John Maynard Keynes described as uncollectable, given Germany’s ravaged state.⁴⁸ These events had shaken the foundations of European culture—not to mention the blow the war delivered to the Empires these powers had established in Africa and Asia. Pressure began to mount during the 1920s for a radical change in the conduct of international relations.

⁴⁸ John Marnard Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), cited in Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000* (London: Penguin, 1997), 103.

Partly to counteract Bolshevik charges that the War had primarily been a struggle among imperialist powers, American President Woodrow Wilson recast U.S. participation in the war effort into a veritable religious crusade to change the nature of international relations. On January 8, 1918, Wilson announced a plan to organize the peace. Called the Fourteen Points, it argued for “open covenants of peace openly arrived at”. Freedom of the seas, of trade, and the self-determination of all peoples: these principles should re-shape the great power politics. Wilson’s fourteenth point called for the establishment of a “league of nations” to preserve the peace. World leaders met in Paris on 18 January 1919, eventually establishing the League of Nations. An American delegate to Paris, former Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana, provided one perspective on why the Americans failed to join the League. An ardent nationalist, Beveridge denounced the League as the work of “amiable old male grannies who, over their afternoon tea, are planning to denationalize American and denationalize the nation’s manhood.”⁴⁹ Beveridge’s reaction underscores tensions arising from reforms that reshaped political constituencies. Partly due to the labor pressures born of wartime exigencies, the United States passed the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, granting women the right to vote. Britain’s Fourth Reform Act had led to similar demographic changes in the electorate in 1918. Many of the women who pushed for these reforms had been active in wartime activities on the home front, and formed the rank-and-file of peace groups after the war. The post-War world need

⁴⁹ Cited in William Edward Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1958]), 57.

to be transformed, and new constituencies—polities that included women—would help perform this crucial labor.

PEN's founder, C.A. Dawson Scott, was just such a woman. Born in London in August 1865, Dawson Scott became a novelist known primarily for depictions of Cornish society. Her first published work was a lyrical ode to the Greek poet Sappho. As a seventeen year old she admired the Greek's championing of women's equal rights to education, confiding in her journal a desire to become known as "the Sappho of this age."⁵⁰ She gave all of her savings, sixty-four pounds, for the vanity publication of her first book, an epic poem about Sappho.⁵¹ Though Dawson Scott achieved little critical recognition for the piece—and less than a month after it appeared her publisher's warehouse burnt down, taking her uninsured life's savings with it—she felt this signaled her entry into the literary world. To mark her transition, she discarded "Amy" and christened herself after her idol. Apparently unaware of any sexual implications, Sappho felt obliged to assure PEN delegates later in life that she was not a lesbian.⁵² Critics considered her literary work breezy entertainment at best and provincial at worst.⁵³ Her

⁵⁰ Dawson Scott's daughter, Marjorie Watts, wrote a biography of her mother which, along with scattered files at the Harry Ransom Center in Texas, provides the only documentation of C.A. Dawson Scott's life. Marjorie Watts, *Mrs. Sappho: The Life of C.A. Dawson Scott, Mother of International P.E.N.* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 16.

⁵¹ Catherine Amy Dawson, afterward Scott. *Sappho: A Poem* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1889).

⁵² Francis King's forward to Marjorie Watts, *Mrs. Sappho*, ix.

⁵³ Early in her career Dawson Scott wrote poetry, most notably *The Idylls of Womanhood* (London: Heinemann, 1892). Her best-known novel was *Madcap Jane: Or Youth* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1910), though she felt most proud of *The Story of Anna Beames* (London: Heinemann, 1907), which explored the stifled potential of women in Edwardian England. Both books came before her Cornish period, marked by works such as *Wastralls: A Novel* (London: Heinemann, 1918) and *The Vampire: A Book of Cornish and Other Stories* (London: Robert Holden & Co, 1925). Later in life she experimented

chief advocate, her friend the publisher William Heinemann, confided to a literary agent, “it is a great pity that [she]... has not clever people to sharpen her wits against. It is bad for her and shows in her work.”⁵⁴

Contemporaries, however, celebrated Dawson Scott for her zeal, organizational capacities, and networking skills. She arrived in London in the early 1890s and integrated herself into a circle of writers surrounding Heinemann and Walter Besant, founder and head of the Society of Authors, all of whom gathered for monthly literary lunches. Heinemann's lunches were well-regarded because he refused to invite the spouses and partners of writers, arguing that they led his guests to “censor themselves” and “impeded the lively flow of discourse.”⁵⁵ The obligations of middle class life, however, eventually took Sappho away from London. In 1898 she married a doctor whose career sent them first to the Isle of Man in 1902 and then on to Cornwall in 1908. Secluded far from the excitement of the city, over the following decade Dawson Scott devoted the spare time she could find around child-rearing to writing novels that evoked the local color.

In Cornwall in 1917 Dawson Scott founded a precursor to PEN called the

with psychics, séances, and mysticism, which she documented in *The Guide to Psychic Knowledge: Questions from People on This Side of Death, Answers from People From That Side of Death* (London: C.W. Daniel, 1932). Many PEN members during the 1920s were, along with Dawson Scott, absorbed by mysticism. For an analysis of the rise of the popularity of mysticism and its relationship to intellectual circles in the wake of William James's pioneering study of *Varieties of Religious Experience*, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, “The Making of Modern ‘Mysticism’”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (June, 2003), 273-302. For a longer view stretching back to the nineteenth century, see Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth Century England* (London: Virago, 1998) and *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Cult of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁵⁴ Watts, *Mrs. Sappho*, 35.

⁵⁵ Watts, *Mrs. Sappho*, 20.

To-Morrow Club. The To-Morrow Club aimed to nurture young writers by bringing them into contact with established authors over teas. Dawson Scott staged and directed these events, from lettering invitations down to ordering china, from her sitting room in Cornwall. The young and ill-connected declined no offer to help. Rebecca West, one of the writers in whom Dawson Scott took particular interest, said of her in 1927, "There isn't probably a person in London who hasn't called Sappho a pest.... [but] she is a loveable pest."⁵⁶ West's tone of affectionate condescension typifies most remembrances of Dawson Scott. Indeed, besides the young and struggling, Dawson Scott found it difficult to recruit famous writers to her teas.

Many writers sought to distance themselves from Dawson Scott's middlebrow context. Dawson Scott typified her social milieu, a middle class world that enjoyed an active associational life. Secular in character yet almost evangelical in their zeal, issue-based clubs, societies and lobby groups flourished in the 1920s. Largely in response to the seeming barbarism of the War, many of these groups were "committed to creating and defending space within associational life that was free from partisan or sectarian conflict."⁵⁷ The To-Morrow Club seemed just one among scores of such groups. To gain success, it would have to differentiate itself.

Dawson Scott herself demonstrated awareness of this fact when she sought

⁵⁶ Francis King, introduction to Watts, *Mrs. Sappho*, xi.

⁵⁷ Helen McCarthy, "Parties, Voluntary Associations, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain", *Historical Journal*, 30, 4 (2007), 891.

to transform the To-Morrow Club into the PEN Club in 1921. Using information gained through Heinemann, Dawson Scott recruited writers with greater stature than herself to attend the dinner. The PEN would provide a much-needed social space for writers, invitees were informed. “London has no centre where well-known writers of both sexes can meet socially, no place where distinguished visitors from abroad can hope to find them,” her introductory letter began. “As a dinner-club would supply this need, it is proposed to start one.”⁵⁸ Like Heinemann before her, Dawson Scott prohibited spouses or any other ill-qualified people from attending: while members could bring a guest, preferably also a writer, they were barred from bringing the same person (most likely a spouse) twice per year.⁵⁹ This measure aimed to revive Dawson Scott’s memory of the artistic and intellectual scene she had experienced in London at the turn of the century, at the end of the Victorian era.

Dawson Scott saw first the To-Morrow Club, and then PEN, as a vehicle to sustain and inspire young writers. Her idealistic vision clashed discordantly with the mood of many young writers after the war. We can conjure this discordance ourselves by remembering our now-dominant recollections of the 1920s. While political and economic conditions varied in the different countries that would house PEN branches—from the “roaring” American context, to a nation giddy with relief from wartime restrictions in Britain, to the political instability of Weimar

⁵⁸ C.A. Dawson Scott to John Galsworthy, September 1924, PEN Letters, John Galsworthy, Box 15, Series II: Recipient. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

⁵⁹ Marjorie Watts, *PEN: The Early Years, 1921-1926*, 13-14.

Germany—a similar cultural mood prevailed. Economic recovery stimulated various brands of hedonism. Jazz clubs proliferated across international metropolises. The artists most praised by avant garde tastemakers, from Greenwich Village to Bloomsbury, the Left Bank to Berlin, often juxtaposed the heady popular culture against an undercurrent of post-War melancholy and loss. "We were eighteen and had begun to love life and the world," German PEN member Erich Marie Remarque would write in his seminal 1929 novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, "and we had to shoot it to pieces.." Now, he wrote, "we are cut off from activity, from striving, from progress. We believe in such things no longer."⁶⁰ PEN formed to counter any such flirtations with nihilism. Dawson Scott's contemporaries gently mocked her middle-brow sensibilities, earnest tone and provincial worldview, all of which influenced the PEN ethos. But her very isolation from the worst trials of the War—generationally, geographically, and aesthetically—led her to imagine how civil society might revive afterwards.

Initial reactions to the PEN concept triggered outright skepticism in some. "My dear Sappho – it sounds alright," wrote the novelist, poet and suffragist May Sinclair: "But how is it going to work out?" Sinclair went on to lay out the challenge as she saw it:

Is Mrs. Wharton going to meet Mr. Wells and Mr. Conrad, the Editors of the Times and Quarterly? Or is Miss. Sadie P. Tucker of Powkeepsie going to meet the members of the To-Morrow Club? Because after all, you know, Mrs. Austin [the American nature-writer Mary Austin, who had recently

⁶⁰ Erich Maria Remarque. *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Trans. A.W. Wheelen, (New York: Ballentine Books, 1982 [1958]), 121.

toured London] succeeded in meeting most people she wanted to meet without any 'organisation', and I don't imagine Mrs. Wharton ever has much difficulty. The trouble is that your qualification is so very wide: the success of a club of this sort depends as much on the people you keep out as on those you let in.⁶¹

Sinclair here pinpointed the single most challenging issue the PEN Club faced during its founding decade: the question of inclusion versus exclusion, which pivoted on locating shared definitions of both social hierarchies and judgments of taste.

As Dawson Scott originally conceived of it, the PEN Club would exist simply to facilitate connections between writers in different countries. Cultural exchange as Sinclair here conceived of it, however, worked within an economy of prestige that functioned best if both sides shared a similar position in the literary hierarchy. Yet the type of people who carried the most prestige—the Mrs. Whartons—rarely, as Sinclair points out, had trouble meeting people of their own accord. Their names held sway not just with writers, but also outside, with a wider, non-literary public. Yet the people who would most benefit from the introductions facilitated by the PEN were precisely people who didn't wield this power: the Sadie P. Tuckers. Writers from Powkeepsie—a byword for the provincial, a category into which Dawson Scott herself arguably fell—stood to gain the most benefit from association with the PEN. As Francis King, President of English PEN in the 1980s wrote diplomatically, Dawson Scott had “no great influence and no large fortune... nor did she have international fame or indeed

⁶¹ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 14.

fame of any kind, except among other writers.”⁶² PEN would only work if it attracted enough of these “valuable” names and raised the barrier of entry for middling writers. The fluctuating reputation of PEN, both within individual nations and across time, to some degree tracks the extent it effectively balanced these competing claims.

Dawson Scott implicitly understood this dynamic. She immediately sought out “Named” writers to support her endeavor. In this she took her cue from her mentors, Walter Besant and William Heinemann. The Society of Authors, though propelled forward largely by the organizational zeal of William Besant, had recruited Lord Tennyson as its official figurehead. Dawson Scott knew she had to find a similarly grand figurehead. She contacted William Heinemann asking for help. Heinemann put her in touch with John Galsworthy, the author of *The Forsyte Saga* and one of the most prominent British novelists of his day.⁶³

Galsworthy received a letter from Dawson Scott in September 1921 asking him to attend the inaugural PEN supper, to be held in October in the Florence Restaurant. He received the same letter addressed to all invitees, which laid out Dawson Scott’s conception of the Club. “London has no centre where well-known writers of both sexes can meet socially, no place where distinguished visitors from abroad can hope to find them,” the letter began. “As a dinner-club would supply this need, it is proposed to start one.” She went on to lay out the club rules.

⁶² Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, ix.

⁶³ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, ix.

The qualifications for membership shall be either a book of verse published by a well-known London or American firm; or a play produced by a London or New York theatre; or the editorship, past or present, of a well-known paper or magazine; or a novel published by a well-known London or American firm.

Subscription 5/- yearly, which money shall be used for stationary, printing, and secretarial expenses. Each member to pay his own dinner-bill.

Dinner on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., at the Florence Restaurant...

Members shall be allowed to bring visitors, but those visitors shall be persons who have distinguished themselves in some way.⁶⁴

Galsworthy, having never heard of Dawson Scott, initially hesitated to accept the invitation. Only after receiving sufficient confirmation from friends that she was not an unknown quantity did he agree to attend. As is evident from this original invitation, Dawson Scott's Dinner Club was to be strictly transatlantic, specifically Anglo-American. Galsworthy's influence would propel the Club in a more international direction. "Anything that makes for international understanding and peace is to the good," he responded to Dawson Scott's invitation. "So I will come to your meeting."⁶⁵ Galsworthy and some sixty other writers attended, which also counted former wartime Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Lloyd George as a guest.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Letter, C.A. Dawson Scott to Walter Besant, October 1921, Society of Authors Archive, British Library.

⁶⁵ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 14.

⁶⁶ The first PEN dinner included Beverley Baxter, Victor Bridges, E. Coxon, C.S. Evans, William Lloyd George, Muriel Morgan Gibbon, Louis Golding, Austin Harrison, Violet Hunt, Edgar Jepson, Sheila Kaye-Smith, A.E. Mann, Edgar Middleton, Elinor Mordaunt, Hermon Ould, E.T. Raymond, Hylda Rhodes, Kathlyn Rhodes, Marion Ryan, Horace Shipp, May Sinclair, Stephen Southwold, Winifred Stephens, Murial Stuart, Netta Syret, Rebecca West, Kate Douglas Wiggin and Stanley Wrench. Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 15.



Figure 1: Dinner Club. The first PEN Club dinner held in the Florence Restaurant in October 1921. Dawson Scott, sitting at the table in the bottom right hand corner, stares directly into the camera. Galsworthy sits to her right.

PEN English Centre Archive, Box 55, uncataloged material, HRC.

At the dinner itself Galsworthy rose to give a toast. His short speech gives a sense both of why he agreed to serve as President—despite a well-publicized aversion to publicity—and of the intellectual direction he pushed the group. “Wewriters are in some sort trustees for human nature; if we are narrow and prejudiced we harm the human race. And the better we know each other... the

greater the chance of human happiness in a world not, as yet, too happy.”⁶⁷

Writers, in short, possessed unique talents that enabled them to function as links across cultures; because art stood above politics, writers could help nations transcend political strife. After he gave his speech, Dawson Scott rose and asked the group to join her in urging Galsworthy to become PEN's first President. Galsworthy accepted.

Dawson Scott and Galsworthy began to exchange letters sharing their respective visions for the future of the PEN Club. “The PEN is propaganda. The biggest that has yet been attempted,” wrote Dawson Scott to Galsworthy in affirmation of his vision: “It is an attempt to make art serve the community.”⁶⁸ Literature was to form a bridge between the arbiters of cultural capital and political power. PEN’s ultimate ambition was to leverage cultural authority to influence and thus elevate political leaders, they both agreed. “We’ll be a model to politicians,” as Dawson Scott scrawled to Galsworthy in an excited letter: “books for diplomats!”⁶⁹ PEN consolidated cultural authority, arguing true literature resembled nothing material, in order to influence political authorities.

After the founding dinner, Dawson Scott assumed the title of “Sappho, The Mother of the PEN”. The seeming incongruity of the juxtaposition of “mother” and “Sappho” provoked further whispered mirth among members. Many considered

⁶⁷ Marchutte Chute, *PEN American Center: A History of the First Fifty Years*, 6-7.

⁶⁸ C.A. Dawson Scott to John Galsworthy 6/10/1924. PEN Letters, John Galsworthy, Box 15, Series II: Recipient. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

⁶⁹ C.A. Dawson Scott to John Galsworthy 6/10/1924. PEN Letters, John Galsworthy, Box 15, Series II: Recipient. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

her role largely ceremonial, despite the fact that she and her daughter, Marjorie Watts, served as joint secretaries, fulfilling all PEN's administrative duties. Frequent references to Dawson Scott's title, and the degree to which she remained largely absent in press accounts of the group, highlights a discomfort contemporaries felt with Dawson Scott's identity being conflated with PEN as a whole. While some of this disquiet likely stemmed from her middlebrow reputation, given the frequency of references to how amusing the moniker Sappho was, gendered assumptions about leadership seem also to figure. Sappho, the author of novels about Cornish housewives, seemed an unlikely figurehead for literary circle.

In this sense, PEN departs from conclusions offered by historians of women's activities in both publishing and international organizations, fields in which women assumed leading roles. Dating back to the nineteenth century, writing had long provided many middle class women with a path into the public sphere. Writing and print provided one of the key routes through which women shared ideas, explored new social roles, and inched their way into a civil society that denied them suffrage. The vanguard of women's empowerment and feminist exchange often took place in print. Authorship provided a way for middle class women to pursue employment outside of the home, while intellectual and activist women exchanged political ideas through journals and magazines. "The creative arts" are often seen as "the 'core' of avant-garde activity," writes one historian. "Like the 'new woman', 'feminism' was closely bound up with its representation in

print – to be a feminist was very centrally a reading experience.”⁷⁰ Marginalized from more explicitly party political activities, literary culture provided women a means to access the public sphere. International movements, from the anti-slavery campaigns to International Women’s Congresses that discussed labor issues, had also provided women a means of influence that bypassed the nation-states that excluded them from the franchise.⁷¹ PEN, which has never had an women international President, forms a contrast to other literary and international organizations.

The fact that PEN members felt more comfortable with men at the leadership level suggests two conclusions. First, as will be demonstrated below in relation to literary hierarchies, by the 1920s creative writing had largely freed itself from the low-brow and feminine connotations it had born in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet this program was not yet complete by the 1920s. Male PEN members too were sometimes pilloried, in their case for excessive softness. The type of man involved with a group like PEN formed precisely Orwell’s target when he excoriated “the Nancy poets”—the fey and

⁷⁰ Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4. See also Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁷¹ Richard J. Evans, *The Feminists: Women’s Emancipation Movements in Europe, America, and Australasia, 1840-1920* (London: Croop & Helm, 1977); Catherine Foster, *Women For All Seasons: The Story of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Leila Rupp, “Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women’s Organizations, 1988-1945,” *AHR* 98 (April 1992), 13037; Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women’s Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

effeminate artistic men who refused to take a assertive political positions.⁷² Orwell scathingly described Galsworthy as “the perfect Dumb Friends Leaguer.”⁷³ Secondly, the privileging of male perspectives suggests PEN’s desire to speak above all to political and diplomatic powerbrokers. Writers, the fundamental premise of PEN maintained, existed to serve as ambassadors between the fields of culture and politics. While women had long performed such mediating roles in an informal sense, the process of professionalization encouraged the increasing rigidity of gender barriers.⁷⁴

The Press almost without exception attributed the PEN idea to Galsworthy. While he denied credit (“I am very sorry people keep attributing the PEN Idea to me instead of to your mother,” he wrote to Dawson Scott’s daughter Marjorie Watts in 1924⁷⁵), this factual slip betrayed the reality: it was Galsworthy who

⁷² Chapter Two of Orwell’s *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1958 [1937]) frequently invokes the term “the Nancy Poets.”

⁷³ George Orwell, “Glimpses and Reflections, by John Galsworthy: Review,” published in the *New Statesman and Nation*, 12 March 1938, anthologized in *George Orwell: An Age Like This, 1920-1940* (London: Harcourt, Brace, World, 1968), 308.

⁷⁴ This point becomes especially interesting when considered in relation to the histories of women’s movements and the development of feminist ideologies. As scholars of both of nineteenth and early twentieth century feminism and of literary history have argued, writing and print provided one of the key routes through which women shared ideas, explored new social roles, and inched their way into the public sphere. The vanguard of women’s empowerment and feminist exchange often took place in print. The most rapidly growing sectors of print culture by the end of the nineteenth century, the periodical and the novel, had become conflated with female readership, an association that pushed these forms to the bottom of hierarchies of taste and status. Authorship itself provided an important way for middle class women to pursue employment outside of the home, while intellectual and activist women exchanged political ideas through journals and magazines. “The creative arts” are often seen as “the ‘core’ of avant-garde activity.” “Like the ‘new woman’, ‘feminism’ was closely bound up with its representation in print – to be a feminist was very centrally a reading experience.” Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century*, 4. See also Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁷⁵ John Galsworthy to Marjorie Watts, 515/1924. PEN, Letters Recip, Galsworthy, 1921-1932. HRC.

pushed PEN to be something greater than a dinner club. He too hoped the Club would be a “model to politicians,” but where Dawson Scott’s ambitions remained largely national, Galsworthy aspired to international prominence. PEN as he envisioned it would function less as a private dinner circle and more as a forum for the revival of older conceptions of cultural civility. Galsworthy’s conception of cosmopolitanism—of his lifelong struggle to reconcile his love of England with his simultaneous desire for something larger—veins most clearly through his literary work.

The Island Pharisees

Galsworthy’s fullest articulation of his own struggle toward the cosmopolitan ideal can be found in the first novel to carry his name,⁷⁶ *The Island Pharisees*. Published in 1904, Galsworthy considered *The Island Pharisees* his most important work, more significant than plays like *The Silver Box*, which won him fame in his own time, or the novels of *The Forsyte Saga*, the BBC adaptations of which keep his name alive to this day.⁷⁷ *The Island Pharisees* unfolds from the perspective of Richard Shelton, a thirty-two year old Englishman of upper middle class wealth who attended Oxford and trained for the Bar, but decides not to practice law. Shelton instead chooses to travel the world. This narrative mirrors

⁷⁶ Galsworthy had published novels under the penname “John Sinjohn” before *The Island Pharisees*: *From The Four Winds* (1897), *Jocelyn* (1898), *Villa Rubein* (1900), and *A Man of Devon* (1901).

⁷⁷ Hermon Ould, *John Galsworthy* (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1934), 46.

the life stages Galsworthy had passed through when he sat down to write the novel at age thirty-four. Indeed, the story stemmed from his own intellectual coming-of-age abroad and disillusionment after returning home, he informed friends. The social types who walk through the novel were “drawn from life.”⁷⁸ Shelton, and one may infer Galsworthy, finds upon returning home that his experiences abroad have left him crippled with a painful awareness of the provinciality of his homeland. He struggles to reconcile his newfound worldliness with what now seems the embarrassingly provincialism of his social set.

The Island Pharisees tracks Shelton’s reentry into English society, offering a critique of his compatriots, the “Island Pharisees”, or self-righteous hypocrites, of the title. It moves through various scenes of privilege—the Oxbridge college, the dinner party, the gentlemen’s club, the country house—tracking Shelton’s growing discomfort with the conceits of upper middle class English life. Shelton’s insights are encouraged by his acquaintance with a Flemish man named Louis Ferrand whom he meets on the boat over the Channel. Ferrand represents both the typical European and the classic bohemian (social types themselves often conflated in Anglophone circles).⁷⁹ Imagining his world through Ferrand’s eyes renders the hypocrisy of Shelton’s circle both more stark and destabilizes Shelton himself, highlighting his own liminality. Shelton’s fiancé, Antonia, becomes a particular

⁷⁸ Ferrand was, Galsworthy wrote, “drawn very much from life,” being based on “a true vagabond” he met on the Champs Elysées. Ferrand has “seen and felt ten times as much as I” and “made a start in some fresh journey through the fields of thought.” quoted by Anthony Gardner, introduction to *The Island Pharisees*, (London: Capuchin Classics, 2010 [1904]), 8.

⁷⁹ For a discussion see Stephan Collini, *Absent Minds*, “Introduction” and “Part One: The Terms of the Question”.

focus of his anxiety. Antonia is soon to become an extension of his identity. Literally, through marriage, and figuratively, to the degree that she embodies the English mindset. The majority of the novel tracks Shelton's disillusionment with Antonia, and, by extension, with England itself.

Antonia, we are often shown, epitomizes the best and worst of English character. She appears at her best in the countryside, the personification of the English pastoral ideal. Shelton first realizes he loves Antonia as they climb a peak. "The colour was brilliant in her cheeks, her young bosom heaved, her eyes shone, and the flowing droop of her long, full sleeves gave to her poised figure the look of one who flies."⁸⁰ In one passage Antonia bounds up a mountain. "Shelton let her keep in front, watching her leap from stone to stone and throw back defiant glances when he pressed behind. She stood at the top, and he looked up at her. Over the world, gloriously spread below, she, like a statue, seemed to rule."⁸¹ Galsworthy adorns Antonia with elements of nature. He attributes to Antonia an integrity that transcends manufactured civilization. In one passage, Galsworthy sprinkles Antonia's face with raindrops, marveling "was ever anything so beautiful... She seemed to love the rain. It suited her—suited her ever so much better than the sunshine of the South. Yes, she was very English!"⁸² Antonia represents the pinnacle of Shelton's conception of beauty. She exists organically, in harmony with the nation. Antonia is the flower of England. But she wilts when

⁸⁰ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 34.

⁸¹ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 34.

⁸² Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 101.

uprooted.

Herein lies the kernel of Shelton's tension with Antonia. He loves her for her Englishness. But he begins to realize that to love her she must also transcend her Englishness. Shelton's particular *Bildung*, packaged here as a version of the archetypal European Grand Tour, encourages him to cultivate a cosmopolitan worldview that values culture (in the normative sense) according to the degree that it can be detached from material conditions. The cultural ideal presented here grows from national traditions while it simultaneously strives to transcend them.

The more critical Shelton becomes of his country, the more he begins to doubt his impending marriage. Shelton's critique of Antonia, and of England, pivots on her shallow conception of art and culture, her inability to commune with him at the depth he desires. Shelton longs for both a love match and intellectual connection in marriage. He feels hollow when his acquaintances congratulate him for the "soundness" of Antonia's social connections. In response he urges Antonia to engage with him on a deeper level than that sanctioned by her mother, or society. If she cannot demonstrate her passion for him, he urges her, then she should at least learn to express herself through appreciation of art and the cultivation of intelligent conversation.

Antonia, inevitably, fails to meet Shelton's expectations. Her failure underscores Shelton's problems with England. In a final attempt to shake Antonia and rouse her to express an original opinion, Shelton writes her a letter expressing his growing dissatisfaction with English values. "To secure our own property and

our own comfort,” he writes of bourgeois acquisitiveness, “something about... that is awfully repulsive.”⁸³ Antonia responds in frustration: “I had to play on that wretched piano after reading your letter; it made me unhappy.”⁸⁴ At moments of conflict in the narrative, Antonia frequently appears at the piano playing mechanically to relieve her stress. In the middle of one heated conversation she turns away from Shelton mid-sentence, carelessly tossing a book aside, to greet a friend. Her functional use of music and literature cuts to the heart of Shelton’s reservations. An instrumental approach to art signals an inability to transcend the self.

To Shelton’s dawning disgust, his compatriots all seem to share Antonia’s lack of sensitivity. After his return from Europe, the novel proceeds in a series of social tableaux, gross satires of bourgeois self-satisfaction. After viewing the latest West End sensation, Shelton leaves frustrated: “they had all the air of knowing everything, and really they knew nothing—nothing of Nature, Art, or the Emotions, nothing of the bonds that bind all men together.” “Men of letters” and the chic, narrow women who host their dinner parties exhaust Shelton with their “smart conversation”,⁸⁵ and he longs for “the element called Art... things that show [the] soul more fully than anything... in life.”⁸⁶ Galsworthy here seems to foreshadow T.S. Eliot’s critique of “the women who come and go, talking of

⁸³ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 46.

⁸⁴ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 47.

⁸⁵ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 105.

⁸⁶ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 245.

Michelangelo.”⁸⁷ Shelton begins to realize he needs to establish a new relationship with his native country, one that leaves Antonia aside.

Toward the end of the novel, tortured by the question of whether or not he should go through with his impending marriage to Antonia, Shelton calms himself by communing with the countryside. He escapes Antonia’s family home in the middle of the night, tramping across the damp fields from Oxford toward London “without knowing or caring where he went.” He pushes on to the point of exhaustion before finally entering a field, where he throws himself down “under the hedge” and into a deep sleep.⁸⁸ In his dream state Shelton reaches a conclusion: he must leave Antonia or leave England itself.

Shelton awakens calmed by clarity, propelled quietly forward with a new sense of purpose. His dream, he marvels, had “said things... more fully than anything [it] would have said in life.” Because “in its gross absurdity,” he reflected, the dream “had the element called Art.”⁸⁹ Shelton walks on to London, where the novel concludes. He will stay in his native country, he decides. He will abandon his struggle with the false ideal embodied by Antonia, and let her marry someone else. The future, we are left to infer, leads on to London, independence, and art. The wandering naïf turned scathing sophisticate has finally reached a compromise, a way of reconciling England with his experiences abroad. Shelton finally found his way home.

⁸⁷ T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock,” first published in 1915. B.C. Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1994).

⁸⁸ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 243.

⁸⁹ Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, 245.

Ladder to Legitimacy: Craft, Profession, Art

The PEN Club, in contrast to dinner parties overrun with chattering Pharisees, offered the Sheltons of the world a place to gather. If it spread internationally, it might even counter the narrow-mindedness that had triggered Shelton's questing abroad in the first place. The Club, moreover, provided members a way of expressing cosmopolitan values without even leaving home. During its founding decade Galsworthy made yearly pronouncements affirming PEN's dedication to "Literature as an Art", something "impersonal and universal" that "transcends national divisions."⁹⁰ These statements, iterations of an ideological program, had to be repeated so often because PEN, like Shelton, operated within a wider context disinclined to view literature in such elevated terms.

PEN was able to argue literature was an art partly because writing had been established a generation earlier as a profession. Writers unions proliferated during the nineteenth century. Britain's Society of Authors, which had been founded by Dawson Scott's acquaintance Walter Besant in 1883, modeled itself after France's Société des Gens de Lettres, which itself had been founded in 1838. Similar groups sprouted across Europe and America, marking the elevation of the writer from a Grub Street hack to a professional entitled to copyright and other

⁹⁰ John Galsworthy, "Promotional quote for attachment with mailings," PEN American Center Archives, I. Governance, Box 7/9, Princeton.

protections.⁹¹ These Societies formed part of the wider unionization impulse of the nineteenth century, rallying writers together to defend their craft against those who purchased and by implication controlled their labor, in this case publishers and editors. Through their lobbying efforts, indeed by their very existence, writers' unions asserted that writing was a respectable craft. Or, as many increasingly argued by the end of the nineteenth century, a legitimate profession.

Within months of its foundation, the English center debated about who should be granted access to PEN and who denied. In 1923 a reporter from the *Glasgow News* interviewed Dawson Scott about the question of membership. "To belong you must have 'arrived,'" the paper reported back to its readers.⁹² May Sinclair's advice had been heeded: in order to encourage Galsworthy-caliber writers and discourage the attendance of those from Powkeepsie, writers had to produce "quality, creative literary work." Yet this raised the question of how both quality and creative were defined. In theory, membership was only open to poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists who had published in "reputable" forums. In reality, however, this rule proved almost impossible to enforce, and membership was distributed along the lines of preexisting social and artistic networks. While those who wrote nonfiction and in academic genres frequently joined, those who wrote in creative forms, usually fiction or drama, occupied domestic and

⁹¹ For an overview of literature treating the professionalization of authorship, consult Patrick Leary and Andrew Nash, "Authorship", in *The Cambridge History of the Book*, Vol. VI, 1830-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 172-213.

⁹² "Publishers Barred", *Glasgow News*, 11 April 1923. In PEN Ephemera, Vertical Files, Folder 49, 1921-25, PEN Archive, HRC.

international leadership roles.

Many well-known writers refused PEN membership. Writers such as E.M. Forster averred without giving reason, leaving Galsworthy to surmise the cause of hesitation himself. "I've written to Forster, but I doubt if I shall shake him... he really wants to join the Bloomsbury boycott of the PEN."⁹³ The writers Galsworthy targeted engaged little with modernism or other avant-garde currents of the day. Given this tendency, the "Bloomsbury boycott" made sense. English PEN struggled from its inception to overcome perceptions that it catered to middle-class, middle-brow writers of mediocre merit: precisely the type of "Edwardians" who Virginia Woolf argued were being drowned out by the "axes" and "shattering glass" of a younger generation of "Georgians" like D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot.⁹⁴ Woolf made this pronouncement in her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown"—the same essay in which she coolly pronounced that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed."⁹⁵

While Galsworthy and others would likely have welcomed the modernists who scorned the Club, the PEN model rejected the modernist project, rather than the reverse. PEN existed to suggest not only that human character was immutable. In the 1920s it also aimed to link the post-War period with pre-War glory that. "The Great War brought the search for an appropriate language of loss to the centre of cultural and political life," historian Jay Winter has written. "In this

⁹³ Galsworthy to Ould, March 11 1931, Ould, Letters Recip. PEN English Center, HRC.

⁹⁴ "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Virginia Woolf (ed. Stuart N. Clarke), *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. Vol. 5, 1929-1932.

⁹⁵ Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," 320.

search, older motifs took on new meanings and new forms. Some derived from classical strophes. Others explicitly elaborated religious motifs, or explored romantic forms.”⁹⁶ The War stimulated a search for continuity as much as it did innovation, argues Winter in reaction to critics such as Paul Fussell who argued that World War I pushed writers to break with the past and seek a modern sensibility. “This vigorous mining of eighteenth and nineteenth century images and metaphors to accommodate expressions of mourning is one central reason why it is unacceptable to see the Great War as the moment when ‘modern memory’ replaced something else.”⁹⁷ PEN members did not wish to sever links to the past. They strove to remember the best of the pre-War world.

Galsworthy frequently toasted the PEN idea at dinners by recalling Romantic conceptions of the transcendent nature of literature and art. His toasts acted as rallying cries, as statements of action, efforts to reconcile pre-War traditions to post-War conditions. His toast at the inaugural dinner, cited in the Introduction of this dissertation—a statement clipped to PEN documents as a motto for decades to come— may therefore be read as a call to arms:

Any real work of art, individual and racial though it be in root and fibre, is impersonal and universal in its appeal. Art is one of the great natural links (perhaps the only great natural link) between the various breeds of men. Only writers can spread this creed; only writers can keep the door open for art... and it is their plain duty to do this service to mankind.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Winter. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 5

⁹⁷ Jay Winter. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5.

⁹⁸ Galsworthy quote stapled to PEN Newsletters during the 1960s. C0760, I. Governance, Box 5, Folder 4. PEN American Center Archives, Princeton University.

Galsworthy also provided the first draft of the PEN Charter, in 1922:

- The PEN stand for Literature in the sense of Art (not Journalism, nor Propaganda) and for the diffusion of Literature as art from country to country.
- The PEN stands for hospitable friendliness between writers, in their own countries, and with the writers of all other countries.
- The PEN stands for the principle that its members shall do and write nothing to promote war.
- The PEN stands for humane conduct.
- Such words as nationalist, internationalist, democratic, aristocratic, imperialistic, anti-imperialistic, bourgeois, revolutionary, or any other words with definite political significance should not be used in connection with the PEN; for the PEN. has nothing whatever to do with State or Party politics, and cannot be used to serve State or Party interests or conflicts.

Yet how was PEN to identify these great natural links, writers who represented “Literature in the sense of Art”? To administer the selection process Dawson Scott devised a small card containing four sections: “Nominee”, “Proposer”, “Seconder”, and an empty box to list the nominee’s credentials. Both the proposer and the seconder had to be members. The proposer had to present a sound case for the candidate, with citations of publications, before he or she was admitted. In practice, justifications for membership often proved a mere formality. The nomination for a man named J. Abbott, for example, stated simply, “His big book, dealing with India, *The Keys of Power*, has been v. well received everywhere. It’s an admirable book. He was for many years in Bolnchistan, being an official of the Indian Civil Service.”⁹⁹ The Executive Committee then reviewed these cards and voted on the admissions.

PEN membership ultimately traded on pre-existing connections. Being a

⁹⁹ J. Abbott application card, in P.E.N. English Centre Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

known quantity counted most in the eyes of the committee. The more famous a writer's works, the less likely they would suffer the condescension of having their oeuvre reduced to a two centimeter high box. W.H. Auden's card thus stood blank. The Executive Committee simply nominated him, and Cecil Day Lewis seconded.¹⁰⁰ Noël Coward's card stands similarly empty. Coward even lacked a seconder, nomination by the Executive Committee satisfying said committee of its own discernment.¹⁰¹ The process came to be considered so casual (the nomination card for Charles Walter Berry admits that he's not exactly a writer "but he's a man of the world and might prove an excellent Club Fellow"¹⁰² – Berry was accepted) that by 1923 the Executive took to stamping the each card with the following message: "Nominators must have read applicant's work."¹⁰³ Although PEN advertised its exclusively and rigor in screening, in reality it operated with a fluid membership policy that traded on social connections.

Galsworthy insisted, however, that one prescription, be enforced: while "men of the world" like Berry could slip in, men of commerce remained strictly prohibited. Publishers should remain barred at all costs. In a report on the Club,


¹⁰⁰ W.H. Auden application card, in P.E.N. English Centre Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

¹⁰¹ Noël Coward application card, in P.E.N. English Centre Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

¹⁰² Charles Walter Berry application card, in P.E.N. English Centre Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

¹⁰³ Observed on various application cards dated after 1927, in P.E.N. English Centre Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

PLEASE SIGN ON BACK



P. E. N.
Application for Membership of the London Centre

Name of Applicant Noel Coward


Address 17, Gerald Road, S.W.1.

Qualifications: (viz. Author of, Editor of, Translator of)

Proposer: Executive Committee
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N.)

Secunder: _____
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N.)

Nominators must be acquainted with the Applicant's work.



P. E. N. CLUB
Application for Membership

Name..... J. H. Castel

Address..... 120 High Holborn
W.C.1

Proposer.....
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N. Club)

Secunder.....
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N. Club)

Qualifications: Hebrew literary man
(born in Jerusalem)
Published short stories & articles
in: Haolam, of London.
Holover of New York.
Haaretz of Tel Aviv (Palestine)

Annual Subscription £1 6 0. due 1st October.
Entrance fee £1 1 0. due on election.

Nominators must have read the Applicant's work.
Applicants should fill in this form in accordance with the rules overleaf and return it as soon as possible to the General Secretary, P.E.N. Club, 107, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

P. E. N. CLUB
Application for Membership

Elected

Name: Miss Etta Close O.B.E.

Address: Empire House
Brompton Rd.
S.W.3

Proposer: Henry Basilein
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N. Club)

NOMINATORS MUST HAVE READ APPLICANT'S WORK

Secunder: [Signature]
(Must be signed by a member of the P.E.N. Club)

NOMINATORS MUST HAVE READ APPLICANT'S WORK

Qualifications:
Let me the above proposer, say that Miss Close has written what in my opinion is one of the best bits of African travel for many years. I can neither books of people I know myself if I can honestly advise them of this one. I read in front at a certain place & read for hours into the night! The book is called 'A Woman Alone in Kenya' (Constable).

Applicants should fill in this form in accordance with the rules overleaf and return it as soon as possible to the Secretary, Miss M. Scott, 125, Alexandra Rd., N.W.8.

Figure 2: Membership Applications.
J. M. Castel nominated himself, and was denied.
Miss Etta Close was nominated by a member, who, per the rules, provided a lengthy justification for her admittance. In contrast, a writer as well-known as Noel Coward required no introduction.
PEN English Center Archives, Application Files (A-K), Box 13, Folder 2, HRC.

one journalist felt so severely reprimanded for assuming the “P” in “PEN” stood for publishers that he titled his article “Publishers Barred.”¹⁰⁴ Only “men and women engaged in creative literary work” belonged to the group, the reporter clarified.¹⁰⁵ Yet, somewhat contradictorily, the British executive allowed editors to join. Dawson Scott herself tried unsuccessfully to counter Galsworthy’s views. “I proposed that membership should be extended to publishers,” she wrote to her daughter, “but those present were mostly agin. They could not realize that Editors are no more writers than Publishers.”¹⁰⁶ Relative proximity to the act of creation concerned PEN members less than the damning taint of the marketplace. Publishers, Galsworthy maintained, would force members to self-censor their conversations about Art.

As one journalist reported, however, it proved impossible to bar “these literary folk”, from “talking ‘shop’.” “Artists seldom speak of their pictures I have noticed, but novelists evidently take a great interest in the rate at which work is done, the prices paid by publishers, and other more or less technical matters. One well-known writer told me, for example, that five hundred words a day was the usual sum of his energies, while another spoke of thirty-five thousand a fortnight.”¹⁰⁷ Many members began their careers as journalists, and many

¹⁰⁴ “Publishers Barred”, *Glasgow News* 4/11/1923. PEN Ephemera, Vertical Files, Folder 49, 1921-25, HRC.

¹⁰⁵ “Publishers Barred”, *Glasgow News* 4/11/1923.

¹⁰⁶ Dawson Scott to Marjorie Watts, quoted in Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ “A Gathering of Literary People”, *Birmingham Post*, 1/12/1922. PEN Ephemera, Vertical Files, Folder 49, 1921-25, HRC.

continued to publish in the press after writing novels or plays, which perhaps accounts for this anxiety about origins.

Just as individuals demonstrated a concern to distance themselves from commercial or other low origins, the PEN project as a whole related itself to organizations lower on the cultural hierarchy. PEN contrasted itself to groups like the Society of Authors that provided unity for writers on the basis of their professional, not artistic, status. Like all unions, the Society of Authors' strength lay in numbers. Founder Walter Besant offered membership to anyone who had "at any time published work that may fairly entitle them to be described as authors, or those who have been or are at present engaged in journalistic work."¹⁰⁸ The Society pursued three aims: the consolidation and amendment of domestic copyright laws, the promotion of international copyright, and, most centrally, the maintenance, definition and defense of literary property. As book historians Patrick Leary and Andrew Nash note, "the idea that literary property needed to be defined was an illustration of how arbitrary contractual arrangements between authors and publishers had been in the past."¹⁰⁹ Well into the twentieth century, the Society's legal advice bureau remained its most consulted arm. Writers required advocacy and protection. Through its efforts, indeed by its very existence, the Society of Authors asserted that writing was a respectable craft—or, as it began to argue by the early twentieth century, a legitimate profession.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Leary and Nash, "Authorship," 205.

¹⁰⁹ Leary and Nash, "Authorship," 205.

¹¹⁰ Leary and Nash, "Authorship."

The Society of Authors and similar groups laid the groundwork for PEN. The two groups served different sections of the Republic of Letters. Writers concerned with contractual, financial, or legal questions could be referred to the Society, freeing PEN of the burden of acting on this front. The two groups openly discussed the delineation of their separate spheres, at one point even shared office space, and many PEN members carried cards for both groups.¹¹¹ The fact that the Society covered professional and lobbying functions left PEN free to devote itself to higher matters.

If a writer enjoyed enough success, he or she could progress from using the practical services of the Society to enjoying the loftier intellectual communion available through PEN. A less successful writer was more likely to use the Society's on-call legal advisor, while by the time a writer had achieved sufficient stature to gain access to PEN he or she likely no longer needed or desired such services. "The PEN Club is primarily a social club," wrote PEN Secretary Hermon Ould. "It does not aim at usurping the function of organizations, like the Society of Authors, which deal with the economic status of writers." His group, clarified Ould, aimed to "promote international understanding."¹¹² PEN gave successful writers a place to shelter from the dirt and clatter of Grub Street.

Yet an important distinction remains. While the Society of Authors organized around its assertion that writing was a profession, writing had not

¹¹¹ Various letters between Kilham Roberts or Thring of the Society of Authors to Ould of PEN, between 1927 and 1935. Society of Authors papers, British Library. The Society of Authors rented rooms to PEN in Bloomsbury until it found a permanent office of its own in the 1930s in Kensington.

¹¹² Hermon Ould, "P.E.N. Club Congress in Berlin: A Cordial Welcome", undated newspaper clipping. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

necessarily achieved this status. A profession may be defined as an area of endeavor to which access is carefully regulated through exams or other measures of an applicant's mastery of a set of skills. Admitted members define the boundaries of knowledge. These gatekeepers determine why and how new applicants should be granted admission. By this standard, it is impossible ever to declare with finality that creative writing is a Profession". The Society of Authors and its counterparts could do little to stop any person, no matter how ill-qualified, from taking up a pen—and, as long as vanity publishers existed, from sending this work out into the public sphere.

Yet the tenuousness of its claim to represent the profession of writing did not hinder the Society's functioning. It did the opposite. The more that publishers infringed on writers' copyright, and the more writers sold their works at undervalued cost, the more reason the Society had for circulating press releases celebrating and declaring its intention to protect the noble Profession of Writing. The Society of Authors existed to *claim* that writing was a profession.

PEN stood on the shoulders of such professional groups. Where writers' unions argued writing was a profession, PEN argued it was an art. "The Society of Authors, unlike the PEN," wrote E.M. Forster, "does not represent my particular tendencies. The two may cooperate on occasion, but their functions are quite different. The Society of Authors has to do with contracts, the PEN with culture. I know that one can't draw a hard and fast line, as [suggested by] our BBC definition by classes as cultivated, but I feel... clear [this] is its basic definition in each

case."¹¹³ Where writing had been considered a craft, unions came to elevate it to a profession. PEN entered at this stage to argue that writing was not just a profession, but that at its higher echelons, literary writing, it became an art.

Because a keen awareness of hierarchy and an ambition to elevate the status of literary writers so motivated PEN, disagreements about standards frequently rattled meetings. Marjorie Watts, Dawson Scott's daughter and not a writer herself, found these exchanges so amusing she took to recording them for posterity:

At one of the dinners I sat next to Dennis Bradley... and on his other side was Dr. Marie Stopes... I overheard this exchange: she said, 'I have read your book, and I can't think why you make people like Napoleon talk such nonsense; to which he replied, 'I read your book, and I can't think why you are a member of the PEN for you can't write English.' Both turned their backs on each other, but Dr. Stopes observed to the man on her other side - 'He's the tailor, you know.'¹¹⁴

Bradley was indeed a tailor, complete with a shop on New Bond Street. But by the early 1920s he had made a name for himself in the world of letters by arguing that both fashion and lively advertising copy could reinvigorate the public in the wake of the War. He wrote his own ads, garrulous narratives extolling the liberating potential of fabric, color, and design, which he placed in middle-to-highbrow periodicals such as the *Nation* and the *English Review*. "The war came, and a world of drab and mud. And for nearly five years, Art, Beauty, Joy and Life have been

¹¹³ Letter, E.M. Forster to Margaret Storm Jameson, 4/20/1941. E.M. Forster Papers, King's College, Cambridge.

¹¹⁴ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 34.

things of no account,” lamented one of his ads. But the post-War world stood on the verge of change. “Now, after years of this horrible world, this death in life, Youth has returned with a fierce loathing of ugliness, clamouring for color, for brightness, light and joy,” he proclaimed.¹¹⁵ Bradley gained a following for his copy, and used his reputation to style himself as an emerging writer. His prose style, trade background, and overall sensibility proved a jarring contrast to Stopes. A Ph.D. in paleobotany most famous as an advocate of family planning, the author in 1918 of the books *Married Love* and *Wise Parenthood*, Stopes reviled his aspirations. The two represent opposing poles between which PEN operated throughout its history.

PEN long remained absorbed with the tension between high and low forms of writing. The degree to which outsiders detected this preoccupation may be seen in a cartoon published in *Punch* in 1954. Though penned some thirty years after PEN’s founding, it illustrates dynamics at work within the group from its inception. The cartoon tracks “The Rake’s Progress” from worker, to hack scribbler, to celebrated author, to pretentious pseudo-intellectual and back to obscurity. A lowly worker, the “rake” toils away in a dark factory, old envelopes providing his only clean canvass amidst Dickensian squalor. He uses the envelopes to pour out his thoughts in native dialect. So lost in his reverie, we see the tip of his shoe jutting into the bottom of the frame. Like the dainty woman whose foot rises as she leans up into the kiss of her hero (and recalling the

¹¹⁵ “London’s Literary Tailor: H. Dennis Bradley Expresses his Philosophy of Clothes Through the Medium of Advertisement.” *Current Opinion*. Ed. Frank Crane, Edward Jewitt Wheeler. Vol. 66, 318.

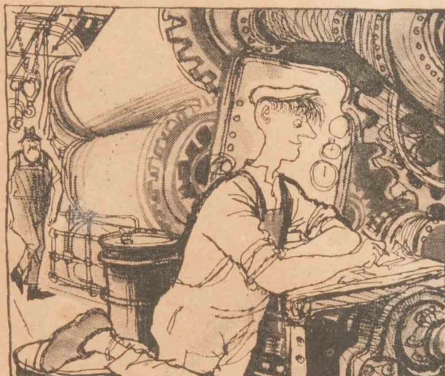
accusations leveled against effeminate “Nancy poets” by George Orwell and others), the Rake seems both charmingly and dangerously naive. Machines loom in the background, darkening the novelist’s reverie, their perspective points narrowing on the factory boss striding forward to disturb his creativity. The Rake’s profit-minded employer punishes his creativity, expelling him from the factory. Here begins his fall.

Liberated from industrial drudgery, the rake trades (literally) on his authenticity, selling his work to a publisher. Commercial and social success follow. He journeys from the North to London. Middlebrow readers mob him in Clapham at the grandfather of mass-market book traders, W.H. Smith, while a more refined crowd clap him on the back at a Foyle’s, the regular luncheon begun in 1930 to bring together writers and high society. The budding writer’s continued success brings him professional recognition, in the form of membership of the Authors Society and PEN. Yet even the one frame set outside in the fresh air is dominated by cathedral, another social pillar. This frame destabilizes the Rake, positioning him off-center. The frame featuring PEN marks the pivot point of the narrative, heralding the novelist’s downfall. John Lehmann, who helped his sister Rosamund Lehmann run English PEN during the 1950s, fails to recognize the budding writer. Lehmann’s appraising glare, compounded by his towering height, shocks the rake into recognition: commercial and social success haven’t necessarily been accompanied by intellectual or cultural credibility.

PUNCH, April 28 1954

The Rake's Progress : The Novelist

By RONALD SEARLE



1. **ADVENT** Son of a North Country tailor. Writes authentic novel in dialect on the backs of old envelopes between teabreaks. Sacked.



2. **TRIUMPH** Book published. Immediate success. Acclaimed. Fryes Literary Luncheon. Mobbed in W.H. Smith's, Clapham.



3. **GLORY** Second novel chosen as Book at Bedtime. Bats for Authors at National Book League Cricket match. Stage rights of 1st book bought for W.H. Freeman.



4. **TEMPTATION** Name unfamiliar to John Lehmann at PEN Club party. Tempted for the first time by desire to get into New Writing. Moves to Paris.



5. **DOWNFALL** Critical analysis of J.P. Sartre rejected by London Magazine and Encounter. Sales of third novel sink to 750 copies.*

* Including British Commonwealth.



6. **RUIN** Psychopathic treatment for schizophrenia. Emigrates to Australia. Reversed.

Figure 3: "The Rake's Progress: The Novelist", Ronald Searle, *Punch*, 4/28/1954. PEN English Centre Archives, Box 55 of uncatalogued material, HRC

The budding writer sets to work credentialing himself. He follows the well-worn path of pilgrims to Paris. He sits in the shadow of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and the other Americans who made the Café des Deux Magots famous in the 1920s. He consorts with beatnik harlequins and pushes out an analysis of Sartre. But his studied bohemianism fails to enliven the work itself, which powerful magazines run out of London and New York duly reject.

The rake's ruin culminates in exile. He returns to the provinces—this time to the cultural backwater of Australia. The one place so desperate for acknowledgement from the mother land, Australian women fete him with laurels. But the women who greet the rake in the antipodes will never be as powerful as the men of London (an aspect of cultural cringe the Australians would come to rail against: when the London Executive of PEN refused the Sydney branch's offer to host an International Congress in 1977 because "European members would not wish to travel that far", the Australians fired back with mock apologies for presuming to be "*worthy* of PEN."¹¹⁶). And so ends the narrative—leaving the reader to ponder whether the supposedly Sisyphean pit of industrial life might also, considering it helps cultivate dreams of artistic fulfillment as yet unsullied, represent a sort of artistic Eden.

Punch here references the original "Rake's Progress", a series of paintings completed by William Hogarth in 1732-3, which plays on the classic eighteenth century anxiety about the corrupting potential of newly ascendant commercial

¹¹⁶ Stephen Kelen, quoted in "Minutes of the International Executive Committee," 23-6/8/1976. PEN International Archives, HRC, uncatalogued material, Box 19, Folder 12, HRC.

and industrial values. In Hogarth's version, the Rake is the son of a newly rich merchant, who wastes the fruits of his father's frugality when he leaves the countryside and heads for London. Drinking, gambling, brothels and other temptations of the metropolis seduce him to expend his inheritance. He ends, penniless, friendless, soulless, institutionalized in Bedlam. *Punch* here toys with that narrative, combining both the classic Protestant rising narrative with the fear of its dark side. We are prodded to question not only the pretensions of the literary world but the folly of ambition itself.

The cartoon also suggests the degree to which literary capital remained inextricable from other forms of measurement. We cannot understand the rake without knowledge of his social background: his origins, the luminaries whose approval he sought, the publishers against whom he played ball, the women who slink in black through Paris, the antipodeans who provided succour in his downfall. Mechanisms of legitimation span nation and empire, and are inseparable from social, commercial, and political fields. Just as PEN serves as the rake's pivot into the game of literary prestige, so too did PEN serve in reality as a meeting point for the competition between different forms of power. PEN, like literature itself, staked its authority on access. Its leadership must not have been unaware of this dynamic, considering the fact that this cartoon hung framed on the wall of the International Executive in London for decades.

Perhaps because PEN existed to mediate both between levels of the cultural hierarchies and between the spheres of culture and politics, the potential for fragmentation concerned Galsworthy as early as 1927. Galsworthy insisted that,

practically, PEN not claim too much. "If the PEN idea," he said, speaking in the context of growing frustration at the apparent failure of the League of Nations and spreading disenchantment with internationalism in general, "is looked upon as a panacea for all evils, or even as a powerful preventative of international trouble, it is bound to disappoint and to furnish one more vanished illusion in a disillusioned world."¹¹⁷ If the PEN was to wield any practical power, it had to present itself as an ideal. Diplomats and politicians too felt drawn in by the ideal of "literature as art". By standing aside from politics to represent this ideal, PEN would gain worldly influence. It was no small coincidence that Ramsey MacDonald, newly ascendant as Prime Minister, heartily applauded a Galsworthy speech at an early PEN dinner.¹¹⁸ PEN insisted on the exclusivity of its membership requirements, modeled its forums after legislative bodies, and displayed its cultural civility at Congresses with a very real political aim: to speak to politics, not to readers. In this sense, Galsworthy bequeathed to PEN precisely the sort of instrumentalist view of culture he lamented that his countrymen shared in *The Island Pharisees*.

Conclusion

Founded by C.A. Dawson Scott and led by John Galsworthy, the PEN Club created a safe space within civil society for literary values after World War I.

¹¹⁷ Ould, *John Galsworthy*, 77.

¹¹⁸ Galsworthy to Miss. Dawson Scott, 4/17/1924. PEN Recip., Galsworthy, 1921-1932. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

Unlike unions like the Society of Authors, PEN's membership policies assured members of their artistic credibility. PEN provided a venue for a select coterie of respectable, middle-brow British writers to talk about the importance of literary values, and of writers themselves, to the wider world. The group gave form to its values through its membership policies and dinner meetings. The words of its leaders, from Dawson Scott to Galsworthy, most centrally shaped these shared practices. PEN members sought to maintain links to the pre-War world, exhibited a respect for normative cultural forms, and privileged realist modes of narrative story-telling. These relatively conservative values harmonized with a tendency to embrace traditional social roles in relation to sex to class.

The rhetorical separation of art from material realities that marked PEN's founding decade performed crucial ideological work, preparing the organization almost from its inception for later action in the very realms – politics and the market – to which it professed superiority. Writers, unlike career politicians, stood above warfare. If organized, the collective force of writers' voices would allow their cultural authority to soothe material tensions. The elevation of literature above politics helped PEN define for itself a field of expertise, an authority it could then use to intervene in the political sphere. The members of the wider world PEN aimed most to influence were politicians, diplomats and other "men of influence." No explicit evidence exists suggesting the group in fact did wield such influence during the first five years of its existence. Yet the declarations PEN issued celebrating the autonomy of art, asserting its centrality to civil society, and its effort to embody the relationship between these two realms

represented a step toward the realization of this mediating role.

Declarations celebrating both the autonomy and the real-world relevance of literature, however, revealed the tension built into the PEN idea. Writing could never “stand aside” from politics, because it also emanated from the material world. Any stark divide between historical memory of an apolitical 1920s versus an engaged 1930s must therefore be discarded.¹¹⁹ The fact that members and observers never remarked on this tension suggests that PEN borrowed from a discourse about art that had become so familiar it seemed unremarkable. As time went on and the group tried to give their ideals a distinct form, the contradictions PEN embodied would soon surface. PEN promoted the promise of communion. Communion between writers and the wider world, between art and politics, between writers of different nations—and thus, by inference, those nations themselves. It is to the last of these projects, to the development of PEN branches in other nations, that we now turn.

¹¹⁹ Various historians embrace the idea that the 1930s were uniquely politicized. This only works with reference to the clash between fascism, socialism and liberalism and other ideologies are studied, but collapses when other forms of political activity are considered—as Arthur Marwick also noted in relation to middle class associationalism in Britain. On America, see, for example, Michael Denning’s *The Cultural Front* (New York: Verso, 1996). For France, see Pascale Ory, *La Belle Illusion: Culture et Politique sous le Signe du Front Populaire, 1935-1938* (Paris: Plon, 1994). For Germany, the relative status of Weimar culture is still hotly contested. Many of these interpretations conform to the division between modernism and traditionalism which Jay Winter aims to overturn in his *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1995]).

CHAPTER TWO
PEN INTERNATIONAL
1927-1933

From its founding dinner onwards, PEN straddled three divisions. The line between art and politics, the division between the writer and the national community, and the boundaries separating different countries—all three shaped PEN’s unfolding practice. PEN came into existence to argue first that literature was a transcendent art. Second, that writers might act as translators between the realms of culture and politics. And finally, that writers might then serve as cultural ambassadors between nation-states. John Galsworthy felt particularly invested in PEN’s international dimension. While at the domestic level PEN became busy navigating the hierarchies of the literary world, as early as 1922 Galsworthy set about encouraging the development of PEN Centers in other countries. Factors similar to those at home in Britain propelled PEN’s growth abroad: pre-existing social networks interacted with hierarchies of taste. Yet these networks and hierarchies assumed slightly different forms from country to country. This chapter examines the ways PEN spread to other countries, analyzing the limitations of the 1920s iteration of the PEN concept.

Though British members would continue to speak of “The PEN Club” well into the 1950s, from 1924 onwards letterhead from London referred to “The International PEN.” Yet during the 1920s, “international” bore very specific, somewhat limited connotations. As we have seen, PEN cast itself as a model to politicians. It aspired to send writers as ambassadors from the realm of culture to

the court of politics. Yet as PEN spread overseas, its structure began to mirror the very institutions of the political culture it set out to critique—effectively proving culture’s inseparability from art.

The structure of the Republic of Letters soon came to resemble states and the newly-created League of Nations. By creating a “Superior Council” comprised of British, American, French and German writers and by hosting yearly Congresses that posed and debated resolutions, PEN took its cue from pre-existing legislative models. Such initiatives encouraged members’ and observers’ tendencies to proclaim PEN a tangible manifestation of the eighteenth century dream of a Republic of Letters.

While PEN seemed to some a veritable Republic, by the end of the 1920s the mechanisms that divided branches came increasingly to encourage fragmentation and multiplicity. Writers from relatively underrepresented languages argued that branches should form on the basis of language, regardless of State. Pushed first by Yiddish-speaking writers in Poland, then supported by writers in Switzerland and the Balkans, PEN branches from 1926 on began to organize around linguistic lines. The logic for this method of organization unfolded as follows. First, writers expressed themselves through language. Second, language dictated who could belong to an individual’s audience and therefore constituency. Finally, a writer’s community formed primarily around the dictates of culture and language—a conclusion that itself underscored the importance of an organic sense of community above political ties. The concept of the cultural or ethnic nation, as articulated over a century earlier by Romantics

such as Johann Gottfried Herder, began to figure in PEN's structural rationale. The PEN model unfolded organically (to borrow a romantic metaphor), taking root in different countries through an evolving set of negotiations at international Congresses.

When formulating their version of internationalism, members did not explicitly discuss philosophical premises or ideological influences. A connection with traditions stretching back to the pre-War period, however, had always guided members. This orientation to the past manifested itself in many forms. Sessions at Congresses were frequently given over to discussions of the greats, from Shakespeare to Goethe. Different centers displayed and compared their long-established literary canons, or used the excuse of a forthcoming PEN Congress to compiling such lists and create such canons. The ritual of the PEN Congresses itself borrowed practices from the nineteenth century spectacle of the Great Exhibition. Such examples underscore the debt the founding generation owed to its imagined predecessors.

The limitations of the founding PEN concept can be viewed in three examples. First, the means Galsworthy used to stimulate the opening of PEN branches abroad. PEN's growth followed the lines and limitations of his own social network and worldview. The reaction of the New York PEN branch against these restrictions demonstrates the limitations of Galsworthy's ideas. Second, an analysis of the ways writers from under-represented languages pushed the organization to divide along linguistic instead of state lines illustrates how the idea adapted to local conditions. Finally, an analysis of speeches Galsworthy made

at Congresses provides insight into what an “international” orientation meant during this period—a preference for normative cultural forms that we will experience ourselves by stepping briefly into the 1931 Dutch Congress. During the early 1920s, English PEN had struggled to balance an autonomous cultural idealism with a desire for worldly influence. By the late 1920s and early 30s, as the PEN model began to spread overseas, a similar struggle would play out on a world stage between the promise of national autonomy and a dream of international community.

PEN becomes international

PEN branches began largely through the personal initiative of John Galsworthy. From 1922-1930, Galsworthy sent letters to friends and contacts worldwide urging them to found centers. The branches that formed in the 1920s thus owe their composition and ideological character to the web of relationships within which Galsworthy operated.¹²⁰ He personally wrote to contacts in each of the nations PEN branches formed during the first decade, explicitly urging them to found centers (See Appendix IV for a list of PEN Centers and their foundation dates). Those writers included:

¹²⁰ See Appendix

England: Thomas Hardy W.H. Hudson	Austria: Arthur Schnitzler	Canada: Stephen Leacock
America: Edith Wharton	Russia: Maxim Gorky	Spain: Blasco Ibáñez Salvador de Madariaga
France: Anatole France Romain Rolland	Sweden: Selma Lagerlöf	Holland: Louis Couperus Herman Robbers W. van Kloos
Italy: Gabriele d'Annunzio	Norway: Knut Hamsun Johan Bojer	
Belgium: Matilde Serao	Denmark: Georg Brandes Martin Andersen Nexø	
Germany: Gerhardt Hauptmann Herman Sudermann Maurice Maeterlinck		

Galsworthy's list of invitees provides insight into his milieu. Most founding PEN members were middle-aged. Many shared his liberal humanism. "Liberal humanism" may be understood here as a concern with social justice and a faith that the health of civil society could be secured without recourse to political alignment. For Galsworthy's generation of Edwardians, this often involved critique of the injustices of industrial capitalism through involvement in reform lobbies, but only on an issue-by-issue basis. Galsworthy considered literature his primary vehicle for social and political criticism as early as 1910, when he staged his play *Justice* as a commentary on Britain's penal system.¹²¹ "John Galsworthy," as one critic has noted, "shared the faith of many Liberals... that English society

¹²¹ Mike Nellis, "John Galsworthy's *Justice*", *British Journal of Criminology*, 36:1, 1996, 65 provides a neat synopsis of Galsworthy's involvement in penal reform during the Edwardian era.

could be made more equitable and humane.”¹²² He refused, however, to join a political party, choosing to remain unaligned, in contrast to Fabian socialist contemporaries such as George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. Galsworthy also eschewed the Church, preferring to self-identify as a “humanist” in its most ecumenical sense. “The world has an incurable habit of going on, with a possible tendency towards improvement in human life,”¹²³ he wrote in measured tones in 1919, echoing the cautious optimism and faith in the resilience of civil society most often associated with exemplars of nineteenth century liberalism such as John Stuart Mill.

While all of the writers in the above list were acquaintances, not everyone accepted Galsworthy’s invitations. Some writers, like Edith Wharton, refused to join “owing to Romain Rolland having been invited.”¹²⁴ The reason for Wharton’s dislike of Rolland is unknown, though it most likely stemmed from personal animosity. A sheaf of letters addressed to younger and more experimental writers seem to have gone unanswered. A number of younger writers, notably F. Scott Fitzgerald and Robert Benchley, received invitations from London asking them if they would be interested starting PEN branches. Neither went on to become members of the New York branch, and Fitzgerald never attended a French branch meeting during his time in Paris. The motivations pushing the “Bloomsbury

¹²² James Gindin, *John Galsworthy’s Life and Art: An Alien Fortress*, (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987), 207.

¹²³ Quoted in Alec Fréchet, *John Galsworthy: A Reassessment*. Trans. Denis Mahaffey (London, Macmillan, 1982), 175.

¹²⁴ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 19.

boycott”, against which Galsworthy had so chafed in relation to E.W. Forster’s rejection, seem also to have figured at the international level.

Galsworthy nonetheless succeeded in his mission. By the end of 1922 PEN branches existed in Paris and New York. That year Dawson Scott suggested the English writers host a dinner party celebrating PEN’s triumph. Galsworthy suggested the London branch instead host a Congress. The Congress took place in London in 1923, and proved a success, with writers from around Europe and from America in attendance (see Figure 4. for the dinner’s seating chart). The New York branch held the second PEN Congress in 1924. The French hosted the third in 1925. The German branch offered to stage a gathering in Berlin in 1926. By the 1926 PEN Congress, writers arrived from the following cities: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Bucharest, Buenos Ayres, Christiania, Copenhagen, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan, Montreal, New York, San Francisco, Paris, Prague, Rome, Santiago (Chile), Stockholm, Toronto, Vienna, Warsaw.¹²⁵ The PEN Congress in Berlin, alongside Germany’s recent admission to the League of Nations, marked a gradual reacceptance of Germans back into the international community.

As PEN branches opened overseas, however, disagreements arose over PEN’s premises and structure. Galsworthy tried to influence new clubs while taking pains not to appear meddling. The English PEN Club, Galsworthy suggested, should allow national branches to interpret membership standards as they saw fit. “Let us *force* nothing on anybody, and we may succeed. We will *set*

¹²⁵ Marjorie Scott to Tring, Society of Authors. 5/10/1926. Society of Authors Archive, British Library.

an example... but there, I think, we must stop. Instructions should be given to everybody forming centres that discretion is in the hands of each individual centre to vary the rule of... membership [as] is it deemed absolutely necessary.”¹²⁶ The very notion of *laissez-faire*, however, built a contradiction into the institutional structure. From the 1924 Congress on, PEN began to define itself as an international federation, meaning that “membership of one centre is membership of all,” as Dawson Scott defined it.¹²⁷

While centers functioned autonomously within their national spheres, international Congresses highlighted and exacerbated differences. Tensions began to surface over the following years, as writers from different places debated the PEN concept and its practical application. The status of translators became an early source of contention. While the group eventually agreed to allow translators into PEN, the idea began to arise that the imperatives of language—and by association, autonomous “literatures” and “cultures”—should divide the Republic of Letters. The admission of translators had been discussed at German, Austrian, and French meetings from these Centers’ inception, but the topic first surfaced at an international meeting in 1926. A German member named Hans Jakob rose at the 1926 Berlin Congress to complain that he “resented the implication of inferiority which excluded translators, as such, from the PEN Club.”¹²⁸

Translators, he proposed, should be allowed admission. Others met Jakob’s

¹²⁶ Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 20.

¹²⁷ Dawson Scott, quoted in Watts, *PEN: The Early Years*, 34.

¹²⁸ “Proceedings, 1926 Congress”, Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

suggestion with protest. Too many translators lacked sufficient delicacy and literary skill, argued some. In their effort to make a work accessible across language divides translators too often simplified ideas, offered another opponent. Jakob countered that the very notion of translation embodied the PEN ideal. To appease both sides, the head of the German branch, Karl Federn, proposed a resolution “to make it incumbent upon all centres to exclude literary pirates, unauthorized translators, and similar gentry.”¹²⁹ Authorized translators, by contrast, could apply for membership. Writers were the aristocrats of the literary world, Federn implied: they should guard the boundaries of their realm. The delegates passed the resolution, with the proviso that centers ensure that translators, more than any other category of member, be vetted to ensure they met literary standards. Some French members became so frustrated by such debates, they informed the press when they hosted a Congress in 1937 that “PEN” stood for “Paix Entre Nous.”¹³⁰

Yet because literary writing encompassed a spectrum of forms and constantly changed as new technologies and media developed, it remained difficult to police its boundaries. As early as 1924 many English members had complained that the London Center itself lacked sufficient discernment on this front. The Spanish PEN Center proposed a resolution at the 1924 New York Congress asking the worldwide membership agree that “membership of the PEN

¹²⁹ “Proceedings, 1926 Congress”, Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

¹³⁰ Palavestra, *History of the Serbian PEN Center*, 7.

Club should be strictly limited to writers of *real* literary standing.” It recommended that “more serious control be exercised over their election.”¹³¹ The resolution passed. But the problem never disappeared. It would resurface as long as different interpretations of literary standards could be tendered—that is, infinitely. The more cultural and linguistic traditions PEN came to encompass, moreover, the more definitions of literary writing members might proffer.

As disagreements surfaced at international meetings, the group began to devise mechanisms to manage relationships between branches. The French suggested the formation of a “Superior Council” at the 1924 Congress. The Council was created to “deal with all future developments of the PEN in its wider aspects, and with questions concerning individual centers” . It enjoyed “the power to take any action which is in conformity of with the ideals of the PEN Club.”¹³² While the Superior Council would meet in London, the French, American and German branches were to granted permanent votes on the Council. A fourth seat would rotate between the smaller centers, specifically whichever center next planned to host a Congress. The influence of the League of Nations clearly loomed large.

The Council, however, barely functioned in reality. For the yearly meeting of 1930 the Berlin Center could not send delegates: “they cannot afford it, they say.”¹³³ The French center’s Benjamin Crémieux had to be “reminded” of the

¹³¹ “Report of the 1924 Congress,” Series III. Box 3, Folder 1” International PEN Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

¹³² “Report of the 1924 Congress” PEN International Archive, PEN Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 27 New York, May, 1924, HRC.

¹³³ Hermon Ould to John Galsworthy, 9/10/1930 PEN, Letters Recip, Galsworthy, 1921-1932. HRC.

meeting. The Americans simply forgot to come.¹³⁴ In the absence of a functioning governance structure, The English Club served as the International Executive. English PEN, however, had so little money it became difficult to cover the cost of mailing newsletters to their own membership. The money PEN did have went from 1927 on to pay the salary of a permanent secretary. Hermon Ould, a minor playwright and acolyte of Galsworthy, replaced the voluntary labor of Dawson Scott and her daughter Marjorie Watts in 1927. During the 1920s, PEN International existed only through the determination of its most active members: their desire to attend meetings, and the will of delegates to fund their own trips to Congresses. PEN also existed through its Charter, formalized at the 1927 Brussels Congress:

1. Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers, and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals.
2. In all circumstances, particularly in times of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.
3. Members of P.E.N. should at all times use what influence they have in favor of good understanding and mutual respect between nations

The English branch mailed copies of the Charter to writers around the world, and to the politicians and dignitaries it wished to influence. PEN's real power stemmed from the appeal of its concept. Yet the PEN concept translated in very different ways to across national contexts.

¹³⁴ "Report of the 1924 Congress" PEN International Archive, PEN Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 27 New York, May, 1924, HRC.

Dissemination and Dissent: the American Example

As PEN began to grow, conflict arose with the founding center over interpretations of the Club's principles. In the case of the United States, disagreement stemmed from British misunderstanding of both the cultural geography of the US, and the different values Americans assigned to forms of writing.

After Wharton declined his invitation, Galsworthy approached New York based writer Booth Tarkington to begin an American PEN branch. Galsworthy's contact with Tarkington is unsurprising. Tarkington's career in some senses paralleled Galsworthy's. Also born to a patrician family, Tarkington wrote novels about the American class system and its absurdities. His novel *The Magnificent Ambersons* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1919 (chiefly known today through Orson Welles's 1942 film adaptation, similar to Galsworthy's debt in posterity to adaptations of his *Forsyte Saga*). Galsworthy informed Tarkington specifically that an American PEN branch should be based in New York but still represent writers nation-wide.¹³⁵ Tarkington appears to have agreed—and then promptly seems to have forgotten about PEN, having made it only to one meeting. Tarkington's absence is perhaps unsurprising given the fact that he lived during this period in Kennebunkport, Maine.

An English PEN member visiting New York, Marion Ryan, wrote to Dawson

¹³⁵ Marion Ryan to Dawson Scott, 22/2/1922, HRC. PEN Recip., Dawson Scott. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

Scott after attending a New York PEN meeting to report that many Americans were complaining that Tarkington headed the Club only in name. She also learned that they wished to open PEN branches in other parts of the country, but that Galsworthy had discouraged them. "I must confess I was somewhat surprised to learn that Mr. Galsworthy had made so many suggestions as to New York being a National PEN Centre," she wrote in frustration to Dawson Scott. She noted that other members of the New York branch, such as Alexander Black, who headed the group in practice, "seemed to agree that America being so huge it would be a good idea to have centres in various cities where groups of writers are found. For example, California has a school [sic.] of writing of its own." However, she noted, Black had told her that "Mr. Galsworthy considered that New York should be *the* National Center."¹³⁶

A lack of understanding of the space and distance of the American continent clearly contributed to this misunderstanding. Galsworthy's insistence that "New York should be *the* National Centre" also points to a desire to impose onto the American situation the centralized model of the relationship between national culture and capital city that had developed in places like London and Paris. Yet as book historians have argued, the development of literary metropolises follows the material patterns of trade governed by the print and publishing industries. "We have...been misled by false analogies between our cities and London, which has always done ninety-nine per cent of literary publishing for the

¹³⁶ Marion Ryan to Dawson Scott, 22/2/1922, HRC. PEN Recip., Dawson Scott. PEN English Center Archives, HRC.

while of England and in which most English [writers] have actually lived," William Charvat has written.¹³⁷ American literary culture was forged during a period when rivers, and then canals, governed communication. Printers established presses in a number of urban centers, which shipped finished books back to the hinterlands along the same rivers that had delivered the logs to produce paper in the first place. "For our purposes," writes Charvat of the American case, a literary center "cannot be defined as a place where writers live." To do so tempted the lamentation that Americans simply lacked the literary culture of Europeans. Americans especially fell prey to this false conclusion:

Our conception of the literary center has been corrupted by a tendency, continuous from Joseph Dennie in the eighteenth century to Van Wyck Brooks in the twentieth century, to think of cultural centers in European terms which are not wholly applicable to American facts. Implicit in such thinking is the Greek conception of the metropolis – literally, the mother city, the place in which art and thought are generated, and from which cultural influence flows to the sterile provinces.¹³⁸

Centralization of the publishing industry had indeed occurred in a handful of centers, most notably New York, by the late nineteenth century. This development, however, had not erased a long tradition of regional distinctiveness in American letters. During the interwar years, New York did not function as a literary center to the degree that London did.

The second misunderstanding plagued the Anglo-American relationship. It

¹³⁷ William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850* (Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1993 [1959]), 21.

¹³⁸ Charvat, 20.

stemmed from a disagreement about the status of publishers. Publishers and journalists, who unlike creative writers *did* tend to concentrate in New York, proved much more willing and able to attend PEN meetings than writers scattered around the country. These individuals insisted that the “P” in PEN could stand also for publishers. The British executive complained that this represented a betrayal of the PEN ideal in favor of commercial impulses. The preponderance of publishers amongst the American ranks so vexed some English members, that the Americans asked Galsworthy and Dawson Scott to desist from offering further advice. Marion Ryan wrote to Dawson Scott in 1922 updating her on the dispute. “I would not show this letter to anyone but Mr. Galsworthy,” Ryan advised Dawson Scott. “It is better there should be no further discussion about the American PEN Club. Americans are all very youthful in their resentments and they don’t want any helping hands.”¹³⁹ While the disagreement had been superficially resolved for the time being, concern about PEN’s relationship to the marketplace would persist until well after the World War II.

For both geographical and cultural reasons, the New York PEN Center did not take root as firmly as did its European counterparts. Of writers based in New York, most of the Greenwich Village set eschewed PEN, writers of the Harlem Renaissance were ignored, and the rest, as Malcolm Cowley would later chronicle, had exiled themselves to Paris.¹⁴⁰ The most famous American to attend PEN

¹³⁹ Marion Ryan to Dawson Scott, 22/2/1922. PEN English Centre Archives, Letters Recip. Dawson Scott, HRC.

¹⁴⁰ Malcolm Cowley, *Exile’s Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (New York: Penguin, 1994 [1934]).

Congresses during this period was Sinclair Lewis. Yet Lewis avoided meetings, and only allowed the New York branch to fete him after he won the Nobel Prize in 1930. His wife, Dorothy Thompson, meanwhile, became one of the most active members of the New York branch. A successful journalist and radio broadcaster, Thompson reportedly inspired the creation of the character Katharine Hepburn played in the film *Woman of the Year*. Thompson may likely be credited for Lewis's attendance at the 1931 PEN Congress.

Lewis proved precisely the type of American writer that that 1920s PEN sought to represent. Although through his both life and work he would always remain associated with the Midwest, his career brought him frequently to New York. His works like *Babbitt* (1922) critiqued the consumer ethic, while novels like *Dodsworth* (1929) explored the cultural cringe he felt watching Americans tour Europe. His novels allowed him to straddle the line between the national and international PEN aimed to mediate. Lewis seemed an American version of the cosmopolitan dream—at least, to the Europeans who celebrated his Nobel Prize win.

During the interwar years, American PEN remained removed from both the center of PEN International and wider American culture. The American Center's relative marginality could not be blamed on lack of interest. From the 1925 on, Henry Seidel Canby, editor in New York of the *Saturday Review*, served as the American PEN President. PEN interested Canby above all because of its potential to liberalize international publishing conventions. As PEN grew, Canby used it as a

platform to gain support for an international translation scheme. He hoped to launch the scheme with the help of both the private and the public sectors, while PEN—backed by the support of American philanthropy—provided intellectual leadership. The ultimate failure of the scheme underscores the fragility of 1920s PEN’s organizational structure and the limitations of its internationalism.

Canby had first floated the idea of an international translations scheme at the 1925 Paris PEN Congress. He implored the assembled delegates to “give the question of translations particular attention.”¹⁴¹ He suggested that each Center “compile lists of books which ought to be translated into other languages and make a register of competent translators.”¹⁴² Canby’s plan took the form of an “international clearing house of literary information.” The clearing house would “simplify, clarify, speed and make more efficient to everyone concerned—author, publisher and public—the flow of literary expression across language frontiers.”¹⁴³ Writers from Switzerland and Norway seconded Canby’s motion. They pointed out that while their national publishing houses often translated the best of foreign literature, their own renowned writers far less often found expression in English, French, and German. The Congress approved Canby’s proposal. It established a subcommittee comprised of Canby, Galsworthy, Dawson Scott and Hermon Ould to oversee its development. In practice, Canby assumed

¹⁴¹ Minutes, PEN Congress Paris, 1925. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC..

¹⁴² Minutes, PEN Congress Paris, 1925. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC..

¹⁴³ Minutes, PEN Congress Paris, 1925. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC..

the work of approaching potential supporters on behalf of the scheme.

Canby first broached the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation for support. The committee agreed to provide space in the Palais Royal in Paris as headquarters for the proposed translation bureau.¹⁴⁴ By 1926, however, the Committee possessed insufficient funding from its parent organization, the foundering League of Nations, and could not even afford to maintain its own office in Geneva.¹⁴⁵ Canby next targeted publishers. Publishers, he suggested, should pay an annual fee for the use of the services of the clearing house. Six London publishers, fourteen German publishers, and two American publishers agreed to the scheme. By the spring of 1928, however, Canby had raised only \$6,500 from these houses. Galsworthy had set the Committee a fundraising goal of three thousand pounds.¹⁴⁶

Canby decided to seek philanthropic support for the scheme from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The CEIP had been established in 1910 by Andrew Carnegie, who believed along with other ardent internationalists that stronger laws and supranational organizations could “hasten the abolition of international war, the foulest blight on our civilization.”¹⁴⁷ By the interwar period,

¹⁴⁴ Canby, Report to the Executive Committee, June 1925, PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 7/3..

¹⁴⁵ René Girault, *L'Unesco Oubliée : la Société des Nations et la Coopération Intellectuelle, 1919-1946*, (Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999).

¹⁴⁶ Minutes, PEN Congress Paris, 1925. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC..

¹⁴⁷ Quote taken from the deed of Carnegie’s gift, in Edmund Jan Osmanczyk and Anthony Mango (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements*. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

the CEIP had made cultural institutions the focus of its grantmaking activities. The CEIP rebuilt destroyed towns such as Fargniers in France, which had sought to combine American and European ideals in one perfectly planned village.¹⁴⁸ The CEIP is perhaps best known for building libraries around the world—and for then deciding which books would line their shelves. Despite PEN’s seemingly natural fit with the CEIP’s agenda, however, Canby failed to secure the Endowment’s support. In his words, the international translation scheme “finally came to nothing” because it could not convince potential funders that “the P.E.N. Clubs as a whole... had sufficient central organization to guarantee the proper support and control.”¹⁴⁹ The New York PEN, in short, possessed insufficient influence with funders in its own city, just as PEN as a whole had not yet demonstrated its institutional soundness to an international audience.

¹⁴⁸ On the CEIP, see William Warner Bishop. *Carnegie Corporation and College Libraries, 1929-1938*. (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1938); Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963); and Megan Doherty, “A Symbol to the World”: the Carnegie Endowment’s post-World War I Reconstruction of Fargniers, France, unpublished Masters Thesis, Columbia University. On American philanthropy in Europe more generally, see Fehrenbach and Poiger (eds.) *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000); Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars: Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Daniel Rodgers. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*; Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideals: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and David S. Patterson, “Andrew Carnegie’s Quest for World Peace,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. Vol. 114, No. 5, (Oct. 20, 1970), 337.

¹⁴⁹ Minutes, PEN Congress Paris, 1925. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC..

Dissemination and Dissention: the Yiddish-Speaking Example and the Language Precedent

While the PEN concept translated with some difficulty to the American context, the wider question of language as an organizational rationale became a source of disagreement back in Europe. As early as 1924 the idea that PEN should be organized not by country but by literature—that is, by language and culture—was raised. When the Superior Council was created in Paris in 1924, members decided that the Council “shall be composed of one representative from each ‘literature’”. The President shall be elected annually and shall represent each ‘literature’ in turn.”¹⁵⁰ The fact that “literature” sat uneasily in quotations in the minutes suggests that model seemed somewhat unorthodox to the writers involved. Yet in 1924 circumstances did not compel the group to consider the implications of this discomfort. The writers from the four member Centers of the Council—Britain, America, France, and Germany—considered themselves representatives of *both* autonomous countries and literatures. Members could also defer discussion of the implications of “literature” as an organizing principle considering the Superior Council never worked in practice. While the details of specific membership policies fell under the purview of national centers (“let us *force* nothing on anybody,” as Galsworthy had decided) the overall formation of new Centers required some level of international agreement. Should branches

¹⁵⁰ “Decisions Take at the Congress”, International Gathering of the P.E.N. Club, Paris 1924, 5/21-23/1924, PEN International Archives. International Congresses, 1-11, HRC.

model themselves along the lines of preexisting nation-states? Or did language above all dictate a writer's allegiance?

These questions received their first serious consideration in Berlin in 1926. At the 1926 Congress, Hermon Ould, on behalf of the English Executive, raised the question of "whether a PEN Centre can be established to represent a literature which is not attached to a homogenous territory."¹⁵¹ Louis Piérard of the Centre Walloon—one of two Centers that had formed in Belgium—protested the resolution's vagueness, asserting that "clearly the tactful English...really meant Belgium."¹⁵² Piérard went on to argue that the Walloon and Flemish speakers continue to be allowed to hold separate meetings because they "met in perfect amity in the PEN Centre in Brussels."¹⁵³ Karl Federn of the German branch responded that the question could not be kept abstract for another reason: the German organizers of the 1926 Congress had received two telegrams from Warsaw "emphatically rejecting the suggestion that a Yiddish chapter of the Warsaw PEN should be formed."¹⁵⁴

Federn was right. The "tactful English" did not, in fact, allude here to the Belgian center. They referred to Jewish writers in Poland who wrote in Yiddish,

¹⁵¹ "Le Congrès des PEN Clubs à Bruxelles" PEN International Archive, PEN Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 29, Brussels, June, 1927.

¹⁵² "Rough Notes of the Berlin Congress", May 1926. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6.

¹⁵³ "Le Congrès des PEN Clubs à Bruxelles" PEN International Archive, PEN Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 29, Brussels, June, 1927.

¹⁵⁴ "Rough Notes of the Berlin Congress", May 1926. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6.

who were pushing to form a branch independent of Polish writers. From as early as 1923 writers living in Poland who published in Yiddish, led by Zalman Rejzin and Sholem Asch, had begun petitioning the International Executive in London expressing their desire to be known not as “Polish” writers but as “Yiddish-speaking” writers. They wished to join PEN as Yiddish-speakers, and to be allowed to form a Yiddish-speaking PEN branch, instead of meeting under the auspices of the Warsaw Club.

Galsworthy, Ould, and other members of the International Executive felt reluctant to allow Jewish writers a separate branch. Around the same time, the English branch received a letter from Galsworthy’s contact in South Africa, a novelist called Sarah Gertrude Millin. Galsworthy had written Millin urging her to found a PEN branch. But Millin deemed the prospect impractical owing to the “enormous distance” between the cities in South Africa and “the fewness of writers.” She suggested instead that South Africans simply join the London branch and access PEN through Britain.¹⁵⁵ The English membership committee balked at implications of this proposal in light of the Yiddish-speakers’ petitions. “There appears to be some fear in the back of people’s minds that if we once allowed writers not in England to become members of our Centre the door in England would be open to those Yiddishers who claim the right to a Centre although they have no territory of their own,” Ould wrote to Galsworthy. “I do not see that the cases are in any way parallel but I thought you ought to know what people were

¹⁵⁵ C.A. Dawson Scott to John Galsworthy, 11/1/1927, PEN English Center Archive, PEN Letters, John Galsworthy, Box 15, Series II: Recipient, HRC.

thinking.”¹⁵⁶ With this in mind, the International Executive rejected both suggestions. They urged South African writers to form their own branch and advised Yiddish writers to participate in the activities of the Warsaw center—unless they could prove that Yiddish really comprised a distinct literature.

The Jewish contingent accepted the English challenge. They first raised the matter at the 1926 Berlin Conference, asking that their case be tabled for discussion. Delegates voted to defer discussion on the grounds that the topic “was too serious to settle within so short a time.”¹⁵⁷ A committee, comprised of writers from England, Poland and Belgium (because Brussels planned to host the next Congress) formed instead to discuss the matter.

By the 1927 Congress, the Yiddish-speakers came prepared. At the 1927 Brussels Congress they distributed a booklet to all attendees on the Congress floor forcefully presenting their case. Written in French, German, and Hebrew—neglecting English and, curiously, Yiddish itself—the booklet outlined a brief history of Jewish literature. The narrative began in the seventeenth century, discussing the works of Joseph Pintou and Moische Chaim Luzatu, moving on to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with Schlomo Levinson, Aron Wolfzon Berel Broder and Welwel Zabarager, and ended with a celebration of the works of Mani Lejb and M.L. Halpern.¹⁵⁸ Borrowing from discourses of biological

¹⁵⁶ Hermon Ould to John Galsworthy, 1/6/1927, PEN Letters, John Galsworthy, Box 15, Series II: Recipient, HRC.

¹⁵⁷ “Rough Notes of the Berlin Congress”, May 1926. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, 1-6, HRC.

¹⁵⁸ “Memoire sur l’admission des ecrivains juifs a l’union internatonale des Club PEN”. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, Folder 19, Brussels, June 1927, HRC.

determinism that had informed some strains of nineteenth century nationalism, the booklet asserted that these writers shared “a specific physiognomy, a uniform character, and exhibit the peculiarities of Jewish life.”¹⁵⁹ Jewish writers, the document concluded, “already possess a fully-formed national literature.”¹⁶⁰ This ethno-cultural nation desired its own branch.

The solution the 1927 Congress settled upon aimed to conciliate both sides:

The Congress of PEN Clubs resolves that

- 1) there should only be one PEN branch per city;
- 2) there can be multiple PEN branches per country;
- 3) the multiple sections from a country must federate into a central committee at the national level.¹⁶¹

Yiddish writers countered that they too wished to base their activities out of Warsaw, the place they actually lived. The assembly devised yet another compromise. A PEN Center should soon form in Palestine, they recommended. A Yiddish branch would be allowed to operate temporarily in Warsaw on the condition that as soon as a PEN branch formed in the mid-East, the Yiddish branch realigned itself with the new Palestinian center. The Yiddish branch was a Jewish,

¹⁵⁹ “Minutes of the Brussels Congress, 21 June 1927”, Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International Pen Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

¹⁶⁰ “Memoire sur l’admission des écrivains juifs a l’union internationale des Club PEN”. Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International PEN Congresses, Folder 19, Brussels, June 1927.

¹⁶¹ “Minutes of the Brussels Congress, 21 June 1927”, Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International Pen Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

not a Polish, group.¹⁶²

These resolutions, with their contradicting and conflicting logic (on the one hand, only one branch was to be permitted per city, so long as branches united at the state level; but then multiple branches were allowed in one city so long as they formed branches of different cultural nations) had important implications. First, it established a precedent by which PEN spread in other places. Only one branch had existed at first in Yugoslavia, located in Belgrade, which aimed to speak for the whole of what was then the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Soon two new meetings established themselves, one in Zagreb and the other in Ljubljana. At first all three considered themselves different seats of the same Club, and rotated votes at Congresses. Eventually, however, “the national element prevailed and they became ‘Croatian PEN’ and ‘Slovenian PEN’ ” respectively.¹⁶³ Second, this represented one of the first times a body purporting to be international voted that Jews living in Europe constituted part of a larger Jewish “nation” whose logical homeland was not Europe but Palestine. The idea that PEN branches should be built around cultural nations instead of state lines had been firmly established.

To solidify further acceptance of this new model, the following Congress,

¹⁶² Deuxième Séance. “Minutes of the Brussels Congress, 21 June 1927”, Series III., Box 3, Folder 1: International Pen Congresses, 1-6. PEN Archive, HRC.

¹⁶³ See Palavestra, *History of the Serbian PEN*. The official name of the center in 1926 was "PEN Club Belgrade, later to become Yugoslav PEN Centre Belgrade. The other two Yugoslav PEN centres that were founded several months later in Ljubljana (1926) and Zagreb (1927) were also named after their seats: 'PEN Club Zagreb' and 'PEN Club Ljubljana' until the national element prevailed and they became 'Croatian PEN and 'Slovenian PEN.' After the Second World War, another national centre was opened in 1962: Macedonian PEN. The Belgrade PEN Centre did not change its name to the Serbian PEN Centre until 1985 in order to denote the equal footing of all Yugoslav national PEN centers and remove any doubt or confusion that the Belgrade centre, owing to the 'Yugoslav' in its name, was superior to the other centers in the country." Palavestra, 13.

held in Vienna in 1929, passed the following resolution:

The PEN Club Congress establishes as a principle that the division of the PEN Clubs in sections and the right of representation and voting at the Congress are based on the independence of a civilised language and literature...

Each literature recognised as such has the right of representation and of voting at the congress.¹⁶⁴

The complex practical implications of this model would not become apparent until after 1933, when Nazi persecution scattered German-speaking PEN members around the globe. For the time being, the resolution, with its references to “civilised” languages and literatures, underscored PEN’s debt to an interwar world absorbed with rescuing civility from the brink of barbarism.¹⁶⁵

PEN’s organizational aesthetic: Galsworthy’s rhetoric at PEN Congresses

At world Congresses during the 1920s, leaders of PEN tried to strike a balance between the imperatives of state and language. Members found it difficult to reach consensus on this question. The solutions devised, such as the Yiddish-speaking compromise, had a make-shift, ad hoc flavor. The difficulty the group experienced in trying to overcome these conflicts reflects the contradictions built

¹⁶⁴ 1929 Resolution. PEN International Archives. International Congresses, 1-11, Folder 2:9, HRC.

¹⁶⁵ See the end of Chapter Four for a discussion of the discourses of civilization.

into the PEN concept itself. PEN's simultaneous efforts to craft centers that respected both language-based cultures and geographically-bounded states mirrored the tension implied by the dualities of art/politics the group had aimed to straddle from in London. Members' attempts to balance these demands may be seen in two examples: Galsworthy's discourse of internationalism, and the Dutch Congress of 1931. Both instances suggest the limitations of PEN's early approach to internationalism.

John Galsworthy continued to serve as PEN President during this period. Through his speeches he aimed to provide guidance on these questions. He frequently rose to the podium to affirm PEN's commitment to internationalism. "For myself," Galsworthy said in 1931,

I will say at once that practically all my interest in our organization, now so wide-spread, has from the beginning lain in its international side... That the PEN should bring the writers of all the nations into closer and friendlier touch with each other, and through them help to bring the nations themselves into closer and friendlier touch, has been my hope. There are people who sneer at such aspiration, but happily I have noticed that they are people whose sneers one can positively enjoy.¹⁶⁶

Galsworthy's sensitivity about "sneers" reflected a growing weariness with both international organizations and liberal optimism by the early 1930s. The economic crisis of 1929 highlighted the instability of the world economic system. "Depression" and "slump" began to replace "roaring" and "dazzling" in newspaper copy. Unemployment lines and dole queues snaked through cities around the

¹⁶⁶ Galsworthy speech at PEN dinner, 10/10/1931. PEN English Centre Archives, PEN Recip., Galsworthy, 1921-1932, HRC.

world. For many, commitment had come to replace compromise as the catch word of both domestic and international associationalism, of both political and cultural life. The great Congresses for socialist writers that took place in Paris, Berlin, and New York would not be held until mid-decade, but both socialist and fascist formulations of the role of the writer were already being articulated. Such formulations required individuals to make an ideological commitment that transcended domestic concerns. Galsworthy's desire to "bring the writers of all the nations into closer and friendlier touch with each other", in contrast, underscored PEN's wish to reconcile the local distinctiveness with international community.

Galsworthy's understanding of nationhood shaped the PEN rationale as it internationalized. "I believe in my own country, I desire the best for it," he said to PEN members. Yet national pride needed to be tempered by awareness of others' equally valid rights to the same feelings. "Because of that belief and that desire," Galsworthy said, "I understand how others feel about their countries." As a collective, PEN members needed to respect and accommodate each others' patriotism:

If one is a child in a large family and wished to have for oneself all the nubby bits and warm corners, or even have more than one's fair share of them, one is commonly called and treated as, a pig, and rightly. I do not know why it should be otherwise in the family of Homo Sapiens, in which all modern nations are children.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Galsworthy speech at PEN dinner, 10/10/1931. PEN English Centre Archives, PEN Recip., Galsworthy, 1921-1932, HRC.

Galsworthy here uses cultural models to explore political ideas. A “nation” should be considered not a political entity, but a community. A nation as a cultural community marked its borders less by geography, more by a shared language, history, and practices. For writers, as PEN had affirmed through its policy on branch formation, the most central manifestation of common culture flowered through language. German Romantics such as Johann Herder had articulated a similar idea over a century earlier:

Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwell its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence; its whole heart and soul. ¹⁶⁸

Herder argued that knowledge of philology alone led to understanding of a nation. The assertion at the center of Galsworthy’s first toast at the Florence Restaurant in 1921, which affirmed that that “only writers” could bring peace to the world, echoes Herder’s concept. Yet while many nineteenth century advocates of cultural nationalism maintained that there existed a *Favoritvolk*, a chosen people, Galsworthy maintained that no hierarchy ordered nations.

When PEN grafted its model of national plurality to a practical context in which social, political, and literary relationships were still understood as hierarchical, sobering ramifications emerged. The implications of the concept of nations as “children” occupying separate but equal status in a united “family of Homo Sapiens” can be discerned in the ritual of the Congress itself. The flavor of

¹⁶⁸ Herder, quoted in Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press.), 165.

PEN's organizational culture—its aesthetic of internationalism—may be tasted by visiting a Congress itself. The 1931 Dutch Congress wonderfully illustrates the nature of PEN's interwar internationalism. By 1931, PEN seemed increasingly out of touch with a wider world experiencing devastating economic crises, shaken by loss of faith in the promise of international governance, divided by political polarization, and haunted by fears of yet another World War.

In the summer of 1931 writers from around the world converged on Holland. Trains, boats, and trams emptied the participants, including John Galsworthy of England, Paul Valéry of France, and Thomas Mann of Germany, onto the wide, tree-lined streets of The Hague on June 21st. Over two hundred writers came from forty-five separate PEN Centers, which together counted three thousand among their ranks. By day they discussed topics of “literary import” in the rooms of the Peace Palace, a towering neo-Renaissance red brick building conceived jointly by a Russian and an American diplomat after the 1899 Peace Conference and financed by the Scottish bobbin boy turned American industrialist Andrew Carnegie. By night they danced in the Royal Palace. To mark their final day in the Hague the writers woke to tea imported from the Far East, home to the last remaining Dutch colonies, before boating south to Rotterdam, sluicing across the Zuider Zee to view the ships responsible for importing the delicacies they enjoyed each night. They then moved *en masse* to Amsterdam, where Dutch art and culture were paraded with similar fanfare.

The understanding of Literature these Congresses evoked seemed fraught with internal contradictions. Stages decorated with what today would be read as a

satire of patriotic kitsch served as platforms for peons to world brotherhood. Self-conscious efforts to nod to PEN's worldwide presence took the form of food imported from fading empires. Members ate this food while listening to speeches that extolled Holland's modernity. "If this... is the occasion of your first visit to our country," warned the Dutch PEN center's guide to its 1931 Congress, "you will perhaps be disappointed to find that the majority of Holland's inhabitants are dressed in the same fashion as other European mortals and not as you see them depicted in travel advertisements."¹⁶⁹ Or so said the Dutch Center; after dinner a series of hired actors gave a fashion show displaying traditional garb. Congresses pulled the tensions between local distinctiveness and universal communion to their extremes.

Prime Minister Jhr. Ruys de Beerenbriuck officially opened the Congress Monday morning. A choir rounded off the opening ceremony. They sang the national anthem, "the fine, imposing 'Wilhelmus,'" in addition to "'Geusenliederen', those 'Beggar' songs which every Dutchman knows and loves, dating from the time of the eighty years war."¹⁷⁰ A reception at 10:30 that evening hosted by "her Majesty's Ministers in the Palace Hotel in Scheveningen" provided the second ceremonial bookend to the day. More Dutch-themed activities awaited members the following day. An outing to the Municipal Museum to see Rembrandt's *David and Saul* and Vermeer's *View of Delft* occupied the morning. An excursion via boat

¹⁶⁹ Programme booklet, Amsterdam Congress 1931. PEN archive, Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 33: International Congress of PEN Clubs, HRC.

¹⁷⁰ Programme booklet, Amsterdam Congress 1931. PEN archive, Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 33: International Congress of PEN Clubs, HRC.

to Rotterdam followed, “as becomes true Hollanders,” guests were assured, “who relish a day of sunshine and wind and jollity on the gray-blue sea.”¹⁷¹ If members had little interest in these activities, they were encouraged to break off to the side for informal conversation. “The most fruitful aspects of these Congresses stem more from the amity fostered by incidental conversation than the official sessions themselves.”¹⁷² Culture in a normative sense formed a backdrop as writers brokered their shared behaviors and practices.

While some writers studiously such the sociability of such Congresses (“I don’t ever find myself useful [at them]” wrote E.F. Forster),¹⁷³ most who did attend enjoyed the spectacles heartily. William Power of the Scottish branch enthused at the “magically varied components” of Dutch culture. “Holland, through her great East Indian possessions, is very closely in touch with the gorgeous East,”¹⁷⁴ he informed readers back home. He went on to evoke a vision of the East that would have made better-travelled writers cringe. “The Congress moved in a delightful atmosphere that seemed to blend the old popular and feudal tales of Western Europe with the most exotic passages of the Arabian Nights.”¹⁷⁵ One evening particularly inspired him. The Congress concluded with a dinner

¹⁷¹ Programme booklet, Amsterdam Congress 1931. PEN archive, Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 33: International Congress of PEN Clubs, HRC.

¹⁷² Programme booklet, Amsterdam Congress 1931. PEN archive, Vertical Files, Box 624, Folder 33: International Congress of PEN Clubs, HRC.

¹⁷³ Letter, E.M. Forster to Margaret Storm Jameson, 4/20/1941. E.M. Forster Papers, King’s College, Cambridge.

¹⁷⁴ William Power, “A Congress of Literature: PEN Conference at the Hague”. Newspaper article of unknown provenance, in Folder 34, Amsterdam June 1931.

¹⁷⁵ William Power, “A Congress of Literature: PEN Conference at the Hague”.

aboard a ship that motored writers “fairy-like” around the port of Rotterdam. There, in the middle of Holland’s industrial heartland, “barefooted Javanese waiters, with their native costumes and chocolate-coloured skins” served the writers dinner, conveying “the delicate odour of Oriental spices and perfumes.” Power was moved, and felt “as if we were really bound for Sumatra, Bali and Tidore.”¹⁷⁶ The “World Republic of Letters”, he announced, had finally come to fruition.

Power acknowledged that the 1931 ceremonies might seem excessive given the world economic slump. He offered a justification for the expense. Writers, he asserted, received such attentions *not* as individuals but as representatives of something larger. “[We] were representatives and trustees of all of humanity,” he maintained. “It was the universal feeling... the feeling that literature, as pure art, is the spirit of the human race.” Writers were “individual trustees for humanity,” their works “the literary and philosophical expression of essential religion.” He concluded his defense by quoting the Schiller’s “Ode to Freedom”, which was “constantly ringing in my mind,” during the Congress:

Deine Zauber bindet wieder
Was die Mōde streng geteilt:
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo Dein’ snafte Flügel weilt.¹⁷⁷

Schiller only wrote only half of this passage (Beethoven filled out the middle two

¹⁷⁶ William Power, “A Congress of Literature: PEN Conference at the Hague”.

¹⁷⁷ William Power, “A Congress of Literature: PEN Conference at the Hague”.

lines so the verses could be sung in tempo with his Symphony No. 9), but the verse typifies the Romantic temper of 1920s PEN. While custom (“Möde”) divides men, Joy (“Freude”), the Daughter of Elysium, uses the magic (“Zauber”) of her gentle wing (“sanfte Flügel”) to dissolve the artificial boundaries between men. In the end they transform into brothers, into fellows (“alle Menschen werden Brüder”). The rituals of literary culture bound individuals across cultural and national lines, allowing them also to celebrate their distinctiveness.

The 1931 Dutch PEN Congress marked the last time PEN would sound exuberant hymns to cultural brotherhood without rousing some degree of cautious self-consciousness. By 1931 members had arrived at a working consensus on the questions of membership, organization and function that had shaped its founding decade. The schism that the specter of ideological extremism would usher in by the late 1930s had yet to arrive. Amsterdam hosted the last Congress free from discussions of persecution, free from tormented analysis of what it might mean “really” to be “international”, one of the last times members would ride “fairy like” on boat eating food served by barefooted “Javanese” waiters. A year later the Zuiderzee, with the completion of the Afslutdijk dam, would itself be no more.

The PEN Congress ritual, with its echoes of the artistic and professional Conferences held adjunct to the Great Expositions of the nineteenth century, provided a tangible manifestation of the international artistic fellowship PEN claimed to embody. Outside these meetings PEN existed only as an idea, a concept held together by the network of individuals who pledged membership.

Internationalism expressed primarily through the rituals of cross-cultural civility informed the first incarnation of PEN International. Galsworthy believed this approach best ensured PEN's stability and longevity. It also provided the most tenable means of ensuring the relevance of literary writers in civil society. As Galsworthy confided in a private letter to Hermon Ould, "writers have no great, at least no direct influence, on world affairs. Such influences as they exert are vague and, as it were, subterranean; they do well not to pretend to possess political power they have not."¹⁷⁸ Only on this basis, he thought, should PEN consider itself a model to the world. The PEN, as he said in an early speech to members, "should be a sort of guardian to Literature and its cousins – Music, Painting and Sculpture – against chauvinistic national demons... [it] can educate the public opinion of the world to regard the achievements of art as supra-national, belonging to human nature as a whole."¹⁷⁹ PEN did not, of course, realize this lofty goal in the 1920s any better than the League of Nations or various pacifist groups. During the following decade, the march of fascism, the question of how to help exiles, and the degree to which PEN should align with governments to aid refugees would divide the membership yet again—leading PEN to the brink of dissolution.

¹⁷⁸ Ould, *John Galsworthy*, 77.

¹⁷⁹ Ould, *John Galsworthy*, 78.

Conclusion

From the mid-1920s to 1931, the PEN Club grew beyond its roots in London into a multi-national federation that spanned over thirty countries. At the domestic level PEN had posited a distinction between the realms of culture and politics. Once the PEN model expanded overseas, this tension between the ideal and the material mapped onto divisions between international aspirations and national realities. From the proclamations of its President to the practices members pursued at Congresses, PEN aspired to the type of ideological unity that had first guided the Enlightenment promise of a Republic of Letters.

In practice, members arrived at a set of compromises that affirmed national differences. In the United States, sheer geographical size led the Americans to challenge the model based around metropolises preferred by the British wished. American inclusion of publishers and reporters also challenged the strict division the London office hoped to maintain between literature and the market. Back in Europe, pressure from Yiddish-speaking writers pushed the group to accept language, and by association culture, as the mark of a writer's identity and communal allegiance. As PEN accommodated increasing levels of fragmentation, however, through the act of holding Congresses it displayed its version of universal culture.

PEN's international Congresses aimed to buttress an international community built around lines of communication that had again begun to falter. By the early 1930s, skepticism—and even, as Galsworthy noted, sarcasm—greeted all

such claims to the cosmopolitan. “Committed” was quickly becoming the byword of the period. Universalist formulations of the role of the writer aligned deliberately with political programs were coming to seem more relevant than the vision of a liberal humanism embodied by PEN. Many groups, not only PEN, would continue to try to chart a middle ground through the extremes of socialism and fascism.¹⁸⁰ In 1933, however, the duality of the PEN promise—the balancing of art and politics, national and international forms of community—would receive a forceful test.

¹⁸⁰ Marwick, 285.

CHAPTER THREE:
HITLER ÉMIGRÉS
1933-1939

Three events occurred in 1933 to change the character and mission of PEN. First, John Galsworthy died in January. Galsworthy left in his wake a bequest that secured the financial stability of PEN, and the suggestion that H.G. Wells replace him as International President. Wells's less patrician temperament and socialist politics reflected the more politically radical mood of the decade. Second, a major dispute at the annual Congress in Dubrovnik in May marked the beginning of a decade of fissures. Rumors that Nazis had infiltrated the German branch reached the Executive by April, and spread through the membership base by the time delegates met in Croatia that Spring. The German group agreed to travel to Serbia on the condition that "no mention of politics be made."¹⁸¹ Ernst Toller, by that stage exiled from both German PEN and Germany itself, attended the Congress as a guest of the Serbian hosts. Toller rose at the Congress to denounce the infiltrated German branch. This action led to the expulsion of German PEN from the Federation—though the Germans contingent would insist that they had voluntarily resigned before they could be expelled. Finally, by the end of 1933 German Writers-in-Exile had begun to meet in Paris, London, and New York. The debates that preoccupied PEN during its first decade about the relationship between language, nation, and state assumed new meanings as writers suffered persecution,

¹⁸¹ Minutes, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, 1933. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

alienation, and exile.

On the initiative of émigrés who established centers for Writers-in-Exile in foreign capitals such as London and New York, during the 1930s PEN affirmed the proposal broached by the Yiddish branch in 1927: that the relationship between writers and their nation should be defined not geographically but linguistically. Fascist persecution drove German-speaking writers to emigrate. Writers such as Herwarth Walden, newly arrived in London, and Lion Feuchtwanger, who emigrated to New York, argued that German-Exile PEN centers should exist separate from the local, English-speaking branches. Many Germans argued that they carried the “true” spirit of their home country with them, regardless of location. Nazism, on the other hand, represented a perversion of German culture. The political state (*Staatnation*) and the cultural nation (*Kulturnation*), members implicitly affirmed, were separable.

This conclusion complimented the founders’ insistence on the separation between culture and politics, but with an important distinction. During the 1930s, political persecution pushed members to speak out more assertively against infringement. PEN no longer existed just to model cultural civility to politicians. Writers needed to intervene, to rescue their audience from manipulations of their national ideals.

While Germans led the move within PEN to separate the political state and the cultural nation, no neat consensus on this question existed among German writers. This chapter begins by considering the events of 1933 that signaled PEN’s radicalization, from H.G. Wells’s election on to the Dubrovnik Congress. Yet 1933

represented only a brief moment of agreement in the face of Nazi aggression. From that point on, Germans began to take a variety of positions on the relationship between the political state and cultural nation, as well as between the writer and his or her audience.

After considering the events of 1933, we then move on to examine the divergent stances two Germans took on this question. On the one hand, the international press hailed Thomas Mann as an exemplar of the survival of the true German “spirit” outside the bounds of the corrupted German state. Mann, who lived abroad after 1933, first in Switzerland and eventually in America, would argue in contrast that his real audience remained “the German people,” those who lived within the borders of Germany itself. Erich Kästner, on the other hand, chose to remain within Germany. Kästner argued that political and national loyalty was intellectual or spiritual rather than material. His presence within the Reich did not signal his collaboration, he argued. Kästner became represented the move toward “innere Emigration,” or inner emigration. Advocates of inner emigration argued that some who chose to stay in Germany were able to dissociate intellectually from the Reich, subtly coding their writing to provide moral leadership to Germans at home. The chapter concludes by tracing the implications of this debate into the post-war period, using the contested status of Kästner’s novel *Fabian: The Story of a Moralist* as illustrative example.

A stark division between right and left, between socialism and fascism, characterizes most depictions of intellectual life of the 1930s to this day. “By the close of the 1920s, the European mood had changed from nihilism and apolitical

hedonism that followed the Great War to serious engagement with a politics of crisis generated by economic collapse and the social and cultural disintegration which accompanied it," write historians in a recent account of British and French intellectuals.¹⁸² "Ideological difference... was *the* defining characteristic of [the]1930s."¹⁸³ Such scholarship tends to take its cue from contemporaries of the period itself. As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1932, history was poised like a ball on the top of a pyramid, and "the slightest impact [could] cause it to roll down either to the left or to the right."¹⁸⁴ These declarations suggest that a writer's identity stemmed above all from the question of political commitment. As individuals, PEN members likely felt the ideological extremes of the decade as keenly as other writers. The group's liberal ethos, however, tended naturally to exclude the extreme right. Its membership, especially under the leadership of Wells and other socialists, displayed a more markedly leftist orientation during the decade. Yet the group's insistence on remaining "apolitical" also ensured it refrained from taking explicit positions. For PEN members, debate about of the proper relationship between a writer and his audience during moments of political crisis above all defined the group's decade.

¹⁸² Jennifer Birkett and Stan Smith (eds.), *Right/ Left/ Right: Revolving Commitments, France and Britain, 1979-1950*. "Introduction," (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 1.

¹⁸³ Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, , 13..

¹⁸⁴ Leon Trotsky, quoted in Birkett and Smith, "Introduction", 2.

Change in Leadership

In December of 1932, Marjorie Watts walked a few minutes down the road from her small cottage in Hampstead and up the sloped lawn of the stately manor owned by John and Ada Galsworthy. She had come to deliver the couple a Christmas card. The house-parlor maid, wife of the chauffeur, accepted Marjorie's card. When Marjorie asked if she might talk to the Galsworthys in person, the maid refused her entry. "I was surprised and shocked when tears came to [Minnie's] eyes," remembered Marjorie. "J.G. was ill, but no one seemed to know exactly what was the matter."¹⁸⁵ While PEN members, including Dawson Scott, remained ignorant of his condition, Galsworthy had been making provisions for his death. In November he had formed a trust fund for PEN, bequeathing the money from his 1932 Nobel Prize for Literature to the group. After his death on January 30th, 1933, £9,000 came under the purview of the PEN Executive.¹⁸⁶

Dawson Scott called an emergency meeting of the Executive on February 1st to plan PEN's transition.¹⁸⁷ "I will start straight on to business," she began. "In the first place we have to remember that the P.E.N. is now universal, with yearly conferences which take place wherever the P.E.N. folk—not of England, but of the

¹⁸⁵ Marjorie Watts, "1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37." Manuscript for a book on PEN. Box 19 of uncatalogued materials, labeled "English Centre Papers – Early PEN." HRC.

¹⁸⁶ Watts, "1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37."

¹⁸⁷ Watts, "1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37." The members of the Executive at the meeting included R. Ellis Roberts, Vernon Bartlett, H. Dennis Bradley, W.G. Hole, Violet Hunt, Henrietta Leslie, Beatrice Kean Seymour, W. Kean Seymour, Horace Shipp, Amabel Williams-Ellis, and Hermon Ould.

world—may choose.”¹⁸⁸ Despite the Club’s supposed universality, however, the English branch would be the sole recipient of the Galsworthy trust because “the brunt” of the international work fell “upon our shoulders.”¹⁸⁹ After taxes, the trust generated only £260 per year. The Executive voted to increase Secretary Hermon Ould’s salary from £150 to £250. The remainder would secure more convenient offices, the better to “invite and entertain great world figures, such as Gorki, Pirandello, Hauptmann, and so forth.”¹⁹⁰

The last topic addressed by the Executive on February 1st concerned Galsworthy’s successor. Galsworthy himself had suggested H.G. Wells before his death. The two had met occasionally over the previous decade under the auspices of the pacifist movement. Wells’s charisma and affinity for publicity would serve the group well, Galsworthy reasoned.¹⁹¹ While some thought Wells a curious candidate given his outspoken socialism during the previous decade, Dawson Scott clarified his current orientation. “Mr. Wells has the P.E.N. ideas,” as Dawson Scott asserted to the group.¹⁹² The rising specter of fascism was encouraging the formation of alliances between liberal progressives, Fabians, and the radical left. By 1933 Wells was at the forefront of developing such alliances. “He has, I understand, started a movement of his own,”¹⁹³ Dawson Scott announced to the

¹⁸⁸ Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

¹⁸⁹ C.A. Dawson Scott, quoted in Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

¹⁹⁰ C.A. Dawson Scott, quoted in Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

¹⁹¹ Marjorie Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

¹⁹² C.A. Dawson Scott, quoted in Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

¹⁹³ Marjorie Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.”

gathering.

She referred to the Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals, which Wells had formed alongside Bertrand Russell, Barbara Wootton, Vera Brittain, Cyril Burt, Aldous Huxley, Kingsley Martin, Harold Nicholson, Olaf Stapledon, Rebecca West, Leonard Woolf, and others.¹⁹⁴ Wells had been recruited to the Progressive Society after he published an article in May 1932 in the *New Statesman* calling for an alliance of “open conspirators to change the world.”¹⁹⁵ The Progressive Society argued that many groups professing “advanced” opinions resided in England, but that they “preach only to the converted: their literature is read only by their members, and not always by them; and they are politically and socially completely impotent.”¹⁹⁶ The Society, it declared in a letter to the *Guardian* in October of 1932, aimed to bring these small groups together to counter the “economic breakdown and international anarchy [that] threaten to destroy civilisation, which, if it persists, seems increasingly likely to pass into the control of those who regard the traditional ideals of democracy—freedom and equality and the right of citizens to live their lives without moral, religious, or political interference—with amused contempt.”¹⁹⁷ Progressives needed to act now, maintained the group, because “if democracy were to founder, the intellectuals

¹⁹⁴ Philip Coupland, "H.G. Wells's 'Liberal Fascism,'" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 35 (4), 2000, 541-558.

¹⁹⁵ Tribe, David. *100 Years of Freethought* (London: Elek., 1967), 50.

¹⁹⁶ "Organising the Intellectuals: Address by Mr. Joad," *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 September 1932, 7.

¹⁹⁷ "Organising the Intellectuals: Address by Mr. Joad," 7.

would be the first to go down in the wreckage.”¹⁹⁸ Given the Progressive Society’s orientation, Dawson Scott suggested, Wells “might be induced to see that it worked on the same lines as the P.E.N.” He might be tempted to use those connections to serve PEN, which could in turn offer him an international platform.¹⁹⁹

While Dawson Scott expressed confidence that Wells’s politics could be made to mesh with PEN’s, his pedigree and literary tastes might prove more of an obstacle. The English writer V.S. Pritchett, who would become English PEN President during the 1970s, noted that “Wells emerged... cheerfully from the little suburban shop in Bromley.”²⁰⁰ Pritchett depicted Wells as a character straight out of George Gissing’s 1891 novel *New Grub Street*, a less cynical version of that novel’s money-grubbing Jasper Milvain. Unlike Galsworthy, who was able to advocate for a commercially and politically untainted conception of literary art thanks partly to inherited wealth that afforded him complete independence, Wells had always lived off of his income as writer. While William Heinemann had paid him only £100 for the *Time Machine* in 1895, the novel announced his arrival internationally, and he later profited from film and other forms of adaptation.²⁰¹

Wells turned his commercial success into an aesthetic position. “I should think that it would be clear by this time that I am not primarily a ‘literary’ writer,”

¹⁹⁸ “Organising the Intellectuals: Address by Mr. Joad,” 7.

¹⁹⁹ Marjorie Watts, “1933. Death of John Galsworthy. Part 37.” HRC.

²⁰⁰ V.S. Pritchett, *London Perceived*, (London: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1990 [1962]), 180.

²⁰¹ John R. Hammond, *H. G. Wells's The Time Machine: A Reference Guide* (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004).

he snapped in response to criticism of his work.²⁰² These types of avowals, rather than his politics, made his candidacy surprising. Galsworthy, however, had met Wells through Joseph Conrad some twenty years earlier. He predicted that Wells might embrace PEN's highbrow aspirations if Wells himself were invited to represent it. Galsworthy was correct. Citing his long-standing personal acquaintanceship with Galsworthy as the key reason for his acceptance, Wells became PEN President in February 1933.²⁰³



Figure 5: H.G. Wells in India. Following the example of John Galsworthy, pushed writers in other countries to establish PEN Centers. Here Wells, left, meets with “unidentified Indian writers.”
PEN English Center, Early Materials, Box 55, HRC.

Under Wells's leadership, the Executive in London began to debate whether or not ideological polarization on the Continent warranted PEN's intervention. After the strong showing by the National Socialists in the election of 1932, which

²⁰² Robert Van Gelder. “H.G. Wells Discusses Himself and His Work: He Insists on Being Thought of as a Journalist, not a Literary Writer.” *New York Times*, October 27, 1940. The journalist seems to have misunderstood Wells, who never once through the article mentions himself in relation to journalism. He describes his work as functional, given to promoting an ideological agenda. “I seek, in fiction, to advance ideas.”

²⁰³ H.G. Wells, Presidential Speech, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, 1933. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

pushed President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler to the Chancellery, the German government began immediately to censor writers and artists.²⁰⁴ The infamous Burning of the Books on May 10, 1933 in response to the Nazi proclamation a month earlier condemning “Actions Against the Un-German Spirit” has become a symbolic turning point in the historiographies of both fascism and intellectual censorship.²⁰⁵ While the degree to which the Nazi regime directly organized the action remains contested,²⁰⁶ Goebbels himself presided over the Berlin burning in the middle of the Unter den Linden. Nazi infiltration of German PEN had begun a year earlier, soon after Hitler's rise to power. Government officials began attending German PEN meetings in 1932 and had expelled writers deemed too “radical.” Jews, socialists, liberals, and anyone unwilling to support the Reich were informed they were no longer members of the Club. Heinrich Mann, Ernst Toller, Carl von Ossietzky, Ludwig Renn, Erich Mühsam, Sigmund Freud, Alfred Kerr, Jakob Wassermann numbered the PEN members among the fifty-eight writers whose

²⁰⁴ “Literature and Cultural Policies in the Third Reich,” Chapter Three of Karl-Heinz Schops’s book *Literature and Film in the Third Reich* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004) provides a helpful overview of the period.

²⁰⁵ J.M. Ritchie, “The Nazi Bookburning”, *Modern Language Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (Jul., 1988), 627-643 provides an overview of this literature in English. See also Theodor Verwey, *Büchverbrennungen: Eine Vorlesung aus Anlaß des 65. Jahrestages der ‘Aktion wider den undeutsche Geist’* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000); Dietrich Strothmann, *Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik. Ein Beitrag zur Publizistik im Dritten Reich* (Bonn, 1968); Andreas Kettel, *Volksbibliothekare und Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1981).

²⁰⁶ H. Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1963) provided the first academic support of the connection between the burnings and the regime. This conclusion was subsequently challenged by Hans-Wolfgang Strätz and Dietrich Aigner: Strätz, “Die Studentische Aktion Wider den Undeutschen Geist im Frühjahr 1933,” *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte*, 16, no. 4, (1968), 346-72; Dietrich Aigner, *Die Indizierung "Schadlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums In Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt: Buchhandler-Vereinigung GMBH, 1971).

works were burned on Unter den Linden.²⁰⁷ Scores of other writers were evicted from the Club.

The former heads of the German branch began to write London asking for help. “During the outbreak of barbarity in Germany, the so-called National Revolution, I happened to be in Moscow,” wrote Herwarth Walden to Hermon Ould in April 1933. Others “are already being put up in concentration camps,” he noted ironically—a form of accommodation he planned to decline by staying abroad.²⁰⁸ Frustrated that he no longer was “in connection” with “our German friends,” he requested Ould’s help in acting as fulcrum of communication for estranged German members.²⁰⁹ In another letter he clarified: it was members “von literarischer Bedeutung”, those with real literary sensibilities, who were above all suffering at the hands of the Nazis.²¹⁰ Ould responded cautiously. Concerned not to commit PEN to any explicit form of party political action, he wrote the head of the German branch, Alfred Kerr, for clarification of the extent of Nazi censorship. “In answer to your question about how non-Nazi intellectuals are being treated, I can offer myself as an example:... I’m not allowed by the authorities to publish anything in any German newspapers or magazine.” His experience was universal, he concluded.

²⁰⁷ Members of German PEN whose work had been burned included Oskar Maria Graf, Alexander Moritz Frey, Hermynia Zur Mühlen, David Josef Bach, Fritz Brügel, Rudolf Brunngraber, Theodor Kramer and Josef Luitpold. See Roman Roček, *Glanz und Elend des P.E.N.*, 124.

²⁰⁸ “Während des Ausbruchs der Barbarei in Deutschland, der sogenannte Nationalen Revolution, befand ich mich in Moskau”; “soweit sie nicht bereits in Konzentrationslagern untergebracht sind.” Letter, Herwarth Walden to Hermon Ould, 16 April 1933. HRC 2.

²⁰⁹ “In Verbindung mit unsere Deutsche Freunde.” Letter, Herwarth Walden to Hermon Ould, 4/16/1933. Letters Recip. German Group, PEN Archive, HRC.

²¹⁰ “Von literarischer Bedeutung.” Letter, Herwarth Walden to Hermon Ould, 8/14/1933, Letters Recip. German Group, PEN Archive, HRC.

“Mein Fall ist nicht nur mein Fall”, he offered grimly: “my case is not only my case.”²¹¹

As reports of German unrest reached the International Executive in London, some members began to demand action. Back in 1932, when Galsworthy was still alive and reports about infiltration had first reached London, the English decided not to act. Ould had advised the Executive that both he and Galsworthy thought it unwise to intervene in the affairs of the German branch. In early 1933 Wells affirmed this noninterventionist line. He suggested instead that members write directly to the German government if they wished to protest.

One member of the Executive, a novelist and literary critic named Storm Jameson, expressed frustration with this approach as the flood of German émigrés increased over the following year. She agreed to write her own personal letter to Goebbels in 1934, but made it well-known that she felt this a weak form of intervention compared to the influence a collective effort might wield. “I enclose herewith my Goebbels letter,” she wrote to Ould. “But I feel it should not be sent unless a really worthwhile number of good writers send letters at the same time.”²¹² She recommended that Ould bypass Wells and “send out to the right people an appeal for letters.”²¹³ It mattered little that this would serve to

²¹¹“Aus Ihre Frage, wie die Intellektuellen, die nicht nationalsozialistisch sind, in Deutschland behandelt werden, kann ich mich als Beispiel anführen:... Es ist mir von der Behörde verboten in irgend einer deutschen Zeitung oder Zeitschrift irgend einen Beitrag zu veröffentlichen.” His experience was universal, he concluded. “Mein Fall ist nicht nur mein Fall.” Letter, Alfred Kerr to Hermon Ould, 3/5/33. Letters Recip. German Group, PEN Archive, HRC.

²¹² Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 6.2.34. HRC. Jameson PEN Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

²¹³ Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 6.2.34. HRC. Jameson PEN Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

undermine Wells, she confided, revealing also the degree to which PEN's paid administrators have always performed roles equally as pivotal as Presidents. "To everyone, you are the PEN. More than Wells is. They would listen to you."²¹⁴

Jameson would consistently advocate intervention as the decade progressed, while Wells maintained the necessity of caution.

Yet the May book-burnings pushed Ould to write frankly to the German PEN Center, headed now by National Socialist functionary Hans Martin Elster. "There was no indication in this... letter that the persons elected were in any way connected with the P.E.N.," Ould wrote Elster. Moreover,

It would be disingenuous to pretend that the international Federation of the P.E.N. will accept this new German Centre without question. I act without official instructions but think it me (!) duty to inform you that the question of the constitution of the German Centre is bound to be raised very early in the course of the business of the Congress in Jugoslavia, and the German delegates will certainly be asked whether they accept the chief principles of the P.E.N., viz: that it is aside from politics; that it believes in the free interchange of literature; that the only qualification for membership is distinction in literature, irrespective of nationality, race or creed. Also, the German delegates will be asked to explain why distinguished writers like Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Fritz von Unruh, Döblin, Arnold and Stefan Zweig, Else Lasker-Schüler, Albert Ehrenstein, Jakob Wassermann, Remarque and many others are not admitted to membership of German P.E.N., and why your President, Alfred Kerr, should have been asked to resign.²¹⁵

While Ould wrote this frank letter to the German group, Wells sought to appease them. Members around the world, particularly in New York and France, questioned whether the Germans should even be allowed to attend the upcoming

²¹⁴ Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 6.2.34. HRC. Jameson PEN Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

²¹⁵ Hermon Ould to Hans Martin Esler, 9 May 1933, PEN Papers, Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt..

1933 Congress. After receiving Ould's letter, Elster, on behalf of the "cleansed" German branch, threatened to boycott the Congress. The agenda, asserted the official German delegation, should remain free from politics. Wells, anxious that PEN be considered an exemplar of cooperation amid the escalating European crisis, promised the Germans that no discussion of the recent changes in the Berlin branch would take place. Elster, along with Fritz Otto Busch and Edgar von Schmidt-Pauli, also members of the National Socialist Party, agreed to attend the Dubrovnik Congress. Wells, in turn—whose words were grudgingly conveyed through Ould, a German speaker—promised to keep politics off the Congress floor.

Wells opened the Dubrovnik Congress with an attempt to articulate a neutral middle way. In his Presidential speech, he acknowledged that an ideological chasm was opening up. He aimed to appease both the official German delegation, with their demands for ideological neutrality, and members of his own branch like Jameson who believed PEN needed to speak out against the Nazis. The choice facing writers pivoted less on the pole of left vs. right, Wells announced before the Congress. The task facing writers really stemmed from their loyalty to the ideal of art itself. Defense of this ideal was so important it *might* justify political involvement, he intimated—though he ended his speech by urging deliberation and caution on this front. "The original idea of the P.E.N. Club," Wells began his speech opening the 1933 Congress,

was essentially a conception of friendliness between men of different nationality, based on a profound faith in the common sense of mankind.

The idea of dining and gathering and entertaining each other [and] talking things over was a very Anglo-Saxon idea... it was a good old Liberal

idea... But now all sorts of novel conditions [have] arisen to alter that, and it seems that the time has come for the P.E.N. Club to revise very carefully what it is and what it stands for.

For centuries we have been talking of the 'Republic of the human mind'—a world republic of letters and science and of creative effort... [This is] something that is only just coming into existence. Are we of the P.E.N. Clubs trying merely to sustain something or are we trying to evoke something? I suggest to you that we are trying to evoke something, a mental community throughout the earth...

The world is now in labor with two main ideas that press upon it. First, is the appreciation of the need for unification... of a world commonwealth. The second is a realization of the old need for discipline... These two ideas seem to be in conflict, [but] the real issue is not between discipline and liberty, but about the objective toward which our discipline ought to be directed.

It has been the profession of the P.E.N. Club to keep out of politics, but can it keep out of politics when things are in this state?... the time has come for our federation of societies to choose definitely between making the world commonwealth the guiding conception of its organization or relapsing into a mere meeting-ground for the mutual compliments of narrow and repressive cults. Which line are we to take?

I think a decision on that alternative is forced upon us now. I believe we must make that decision within a year... Then we shall know where we stand, whether we stand for reaction or whether we stand for the world commonwealth.²¹⁶

Wells uses the term "discipline" here in much the way "commitment" or "engagement" was used by the Left. Discipline signals adherence to an ideological program, be it left or right. Following Galsworthy's cue, Wells positions discipline in contrast to liberty. Liberty is associated with the "good old Liberal idea" of a Millsian public sphere in which a variety of political positions can be voiced, their merits weighed by the collective. In this sense, Wells implies, "liberty" and "discipline" might actually coexist. Wells suggested here a rather radical revision of PEN's practice. Instead of barring discussion of politics, as Galsworthy had insisted,

²¹⁶ H.G. Wells, Presidential Speech, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, 1933. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

PEN should embrace “that alternative”: it should invite articulation of myriad political positions. If all believed in the ideal of literary art, Wells suggested, the material realities of liberalism, socialism, and fascism could co-exist. Yet the group will only withstand political polarization, he insisted, if they shared a common cultural ideal. PEN might be able to accommodate a variety of political positions if all agreed on the importance of one ultimate goal: the maintenance of the community itself, evoked here using the now-familiar reference to the Republic of Letters. This, not fascism or socialism, was the choice facing writers: did they, or did they not, wish to be members of the international cultural community?

The structure of Wells’s speech suggests the degree to which this choice remained ideologically charged. Wells’s compromise represented a distinct position itself. He begins and ends the speech with descriptions of the harmony of the imagined republic, suggesting “faith” in this concept grew from “common sense.” Moreover, his choice of “earth” over “world” or “society” (“We are trying to evoke something, a mental community throughout the earth”) emphasized rootedness, permanence, and an organic inevitability. His nudging of the delegation to embrace “the world commonwealth” came with a cautious, classically liberal advisory. “At this conference we shall open our minds to all...alternatives,” he declared. Still he advised caution, concluding that “I hope we shall not attempt to make it at once.”²¹⁷ While Wells presents it here as an ideologically neutral universalism, the iteration of the World Republic of Letters he offers is itself

²¹⁷ H.G. Wells, Presidential Speech, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, PEN Congress Dubrovnik, 1933. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

classically liberal. To borrow the terms he used to describe the original dining club model, his proposal was “a very Anglo-Saxon idea.” Reaction to Wells’s speech went unrecorded, but his version of consensus seems to have roused few. The day after Wells’s speech the 1933 Congress exploded into a heckling match. The congress culminated in the expulsion of the official, Nazi-backed German contingent.

German Expulsion

The discord of the second day of the Dubrovnik Congress can be detected in the first session, in an American Center resolution that urged the gathering to censor the German delegation. The American PEN Center in New York sent only one delegate to the Congress, Henry Seidel Canby, the leader of the American branch who had tried unsuccessfully to start an international translations bureau back in the 1920s. Canby has maintained leadership of the American branch during this period. At American PEN meetings he frequently expressed his frustration that the London Center did not provide a sufficiently cohesive source of centralized bureaucratic authority. Largely through his initiative, the New York branch decided that if Wells and the British were not interested in making a statement against the Nazi book-burnings, the Americans should.

Prior to the Dubrovnik gathering, New York PEN held a lunch meeting to debate the approach to the “German question” Canby should represent on their behalf to Dubrovnik. One member suggested that Canby be empowered to

“withdraw the American Center if the international principles of the organization are in his judgment not upheld.”²¹⁸ The group decided instead to draft a resolution for Canby to read out to the Congress expressing the New York Center’s position. On the second day of the Congress, at the opening session, the editor tabled a statement on behalf of the New York branch, which became known as the “Canby Resolution”:

Whereas there are again abroad in the world aspects of chauvinism which debase the spirit of man, causing him to persecute his fellow man, robbing him of generosity, of nobility, and understanding; and whereas it is the duty of the artist to guard the spirit in its freedom, so that mankind shall not be prey to ignorance, to malice and to fear, we the members of the American Center of the P.E.N. call upon other centers to affirm once more those principles upon which the structure of this society was raised.

We... call upon the International Congress to take definite steps to prevent the individual centers of the P.E.N., founded for the purpose of fostering goodwill and understanding between races and nations, from being used as weapons of propaganda.²¹⁹

Canby made no explicit reference to Germany. Indeed, his wording proved so vague that the Nazi-backed German delegation felt comfortable with it. The resolution passed unanimously. This articulation of the PEN ideal is notable, furthermore, for the extent to which evocations of “spirit” and “nobility” had become rhetorically commonplace, central to PEN’s conception of “the duty of the artist.” The ideal evoked by the Canby resolution not only echoed Wells from the day before. It closely resembled statements made at virtually all PEN Congresses

²¹⁸ Chute, *P.E.N. American Center*, 16.

²¹⁹ “Report of the Eleventh International Congress in Yugoslavia,” in *P.E.N. News*, no. 56, June 1933. PEN American Center Archives, CO760, I. Governance, Box 11/1, Princeton.

by writers from around the world. Repetition of references to the transcendent links between mankind and art served ritualistically to affirm the existence of “the spirit in its freedom”, PEN’s version of artistic humanism.

Not all of the members gathered in Dubrovnik were content simply to pass such ecumenical resolutions. Some of those who had been expelled from the German PEN Club were attending the Congress as “writers at large,” special guests of the Serbian hosts. The most famous was Ernst Toller. A Jew, a radical, and a former Communist, Toller enjoyed a reputation for his outspokenness both within and without the PEN Club. An Expressionist playwright, Toller was also famous for having served for six days as President of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919.²²⁰ As early as 1930 Ould and Galsworthy had privately expressed wariness of Toller’s ego and temperament. “Toller is...the *enfant terrible* of the PEN” warned Ould to Galsworthy,²²¹ who agreed that Toller was “a thorn in our side” and a “hot head.”²²² Toller decided that the Canby resolution should be illustrated by direct testimony of the “chauvinism” and “propaganda” he had witnessed in Berlin. This, he hoped, would reveal the hypocrisy of the German

²²⁰ Scholarship on Toller has been produced in two waves. The first began during his life and considered him above all as an exemplar of German expressionism. The second body of scholarship on Toller comprises part of the reexamination of Weimar culture that took place from the 1980s on. Of the first wave, the following are notable in English: William Anthony Willibrand, *Ernst Toller and His Ideology* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1945) and John Spalek, *Ernst Toller and His Critics: A Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1968). Of the large body of work produced on Toller during the Eighties and Nineties, see the following: Stefan Neuhaus, et. al., *Ernst Toller und die Weimarer Republik : ein Autor im Spannungsfeld von Literatur und Politik* (Würzburg : Königshausen & Neumann, 1999); Andreas Lixl, *Ernst Toller und die Weimarer Republik 1918-1933* (Heidelberg : C. Winter, 1986); Martin Kane, *Weimar Germany and the Limits of Political Art : A Study of the Work of George Grosz and Ernst Toller* (Tayport, Scotland : Hutton Press, 1987); Richard Dove, *He Was a German : A Biography of Ernst Toller* (London : Libris, 1990).

²²¹ Hermon Ould to John Galsworthy, 8/1/1930, PEN Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

²²² Letter, John Galsworthy to Hermon Ould, 8/2/1930, Galsworthy Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

contingent's vote in favor of the motion. On the third day of the Dubrovnik Congress, Ernst Toller announced that he wished to clarify the intentions of the Canby resolution.

The Nazi-backed German delegation protested as Toller assumed the lectern. Wells, wishing to retain a position of neutrality, asked the Secretary Hermon Ould instead to chair the special session. Ould asked the German group why they protested Toller's presence. "Had the German P.E.N. Centre protested against the ill-treatment of German intellectuals and the burning of books? Was it true that the Berlin Centre had issued a notice to its members depriving those of Communist or 'similar' views of their rights of membership, thereby violating the first rule of the P.E.N. that it should stand aside from politics?"²²³ The German delegation refused to engage with Ould's statement. If Toller was allowed to speak, they would leave the Congress altogether. Wells put the issue to a vote. The Congress voted to hear Toller's statement. At that point the German delegation filed out of the room, and refused to attend the session.

"Yesterday I didn't speak, as I wanted to give the official German delegates the chance to speak themselves," he began.

Since despite the severity of the accusations they prefer not to appear at this meeting for formal reasons, I am forced to speak in their absence. They may respond elsewhere.

Several weeks ago, ten members of the German P.E.N. Club were notified that they were expelled from the P.E.N. because they were associated with Communist or similar organizations. I do not wish to

²²³ "Report of the Eleventh International Congress in Yugoslavia," in *P.E.N. News*, no. 56, June 1933. PEN American Center Archives, CO760, I. Governance, Box 11/1, Princeton.

comment on the ambiguous meaning of this term. Communist is for these gentlemen a label for every man who doesn't fall into line...

What did the German P.E.N. Club do to counter the book burnings? The gentlemen here [the official German delegation] will object that the burnings were the acts of young, immature people [who don't necessarily represent the essence of National Socialism]. But Minister Goebbels protected the burning while calling the works in the fire, work of men who represented a nobler Germany, "intellectual filth."

Insanity dominates our age, and barbarity drives humans. The air around us is becoming thinner. Let us not fool ourselves. The voice of the spirit, the voice of humanity, will only become powerful if it serves a larger political agenda.²²⁴

Toller then read aloud the names of writers whose works had been burned that

May.²²⁵ Toller, like Wells and Canby before him, ended his speech by invoking "the voice of the spirit," the ideal of literature to which PEN professed. Toller's version

²²⁴ "Da sie trotz Schwere der Anklagen es vorzeigen, aus formellen Gründen der Sitzung fernzubleiben, bin ich gezwungen, in ihrer Abwesenheit zu sprechen. Sie mögen an anderer Stelle antworten. ..."

"Vor einigen Wochen haben zehn Mitglieder des deutschen P.E.N.-Clubs die Mitteilung erhalten, dass sie aus dem P.E.N.-Club ausgeschlossen sind, weil sie kommunistischen oder ähnlichen Organisationene nahestehn. Ich will mich nicht mit der vagen Diktion dieser Worte beschäftigen. Kommunist ist für die Herren jeder, der nicht in Reihen steht..."

"Was hat der deutsche P.E.N.-Club gegen die... Verbrennung getan? Nun werden die Herren einwenden, die Verbrennung sei ein Akt junger, unreifer Menschen gewesen. Diese Verbrennung beschützte der Minister Goebbels und er nannte die verbrannten Werke keener Männer, die ein edleres Deutschland repräsentieren als der, 'geistigen Unflat'..."

"Wahnsinn beherrscht die Zeit, Barberei regiert die Menschen. Die Luft um uns wird dünner. Täuschen wir uns nicht, die Stimme des Geistes, die Stimme der Humanität wird von den Mächtigen nur dann beachtet, wenn sie als Fassade dient für politische Zwecke..." Quoted in full in Ernst Toller, "Der P.E.N.-Club-Kongreß," *Die Neue Weltbühne*, Prag/Wien/Zürich, No. 24 (6/15/1933), 741.

²²⁵ Books by the following writers were burned in May 1933. Asterisks indicate those who were members of PEN at some point in their careers. Isaak Babel, Henri Barbusse, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, Max Brod, Charles Darwin, Otto Dix, Alfred Döblin*, Ilja Ehrenburg, Albert Einstein, Friedrich Engels, Lion Feuchtwanger*, Marieluise Fleisser, Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, Leonhard Frank*, Sigmund Freud*, André Gide*, Ernst Glaser, Iwan Goll, Maxim Gorki, George Grosz*, Jaroslav Hašek, Werner Hegemann, Heinrich Heine, Ernest Hemingway, Hermann Hesse, Ödön von Horvath, Heinrich Eduard Jacob, Franz Kafka, Georg Kaiser, Erich Kästner*, Helen Keller, Alfred Kerr*, Egon Erwin Kisch, Karl Kraus*, Vladimir Lenin, Theodor Lessing, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, Karl Liebknecht, Jack London, Georg Lukács, Rosa Luxemburg, Heinrich Mann*, Klaus Mann*, Thomas Mann*, Ludwig Marcuse, Karl Marx, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Ludwig von Mises, Robert Musil, Carl von Ossietzky*, John Dos Passos, Erwin Piscator, Alfred Polgar, Marcel Proust, Eugen Relgis, Erich Maria Remarque, Ludwig Renn, Joachim Ringelnatz, Romain Rolland, Joseph Roth, Nelly Sachs, Felix Salten, Anna Seghers, Upton Sinclair, Arthur Schnitzler*, Carl Sternheim, Bertha von Suttner, Ernst Toller*, Leon Trotsky, Kurt Tucholsky, Jakob Wassermann*, Franz Werfel*, Grete Weiskopf, H.G. Wells*, Émile Zola, Arnold Zweig, Stefan Zweig*, Fred Dinklebird.

also offered a slight reformulation that underscored his advocacy of intervention. The day before Canby had offered “freedom of the spirit” as the salvation of mankind, which was in danger of falling “prey to ignorance”. Literature could work to redeem mankind, Canby had implied. Toller’s version directly united “the voice of the spirit” with “humanity”. “Humans” may be perverted by “insanity” and “barbarity”, but humanity itself transcended the base actions of perverted individuals. Speaking out against persecution aligned writers with this “humanity”. Because Nazism had infected certain people, to defend humanity writers had to “serve a larger political agenda.” Political action, in short, was necessary to protect the PEN ideal. The Congress voted, after Toller’s speech, to expel the German Center from the PEN Federation.

Contemporaries cited Toller’s speech at the 1933 Congress as the point at which PEN liberated itself from its staid bourgeois origins and finally embraced politics. Different national centers raced to claim the moment as their own, thereby affirming their centrality in the group’s history. “These Congresses, of which I have attended several, are ordinarily harmless and most delightful social gatherings... No issue of great importance has ever troubled [them],” Canby was quoted in the American press immediately after the event. “Until now,” he added with a flourish, gesturing to his resolution.²²⁶ The “Toller speech”, or simply “Dubrovnik”, assumed an increasingly central position in the group’s self-presentaion. “In Dubrovnik,” ran one account published in the 1970s, “They would not let themselves be corrupted by fear... There were individual writers alone with their consciences, and the great

²²⁶ Quoted in Peitsch, *No Politics*, p. 9-10.

majority refused to deny the principle upon which the P.E.N. had been founded.”²²⁷ Others suggested the episode formed a pivot not just in PEN’s history, but in the larger historical narrative of the twentieth century. “A French writer who had been at Dubrovnik spoke of this Congress as an event in the intellectual history of Europe... It proved that [PEN] members had agreed to a basic principle which they would not betray, no matter how frightening the present or how unclear the future. They would follow Toller’s way and not Hitler’s.”²²⁸ Some sources, particularly Eastern European and German writers, went so far as to describe this as the explosive arrival of the group. “Der Pen-Klub ist gesprengt!” as a Berlin magazine quoted Klaus Mann—“The PEN Club has detonated!”²²⁹ The 1933 Congress seemed to many the moment PEN when realized its inner potential—the point PEN came into its own. “The P.E.N. was becoming a force almost in spite of itself, simply by refusing to abandon its allegiance to the freedom of the human spirit.”²³⁰

The small historical literature on PEN also affirms the importance of the Toller speech and the 1933 Congress. Historian Helmut Peitsch of the German Exile-PEN has noted that writers pushed the vanguard of both of pre-War anti-Nazi protest and then eventual post-War rapprochement.²³¹ The Americans noted that

²²⁷ Chute, 18.

²²⁸ Chute, 18. It is not clear of which French writer Chute speaks, but it was likely Jules Romains.

²²⁹ “Weder von den Delegierten noch in der konservativ-liberalen Oeffentlichkeit Europas wurde auf diese Punkte eingegangen. Die Enttauschung Klaus Manns ist seinem Tagebuch zur Zeitungslektuere am 30.05.1933 zu entnehmen, wo die Eintragung 'PEN-Club aufgefliegen' wie ein Echo der Schlagzeile der Berliner illustrierten Nachtausgabe klingt: 'Der Pen-Klub ist gesprengt!' " Quoted in Peitsch, 185..

²³⁰ Chute, 19.

²³¹ Peitsch, 13.

Toller might never have spoken had it not been for the Canby resolution: American democratic ethos provided some clear-eyed perspective for the entangled Europeans.²³² A recent Serbian account suggests the protest owed a debt to the atmosphere of open debate facilitated by Serbian culture.²³³ “[Dubrovnik], already filled with a great international atmosphere,... transformed into a large, comfortable Parisian cafe of the arts.”²³⁴ A history of the Austrian PEN implicitly affirms the importance of the Toller speech as a moment of “politicization” by seeking to revise its centrality. The Nazi-authorized German contingent, on the other hand, maintained that they had walked out of the session of their own volition, quitting PEN themselves before they could be expelled.²³⁵ This preoccupation with pinning down a precise moment of politicization underscores the degree to which Galsworthy’s conviction that culture and politics could ever be separated has shaped almost all subsequent analysis of the group.

Ritualized repetition of the Toller episode, particularly after the Second World War, served an important function. It assured members that PEN had fought to preserve an ethos of enlightened humanism in the face of extremist atrocity. In practice, the question of whether or not PEN should assume an active role in political matters would resurface repeatedly through the War and well into the post-War period. The Dubrovnik Congress seemed to prove to members that PEN

²³² Chute, 16.

²³³ Palestrava, 30-33.

²³⁴ Rade Drainac reporting for *Pravda Justice*, 26 May 1933, quoted in Palavestra, *History of the Serbian PEN* (Belgrade: Serbian PEN Center, 2006).

²³⁵ Peitsch, “*No Politics?*”

did indeed embody the spirit of literature, and that this spirit represented the ultimate expression of humanity.

Émigré Centers

In London, the International Executive appeared to function as usual after the Dubrovnik Congress. Members tended to avoid discussing domestic politics at meetings.²³⁶ Topics such as “The Downside of Bestsellerdom” and “Goethe: An Homage” instead drew respectable crowds.²³⁷ After the ruckus of the Dubrovnik Congress, Wells and Ould wished to ensure above all that PEN maintained a semblance of coherence and unity. In 1937 H.G. Wells stepped down from the International Presidency, stating that that after four years he needed to return to his own work. The French branch, run during most of the 1930s by Paul Valéry, had been pushing for influence at the international level. Wells passed the running of English PEN over to Storm Jameson, and the International presidency over to Jules Romains of the French branch.

PEN’s reaction to the Spanish Civil War suggests the degree to which the organization remained peripheral to the most central intellectual debates of the 1930s. Reportage on the war and pictures from its front lines featured on the

²³⁶ Jameson discusses her disillusionment in her autobiography *Journey from the North* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 317-322. While Wells was the Labor Party candidate in the early 1920s for the University of London’s seat in Parliament, by the 1930s he moved away from Fabian socialism and had come to take an interest in the Soviet Union. For a discussion of Wells’s evolving socialism, see William J. Hyde, “The Socialism of H.G. Wells in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* (17: 1956), 217-234.

²³⁷ Programs, English Center Meetings and Correspondence, 195-39, HRC..

pages of newspapers worldwide. Intellectuals cast the battle as a touchstone, a test of ideological mettle, regardless of whether one was republican, socialist, or pacifist.²³⁸ Foreign writers flocked to the Spanish front lines, producing a vast body of literature on their experiences. George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) and Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) remain exemplars of reportage and fictionalized accounts of the war respectively. Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938) critiqued homoerotic valor that veins all of these accounts, suggesting that a lopsidedly masculine public culture drove such belligerence. Long after the conflict had ended, the character of Rick in *Casablanca* (1942), who had fought for the doomed Republican side, conveyed to mass audiences that defeat and cynicism no longer stood as options, even for the weary and disillusioned. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, "Liberals did not even have the option of neutrality." The most immediate lesson of the Spanish Civil War suggested "that 'non-intervention' helped one side. This was evident to the British government, which certainly wanted the Nationalists to win, though it also wanted at that time to avoid formally taking sides with Hitler and Mussolini against

²³⁸ The literature on the Spanish Civil War and literary culture is vast, ranging from scores of firsthand accounts by writers from around the world of their experiences on the front lines, to scholarship studying the literary imagination of the event. The following critical analyses in English are useful: Frederick R. Benson, *Writers in Arms; the Literary Impact of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: NYU Press, 1967); Stanley Weintraub, *The Last Great Cause: the Intellectuals and the Spanish Civil War* (New York, Weybright and Talley, 1968); Peter Monteath, *Writing the Good Fight: Political Commitment in the International Literature of the Spanish Civil War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994); Gareth Thomas, *The Novel of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1975* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Janet Pérez and Wendell Aycock (eds.) *The Spanish Civil War in Literature* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1990); Robert Stradling, *History and Legend: Writing the International Brigades* (Cardiff: University of Wales, Press, 2002).

bolshevism.”²³⁹ That PEN issued no official press statements on the conflict attests to its willful marginality during the period. International PEN limited itself to asking its membership base to shelter refugees, while the Executive established a fund for stranded Spanish writers.²⁴⁰

The question of how to affiliate émigré writers instead absorbed the group throughout the thirties. From 1933 onwards, émigrés left Germany and other areas with fascist sympathies in large numbers. Germans formed the first and ultimately largest contingent, followed closely by the Hungarians, Austrians, and others who departed from Poland down to Italy. Of Jews alone 300,000 left Germany during the decade, 132,000 of whom settled in the US, 85,000 in Latin America, and 78,000 in Britain. The US, Latin America, and Britain formed the three main exile destinations.²⁴¹ Scientists and architects such as Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud and Walter Gropius tended to receive the most attention from the press, which focused on the refugees from Hitler who enjoyed high-ranking as professionals, or who were wealthy and educated.²⁴² Academics received particular support. In Britain the Academic Assistance Council set up in 1933 and led by William Beveridge of the LSE,²⁴³ and in New York the University in Exile,

²³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Intellectuals and the Spanish Civil War,” *Revolutionaries* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

²⁴⁰ English Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 1937-June 1943. PEN English Center Archive, HRC.

²⁴¹ Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 26.

²⁴² Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), 172.

²⁴³ Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), especially Chapter 12, “Social Science and Academic Freedom,” 227-302. See also David Zimmerman, “The Society for the

conceived by the President of the New School, Alvin Johnson, both provided a haven for scholars fleeing fascism.²⁴⁴

In contrast to academics, with their explicit professional qualifications, helping literary intellectuals proved a more difficult task. With no explicit professional body to function as a mouthpiece for writers, it often fell to individuals to try to encapsulate the emigrant experience. According to Wieland Herzfeld, at first “the artists and intellectuals remained in Europe” because they assumed that “we were not emigrating... we would return.”²⁴⁵ Until fall of France in 1940, Paris served as a haven for intellectual émigrés, as it had since at least the late eighteenth century.²⁴⁶ But by 1941 London, New York, and California became the chief emigrant centers. “The arrival of the refugees in the thirties”, of “the talented”, in the words of the writer V.S. Pritchett, helped “revive” London during the slump.²⁴⁷ Britain’s declaration of war on Germany in 1939 encouraged yet more emigration westward. According to Heinrich Mann, by 1942 “all of German literature had settled in America.”²⁴⁸ Mann’s easy reference to “all of German literature”,

Protection of Science and Learning and the Politicization of British Science in the 1930s,” *Minerva*, 44:1, 45-25.

²⁴⁴ Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Emil Walter-Busch, *Geschichte der Frankfurter Schule: Kritische Theorie und Politik* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2010).

²⁴⁵ Heilbut, 28.

²⁴⁶ Lloyd S. Kramer provides a helpful overview of this much-examined subject, including references to the vast body of primary source memoirs and secondary analyses of the experience of intellectual exile in Paris. *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830-1848* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

²⁴⁷ Pritchett, 206.

²⁴⁸ Heilbut, 261.

however, proved too neat. In practice, German writers articulated a variety of perspectives on an equally diverse constellation of relationships: between the émigré and his fellow emigrants, as both a citizen and a writer; between the émigré and his homeland; between the émigré and his adopted land; and finally, between the émigré and the idea of literature itself.

In the midst of both the ideological polarization of the thirties and debate within émigré communities about the writer's duty, PEN adopted an approach of minimal intervention. This policy complimented the group's apolitical, nonaligned self-conception. More importantly, it reflected the desires of émigrés themselves. The majority of foreign writers living in Paris, London, or New York wished to affiliate with other émigrés who shared their language and literature. By the end of the Second World War over a dozen separate exile groups had established PEN Centers in Exile, and the Hungarian writer Paul Tabori would establish the PEN-in-Exile Center as an umbrella center representing the interests of all of these groups. During the 1930s, however, German writers formed the bulk of émigrés, and the question of how to organize German PEN Centers abroad most occupied PEN.

The German writer Herwarth Walden had written as early as April 1933, before the book-burnings, alerting the London PEN office that Nazis had begun attending Berlin PEN meetings and to question members. Walden asked Hermon Ould if the London office might declare the Berlin PEN Center illegitimate and allow him instead to organize a branch representing "real" German literature in exile.²⁴⁹ Ould deferred the question given the impending Dubrovnik Congress. It was not

²⁴⁹ Walden to Ould, 4/14/1933. PEN Letters Recip. German Center, PEN Archive, HRC.

until later in 1933, after the Toller speech and the Dubrovnik Congress, that Lion Feuchtwanger established the first German-speaking PEN branch in London. Feuchtwanger worked in collaboration with Toller, Rudolph Olden and Max Herman Neisse.²⁵⁰ They argued that “free German literature” no longer existed within the boundaries of the Reich. “In the spirit of the International PEN Club” they wished to give voice to the German “soul”. Yet representatives of “real” German culture harbored not just in London but also in France, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland.²⁵¹ A German branch in London could represent Germans scattered in all of these places.

Wells and Ould agreed, and the German PEN-in-Exile Center took form in London in 1934. The German-speaking PEN Center would act to represent all exiled German writers. None of the objections raised in the 1920s to the establishment of a Yiddish PEN club were tabled, suggesting that the precedent had become well-established. It wished to remain separate from the London Center partly because the “no politics” edict sat uncomfortably with a group of people for whom discussion Nazism formed a central shared experience. While the English Center discussed Goethe and Bestsellerdom, the German Exile branch debated the British government’s policy of appeasement and the meaning of exile.²⁵² German exiles were frequently sought out by the press for commentary on their situation, and many made excoriation of the Nazi regime their prime subject matter during

²⁵⁰ Feuchtwanger, et. al. Ould, 12/28/1933. PEN Letters Recip. German Center, PEN Archive, HRC.

²⁵¹ Feuchtwanger, et. al. Ould, 12/28/1933. PEN Letters Recip. German Center, PEN Archive, HRC.

²⁵² “Update on Activities”, German PEN-in-Exile, London, PEN Letters Recip., 1938..

the period.²⁵³ In the words of German writer Paul Frischauer at an Exile Center dinner, words directed to the English writers present, “we too have tried to protest within the terms of the principles” of apolitical nonalignment. But, as he would go on to clarify elsewhere, “politics are stronger than we are.”²⁵⁴ In the words of one observer, “the German group [owed] its part in the development of PEN to political motivations—with their speakers at yearly Congresses,” and “with the contributions of their representatives to the discussions at Executive Committee meetings” the German members ensured that the discussion of the dangers of totalitarianism remained on PEN’s agenda.²⁵⁵

Such open discussion of political topics signaled a shift for PEN, at least from the perspective of German writers. The efforts of the German Exile group, according to one observer, led “zur Entwicklung des Internationalen PEN”—to the transformation and maturation of International PEN.²⁵⁶ “Entwicklung” conveys the sense not just of progressive development, but of coming-of-age: of emerging from

²⁵³ Lion Feuchtwanger, who left Germany in January of 1933, migrated first to France, and eventually ended up in New York, where he ran the German Exile PEN Center there, provides just one example. Between 1936 and 1944 he wrote the following novels, all analyzing totalitarianism in different ways: *Der Falsche Nero (The Pretender)* in 1936, about Terentius Maximus, the “False Nero”; *Unholdes Frankreich (Ungracious France)* and *Der Teufel in Frankreich, (The Devil in France)* in 1941; *Die Brüder Lautensack (The Lautensack Brothers)* in 1943; *Simone*, a novel about a fifteenth year old girl who fights against the Nazi occupiers, in 1944; and a book of reportage on Soviet socialism in *Moskau 1937 (Moscow 1937)* in 1937. Viking Press, his American publisher, included *Simone* among the scores printed during this period with this advertisement on the back of the dust jacket: “This book, like all books, is a symbol of the liberty and freedom for which we fight. You, as a reader of books, can do your share in the desperate battle to protect those liberties—Buy War Bonds.”

²⁵⁴ “Wir haben, ebenso wie Sie, in Begriffen des Prinzips protestiert,” but “die Politik ist stärker als wir.” Quoted in Peitsch, viii.

²⁵⁵ “Die deutsche Gruppe hatte an der Entwicklung des PEN hin zu politischer Vernunft ihren Anteil—mit ihren Rednern auf den jährlichen Kongressen, mit den Beiträgen ihrer Vertreter in den Diskussionen des Exekutivkomitees.” Quoted in Peitsch, viii.

²⁵⁶ quoted in Peitsch, ix.

adolescence into full maturity. While such statements reflect the same urge to pin down an ideological “pivot point” that led to the clamor to claim the mantle of the 1933 Congress, such statements also reflect a general perception that something had indeed changed. No members, regardless of their branch affiliation, ever considered ejecting the German Exile Center from the PEN fold because they continued so openly to discuss the Reich. A shift had occurred. Writers—so long as they had been explicitly persecuted by totalitarian regimes—had earned the right to defend themselves.

German Exile PEN members not only saw themselves as forces of maturation within PEN. Some also cast themselves as spiritual guides to their adopted cultures. The novelist Oscar Maria Graf, active in both the German PEN circles in New York and the German-American Writers Association, provides an example of this position. “New York is the new center of the literary scene that used to exist in Berlin, Munich, Vienna and Prague,” he wrote in an article in the *New Republic* in 1939.²⁵⁷ Seeing an opportunity for a platform in the midst of the highly-publicized Third American Writers’ Conference held by the League for American Writers in 1939, Graf provided a list of notable German authors resident in America who were undertaking important work, including Ferdinand Bruckner, Ernst Toller, Bruno Frank, Ernst Bloch, and Klaus Mann. “Torn from their geographic and cultural roots,” wrote Graf, “these exiles have lost everything of their home except their native tongue, the German language. And here too their use of it becomes restricted on foreign shores. Despite these physical and psychological

²⁵⁷ Oscar Maria Graf, “German Writers in America,” *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, 344.

estrangements, the German exiles in America are making themselves felt as a positive and guiding element.”²⁵⁸ Graf then proceeded simply to catalogue books published by various exiles, ending the article without a synthetic conclusion. Graf likely left off in this fashion because no neat synthetic conclusion existed. Germans had begun to divide on the question of who exactly the writer exemplified, of where these spiritual guides were leading their flock. Germans’ only point of agreement, their one unspoken assumption: writers were exemplars of some shared cultural tradition. The question of where to locate this tradition became the contested mantle.

The literary *Geist*

Not all Germans found the prospect of membership of an exile PEN branch appealing. Thomas Mann expressed reservations about joining. Mann cited intellectual misgivings, noting that he wished to be associated above all in popular imagination with the German people still resident back in Germany. The fact that Mann also enjoyed a public presence far more commanding than any other German writer at the time likely influenced his decision-making. While Mann enjoyed critical and commercial success well before this period, winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929 had catapulted him to a new echelon of celebrity. With that came a new mantle of authority. Scores of cultural groups petitioned him to sit on their boards. He served perhaps most visibly as Consultant in Germanic Languages

²⁵⁸ Oscar Maria Graf, “German Writers in America,” *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, 345.

and Literatures at the U.S. Library of Congress in 1942, where as part of his duties he gave lectures on such topics as "The War and the Future," "Germany and the Germans," and "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events."²⁵⁹ PEN likely sat at the periphery of his vision.

Yet during this period Mann also began to link himself above all to the German people. The German people, he asserted, remained those still resident in Germany.²⁶⁰ Erich Kästner also argued that he represented the German people, yet his situation sat in direct contrast to Mann's. As a writer who chose to stay within the boundaries of the Reich, and yet wished to dissociate himself from Nazism, Kästner offered a less spatially-defined definition of the German people. Germany, for Kästner, was above all an idea. German culture was borne by peoples' imaginations, not necessarily represented within the boundaries of the State. Mann and Kästner provide two different answers to the problem first of defining a national culture, and from there of offering an articulation of the appropriate role of the writer in the midst of political persecution.

When Feuchtwanger wrote in 1934 inviting Thomas Mann, by that point resident in Hollywood, to join the German PEN-in-Exile Center, Mann replied that he felt unable to make a decision in either direction. "There is actually no right answer for me," wrote Mann, "and because of this question I am once again confronted with the choice either to insult and break with the German émigrés or

²⁵⁹ These speeches are collected in Don Heinrich Tolzman (ed.), *Thomas Mann's Addresses Delivered at the Library of Congress* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003).

²⁶⁰ The most recent biographies of Mann have focused on his sexuality, but also situate him within his intellectual milieu. Anthony Heilbut, *Thomas Mann: Eros in Literature* (New York: Knopf, 1996); Leslie Wilson, *Thomas Mann, Life as a Work of Art: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

to break with Germany, that is, with my German public.²⁶¹ The German people inside the German state remained Mann's public. Mann's insistence on this point prompted other German writers to consider the question themselves. For Thomas's brother Heinrich Mann, a socialist, the issue seemed much clearer. "The individual is not first a Marxist, a Jew, a worker, or an Intellectual," rendered here as the more socialistically-correct 'Kopfarbeiter', or "intellectual laborer." The writer, said Heinrich, "above all...is an Emigrant."²⁶² Heinrich went so far as to argue that personal pronouns should be guarded against in an exile's vocabulary. Collective persecution forced a group identity onto the individual.²⁶³ Ideological context above all shaped a writer's identity, from there his allegiances. His language need to adapt to the jarring realities.

Where Heinrich Mann emphasized politics as the key factor shaping the writer's role, and indeed his language, others emphasized continuous linguistic tradition. Alfred Kerr had argued in a letter as early as 1941 that "the real native country of a man is his mother-tongue." Kerr echoed Thomas Mann's conviction, recorded in his diary, that "The work and thoughts I which I take with me [are] my home... They are language and style of thought... Where I am, is Germany."²⁶⁴ The test of one's relationship to the mother country, argued Kerr, hinged "not only [on]

²⁶¹ Es gibt eigentlich keine richtige Antwort für mich, und ich stehe durch diese Frage einmal wieder vor der Wahl, entweder die deutsche Emigration zu kränken und enttäuschen oder mit Deutschland, dass heisst mit meinem deutschen Publikum, zu brechen. Thomas Mann to Leon Feuchtwanger, 1/25/34, Deutsche Exilarchiv, Frankfurt.

²⁶² "Der Einzelne ist nicht zuerst Marxist, Jude, Hand- oder Kopfarbeiter: vor allem ist er Emigrant." Quoted in Peitsch, 28.

²⁶³ Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise*, 28.

²⁶⁴ Thomas Mann, quoted in Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise*, 305-6..

his mother-tongue, but the manner in which he treats it (or maltreats it).” “And there,” he concluded, “I can say (in all modesty) that I am still in my native country—and that stylists like Hitler or Goebbels [are] living in eternal exile.”²⁶⁵ Language expressed the national essence, not state power or political affiliation. Writers remained the most fluent in the national culture, regardless of their geographic location.

As the decade wore on, Thomas Mann himself began to refine his position on this question. Cultural essence and geographically-bounded traditions might both retain some importance. Mann eventually joined the Exile PEN in 1939, when it became clear that war was unavoidable. His speech that year at the New York PEN Congress, the last to be held before the war, outlined his reasons for joining. “This is a time of great simplification,” he announced to the Congress, “a time when we humbly acknowledge the difference between good and evil.”²⁶⁶ Mann lived in California throughout the war. In 1945 he left his house in Santa Monica, where he was busy finishing his last major work, *Doktor Faustus*, and travelled to Washington, D.C. to attend a gathering held in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday. There he gave a speech that aimed to sum up the entire quandary exiles confronted after 1933.

“And where is Germany?” Mann asked his audience, which, thanks to a radio broadcast of his speech, included Germans on the other side of the Atlantic. “Where

²⁶⁵ Letter Alfred Kerr, unaddressed recipient, 1941/7/15, Letters Recip. German Group, English PEN Archive, HRC.

²⁶⁶ Quoted in Chute, 27.

can one locate it, even if only geographically? How does one return home to one's fatherland, which no longer exists as a unity?"²⁶⁷ As before the war, Mann identified German culture with place. For him there existed only one Germany, he insisted. Good and evil entwined. Nazism, he explained to his audience, was not a separate phenomenon. It was the rotting fruit of *Deutsche Kultur*, of German civilization.²⁶⁸ In the end, he argued, this meant it mattered little where a writer lived. The inseparability of the *Kulturnation* (the cultural community) and the *Staatnation* (the nation-state) meant that a writer carried both his country and his culture with him. Mann continued to live in America until 1952, refusing to return to Germany. He moved instead to Switzerland, where he died in Zurich in 1955.

Other German writers, however, insisted that the *Kulturnation* and the *Staatnation* needed to be understood as separate entities. The term *innere Emigration* encompassed this position. The term had been coined in 1933 by the writer Frank Thiess in direct criticism of Mann and others who, as he saw it, had abandoned Germany when it most needed its writers. In an open letter to Mann published in the *Münchener Zeitung*, Frank Thiess argued that "I think it was harder to preserve one's personality over here than to send messages to the German people from there, which the deaf sections of the populace never heard anyway, as we were always not just one but several steps ahead of them."²⁶⁹ The writer's duty,

²⁶⁷ Stephen Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour* (Rochester, N.Y. : Camden House, 2004), 90.

²⁶⁸ Brockmann, 90.

²⁶⁹ "Ich glaube, es war schwerer, sich hier seine Persönlichkeit zu bewahren, als von drüben Botschaften

believed Thiess, remained to his country. Those who had left the territory had betrayed the nation. Conscience could be separated from material circumstance. Writers who had stayed in Germany through the war, maintained advocates of this position, were therefore not necessarily traitors. They could send subtle messages through their prose to readers critical of the Reich. A writer's responsibility involved staying. He must continue to engage, not flee. Mann and other exiles, Thiess argued after the war, had no right to claim German cultural authority. They had simply watched Germany cinematically implode from their Pacific Palisades mansions.²⁷⁰

A key figure in this debate, and in the post-war reconstruction of German PEN itself, was Erich Kästner. As early as 1931 Kästner's novel *Fabian: The Story of a Moralist* (*Fabian: Die Geschichte eines Moralisten*) had provoked controversy and stimulated debate about the definition of a committed writer and the nature of literary engagement.²⁷¹ The novel takes place in the final days of the Weimar Republic, in the years between the Wall Street Crash and the Nazi takeover. Fabian, "aged thirty-two, profession variable, at present advertising copywriter, 17

an das deutsche Volk zu senden, welche die Tauben im Volke ohnedies nicht vernahmen, während wir Wissenden uns ihnen stets um einige Längen voraus fühlten." Frank Thieß, "Die innere Emigration," *Münchener Zeitung*, 18 August 1945, reprinted in Johannes Grosser, *Die große Kontroverse: Ein Briefwechsel um Deutschland* (Hamburg: Nagel Verlag, 1963). 22-25.

²⁷⁰ The first study of the "big controversy" ("große Kontroverse") between exiles and those who stayed was completed in 1963 by J. F. G. Grosser, *Die große Kontroverse: Ein Briefwechsel um Deutschland*. See also Ralf Schnell, *Literarische Innere Emigration 1933-1945* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1976); Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand. (eds.), *Exil und innere Emigration*. Wisconsin Workshop, 3rd : 1971 : Madison, Wis. (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum-Verlag, 1972); Hermann Haarmann. (ed.), *Berlin im Kopf - Arbeit am Berlin-Mythos : Exil und Innere Emigration 1933 bis 1945* (Berlin : B & S Siebenhaar Verlag, 2008).

²⁷¹ Fred Genschmer, "The Ordeal of Erich Kästner", *Monatshefte*, vol. 39, no. 6 (Oct., 1947), 389-402.

Schaerstrasse, weak heart, brown hair” has been favored with a university education but prevented from putting it to meaningful use. As the U-Bahn shuttles Fabian between streets and social tableaux, the reader moves through the range of reasons for his stultification. The comic grotesque of the advertising world, his subsequent unemployment, the egoistic competition of intellectual circles, the vulgar decadence of the movie producer who woos away his girlfriend, and the lascivious appetite of the women who embody the moral failings of Weimar culture (“love is a hobby, for which you use your body”, sings one²⁷²)—all number among the reasons for Fabian’s alienation.

Fabian partakes of these temptations, yet he despises them. At night he escapes his boarding house (where “coughing three times costs 1 Mark”²⁷³) and takes to the streets. We encounter Fabian amidst lemming-like crowds of the sort that march through Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*. The U-Bahn pneumatically delivers him from dirty brothels in the east disguised as *gemütlichen Kneipen*, as cozy pubs, to restaurants patronized by portly movie producers off of the Kudamm in the West. In a chapter titled, with thudding irony, “A Club for Intellectual Contacts”, Fabian indifferently agrees to go home with a tall blonde with “a pale, infantile face and an air of greater restraint than, to judge by her dancing, she possessed.”²⁷⁴ In the cab on the way to her place the woman “assaults” him and threatens to hit him if he doesn’t join her upstairs. While fending off her advances on the living room

²⁷² Erich Kästner, *Fabian: The Story of a Moralist*, Trans. Cyrus Brooks, (London: Libris, 1990 [1931]). 40.

²⁷³ Kästner, *Fabian*, 30.

²⁷⁴ Kästner, *Fabian*, 9.

couch (“you’re coming on slowly,” she taunts him), he is relieved to be interrupted by the woman’s husband. “Isn’t she appalling?” asked a strange voice... “My name is Moll, sir. I am a solicitor and also,” he yawned heartbreakingly, “and also the husband of the woman who is now reclining on you.”²⁷⁵

Herr Moll sends his wife sulking out of the room while he explains his offer to Fabian. His wife possesses an insatiable, animal-like sexual appetite. Husband and wife had therefore made a contract: Frau Moll was allowed to invite home as many men as she liked, so long as Herr Moll retained veto-power. Moll, he assures Fabian, heartily endorses the young man’s copulation with his wife. But Moll begins to panic when Fabian rises in quiet disgust to leave. “For heaven’s sake don’t go! She’ll fly into a passion when she finds you’ve gone... Do stay. You won’t regret it,” he trails off, like a grasping salesman.²⁷⁶ But Fabian continues accidentally to encounter Frau Moll until the novel’s end, fate forcing him to reconsider his decision over and over, until he eventually boards a train back to his small village and returns crying to his mother.

What does Fabian make of the decay that surrounds him? In response to outcry from the Right—which eventually led to the banning of his book by the Nazis in 1936—Kästner replied, “I am a moralist.”²⁷⁷ Criticism from the left proved just as cutting, and largely saved the book from being burned in the ’33 bonfires. Walter

²⁷⁵ Kästner, *Fabian*, 12.

²⁷⁶ Kästner, *Fabian*, 13-14.

²⁷⁷ Intended epilogue to the novel, first published in the left-wing weekly *Die Weltbühne*, edited by Carl von Ossietzky), vol. 27, no. 43, 1931; quoted in “Epilogue: *Fabian* and the Guardians of Morality”, Kästner, *Fabian*, 177.

Benjamin's scathing review of 1931 condemned the novel's "left melancholy."²⁷⁸ "This left-wing radicalism is precisely the attitude which fails to correspond to political action of any kind...For right from the start its only aim is to relax into a negativistic inertia."²⁷⁹ The evils of society, the novel suggests, are spiritual, not economic. Yet Fabian's disgust with his surroundings, his emotional distance from his contemporaries, the novel suggests, shield him from their decay.

Unlike Fabian, Kästner carved a sense of purpose out of detachment. Kästner stayed in Germany through the war. While his books were not burned in 1933, the Gestapo interrogated him repeatedly through the period, and the Nazified German PEN expelled him. He professed pacifism and wrote children's books, arguing to his friends who fled that his mother's health required he stay. The epigram to his book *Kurz und Bündig* (*Short and Concise*), a poem entitled "Necessary Answer to Superfluous Questions" (*Notwendige Antwort auf überflüssige Fragen*) suggests his reasons for remaining in Germany:

I'm a German from Dresden in Saxony
 My homeland won't let me go
 I'm like a tree that, grown in Germany,
 will likely wither there also.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, "Linke Melancholie", first published in *Die Gesellschaft* in Benjamin's *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. III (Frankfurt, 1972). According to Rodney Livingstone, the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* had refused to publish Benjamin's review.

²⁷⁹ Walter Benjamin, "Linke Melancholie".

²⁸⁰ Ich bin ein Deutscher aus Dresden in Sachsen.
 Mich läßt die Heimat nicht fort.
 Ich bin wie ein Baum der—in Deutschland gewachsen—
 wenn's sein muß, in Deutschland verdorrt.
 Kästner, *Kurz und Bündig* (Zürich: Atrium Verlag, 1950).

Kästner seemed to offer a bridge between Mann and Thiess's positions. By staying he accepted, as an inner exile, his organic role in the transformation of Germany—who would soon “wither” there, not unlike Mann’s description of Nazism as the “rotting fruit” of German culture.

A controversy grew around *Fabian* in the immediate post-War period. As the full extent of Nazi atrocities were aired, appraisal of *Fabian* provided a way of debating the merits of the merits of *innere emigration*. Kästner felt roused to defend himself in 1950. To critics of his supposed amorality, he wrote “the moralist holds up not a mirror, but a distorting mirror to his age.” Caricature, he wrote, “a legitimate artistic mode, is the furthest he can go. If that doesn’t help, nothing will.”²⁸¹ His argument to critics on the Left, his answer to the likes of Benjamin, recast both his and *Fabian*’s passive observation as active intervention. “[I] wished to utter a warning. [I] wished to warn people about the abyss into which Germany was in danger of falling... threatening to take all Europe with it.”²⁸²

Both sides shared a fundamental interpretative problem, Kästner’s statement implied. That problem stemmed from the wrenching division of the *Kulturnation* from the *Staatsnation*, of culture from politics. “Will people understand [my book] any better today?” he asked, reflecting on twenty-five years of controversy. “Of course not! How should they? The fact that judgments of taste were nationalized during the Third Reich... has ruined the taste and judgment of

²⁸¹ Erich Kästner, “Preface to the 1950 German Edition”, *Fabian*, 4.

²⁸² Erich Kästner, “Preface to the 1950 German Edition”, *Fabian*, 3.

broad sections of the public down to our own time.”²⁸³ A healthy body politic needed to be able to make critiques of taste independent from the state.

The distinction between *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation* seemed easier to plot during the 1930s. Hitler’s regime represented either a perversion (from Mann’s perspective) or abnegation (in Theiss’s view) of a healthy culture. After the war, however, an array of possible relationships between writers and their native cultures seemed possible. What did the phrase “German culture” even mean, if its most famous cultural figures remained outside Germany itself? Should “German culture” be located physically within Germany, or had the exiles who had fled or been expelled taken psychically it with them?²⁸⁴ The view one took on this question shaped the debate that unfolded after the World War II regarding whether and on what terms to readmit the German PEN Center.

Conclusion

From 1933 on, PEN’s determination to maintain a strict separation between the fields of culture and politics began change. The 1933 Dubrovnik Congress represented a pivot point for the group, but not in the simplified sense favored by some contemporaries. The Canby Resolution, the Toller speech, and the expulsion of the Nazified German branch did not represent PEN’s “politicization.” On the contrary, these events pushed the group to redefine its definition of “political”

²⁸³ Erich Kästner, “Preface to the 1950 German Edition”, *Fabian*, 3.

²⁸⁴ For a discussion of this dynamic see Brockmann, 90.

activity. The Nazi book-burnings triggered alarm bells within cultural and intellectual circles because the state had trespassed against art. The state, not writers, had transgressed its appropriate sphere. Writers, PEN implicitly concluded by sanctioning the discussion of totalitarianism, expressed their natural rights as artists by protesting unwarranted intrusion from aggressive political leaders. Writers could speak out against persecution, PEN concluded in 1933, without sullyng itself.

PEN's toleration of discussion of politics represented a distinct change in practice from the Galsworthy-era. Yet it remained one step short of a seemingly logical conclusion, a conclusion all Germans seemed already to accept: a writer's *duty* lay with protesting persecution. The PEN Executive maintained a policy on this question during the 1930s. Members interested in mounting critiques of fascism could do so primarily as private citizens, but not in the name of the group. This move allowed PEN to continue to welcome writers from different political persuasions.

The exiles from Hitler bore most responsibility for shifting PEN's praxis. These writers also offered startling, often conflicting, visions of the role of the writer. Whereas Thomas Mann rejected the entire notion of an exile identity by insisting his audience and homeland remained within the borders of the German state, writers who remained within the Reich such as Erich Kästner presented themselves as "inner" exiles. Regardless of the myriad positions writer took on this question, all share one central assumption. The "true" nation—the collective culture, its *Geist* or spirit—had been perverted by Nazism. The cultural community

existed separately from, and in many senses transcended, the state. This conclusion affirmed the steps in this direction the group had already taken in the late 1920s, when it allowed branches to form along linguistic rather than state lines. Ultimately, whether they derived their authority from geographical or psychic exile, *Dichter und Denker*, poets and thinkers, were privileged articulators of the *Kulturnation*. And only the *Kulturnation* could atone for the sins of the *Staatsnation*.

The writer most often credited with inaugurating PEN's discussion about the evils of totalitarianism, Ernst Toller, hanged himself on May 22, 1939 in a room in the Mayflower Hotel in New York. Most attributed the suicide to the depression he suffered since his brother and sister had been interned in concentration camps, and to the financial woes he had experienced since giving the bulk of his money to victims of the Spanish Civil War. Others whispered of the "hotheadedness" Galsworthy and Ould had conferred about some years earlier. W.H. Auden wrote a poem to commemorate his friend's life.²⁸⁵ The poem was printed in PEN newsletters, and provides some insight into the values most PEN members of the period shared.

In Memory of Ernst Toller

The shining neutral summer has no voice
 To judge America, or ask how a man dies;
 And the friends who are sad and the enemies who rejoice

 Are chased by their shadows lightly away from the grave
 Of one who was egotistical and brave,

²⁸⁵ Included in *The Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1945).

Lest they should learn without suffering how to forgive.

What was it, Ernst, that your shadow unwittingly said?
O did the child see something horrid in the woodshed
Long ago? Or had the Europe which took refuge in your head

Already been too injured to get well?
O for how long, like the swallows in that other cell,
Had the bright little longings been flying in to tell

About the big friendly death outside,
Where people do not occupy or hide;
No towns like Munich; no need to write?

Dear Ernst, lie shadowless at last among
The other war-horses who existed till they'd done
Something that was an example to the young.

We are lived by powers we pretend to understand:
They arrange our loves; it is they who direct at the end
The enemy bullet, the sickness, or even our hand.

It is their tomorrow hangs over the earth of the living
And all that we wish for our friends; but existing is believing
We know for whom we mourn and who is grieving.

Auden's repeated use of the personal collective pronouns "we" and "us" creates a circle of communion between writer and readers. Auden gives us a vision of a fallen world peopled by those who cast shadows, with all the connotations of menace, guilt, and even evil the image of a skittering shadow conveys. Ernst, in contrast, lies "shadowless at last". Yet the meaning of this image is ambiguous. Does Ernst no longer cast a shadow because he lies cold in his grave? Or do "we" cast shadows because we exist in a sort of Platonic cave, mere copies of "powers we pretend to understand" who "live" and "direct" us? With his repeated evocations of "bright" and "light", Auden points us to the latter interpretation. Light functions as both an adjective and adverb when the shadows of friends and enemies are "lightly

chased away” from Ernst’s grave. Indeed, “powers” we can only “pretend to understand” transcend the earthly realm, “living” through us and deciding our fates. Yet Auden’s refusal to preclude the darker implications of Ernst’s shadowless state lend the poem its force. The whims of these powers remain inexplicable, as do the events unfolding around the world. The “tomorrow” of the higher powers “hangs over the earth of the living”, casting, by implication, its own shadow. Auden ends with an affirmation of faith (“existing is believing”), rounding out the poem with a statement that acts to create a circle of intimacy. The line dividing “friends” and “enemies” evoked in the first stanza becomes meaningless in the end. What ultimately matters, Auden implies, is understanding of the real ideal Toller died for: “we know for whom we mourn and who is grieving.”

Auden’s notion of a force more powerful than the material world represented precisely the ideal most PEN members considered to be at stake during the 1930s. Discussing political programs was beside the point: “existing is believing.” For this reason a writer who remained unaligned was not willfully individualistic, but rather “egotistical and brave”—the two coming almost to mean the same thing. Its central function, PEN maintained throughout the thirties, lay with preserving a safe haven for such writers, for the “we” who believed in the ideal Auden describes. By the 1940s, however, some would come to consider this articulation of the PEN ethos limp and powerless in the face of yet another World War.

CHAPTER FOUR

WAR AND THE REFUGEES

1938-1949

During the autumn and winter of 1938-1939, onlookers worldwide anxiously discussed Hitler's intentions for Europe. The previous March the Germans had invaded Austria. By April, Franco had also signaled his intentions, signing the anti-Comintern Pact. Facing mounting pressure to act, Neville Chamberlain travelled in October to Hitler's home in Berchtesgaden to convince the Führer to sign the Munich Agreement, a measure intended to appease the Nazis by offering them the territory they desired, and thus prevent yet another War. Within days Hitler had marched his troops into the Sudetenland, while Chamberlain promised Czech President Edvard Beneš that this slice of the Czech nation would appease the Germans. By March of 1939 Hitler had seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia. Despite Hitler's advances, support for a negotiated peace settlement with Germany remained high throughout 1939. Memories of the Great War of 1914-1918 lingered. The fields in Flanders remained decayed and shell-holed, the soil barely fertile enough to support fresh vegetation. The most important item on the international agenda to many seemed the avoidance of yet another bloody conflict.

In September 1939, however, the Allied powers ceded to the inevitable, and declared war. Britain's entry into the War on the second of September led the London-based International Executive of PEN to revise yet again its understanding of literature's mission to the world. PEN's 1933 Dubrovnik Congress, and the German Exile branches it helped spawn, had affirmed the right of members to speak

out to discard their “no politics” rule. If threatened, PEN conceded, writers could speak out against political impingement. Many Hitler émigrés suggested writers not only could but should defend literary values in the face of explicit persecution.

The leadership of the London branch took this conclusion one step further during the Second World War. Led largely by the English writer Storm Jameson, PEN International allied with the British Government to aid wartime refugees. PEN’s organizational practice received its second adjustment during the 1940s. During the 1920s, PEN considered itself a model of civility to politicians and diplomats. During the 1930s, writers stripped of their civil and political rights seized their prerogative to speak out forcefully against persecution. During World War II, PEN settled on an organizational model that would carry it into the post-War period. PEN allied for a brief period with an arm of the British Government to help refugees—but, PEN’s Executive assured members, only because genuine crisis had necessitated humanitarian intervention. Writers no longer needed to stand aside from politics, either silently or as critics. If circumstances warranted, they could become actively involved themselves.

Such an explicit alliance with the government still troubled some members. H.G. Wells used the episode in 1940 as a justification for withdrawal from the group, leaving Jameson to run PEN with the help of the Secretary, Hermon Ould. As members repeatedly questioned the motives of the English Executive, Jameson also faced a struggle with Wells’s replacement as International President, the French writer Jules Romains. A battle between Jameson and Romains in 1941 for control of International PEN reveals the degree to which concerns about integrity plagued the

group as it struggled to tread the fine line separating the political and literary spheres. Jameson and Romaines offered starkly different interpretations of the line between individual expression and communal responsibility. Both expressed their visions of the appropriate role of the writer using a shared discourse that emphasized the importance of “character.” Writers without character remained vulnerable to political persuasion—or worse, mere caricatures of literary ideals.

The concept of character also provides an interpretative tool to understand the anxieties that cut across PEN branches as the group negotiated wartime exigencies. Writers conceived themselves and their personal missions in theatrical terms. Both Jameson and Romaines plotted the War as an epic battle to save “civilization”, casting themselves as noble crusaders who would lead the world out of barbarity, while caricaturing their opponents as arrogant individualists. Despite their surface-level strife, however, writers’ shared use of such tropes underscores that PEN members shared more commonalities than they admitted.

Character functioned as both a descriptive device and an explanatory tool. Viewing the world through a literary lens, writers sometimes considered fellow club members characters they performed on the world stage created by the Republic of Letters. Yet character sometimes also served an explanatory function. Writers with “character” possessed highly-esteemed moral qualities or laudable ethical compasses. Most PEN members linked creative writing and the best of its practitioners—with their goal of expressing the essence of humanity—to the question all considered most at stake in the War: the fight to preserve civilization itself.

Refugees

World War II uprooted millions of people within a handful of years. By 1945, the number of people displaced by the war in Europe amounted to a staggering thirty million.²⁸⁶ While a significant number of those fleeing fascist-occupied territories travelled to the Americas or even as far as Australia, London became many peoples' new home—or their port of exit from Europe. Millions flooded the capital, and many remained throughout the war. Britain became, according to one contemporary observer, “a fascinating mix of nationalities and races.”²⁸⁷ London in particular seemed an entrepôt of different cultures, containing a variegated mixture of

French sailors with their red pompoms and striped shirts, Dutch police in black uniforms and grey silver braid, the dragoon-like mortar boards of Polish officers, the smart grey of nursing units from Canada, the cerise berets and sky-blue trimmings of the new parachute regiments, the scarlet lining of our own nurses' cloaks, the vivid electric blue of Dominion air forces, sandy bush hats and lion-coloured turbans, the prevalent Royal Air Force blue, a few greenish-tinted Russian uniforms and the suave black and gold of the Chinese navy...²⁸⁸

This passage sketches the sea of soldiers that flooded the capital. An equally variegated slate of intellectuals made Britain their home during the period. “The

²⁸⁶ Martin Conway, and Jose Gotovitch, *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain, 1940-45*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 12.

²⁸⁷ Conway and Gotovitch, 12.

²⁸⁸ Quoted in Conway and Gotovitch, 12-13.

arrival of... the talented”, in the words of V.S. Pritchett, helped “revive” London during wartime.²⁸⁹

This influx of foreigners triggered alarm in some. The British Government voiced concern at the potential for espionage. The Home office began to take precautions to limit the presence of a “fifth column” on British shores. The term “fifth column” dated back to the Spanish Civil War. In 1936 a radio address, Nationalist General Emilio Mola argued that as his troops approached Madrid, the four columns of his forces outside the city would be supported by a fifth column of supporters inside the city. This fifth column would help undermine the Republican government from within, Mola argued. In reality the “fifth column” proved to be weak, virtually nonexistent. While the term is perhaps best known to cultural historians today as the title of Ernest Hemingway’s only play,²⁹⁰ within Britain during the early stages of the war concern about a fifth column became the focus of widespread alarm. The desire to eradicate any trace of a fifth column within its borders led the British government to rounded up German-speaking nationals and send them to internment camps. The Isle of Man, which had hosted similar camps during World War One, became a virtual Kleindeutschland floating in the middle of the Irish Sea.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ V.S. Pritchett, *London Perceived*, Boston: David R. Godine, 2001 [1962]), 206.

²⁹⁰ Hemingway wrote the play “The Fifth Column” in 1938 play. It is included in the following anthology. Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The First Forty-Nine Stories and the Play the Fifth Column* (New York, Modern Library, 1942).

²⁹¹ A.W. Brian Simpson provides an overview of Britain’s internment policies during the First and Second World Wars, exploring both the polices and their legal justifications. A. W. Brian Simpson, *In the Highest Degree Odious: Detention Without Trial in Wartime Britain*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). See also Peter and Leni Gillman, ‘Collar the Lot!’: *How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees*. (London: Quartet Books, 1980).

Two prominent German-speaking PEN members numbered amongst the Isle of Man internees: Robert Neumann, who had founded the Austrian PEN-in-Exile branch in Britain in 1935, and Rudolf Olden, member of the German PEN-in-Exile branch. The internment of both Neumann and Olden triggered outcry among the PEN membership. The targeting of these two writers seemed outrageous given their records in relation to the Nazi regime. Neumann was known to be hated by the Reich for his outspoken criticism of Nazism.²⁹² Nazis had accidentally killed another man by the same name in their attempts to silence the writer, went the lore surrounding Neumann. Olden, a lawyer, journalist, and editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, had reported details throughout the early 1930s of illegal German rearmament. From London he had published a deeply critical biography of Hitler.²⁹³ Neither seemed likely members of a secret “fifth column” plotting against the allies from within British borders.

H.G. Wells headed a PEN-led effort to secure the release of Neumann and Olden. In an article in *Reynolds News* on 28 July, 1940 Wells, highlighted the

²⁹² A recent biography of Neumann provides the best overview of the range of his publications. Hans Waegner, *Robert Neumann: Biographie*. (München: Fink, 2007). Another recent study situates Neumann within the framework of Exile Studies: Anne Maximiliane (ed.), *Einmal Emigrant, Immer Emigrant?: der Schriftsteller und Publizist Robert Neumann, 1897-1975* (München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006). Neumann published his own autobiography in 1963: Robert Neumann, *Ein Leichtes Leben: Bericht über mich selbst und Zeitgenossen* (Wien: K. Desch, 1964). The novel of Neumann’s to receive widest circulation outside German-language speaking circles aimed specifically to convey the plight of civilians in Nazi-occupied Vienna to a worldwide audience. *Kinder von Wien* was translated into English in 1947: Robert Neumann, *Children of Vienna: A Novel by Robert Neumann* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1947).

²⁹³ Most of Olden’s biographies were translated into English. Rudolf Olden, *Stresemann*, Trans. R.T. Clark (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1930). Olden, *Hitler*, Trans. Walter Ettinghausen (New York: Covici, Friede, 1936). Hi biography of Hindenberg is only available in German: *Hindenberg: Oder, der Geist der Preussischen Armee* (Nürnberg: Nest-Verlag, 1948). During the war he was approached to Victor Gollancz to construction a version of German history to counter the fascist interpretation. That resulted in *History of Liberty in Germany* (London: V. Gollancz Ltd., 1946).

dangerous precedent established by the government's actions.

In this country, as in France before reaction threw aside all pretence, a deliberate and systematic intimidation of liberal-minded foreigners is going on.

...So that even while we are at war with the Axis Powers and their subjugated 'allies', people in positions of authority and advantage in this country are allowing the collection, internment and ill-treatment of all those disaffected subjects of our enemies who would be most willing and able to organize internal resistance in their own countries on our behalf...

Everything these people do is calculated to convince their victims who have sought our aid and protection.²⁹⁴

Under Wells's guidance, PEN lobbied the Home Office, providing samples of both Neumann and Olden's work, alongside character testimonies, as evidence of their innocence. PEN helped secure both men's release by the end of the summer.

PEN's success in these two cases, however, highlighted the plight of writers of lesser reputation who remained stranded in the camps. The episode, moreover, seemed just one small move in a much larger struggle to delineate the appropriate sphere in which PEN might help writers fleeing fascism. As PEN's policy on refugees developed, a schism opened between H.G. Wells and Storm Jameson, who became head of the English branch in 1939. Wells wished to guard against excessive collaboration with Government and political interests. Jameson believed the imperative to help justified any such alliances.

Jameson's position on the question of refugee aid may be partly accounted for by the evolution she had experienced in her political and ideological commitments during earlier involvement with both the socialist and the peace

²⁹⁴ Quoted in François Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens* (London: Harmondsworth, 1940), 87-8.

movements. Margaret “Storm” Jameson was born in Yorkshire in 1891. She took for herself the nickname borne by her sea captain father, himself born to a family ship-makers, as a mark of her life-long identification with the moody northern moors. During her eighty-year-long life she wrote forty-five novels, criticism under various pseudonyms, and three volumes of autobiography. Few read her work today, although her name began to circulate again in the early 1980s upon the reissuing by Virago of the last and most powerful version of her autobiography, *Journey from the North*. In it she charts her life story. She moves from north to south, from idealism, to activism, to cynicism. She proceeds from childhood in Whitby, to university in Leeds, then on to London to work as a publisher's agent and eventually writer, and finally to the Presidency of English PEN. At the end of her life she remarked that she should rather have been an academic, a History professor, had her ambitions not been stymied by the conventions of the day. In *Journey from the North* she looked back on her writing career with disgust. “It is laughably clear that Nature was no more eager to make me a novelist than the university authorities to make a don of me.”²⁹⁵ Some of her novels, peopled by cardboard social types enacting well-defined positions on the political issues of the day, support her sharp self-assessment. In *Love in Winter*, for example, Jameson conveys sympathy for a hopeful young socialist named Earlham (“Dreams! What dreams he had!”)²⁹⁶ after his politics cost him his newspaper job by likening him to “the Houses of Parliament” which loom through

²⁹⁵ Storm Jameson, *Journey from the North: The Autobiography of Margaret Storm Jameson* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 84.

²⁹⁶ Storm Jameson, *Love in Winter* (London: Capuchin Classics, 2009 [1935]), 105.

the London smog “like the towers of a mediaeval tale, certain to end badly.”²⁹⁷ The political and social choices made by her characters most interested Jameson.

Jameson had become a committed socialist since her teenage years, though she later admitted some embarrassment at having, along with others in her set, barely registered the General Strike of 1926. She joined PEN in 1932. By 1934 she began to argue that the International PEN should stand up to fascism. She took particular interest in Ludwig Renn, a left-wing writer and journalist, author of a novel called *Nachkrieg* about the Spartacist Rising, and a lecturer at the Marxist workers' school in Berlin. A vocal opponent of Hitler, Renn had been arrested in 1932 and charged with “literary treason.”²⁹⁸ While his persecution had first been raised at the Dubrovnik Congress, Toller's speech dominated everyone's memories. Jameson had argued that PEN should act to secure leniency for Renn. Wells, then the current President, refused to approve any letter from the organization itself, but urged Jameson to send one under her name, as he planned also to do himself under his own name. Jameson was, Wells pointed out, a committed pacifist. She must surely understand the inadvisability of PEN taking militant action on the Renn case, he reasoned. She had committed herself, in addition, as a founding member of the Peace Pledge Union, he pointed out. Jameson ceded this point to Wells.

Jameson, however, had been growing increasingly conflicted about her pacifism. The first volume of her autobiography, *No Time Like the Present*, was

²⁹⁷ Storm Jameson, *Love in Winter*, 107.

²⁹⁸ Renn's birth name was Arnold Friedrich Vieth von Golßenau. See Pavel Maksimovich Toper, *Ludwig Renn, Erich Maria Remarque: Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Volk u. Wissen, 1965).

greeted on its publication in 1933, somewhat to her surprise, as an outspoken anti-war polemic.²⁹⁹ In it she had written that if war broke out she would urge her son not to fight, because war does not advance socialism. What was needed was not war, but “a social order which does not require war as a solvent.”³⁰⁰ By the time Jameson joined the PEN Executive she had begun to rethink her orientation towards both pacifism and the pacifist movement. After the Dubrovnik Congress she began to have doubts, and after Hitler marched into the Rhineland in March 1936 she began to voice her misgivings. She blurted out at a dinner party that someone ought to assassinate Hitler. She recoiled in surprise at her own gut response. “Is this a way for a convinced pacifist to feel? Think woman, think,” she wrote to herself. “None of the others [seemed to]... remember I was a sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union... Then, I was absolutely certain that war is viler than anything else imaginable... Do I think that now?”³⁰¹ She decided she didn't. The time had come for her, and eventually PEN, to take a stand.

Jameson would begin to develop that stand over the coming years, through her novels, journalism, and PEN work. She remained, however, a member of the Peace Pledge Movement despite her change in opinion because she didn't want to “offend people” she “liked and respected”, friends and colleagues from London intellectual circles.³⁰² The discrepancy she admitted between her beliefs and her

²⁹⁹ Jameson, *Journey From the North*, 74..

³⁰⁰ Jameson, *No Time Like the Present* (London, Heinemann, 1933), 67..

³⁰¹ Jameson, *No Time Like the Present*, 75..

³⁰² Jameson to Ould, 9/15/1937, PEN Letters Recip., PEN Archive, HRC.

actual affiliations with the Peace Pledge Union underscored that fact that organizations with broad membership bases such as the Union and PEN existed not only as ideological but as social networks, held together by personal relationships. Indeed, her personal relationships with both Wells and Wells's successor as International President would suffer severe blows as PEN members struggled toward a consensus regarding the writer's appropriate response to the exigencies of War.

Wartime Action

The degree to which British PEN (and by association, International PEN, largely administered by the British) could and should aid refugee writers proved contentious. All members agreed on the necessity of providing some sort of aid. The question of how exactly to help proved the real source of contention. PEN asked its membership to make accommodations available if they could spare a room, to provide typewriters and the other writerly essentials, and to provide as much financial aid as they could manage. On this last question the PEN Executive soon became convinced of the need to fundraise more aggressively beyond the confines of its membership. Yet to whom should PEN apply for such help, using what kind of justification? With Jameson at the helm, the London branch began to lobby on three fronts. First it publicized the plight of writers. Then it tried to organize fundraising and shelter for refugees. Finally, PEN sought to provide social and cultural support. All three efforts proved inseparable.

Jameson personally sent letters of outrage ending with calls to action to the weeklies: *Time and Tide*, the *New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and others. She also sent letters to Winston Churchill and Brigadier General Spears. Refugees also urgently needed money. Modeled after the initiative organized during the Spanish Civil War, PEN established a Refugee Writers Fund and solicited donations from members in October 1938. The fund soon reached just over 1,000 pounds.³⁰³ Single people received grants of around twenty shillings and married couples received twenty-five. As numbers grew, however, this amount had to be halved. English PEN also collected and distributed typewriters and paper, and arranged housing where possible. Jameson was painfully aware of the potentially comic absurdity of these relatively small gestures of aid in the face of impending calamity. "I see before us a future of opening fund after fund, as one country after another goes down, until the moment when our own fate is so close that we go to the bank to draw out the last two shillings to buy ourselves a ticket to the moon."³⁰⁴

PEN acted in collaboration with a network of like-minded groups. It worked closely with the individual Exile branches based in London, in particular an overarching PEN-in-Exile branch set up by a Hungarian writer named Paul Tabori. PEN also worked with the newly established Arden Society for Artists and Writers in Exile in Europe, helping refugees settle into Britain. In addition, PEN also consulted the German exiles in America, who helped secure visas to the United

³⁰³ Jameson to Ould, 8/16/1941, English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

³⁰⁴ Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 10/13/1938, Jameson PEN Letters Recip., HRC.

States. Finally, PEN worked in alliance with the British Council, which itself worked closely with the Ministry of Information.

Not all of these groups shared an agenda, and PEN and the British Council in particular faced conflict as the Council, under its director Lord Lloyd, aimed to extend its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The British Council for Relations With Other Countries has been formed in 1935 “to promote abroad a wider knowledge of the English language, literature, art, music, science, educational institutions, and other aspects of our national life, and thereby to encourage a better appreciation of Great Britain and to maintain close relations between this and other countries.”³⁰⁵ A former ambassador to Paris, Lord Tyrrell, had initially been appointed its head. In 1937 Lord Lloyd, a Liberal-turned-Conservative MP, assumed the position as part of his duties as Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Council approached PEN in 1941 asking for help in determining the identities and allegiances of individuals interned within Britain. Any writers that PEN could prove had been unfairly interned, Lloyd promised, would be immediately released. In exchange, PEN could help provide translators to speak with the internees. Jameson considered this a chance to enter the camps and identify unfairly imprisoned writers. On behalf of English PEN, she agreed to avail the Council of PEN’s services.

Many other members, however, vociferously opposed the British Council alliance. Wells in particular objected. “The P.E.N. [is] in danger of losing its

³⁰⁵ “British Culture Abroad: New Council Formed” *Times of London*, 3/20/1935, 13.

independence and becoming the tool of the Council,” he warned.³⁰⁶ Jameson gave her “word of honour” that no such relationship was being established. Wells refused to accept her justification. “He then said that in the future he wished the P.E.N. to ‘include me out,’ as Sam Goldwyn is reported to have said,” the minutes record cinematically, concluding with the terse statement, “Mr. Wells then left the room.”³⁰⁷ Wells offered his formal resignation from PEN in 1942.

Jameson and Secretary Hermon Ould, in contrast, considered the alliance to provide PEN with important opportunities. They viewed the relationship with the Council as a chance to free “non-Nazi” individuals. While in the camp they might identify and release stranded PEN members themselves. This, in turn, would help them in relation to what they had hoped would be PEN’s most important wartime effort: providing aid to all refugees writers, not just those stuck in camps. By proving their commitment to active involvement in wartime initiatives, moreover, Jameson and Ould also hoped to win support for their newly established Refugee Writers Fund.³⁰⁸ They denied any intention to accept funds directly from government agencies. Instead, they hoped work in the camps would raise PEN’s profile. A higher profile might in turn encourage both the membership and the general public to contribute money to the Fund, which could then be funneled to needy refugee writers.

³⁰⁶ PEN Executive Committee Minutes, 10/10/1941. English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

³⁰⁷ PEN Executive Committee Minutes, 10/10/1941. English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

³⁰⁸ PEN Executive Committee Minutes, 10/10/1941. English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

PEN's efforts to locate interned writers and other "non-Nazis" were led largely by exiled Germans and others living in London. Jameson delegated this task to Robert Neumann and Rudolf Olden, given their personal experiences in the camps. Neumann and Olden posted signs in multiple languages, though mostly German, around the camps. The signs asked writers and anyone else who felt unfairly targeted to come forward and speak with PEN representatives. Various German-speaking members of the exile branch interested in the effort volunteered to travel north to the Isle of Man and speak with the prisoners. Neumann and Olden, following Jameson's leads, considered locating stranded writers to be PEN's central goal. They instructed the volunteers to spend a greater amount of time searching for those they deemed to be of the greatest service to literature.³⁰⁹ Searching for "literary" writers among the stranded somewhat darkly meshed with the PEN's longtime preoccupation with literary hierarchies.

The search for stranded writers linked back to PEN's activities in London. Back in the capital, English PEN was busy determining who exactly among its membership base most deserved a typewriter and a piece of the Refugee Fund. Though no lists or documents were made available to the membership, the ranking of refugees triggered even more vocal concern from Wells than the British Council relationship. Revealingly, however, rank-and-file members protested not the notion of ranking and categorizing people, but the fact that this served the government's interests more than it did literature. To assuage their concerns, Ould circulated a

³⁰⁹ PEN Executive Committee Minutes, 10/101941. English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

letter to the membership of all branches worldwide stating that “we the members of the English PEN call the attention of all centres to the fact that in the event of war... great pressure [is] put on writers to place their skill at the disposal of a government policy.”³¹⁰ The imperative remained, the letter concluded, “to remind members that their pledge forbids them to disseminate hatred... that they owe a duty to truth and reason and that if they allow truth to be destroyed and hatred to triumph they will be betraying their own countries, other countries, civilisation itself.”³¹¹ The statement formed just one of many appeals to the call of civilization that would come to dominate PEN rhetoric by the war’s end.

Within a year, however, Jameson decided that PEN’s activities in the refugee camps had triggered too much dissention to justify continuance—especially considering that the task of sifting through the camps in search of writers had been largely completed. Jameson declined the British Council’s suggestion that the two bodies meet to discuss further ways PEN might be of service. She turned her attention instead to organizing a Coming of Age Congress to be held in London in 1942 to mark PEN’s twenty-year anniversary. The Congress, she hoped, might provide some cohesion and common purpose for the writers from around Europe gathered in London.

Jameson’s decision to stage a Coming of Age Congress in London, however, elicited the ire of Jules Romains, who considered her initiative a challenge to his

³¹⁰ Hermon Ould to PEN Membership, 6/4/1940, English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

³¹¹ Hermon Ould to PEN Membership, 6/4/1940, English Executive Committee Meetings, 1941-1947, HRC.

status as International President. Romaines challenged Jameson's leadership. Their disagreement distilled and combined many of the themes that pre-occupied wartime PEN. Tensions between the English and French branches fueled a contest within PEN over definitions of both character and civilization. All members agreed PEN needed to rally to save civilization—and that a crusading writer needed true soundness of character to save the world from the brink of disaster.

The Battle of Europe

Jules Romaines, born Jean Henri Louis Farigoule in 1885, became one of the most famous writers in France during the 1920s and 30s. He was best known to popular audiences for his novel –issued in twenty-seven single volumes as part of an epic series – called *Men of Good Will (Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté)*.³¹² With *Men of Good Will* Romaines aimed at nothing less than encapsulation of the life of his entire epoch in one narrative. He had just finished volume fifteen when he assumed the PEN Presidency in 1937. His fiction plotted history as an epic struggle between good and evil. “Around the year 1935, all clear-thinking minds, in France, Germany, Europe, America, agreed in their estimate that another world war would be an immense cataclysm for civilization.”³¹³ The psychoanalytic perspective that was being popularized during the interwar period informed his analysis of the

³¹²P.J. Norrish, *The Drama of the Group: A Study of the Unanimism in the Plays of Jules Romaines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [1958]).

³¹³ Jules Romaines, *Open Letter Against a Vast Conspiracy*, Trans. Harold Salemsen, (New York: Heinemann, 1968 [1967]), 17.

Leviathan-like danger states posed to civil society. “There is nothing to protect a nation from the psychopathic behavior of its head, nor from the effects of his progressive megalomania.”³¹⁴ Romain’s plays, most notably *Knock, ou Le Triomphe de la Médecine*, continued to be performed on stages in France well after the war, though his reputation would plummet as that of the existentialists rose.

All of Romain’s works sought to embody the philosophy of *unanimism*, a term Romain coined in 1905 to describe the portrayal in literature of collective movements and feelings. With his volume-long poem of 1908 titled *La Vie Unanime*,³¹⁵ Romain emerged in France as the chief exponent of a psychological art that analyzed not individuals but groups. The study of groups of people drove Romain. He dubbed these groups “*les unanimes*.” When a number of individuals met, he argued, no matter how chance that encounter might be, if they remained together and began to *act* together, they became “something other than a certain number of men.” They transformed into “an individuality greater than their own, the individuality of the group.”³¹⁶ Unanimism expressed “a theory and ideal of collective life presented in a literary form.”³¹⁷

These groups, according to Romain, existed outside of and superior to individuals. His novels and plays explored above all the dynamics of crowds: crowds in streets, crowds in libraries, and that epitome of the crowd, the city itself.

³¹⁴ Romain, *Open Letter Against a Vast Conspiracy*, 17.

³¹⁵ Jules Romain, *Vie Unanime: Poème* (Paris: L’Abbaye, 1908).

³¹⁶ Romain quoted in Norrish, 4.

³¹⁷ Norrish, vii.

“Les unanimes” were, after all, a distinctive feature of modern civilization. Romaines hoped his work would propel people to greater collective consciousness: that fusion of souls which occurred when one joined what he termed “*un fleuve divin*”, the divine river. From there, group action, political or otherwise, required only one more step. While echoes of Durkheim can be detected here, Romaines denied any outside influences on work, insisting on the organic evolution of his ideas.³¹⁸

Romaines’s most decisive achievement as PEN President was the founding of the Maison Internationale in Paris. Drawing on personal connections with ministers of the Third Republic, Romaines solicited enough government funding to secure a property that would be able to offer temporary accommodation at a nominal cost to foreign writers passing through Paris.³¹⁹ “Paris is the intellectual crossroads of the world,” Romaines wrote to London, “it serves the PEN well to have a sheltering point at the place where all roads meet.”³²⁰ The Maison Internationale would be run by French PEN but should, Romaines informed the English, be considered the property of PEN International as a whole.

Some in London felt the establishment of the Maison represented a bid to undermine the centralized authority of the London Executive. The memoirs of Romaines’s wife, Lise, lend some support to this perception. “[My husband] had

³¹⁸ Norrish, 5.

³¹⁹ “Grâce aux relations plus que cordiales qu’il continuait d’entretenir avec les dirigeants de la IIIe République, il obtint sans trop de démarches une subvention assez importante pour l’installation des locaux, et la promesse d’une subvention annuelle pour leur entretien ultérieur.” English: “Thanks to the (more than) particularly cordial relations he had maintained with the leaders of the Third Republic, he managed to secure, without too much hassle, a subsidy significant enough to establish offices as well as the promise of an annual allocation later for their future maintenance.” Lise Jules-Romaines, *Les Vies Inimitables: Souvenirs* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 217.

³²⁰ Jules Romaines to International PEN Congress 1938, Russian repository, 19:1 IMEC, 20.

decided to tackle a great feat immediately. Besides, it was a project he had cherished for quite some time: the creation of an International House for the PEN Clubs in Paris.”³²¹ The house provided six rooms to lodge members of other PEN centers when they passed through Paris. It also boasted enough space to host “receptions on either a small or a grand scale, either sporadically or frequently, where our foreign hosts would have the opportunity to meet with French writers.”³²² The English executive agreed that the Maison Internationale benefited PEN International as a whole. Despite this, many speculated that the French wish to undermine English authority within PEN. Yet the Maison benefited PEN too much to warrant complaint, especially given that the project, funded entirely by the French center, cost them nothing. The Maison itself, however, ceased to function as a sheltering point after the Fall of France in May 1941, as Nazi troops assumed control of the property along with the rest of Paris.

In addition to the tension mounting in diplomatic circles outside of PEN, the personal relationship between Jameson and Romaines would begin to be tested at the PEN Congress in Prague in 1938. The decision to hold the Congress in Prague represented an assertion of solidarity across the battle-lines Hitler was already sketching across Europe. While the *Anschluss* had triggered the fall of Austria, at the time of the PEN Congress in mid-1938 Hitler was still discussing the future of the Sudetenland with Chamberlain. The Czech PEN Club greeted their colleagues from

³²¹ “[Mon époux] avait... décidé de réussir immédiatement un coup d’éclat. Il s’agissait d’ailleurs d’un projet qu’il caressait depuis longtemps; la création à Paris d’une Maison internationale des Pen Clubs.” Lise Romaines, 217.

³²² “...des réceptions plus ou moins brillantes, plus ou moins nombreuses, où nos hôtes étrangers auraient l’occasion de rencontrer des écrivains français.” Lise Romaines, 217.

branches around the world with hopeful expectancy. At this point International PEN included Britain, France and Norway as the strongest European contingents, and boasted centers in America, Australia, India and Japan. As Ould was to declare on the floor of the Prague Congress, “while there is no PEN Club in Russia or in Germany, no other countries of *importance* remain outside of our organisation.”³²³ Delegates from all of these branches attended the Prague Congress. In the garden room of the palace in Prague, the Czech PEN staged Shakespeare for the delegates from these “countries of importance” as a tribute to their “shared European” heritage. They devoted another session to discussion of Huxley's *Brave New World*—which, ominously, translated into Czech as *The End of Civilisation*.³²⁴

The International Executive, alarmed by the enthusiastic and hopeful welcome of the Czech Club, set the dampening of local expectations as its priority. The English contingent, united in embarrassment at Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, took the lead in speaking to local leaders. While H. G. Wells had handed the Presidential baton to Romain Rolland two years earlier at the Buenos Aires Congress, and at the same time stepped down from the English Presidency, he continued to play an active role. At the Prague Congress he accompanied Romain Rolland to talk to Czech President Edvard Beneš in private, where Wells steered the conversation toward warnings to Beneš not to trust too much in the promises of Chamberlain. Jameson spent her energies trying similarly to temper the hopes of

³²³ Hermon Ould, 1938 speech, in the Russian repository, IMEC.. my emphasis

³²⁴ Minutes, PEN Congress Prague, 1938. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

rank-and-file Czech writers on the Congress floor.

Jules Romains, in the meantime, devoted his time to crafting his Presidential address. While he deferred to Wells's British lead in negotiations, he aimed to appease all sides with his keynote speech. He refused, citing PEN policy, to use the office of President to back any explicitly State or national positions. He could understand that feelings of "*amore-propre national*" existed on all sides, he said. This did not mean, however, that members should do nothing. The thing they should do was whatever they themselves believed was the appropriate thing to do. To this end, he proposed a resolution:

The XVIth International Congress of the PEN asks all its members, acting with due regard to the situation of their country in view of events, to redouble their energies and good sense in favour of a better understanding and mutual respect between nations. The Congress asserts once again that the intellect must always serve the cause of peace, without which civilisation itself cannot exist... The Congress, voicing the widespread suffering in the world, addresses the strongest appeal to Governments... for the earliest possible restoration of peace in the countries now devastated by war and for its preservation at all costs in every part of the world where its existence is now threatened.³²⁵

With a level of diplomacy and tact worthy of a civil servant, Romains suggested a way forward which could be interpreted in whatever way the listener chose. From this point onward different branches interpreted this call to action—or as some, such as Jameson, asserted, this unassertive call to *consider* action—in different ways.

Romains himself began to formulate a position that, he argued, most protected the integrity of the European tradition. After the Nazis established

³²⁵ Jules Romains to International PEN Congress 1938, Russian repository, 19:1, IMEC, 20.

themselves in Paris, Romaines sailed for New York in July of 1941. From New York he fired off a missive that unambiguously laid out his competitive agenda. Under letterhead declaring himself to be the leader of “The European PEN in Exile”, he wrote to the London Executive informing them that he had left Europe for the New World, and had taken the PEN Presidency—and Executive authority—with him. An impressive list of American-based exiles lined the margins, notably Thomas Mann (whose name also graced the letterhead of the German PEN-in-Exile), Maurice Maeterlinck, and Stefan Zweig. The text itself referred to the fact that for “everyone, or almost everyone... the defeat of England is only a question of days, or weeks.”³²⁶ Europeans in New York needed to work preserve the voice and integrity of European culture.³²⁷ It was time, Romaines concluded, for PEN to stop pretending it stood above politics. PEN needed to act, and he was its man of action.

The Executive Committee in London replied by asserting both that England remained free and that it could indeed be considered “Europe.” Herman Ould replied to Romaines with a list of the continental European PEN groups based in London who disapproved of Romaines's words. Ould suggested that Romaines change the name of his New York center to The Group of European Refugee Writers in America. Jameson responded less politely. She expressed fury at what she felt was not only the personal salon-politicking of a vain man, but more fundamentally the assumption that Europe had been conquered—indeed, no longer existed.

Jameson decided, in reply to Romaines's claim to represent the voice of

³²⁶ Lise Romaines to Ould, 5/16/1941, PEN Letters Recip. European PEN in America, HRC.

³²⁷ Jules Romaines to International PEN Congress 1938, Russian repository, 19:1 IMEC, 20.

Europe-in-exile, to use her own voice quite literally to counter his assertions. She secured a special BBC broadcast, which was to be transmitted across the Atlantic for the ears of U.S.-based PEN members. On the auspiciously chosen date of July 4th she addressed American members. “We took a poor view of the speech M. Romaines delivered the other day in New York at the first dinner of the group. He said they were going to speak for Europe because Europe can no longer speak. Really?” She proceed using possessive pronouns that bordered on condescension,

You should hear our Czechs, our Poles, our Norwegians, our Catalans, our Germans and Austrians – not to make too much of the Scotch and the Irish we have always had with us. And not forgetting the English. And, he said, he and his colleagues had left us in order to speak, in our name, in a free land. It was a kind thought – but we speak, in our name, in a free land, in England. Still, at this moment, pleasantly situated in Europe.

And “you can believe me,” she concluded of her home country, “it *is* Europe.”³²⁸

Jameson would go on to develop this theme in her own novels, fleshing out characters who embodied what she deemed to be the “true” European soul. A true European possessed a triple allegiance: to locality, to nation, and to Europe itself. The French above all, she argued, had most successfully embraced this triple identity. Jameson glorified the French peasant in her post-War novels.³²⁹ But this did not mean that only a *French* man could speak on behalf of European culture. At a Congress in London in 1941 she argued that to be “European” meant to share a common culture and way of thinking that united everyone from Erasmus to

³²⁸ Storm Jameson, untitled radio transcript, July 4 1941, Series III, 9:5, HRC..

³²⁹ For example, her novels *Cousin Honoré* (New York: Macmillan, 1941) and *Europe to Let: The Memoirs of an Obscure Man* (New York, Macmillan, 1940).

Voltaire: “both are caught in the light of an intellectual impulse which is neither Greek, Roman, nor Judeo-Christian,” she explained to the delegates. “A Valéry, a Capek, a Rilke, have one language in common even when each is working miracles in his own dialect.”³³⁰ This common language did not need to be “preserved” in New York. London in 1941, she announced to the writers gathered before her, had usurped Paris as “the cultural centre of free Europe...functioning for the first time in its history as a European capital.”³³¹ By acting collectively to defy the will of Hitler, she informed the gathered delegates representing various centers-in-exile, they, not Romains, had made the most assertive political statement possible. Like “politics,” “Europe” proved a malleable concept. The race was on to see who could define and thus colonize it the quickest.

Romains, for his part, confined his efforts mainly to speech-making, the issuing of pamphlets, and a book tour he launched in 1940 to promote his work *A Frenchman Looks at America*. This can largely be attributed to the absence of a bureaucratic platform on which to build his activities. By early 1942, American PEN had essentially ceased to exist. In response to Romains's resolution from the 1941 Congress urging all centers to consider action appropriate to their domestic circumstances, Dorothy Thompson, Secretary of the New York branch, had circulated a survey to the American membership. The survey offered members three options:

³³⁰ Jameson, “Opening Speech of 1941 Congress,” Minutes, PEN Congress 1941. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

³³¹ Jameson, “Opening Speech of 1941 Congress,” Minutes, PEN Congress 1941. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC.

Do you want the PEN to make an official protest?
 Do you prefer to protest individually?
 Or do you want to protest officially as BOTH an individual and a member?³³²

Of the branch's 150 members a mere thirty-two responded to her survey, Only one wanted to protest personally; nine would support a PEN protest while also making their own appeals; and another nine wanted absolutely no part in European affairs.³³³ Unsurprisingly, given the fact that the membership almost exactly divided on this question, the American PEN branch ceased to meet by the end of the war. American PEN remained largely inactive until the early 1950s.

Romains attributed the Americans' lack of action to their disinterest in international affairs, a disinterest that he thought also explained American isolationism. Acceptance of Romains's interpretation would be both too easy and misleading. Many American members, such as Robert Nathan, Pearl Buck, and John Dos Passos, concerned themselves in different ways with the question of engagement, either through work with the WPA or in their own writing. Moreover, an isolationist stand on PEN represented for many a critique not of International PEN policies. It stemmed rather from a reaction against the domestic literary scene, especially what many had come to consider the stultifying influence of the Popular Front on creative work, which was pushing writing from realism into didacticism.³³⁴

³³² Dorothy Thompson to Jules Romains, 11/12/1941, Russian repository, IMEC..

³³³ American PEN Newsletter, May 1940. PEN American Center Archives, Princeton, C0760, I. Governance, Box 11/1.

³³⁴ See Richard Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

Regardless of the cause of American disinterest in PEN, however, the implications for Romaines remained the same: not only did New York lack a Maison Internationale to support his International Executive-in-exile, but his lack of political connections meant he would never be able to command the fundraising and organizational heft he could generate in Paris. After his initial declaration of the independence of the European PEN-in-Exile in America, the group existed on letterhead only. Money and connections, in the end, mattered more than words.

Yet with no financial or organizational heft behind him, Romaines had only his words, and his words were easily parodied. His speeches and writings continued to cause a ruckus, as both he and Jameson jockeyed to lead PEN. Jameson dubbed him a “petty, vain little man.”³³⁵ Romaines was a man of little integrity: he lacked sufficient character. *Time* magazine, perhaps taking its cue from her tone, reported on the last New York PEN meeting staged by the American branch before it disbanded. Romaines attended and delivered a polemic urging the Americans to trust in his capacity to lead them to action. *Time* parodied Romaines: “PEN President Jules Romaines is the short, high-browed, big-nosed author of *Men of Good Will*,” reported the magazine breezily, who, after “three days of... nuisance value finally roused the crowd to the revolutionary step of *passing a resolution*.”³³⁶ Back in London, Jameson gleefully clipped this article and distributed it to members of the Executive. Rebecca West advised Jameson and Ould not to dwell too much on

³³⁵ Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 5/5/1940, PEN Letters Recip, Pen Archive, HRC.

³³⁶ “Report on the 1939 PEN Congress”, *Time Magazine*, May 29 1939. Minutes, PEN Congress 1941. Series III., Box 3, Folder 3:10-11: International Pen Congresses, 1-11. PEN Archive, HRC. Emphasis original.

Romains's personality. "I do think that when we are dealing with M. Romains we are dealing with what is called 'a sad case,'" she responded. "It is more like the case of Poor Aunt Emily, who thought she was a poached egg and wanted to sit down, than an international tragedy, and I would beg you not to start witch-hunting."³³⁷ While sage, West missed the fundamental point of both Romains's politicking and Jameson's pillorying. Fights like these regularly punctuated PEN's history and became magnified due to the contenders' affinity for literary flourish and satire. Members were writers above all. They rarely let their skills languish. PEN was a stage, colleagues potential characters.

The Jameson/ Romains tension spoke to a larger dynamic that shaped PEN. Those who assumed its mantle of leadership were often aided in their endeavor by their facility for the manipulation of personal image, both their own and that of others. The individual cast in the starring role depended on whose memoir one consulted. Storm Jameson's gleeful pillorying of Romains's "abominable vanity" and "determination to make a Name for himself"³³⁸ must be understood in relation to the wider imperatives of image-management, acutely felt by most leaders. The author of no less than three distinct autobiographies, Jameson herself carefully burned the vast majority of her correspondence before she died.³³⁹

One might even argue that Romains, rather than engaging in what Jameson condemned as "salon politicking", principally sought to embody his theory of

³³⁷ Rebecca West, quoted, in Jennifer Birkett, *Margaret Storm Jameson: A Life* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009), 205.

³³⁸ Storm Jameson to Hermon Ould, 5/5/1940, PEN Letters Recip, Pen Archive, HRC.

³³⁹ See Jennifer Birkett, *Margaret Storm Jameson: A Life* (New York: Oxford University, Press, 2009).

unanimism: through his impassioned speeches to delegates he as an individual merged with the crowd, and the crowd in turn embodied “une existence globale et de sentiments unanimes,” a global manifestation of a universal will.³⁴⁰ If this was delusional, as West suggested, it was perhaps no more delusional than a politician who, in order to sustain the pace of electioneering, seems genuinely to believe the platform he propounds day after day, while many in the audience whisper that such an ambitious agenda could never be realized. To sustain his prolific and studied output—during the war, for example, he published a seven-part study for the *Saturday Evening Review* devoted to “The Seven Mysteries of Europe”, and wrote over twenty more books before his death in 1972—Romaines needed to believe in his cause. Jameson thought his cause was merely his own ego. A unanimist, however, believed the individual ego morphed into the collective will when the writer entered *le fleuve divin*.

Affirmation of this interpretation can be found in a speech Romaines delivered to the PEN Congress in Nice in 1952 entitled “Un essai d'une politique de l'esprit.”³⁴¹ As the title suggests, Romaines continued to argue well into the 1950s that his actions embodied the will of the entire PEN movement. He described his self-exile as an attempt single-handedly to preserve freedom of speech of the office of the PEN President, to win over American support, and to prevent the Nazis from destroying even more dossiers of French correspondence than they already had. He criticized

³⁴⁰ Romaines, quoted in Norrish, 4.

³⁴¹ Jules Romaines, “Un essai d'une politique de l'esprit,” Minutes, PEN Congress 1952. Series III., Box 4: International Pen Congresses. PEN Archive, HRC. Emphasis original.

his London-based colleagues who had, he asserted, blocked his calls for mobilization and refused to cooperate with him in New York. By not linking their hands across the Atlantic, he argued, the London group advocated neutrality. Well into the 1950s, Romaines maintained his claim to be the first PEN leader to have begun a program of wartime action.

A persistent strain of sexism also veined the exchange between Jameson and Romaines. In her remembrances of PEN, Lise, Romaines's wife—a former acolyte who had taken both of his names after her marriage, styling herself “Lise Jules Romaines”—disregards Jameson completely. Lise depicts Ould as the sole source of the English branch's ambitions. “Jules Romaines knew very well that he would constantly have to battle against the hostility of Hermon Ould,” she wrote decades later.³⁴² Ould, she announced, resisted the European PEN in America because “he had tacitly declared war on him [Romaines].”³⁴³ Yet Jameson served not just as PEN's leader during this period. She was Ould's chief confidant and advisor. “I hope you are surrounding yourself and David [Ould's partner] with ambassadors and/or their wives,” she advised the playwright at the height of the war, urging him to take time out for himself and his partner. “These [the ambassadors] are the people who ought to be given chances to mix with culture,” she advised Ould, recalling the 1920s generation's conception of the appropriate relationship between literature and politics.³⁴⁴ Lise even excludes herself from her account of PEN's history, despite the

³⁴² “Jules Romaines savait très bien qu'il aurait à se battre sans arrêt contre l'hostilité de Hermon Ould,” Lise Romaines, 217.

³⁴³ “il lui avait tacitement déclaré la guerre.” Lise Romaines, 217.

³⁴⁴ Jameson to Ould, 4/13/42, PEN Letters Recip., HRC.

fact that about one third of the letters from the European PEN in America arrived in London handwritten and signed by her.

Fixed gender roles both informed and were influenced by the depiction of the war as a struggle to save civilization. In 1940 H.G. Wells sent his “Declaration of the Rights of Man”—subtitled “What We Are Fighting For”—to the *Times*.³⁴⁵ “The history of the western peoples has a lesson for all mankind,” asserted the declaration. “We of the parliamentary democracies recognize... that time-honoured instrument of a Declaration of Rights... but now upon a world scale.”³⁴⁶ PEN officially endorsed Wells’s statement, which emphasized not only a western but a masculine worldview, with work being defined as access to a fair wage, and duty to the community built around a critique of conscription.³⁴⁷ Simone de Beauvoir’s treatise *The Second Sex*, published in 1949 largely out of this ideological context, provides some insight into Wells’s and Romaine’s conflation of humanity, mankind, and civilization with the masculine experience. “The fact of being a man is no peculiarity,” Beauvoir observed. “There is an absolute human type, the masculine... Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to

³⁴⁵ A final version was eventually published in the left-wing *Daily Herald* in February 1940. “The Declaration was translated into 30 languages and sold thousands of copies. A Penguin special, *The Rights of Man; or What We Are Fighting For?* by H G Wells, was published with a revised version of the “Declaration of Rights”. Wells sent a copy to his friend, President Franklin Roosevelt, and on 1 January 1942 the allied powers belatedly included the protection of human rights among their official war aims. After some further lobbying, this goal was reflected in the founding charter of the UN. See Francesca Klug, *Values for a Godless Age: The Story of the United Kingdom’s New Bill of Rights* (London: Penguin, 2000).

³⁴⁶ “The Rights of Man,” published serially in draft form in the *Daily Herald*, February 1940.

³⁴⁷ Minutes, English Executive Committee, 12/4/1942, PEN Archives, HRC.

him.”³⁴⁸ Wells, Jameson, and other PEN members, of course, never explicitly discussed sex or what we would now call gender. Jameson came the closest. Back in 1938 she had made a comment to Hermon Ould, after she was elected President of English PEN, that she had observed the grumblings of the men present. “I felt horribly sorry last night that I was a woman, thus bringing dissension into the Club by the hand of Henry Simpson and some others,” she wrote in a private letter to Ould. “I must work harder to remove this awful stigma.”³⁴⁹ Such observations remained, during this period, fodder for gossip and not for public consumption. In public, PEN leaders professed a common goal. Their shared imperative remained to carry humanity and civilization itself through the War.

The Jameson/ Romaines tussle ultimately borrowed its references from a long tradition of Anglo-French rivalry. Each side believed it displayed real character, and caricatured the other. The episode stemmed not just from a political struggle, but a competition between different systems of prestige and poles of cultural influence—from competing conceptions of civilization and humanity

Character and Civilization

Both Jameson and Romaines emphasized their sincere intentions, attributes of a noble character, while caricaturing their opponent. Both claimed they did so because of their fundamental concern to save Europe, and by association “civilization.” The notions of “character” and “civilization” were employed by PEN

³⁴⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 1989 [1949]), 49..

³⁴⁹ Jameson to Ould, October 12 1938, PEN Letters Recip., English Center, HRC..

members from a variety of national contexts, which suggests these concepts bore multiple and contested meanings.³⁵⁰ Yet the fact that PEN members exchanged these concepts in dialogue at international Congresses and in correspondence suggests they remained united by a certain level of consensus. The idea that civilization seemed particularly vulnerable during wartime seemed by this stage nothing new. Both the First and Second World Wars witnessed a dramatic uptick of discussions of and publications on civilization.³⁵¹ References to character, on the other hand, provide a way of critiquing its opposite—what had been dubbed “personality” by some during the 1920s.³⁵² Yet references to character also stemmed from a long rhetorical tradition which peaked in the nineteenth century. In response to the consolidation of the power of states and the expansion of laissez-

³⁵⁰ Scholarly explorations of the meaning of the concept of civilization range in emphasis, receiving attention from practitioners of the Annales School through to postcolonialism. See Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Knopf, 1962); Lucien Febvre, “Civilization: Evolution of a World and a Group of Ideas,” in Peter Burke (ed.) *A New Kind of History and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process*, Trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994 [1982]); Fernand Braudel, ‘The History of Civilizations: The Past Explains the Present’, *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), pp. 177–218; Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, ‘Note on the Notion of Civilization’, *Social Research*, 1971, 38, 4, 808–13; Bruce Mazlish, ‘The Origins and Importance of the Concept of Civilization’, *Civilization and its Contents* (Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 1–19; Johan Goudsblom, ‘Civilization: The Career of a Controversial Concept’, *History and Theory*, 2006, 45, 2, 288–97; Roland Robertson, ‘Civilization’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2006, 23, 2–3, 421–7; and Prasenjit Duara “The Discourse of Civilization and Deconcolonisation,” *Journal of Word History*, vol. 15, No. 1 (2004), 1-5.

³⁵¹ The number of tomes produced during the interwar years devoted in various ways to chronicling the career of civilization too vast to do justice to here. Some of the more notable contributions published during the course of World War Two alone include the following. Charles & Mary Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: Macmillian, 1947). Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1947); Albert Schweitzer, *Ethics and Civilization*, Trans. C.T. Campion (London: A & C Black, 1946); Harold Laski, *Faith, Reason, and Civilization: An Essay in Historical Analysis* (New York: The Viking Press, 1944); Bronislaw Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1944); Jacques Maritain, *Twilight of Civilization*, Trans. Lionel Landry (New York: Sheed & Warren, 1943); R. G. Collingwood, *New Leviathan: Or, Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942)

³⁵² See Warren Susman’s essay on the 1920s. Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

faire economic ideologies, cultivation of individual character suggested a means of retaining autonomy and individuality in both the private and civic spheres. Thus order and balance in society as a whole could be maintained. References to character performed a similar function to that which calls to maintain virtue had played in Eighteenth Century discourse. As the historian Stephan Collini notes

In both the language of virtue and the language of character there is a similar emphasis on the moral vigour of the citizens as the prime requirement for the health of the body politic...

Character was... an expression of a very deeply ingrained perception of the qualities needed to cope with life, an ethic with strong roots in areas of experience ostensibly remote from politics.³⁵³

The maintenance of character, moreover, became increasingly important competing conceptions of the role of the writer multiplied and different civilizational models clashed. "The growth of character is inherently tied to a situation of diversity," Collini concludes, adding that "Character was also bound up with reputation."³⁵⁴

References to character functioned as a common tool for PEN members. It offered another affirmation of the shared assumption that the appropriate role of the writer lay outside the political sphere. Simultaneously, the cultivation of a stable character (or, at the very least, a sound reputation) contributed to the health of civil society as a whole. Take, for example, this observation in 1941 by Alfred Kerr, the last head of the German center before his expulsion from PEN in 1933. When asked

³⁵³ Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 53 (1985), 42, 48.

³⁵⁴ Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought", 43.

for his predictions about the “future of European civilization”, his reply pivoted on assessments of Hitler’s character.

After the flight I met in Paris M. François-Ponet, the French Ambassador in Berlin, with whom my family and I had been on friendly terms for years.

I pointed out to him what not only we writers in Berlin had foreseen and foretold, but what even a modest little reporter in a German country town knew at that time—namely: the dreadful danger which Hitler meant for Europe.

In vain! François-Ponet persisted in repeating: “Hitler changera ses opinions—Hitler will change his opinions.” I answered: “But not his character!”³⁵⁵

If political leaders lacked character, it became incumbent on writers to cultivate their own. Discussion of personal character can also be read as a direct byproduct of discourses about civilization—at least according to Freud, both a commentator on and contributor to the sprawling early twentieth century literature about the decline of European civilization. Freud observed that to be “civilized” implied a division between appetitive and rational impulses. “Civilisation inhibits and renders harmless the aggression that constitutes part of the instinctive endowment of humanity.”³⁵⁶ Citation of this passage should not be read as part of a particularly psychoanalytic, let alone specifically Freudian, interpretation of PEN members’ motives during World War II. Rather, such examples help clarify the tangle of meanings implied by the use of terms like civilization, character, and humanity. According to the foremost historian of the civilizing process, Norbert Elias, the

³⁵⁵ Alfred Kerr, Speech, July 15th, 1941. PEN Letters Recip. German Centre, HRC.

³⁵⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, Trans. Jean Rivère (New York: J. Cape & H. Smith, 1930), 23..

concept of civilization had always implied strict division between the individual and the collective:

The moderation of spontaneous emotions, the tempering of affects, the extension of mental space beyond the moment into the past and future, the habit of connecting events in terms of chains of cause and effect—all these are different aspects of the same transformation of conduct which necessarily takes place with the monopolization of physical violence [by the state], and the lengthening of chains of social action and interdependence. It is called a ‘civilizing’ change of behavior.”³⁵⁷

Concerns about the stability of civilization peaked during wartime because the capacity for violence assigned to the state threatened to explode the diplomatic rules that supposedly kept these forces in check. In direct contrast to this potential for violence, the “habit of constructing events in terms of cause and effect”—the instinct, in other words, to construct narratives—was a hallmarks of “civilization”.

Both Jameson and Romaines ritualistically repeated their narratives of the 1940s Anglo-French PEN struggle. They plotted the episode into cohesive narratives, casting themselves as protagonists at its heart. As late as 1952, in response to a speech Romaines delivered in Paris recounting the event, the London office prepared a memo chronicling every episode in the fight, typed out as a three page long timeline. By constructing stories about themselves and their organization, PEN members sought to embody the very ideal of civilization they believed the war challenged. As the Second World War escalated, both Jameson and Romaines aimed to be PEN’s chief story-teller—a role PEN members took to be the pinnacle of civilized culture.

³⁵⁷ Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process*, 236.

In September 1941, immediately after the Jameson-Romains episode, the London PEN Centre staged its “Coming of Age” Congress. The event’s subtitle, “Literature and the World after the War”, demonstrates the ambitions of the gathering: nothing short of pulling PEN through the crisis in order to ferry literature into the future. In the absence of Romains, former President H.G. Wells suggested the Presidency be declared vacant, and that its functions be fulfilled by an International Committee. The gathered delegates, who represented most of the exile groups based in London as well as the local English branch, agreed to the nomination of Wells, Thornton Wilder, and Denis Saurat.³⁵⁸ This English-American-French ticket presumably represented, to quote Ould's statement at the Prague Congress the year before, all of the “important” nations. The Chinese writer Hu Shih, then living in London, later received a nomination.

This committee hardly functioned in practice, however, considering its members lived in different places. Jameson, though officially only head of the English branch, effectively stepped into the vacuum and served as International President during this period.³⁵⁹ The Executive, including Jameson herself, decided to retain the chorus of famous names at the top of the letterhead despite the fact that Jameson performed all executive duties. The importance of an assertive letterhead remained crucial throughout the war, the group decided, particularly as

³⁵⁸ “Report on Jules Romains,” 7/8/1952, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, November 1946- March 1951, Box 19, PEN English Centre, HRC.

³⁵⁹ While Jennifer Birkett has dubbed Storm Jameson the first woman President of PEN, this designation is false. While Jameson did effectively run PEN out of London during the second World War, she actually served as English branch President, while Jules Romains continued to claim the title of International PEN President. Jennifer Birkett, *Margaret Storm Jameson: A Life* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009).

the conflict escalated and more and more funds needed to be raised to aid refugees. The presence of an English, American and French name at the top of the letterhead suggested to the world that the three centers that had dominated PEN before the war remained united—affirming, by association, the continued unity and very validity of the European civilization.

Indeed, discussion of civilization dominated the Coming of Age Congress. No fewer than fifteen prominent members delivered speeches depicting the war as an epic battle between good and evil. “We writers,” as Olaf Stapleton said, “all accept the supreme value of *something* which some of us vaguely call the integrity of the spirit... The time has come for the genuine writers to get together as a body to clarify their apprehension of this supreme object of their loyalty.”³⁶⁰ That “something” seemed to be a definition of civilization expressed the foremost concerns of particular individuals. Romains, for example, would define it as the right “to maintain France's right always to be part of the free world... [to ensure] the old mother of civilisation was... still quite strong.”³⁶¹ In an article Jameson wrote for the *TLS* in the middle of the war, she began by noting the traditional role of England and France had always been jointly to defend civilisation. But, she said, she was beginning to refine her conception of shared values as “the reflection of a precise idea of human *dignity*.”³⁶² Be it based on “integrity” or “dignity”, the 1942 Coming of

³⁶⁰ Stapleton was quoted in an unsigned and undated letter to Rosamund Lehman. Rosamund Lehmann Papers, Folder: Letters re: PEN International, King’s College, Cambridge.

³⁶¹ Romains, *A Frenchman Examines His Conscience*, 9, 13.

³⁶² Storm Jameson, “Fighting the Foes of Civilization: The Writer’s Place in the Defence Line”, *TLS*, 7/10/1939, Issue 1966, 571.

Age Congress announced PEN's authority, promoting its ability to transmit humane values from the pre-War world into the post-War period.

Conclusion

PEN's wartime activities, ultimately, established three key precedents that united to form one overarching conclusion, a new orientation that would lead PEN into the post-War period. First, in relation to refugees, London PEN affirmed the conclusion the group had reached after 1933: writers should stand up for themselves if literary values were threatened. In 1941 PEN went one step further, allying with the British Council in an effort to help foreigners unfairly detained in internment camps. This move caused such discomfort for some members, leading to H.G. Wells's resignation. Storm Jameson, similarly, ended the alliance when PEN's involvement no longer seemed to serve purely humanitarian ends. Alliance with external bodies, PEN concluded during this period, could only be sanctioned on humanitarian grounds.

Second, as the struggle between Jameson and Jules Romains ultimately affirmed, the type of person best suited to deliver this humanitarian message tempered his or her own individualism. He or she emphasized collaboration, and the ability to work towards a common goal. The ideal writer, in short, possessed sound character. Third, this soundness of character spoke to PEN's understanding of the writer's role. The writer had a duty—implied by the very nature of being a writer—to save civilization. At the heart of this conception of civilization lay a

separation of the affective and the rational, of art and the state, and of the writer and politics. PEN's practice changed during this period—John Galsworthy, for example, would never have worked with the British Council—but its values remained the same. Members still worked to affirm that an autonomous literary sphere, the hallmark of the civilized society, should be preserved. Together, these conclusions allowed PEN to embrace a more interventionist role in world affairs. They also underscored its commitment to the independence of the artist and the autonomy of the literary sphere.

PEN's success at adapting its ideals to a changing material context speaks to the fact that writers' concerns about humanitarianism, character and civilization were shared by the wider culture. Around the time of the Coming of Age Congress in London, a photograph was taken of the ruins of Holland House, a Jacobean manor in Kensington in West London that boasted an extensive library. The House was bombed in October of 1940, and the Fox Photos Photographic Agency sent one of its best men, a photographer named Harrison, to the site to capture the landmark in ruins. Harrison arrived to find the library already back in use.³⁶³ His shot captured a handful of men, their hats held high, who had climbed over the rubble to help themselves into the collection. There they stand, peacefully browsing—one absorbed in a book—each isolated from the other yet united in their seemingly oblivion to the noise and clamor of the war.

Any wartime picture intended for press circulation first had to pass the scrutiny of the government's wartime Press and Censorship Bureau. The Bureau

³⁶³ Email from Hulton Archive curator Sarah MacDonald to Megan Doherty, 1/5/2011.

typically sat on pictures for months, but, unusually, released this image almost immediately. A hungry market existed for symbols of tenacity, and the image soon became emblematic of Londoners' legendary resilience and bravery during the Blitz. Hulton released the image on October 23, 1940, and began almost immediately



Figure 5: “Keen Readers”, 10/1/1940, Image #2672731, Hulton Archive, London.

to sell its reproduction rights, as printers turned the image into a poster.³⁶⁴ The poster then began to circulate internationally an emblem of wartime resilience. That emblems of literary culture—of libraries, of books, of reading itself—should stand

³⁶⁴ Email from Hulton Archive curator Sarah MacDonald to Megan Doherty, 1/5/2011.

as visual shorthand for the perseverance of humanity required no translation.

Belief in a cosmopolitan humanism fueled Storm Jameson through the 1940s. Exhausted with her lobbying efforts by the end of war, Jameson became less and less involved with PEN as the 1950s progressed. PEN, and literary London itself, likewise became less interested in her, she noted bitterly in her autobiography. So why did she remain a member until her death, often asking the Executive to ameliorate her poverty and scrounge up the fare to fly her to International Congresses, a courtesy she felt her due as a past President? “The International PEN seems a frail thread, but it has outlasted two wars,” she reflected. And yet “it's stronger than anything else I see. It's the only international network that now holds.” Besides, she added with a hard edge, “We believe in something, or we die.”³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Jameson, *The Writer's Situation and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 27.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE RIGHT TO WRITE
1945-1961

By 1961, PEN institutionalized the practice many consider to be its hallmark to this day: that a writer must be guaranteed the right to write. The group broached this conclusion in earlier periods. Resolutions and speeches at the 1933 Dubrovnik Congress had protested Nazi persecution. The efforts of the International Executive, led by Storm Jameson, to aid refugees during the World War II affirmed that PEN should help those in need. In both these instances, however, members felt compelled to justify their actions. Both these earlier episodes also occurred under conditions of crisis. During the post-War period, in contrast, PEN embraced humanitarian lobbying as one of its defining characteristics. PEN institutionalized humanitarian activism in concert with other groups that also turned towards humanitarian discourses after the War. The United Nations began its life in 1945. PEN formally allied with UNESCO, the UN agency created to administer international cultural and intellectual affairs, in 1946. Discussion of rights began to replace references to civilization after World War II.

Yet while their terms of reference began to change, at PEN meetings members discussed topics which remained, at base, almost indistinguishable from those of the pre-War period. Three issues illustrate both PEN's changes and its continuities. First, in 1947, came the question of whether and how to readmit the German PEN Center. Discussion of this topic unfolded until the early 1960s. German-speaking exile groups asserted their right to continue functioning abroad,

while a German branch within the German state itself was reestablished—only to split into two in 1951 as the Cold War escalated. Second, members accepted that a state of permanent exile formed part of the writer's condition. The Hungarian writer Paul Tabori, head of the Writers-in-Exile branch in London, most centrally articulated this position. Living in a state of exile heightened a person's capacity for empathy, he argued—a perspective he used to explain why PEN need not offer any justification for its intervention on behalf of writer Tibor Déry during the 1956 Hungarian uprising. Tabori's efforts to aid Hungarian writers led to the final key aspect of PEN's post-War humanitarian shift: the establishment of its Writers-in-Prison Committee in 1961.

PEN's embrace of humanitarian discourses allowed it to assimilate during peacetime the type of political interventionism that had provoked such controversy earlier without losing its apolitical credibility. The Writers-in-Prison Committee would soon grow into PEN's most visible apparatus, allowing it to claim a place within the growing fold of humanitarian NGOs all lobbying for influence during the early Cold War period. Yet this shift did not mean PEN had abandoned the values that had guided it from 1921. PEN worked above all to affirm the universality of the human experience.

The Heritage of Humanity at Large

PEN's embrace of the language of humanitarianism during the early Cold War period is best understood within the wider political context of the post-War period.

The ending of the Second World War gave rise to a range of new internationalist organizations. While many still considered the League of Nations a failure, most contemporaries located the fault with the League's execution, not with the idea of supra-national governance itself.³⁶⁶ Talk of recreating a new international governing body began soon after the onset of World War II.³⁶⁷ The term "Declaration by United Nations" was coined by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt on January 1st, 1942, when representatives from twenty-six Allied nations affirmed their alliance against the Axis Powers.³⁶⁸ Political leaders from the United States, Britain, China and the Soviet Union met at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944 to plan the new organization. In 1945, two months after the capitulation of the Axis Powers, representatives from fifty nations met in San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter. Historians have noted that the UN transmitted the unresolved tensions of Empire as a source of world order to the post-War world, that it embodied above all a realist acceptance of great power hegemony and the acknowledgement that struggle for minority rights had failed in the inter-war

³⁶⁶ The notion that the League of Nations had "failed" began to be revised in the 1980s. See Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations", *AHR*, 112:4 (October, 1997), 1091-1117 for a summary of the historiography. Pedersen notes that "International systems for combating or managing epidemic disease, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, refugees, and a host of other problems were found to have originated in or been furthered by conventions hammered out under the auspices of the League of Nations," and that "If one considers its work in stabilizing new states and running the minorities protection and mandates systems, the League appears as a key agent in the transition from a world of formal empires to a world of formally sovereign states. By contrast, if one notes its efforts to regulate cross-border traffics or problems of all kinds, it emerges rather as a harbinger of global governance" (1091-2).

³⁶⁷ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). See also A.W. B. Simpson, *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁶⁸ Charles I. Bevans, *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949. Volume 3. Multilateral, 1931-1945*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 697.

period.³⁶⁹ Yet the Preamble to its Charter spoke of “mankind”, “human rights”, and the “human person”, rhetoric which many PEN members took seriously.

Almost immediately the UN began to form a range of subsidiary bureaucracies to work within certain subject areas. The UN’s cultural and intellectual apparatus, The United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), began operations in 1946.³⁷⁰ Unlike its predecessor, the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), which faltered within five years of its creation by the League in 1922 from lack of funding, UNESCO was apportioned its own budget.³⁷¹ UNESCO’s relative strength compared to the League’s ICIC stemmed largely from the motivation of its backers. In 1942 a group of government ministers and bureaucrats from the Allied powers met in Britain at the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) to discuss ways of reconstructing their educational systems after the war. The group affirmed, to quote their founding statement, “the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.”³⁷² The members of CAME argued that the stability of the international

³⁶⁹ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*.

³⁷⁰ Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley. *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

³⁷¹ Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation; the League Experience and the Beginnings of UNESCO* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962).

³⁷² UNESCO’s charter and sense of its own self-perception can be found in Roger-Pol Droit, *Humanity in the Making. Overview of the Intellectual History of UNESCO 1945-2005* (Paris: UNESCO, 2005). Academic studies of UNESCO have tended to specialize on specific policy areas, such as this treatment of social science: Peter Lengyel, *International Social Science, the UNESCO Experience* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1986). Other studies have examined the organization from the perspective of one particular region, such as this one on Switzerland: Walter Schöni, *UNESCO: Krise der westlichen Hegemonie: staatliche Kulturkonzeptionen und die politische Rolle der Schweiz* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1988). The most synthetic study is Clare Wells, *The UN, UNESCO, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Basingstoke, Hampshire : Macmillan, 1987).

system hinged on the degree to which member states shared a cultural infrastructure. Reconstruction of that infrastructure after the war, they argued, should be the first shared priority of postwar governments. After the war's end, the members of CAME formed their own international organization in 1945. The newly formed United Nations offered them funding. In 1946, the UN incorporated CAME into its fold and renamed it UNESCO.

The UNESCO Charter affirmed that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”³⁷³ Over the coming decade the UN and its allied bodies issued charter after charter affirming the commonalities that linked the “minds of men”. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights was signed in 1948. By the early 1960s, as the Cold War heated up, human rights were dissected into two separate International Covenants: one concerning Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the other Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).³⁷⁴ Here was a version of the division, enshrined in international law, of the separation PEN had long maintained between the political and cultural spheres.

The manner in which the UN adopted what became UNESCO—namely, by surveying the institutional landscape and simply incorporating preexisting groups—resembles the relationship UNESCO, in turn, formed with cultural organizations such as PEN. UNESCO set out with a brief in 1946 to organize and

³⁷³ The UNESCO Constitution can be found at www.icomos.org/unesco/unesco_constitution.html (accessed 2/18/2011).

³⁷⁴ This division is discussed in A. Eide, “Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as Human Rights,” in: Eide, Krause, and Rosas (eds). *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Textbook* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 9–28.

coordinate relations between the various branches of cultural life around the world.³⁷⁵ In early 1947 it issued press releases announcing its intentions to hold an international conference. Representatives from relevant cultural bodies, it advised, should apply to attend.

PEN became aware of this conference in the same manner as the general public: through UNESCO's press releases. The lack of special attention irked the group. A New York-based American playwright named Manuel Komroff, staying at the time in London, volunteered to travel to Paris on behalf of PEN. A sense of PEN's self-image is conveyed by the report Komroff sent back to the London Center:

We were invited to a Congress of International Organizations and I had the honor and distinction to be chosen to represent you. Everything looked fine and I was prepared to ask the U what kind of a peace they could expect if the writers of the world were excluded!

But, alas, arriving on the appointed day, I found that we were one of a hundred delegates and that most of the others represented the YMCA, YWCA, Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women, Women's Clubs, Apostleship of the Sea, etc etc.

At a glance you can see that morally and spiritually we did not belong in this group. At once my duty was clear. The first task was to tactfully and without offence, disentangle the PEN from the above mentioned mob...³⁷⁶

Komroff's sensitivity about a taint of booster-ish associationalism throbs from the pages of his report. His reflections highlight the degree to which PEN still struggled against the middle-brow image that had plagued it since the reign of Sappho. PEN needed to be recast as a substantive international body, and literature as something

³⁷⁵ Wells, *The UN, UNESCO, and the Politics of Knowledge*, 21.. William R. Pendergast, "UNESCO and French Cultural Relations, 1945-1970, *International Organization*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Summer, 1976), 453-483.

³⁷⁶ Manuel Komroff to Hermon Ould, 4/28/1947. English PEN Archives, Letters Recip., 1947.

more profound than the interests of women's and Christian groups. Komroff immediately set to work. He produced a précis of PEN's values for the heads of UNESCO.

A few simple facts:

That writers of the world are close to the hearts and intellectual well-being of the people in their lands.

That if wars are made in the minds of men, then peace can endure only if the minds of men are prepared to accept the ideals of the greater humanity

That writers by profession are engaged in the art of communication. They are articulate and speak the language of their people.

That nothing man can build will outlast a good book.

That the dark regions of the world are not reached by radio or press but are reached by the writers of the lands.

That writers are master of their language and that many of these languages are difficult and rare.

That long before the United Nations organized, the writers of the PEN served their people as a sort of little United Nations.

That literature is international. A murderer in New York is just as loathsome as a murderer in Paris or Moscow or Cairo or Bombay. And a lovable character is loved the world over.³⁷⁷

Despite—or perhaps because of—the twee references to “loveable” characters and “a little United Nations”, Komroff's appeal proved effective. “They want us,” he

³⁷⁷ “A Few Simple Facts,” document produced on 4/24/1947 for distribution at the 1947 Paris PEN Congress. Included with letter from Komroff to Ould, 4/28/1947. English PEN Archives, Letters Recip., 1947.

reported to Hermon Ould in April 1948: “They want us badly.”³⁷⁸ PEN had been invited to serve as the official representative to the UN on all literary matters, he wrote triumphantly. Yet this fact should remain quiet, he advised. The UN and UNESCO wished to be seen as the initiators of all such alliances. Komroff explained to Ould that

The UN would not like to have it known that they appealed to us. The many moves required since February, when we came in as one of a hundred, to first disentangle ourselves from commercial bodies and then from good moral institutions... need not at this time be gone into. A good chess game would not have had less moves. The result is all that counts...

It is hoped that in time our working arrangement and influence in the UN will be extended. At present a small beginning is all we can manage. UN would be willing to take more and also give more.³⁷⁹

Komroff’s statement points to the two bugbears that were as the anathemas of post-War PEN: commercialism and sentimental moralism. PEN proffered a version of literature liberated from the imperatives of commercial markets. Most important, from the perspective of its relationship with the UN, it offered an impartial secularism and professional authority unavailable to groups with movement-ethos. In 1946, PEN became an “official adviser” to UNESCO on all “international literary matters.”³⁸⁰ UNESCO chose PEN as the voice of international letters simply because PEN asserted that it *was* the voice of international letters. Its claim went

³⁷⁸ Manuel Komroff to Hermon Ould, 4/28/1947. English PEN Archives, Letters Recip., 1947.

³⁷⁹ Manuel Komroff to Hermon Ould, 4/28/1947. English PEN Archives, Letters Recip., 1947.

³⁸⁰ Letter, David Carver to UNESCO, 5/27/1953. Box 1564, CA 601/1, 706.230.12, UNESCO

uncontested because no other international writers' groups existed.³⁸¹

PEN also appealed to UNESCO because the groups shared similar values. PEN had begun to formulate a professional identity that cast writing as a human right during the War. The PEN Congress of 1942 had resolved to fight against “anti-Semitism... authoritarianism, the suppression of free speech and nationalism.”³⁸² From there only a small step might lead to a complete revision of the charter. This was proposed at the Stockholm Congress of 1946 and approved at the Copenhagen Congress of 1948 (see Appendix I). The new charter deleted references to “good understanding” and “mutual respect”, replacing them with an expanded fourth clause delineating writers' human rights:

The P.E.N. stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression and freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong. The P.E.N. declares for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace. It believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organized political and economic order renders a free criticism of government, administrations and institutions imperative. And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.³⁸³

PEN now existed as an international organization, suggested the new charter, not simply because literature was “an Art that transcended national lines”, but because

³⁸¹ Internal Memo: Establishment of an International Council of Arts and Letters, UNESCO. Undated. Box 1564, CA 601/1, 706.230.12, UNESCO.

³⁸² Hermon Ould, Speech at the 23rd International P.E.N. Congress in Lausanne, 1951. Box: 23rd Congress Lausanne, PEN Archive, HRC.

³⁸³ Revised Charter draft, Stockholm Congress, 1946. Folder 1: International PEN Congress at Stockholm, 18. PEN Archive, HRC.

writers had a duty to oppose “arbitrary censorship in time of peace.” The post-War PEN, this new charter suggested, would function to protect personal and collective liberties. How exactly members were to enforce this resolution had yet to be determined.

While PEN had ingratiated itself into the UNESCO fold, it soon became UNESCO that dictated PEN’s agenda. The Paris-based organization noted PEN’s Eurocentrism, and asked the leadership to fix this problem. PEN’s leadership, however, remained diffuse after the war. While Maurice Maeterlinck became President, replacing the ad hoc committee that had barely functioned during the war, the paid part time administrator Hermon Ould ran the group in reality. Yet Ould’s health was failing, and he spent less time on PEN matters from the end of the War until his death in 1951. PEN business was conducted largely at International Congresses, with little follow-through afterwards. In response to the UNESCO suggestion, the Stockholm Congress of 1946 resolved that the International Executive Committee should in the future consist of members from outside the English, French, American and “other such branches that figured at congresses.”³⁸⁴ Few new branches joined PEN after the war. The group needed to resolve questions of loyalty that lingered from the War.

³⁸⁴ Minutes of the informal meeting of the IEC, 7-8 March 1946. International PEN Congress at Stockholm, 15. PEN Archive, HRC.

The German Question

After Armistice was declared in Europe in August of 1945, the International PEN Executive in London set out to determine which PEN branches were in a position to reconstitute themselves. Ould and Jameson called a meeting of the International Executive Committee at the Rembrandt Hotel for the New Year to record the status of various branches. The list of members who attended the Committee meeting, held in March of 1946, already gave a sense of which branches would most quickly revive. In attendance sat Denis Saurat of France, Henri Membre also from France, the German writer Alfred Kerr, and Hermon Ould.³⁸⁵

Ould read aloud the status of various centers. The Belgian, French, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech and Norwegian branches were all up and running, he reported. The Italian center had just reformed with Ignazio Silone as President, the Polish branch with Jan Parandowski at its helm. Portugal was still in the process of regrouping. Spain proved yet more complicated. The most active Spanish writers in PEN had always been Catalanian, and they voted to retain their Catalanian center in London instead of helping to reestablish a new center in Spain. PEN approached the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to inform the Russians that “we should welcome a Centre in Russia,” though a Russian Center did not form.³⁸⁶ Germany’s future, Ould concluded, remained most uncertain.

³⁸⁵ Minutes of the informal meeting of the IEC, 7-8 March 1946. International PEN Congress at Stockholm, 15. PEN Archive, HRC.

³⁸⁶ Minutes of the informal meeting of the IEC, 7-8 March 1946. International PEN Congress at Stockholm, 15. PEN Archive, HRC.

Like the larger question of reparations being debated in diplomatic circles, PEN discussed reconstitution of the German Center with reference to the lessons of World War I. Many blamed the harsh economic reparations imposed on Germany after 1918 for the hyperinflation of the Weimar period, leading to the desperate economic conditions that, some argued, had left Germans vulnerable to Hitler's retributive nationalism. After the Second World War, the Potsdam conference of August 2, 1945 required Germany to repay Allied powers with machinery, manufacturing plants, and the forced labor of prisoners-of-war, instead of money itself. As entire industrial plants were dissembled in Germany and carried west for use in France, Britain, and other places, diplomats and economists were drawing up plans for Germany's economic reconstruction. In 1947 Senator George Marshall proposed what would eventually become known as the Marshall Plan. The plan would funnel billions of American dollars and products across the Atlantic over the following five years, laying the economic and political foundation for the Western alliance of the Cold War.³⁸⁷ The stability of the post-1945 world would be best secured by an economically reconstructed, capitalist Germany.

PEN's discussions about German writers took their cues from the diplomatic world. A reconstituted German Center, many agreed, would most benefit PEN as a whole. At first, however, some members had argued that Germans be excluded. The French writers, raw from having experienced Nazi occupation, tended to advocate

³⁸⁷ From necessary reconstructive aid to an attempt by the Americans to establish hegemony in Europe, historians' still contest the status of the Marshall Plan. Dian B. Kunz provides a helpful overview of the historiography in "The Marshall Plan Reconsidered: A Complex of Motives," *Foreign Affairs*, 76:3 (May-June, 1997), 162-170. See also Kunz, *Butter and Guns: America's Cold War Economic Diplomacy* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

this position. Ould and Jameson thought this stance too extreme. To appease the French they proposed in 1946 that the Germans who had remained inside Germany be banned from discussion of German reintegration.³⁸⁸ This meant that the likes of Feuchtwanger or even the venerable Thomas Mann, if he was so inclined (he was not), could participate in the talks, while writers like Erich Kästner were excluded. Kästner found this stance offensive, and requested a seat at the negotiating table. Ould finally relented.

A special meeting to discuss readmission of German PEN was held adjacent to the Zurich Congress of 1947. Kästner and fellow writer Johannes Tralow were to travel to Zurich as representatives of the portion of Germany that had remained loyal to the “true” German nation—the inner emigrants, those who had refused to collaborate intellectually with the Nazis despite remaining within the Reich. Transportation problems delayed their arrival, much to their consternation and the delight of their opponents. While Kästner and Tralow rushed to attend the meeting, French writer Henri Membré urged Ould to begin the session without them. PEN, argued Membré, should simply follow the allied model and start four separate German PEN centers in each of the new post-War military zones. PEN should invite German writers who had stayed in London or America during the war to return to Germany to head up each of these new branches.

When Kästner and Tralow finally arrived at the Zurich meeting, they expressed frustration at Membré’s proposal. They had already established a PEN

³⁸⁸ “Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International P.E.N. Club, held on the 2nd of June at the Congress-House, Zurich,” 6/2/1947, International Congresses, 12-17: Zurich, PEN International Archive, HRC.

meeting in Munich, they protested: that Center should rightfully serve as the voice of the new post-War German PEN.³⁸⁹ In the end, the Executive established a committee to debate the matter, comprised of the following writers:

Eulenberg (English)
 Becher (Russian)
 Leip (English)
 Fr. Schnak (French)
 R. A. Schröder (American)
 Anna Seghers (Russian)
 R. Schneider (French)
 A. Döblin (French)³⁹⁰

Kästner and Tralow, along with fellow German writers Ernst Penzoldt and Rudolf Schneider-Schelde, were to served as coordinating heads of this Committee.³⁹¹ Together, the group hammered out a set of guidelines for the readmission of Germany to PEN. Only one German branch would be established, they decided, but branches would be permitted in the different zones. In terms of membership, only non-collaborators would be admitted. "Every former... member, if he did not violate the aims of the association, is also today a member, and every former... member, not having collaborated with the Nazis, should be member of the [reconstituted] German PEN."³⁹²

³⁸⁹ "Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International P.E.N. Club, held on the 2nd of June at the Congress-House, Zurich," 6/2/1947, International Congresses, 12-17: Zurich, PEN International Archive, HRC.

³⁹⁰ List attached to letter from Johannes Tralow to Hermon Ould, 12/9/1947, PEN Letters Recip German Group, HRC.

³⁹¹ List attached to letter from Johannes Tralow to Hermon Ould, 12/9/1947, PEN Letters Recip German Group, HRC.

³⁹² Johannes Tralow to Hermon Ould, 12/9/1947, PEN Letters Recip German Group, HRC.

The situation facing the Hitler exiles further complicated the German question. Some, such as Alfred Kerr, returned home immediately and rejoined German PEN in the state itself. Others decided instead to remain in their adopted lands. Led by Richard Friedenthal in London and Lion Feuchtwanger in America, Germans living abroad argued that German Exile PEN meetings should be allowed to continue to convene. Writers within Germany like Kästner, meanwhile, advocated for one German PEN Center within Germany itself. As camps formed on opposite sides of this question, Germans revisited the debates of the 1930s about writers' relationships to their native cultures.

The English-speaking natives of the host cultures assumed exile centers were strictly temporary. Henry Canby of the New York branch wrote to Ould in 1941, "my own feeling is that [the Exile PEN] should not be a permanent organization." Indeed, he explained, "these writers will either go back to Europe, or they will become American citizens. In the former case the organization dissolves and in the second case they become members of our American Center."³⁹³ This sentiment echoed most émigrés' assumptions when they first left home. As Wieland Herzfeld recalled, many believed "we were not emigrating... we would return."³⁹⁴

The German PEN-in-Exile used a similar line of reasoning to argue that they, not those who had remained and experienced a supposed inner emigration, represented the true spirit of the German people. The German Exile branch should

³⁹³ Letter, Canby to Ould, 1941/6/13, English PEN Archives, PEN Letters Recip., HRC.

³⁹⁴ Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present*, 28.

not, they argued, be merged with the newly reconstituted PEN in Germany:

In this age of refugees the identity of our Centre with its 80 members should be as well established as that of any little national group. Our members come not only from Germany but from all German-speaking countries once occupied by Hitler... Our Centre is the direct and legitimate successor of the original pre-Hitler German PEN Club (Berlin) which was dissolved by Hitler and reorganized abroad (in Paris, later in London) by the late Rudolph Oulden and other writers... The German language remained the means of [our] expression in literature.³⁹⁵

German writers who wished to remain abroad tended to separate German “culture” and “spirit” from the German state. Nazism had not grown from the German national character. Nor was it a perversion of German culture, as Thomas Mann had maintained. German writers—those who had carried the German spirit abroad—embodied the true German nation. They should be allowed to maintain their exile branches. Indeed, argued Alfred Kantorowicz in 1947, German writers might serve as a diplomatic force on behalf of post-War Germany, healing the reputation of the state from afar. “It is the spiritual Germany that still enjoys credit in the world,” he wrote, “and our hopes rest on it.” That is, he averred, “if there is still hope.”³⁹⁶

Writers within Germany also jockeyed to “save” the reputation of German culture. Over three hundred writers gathered at a series of post-War conferences that aimed to reestablish the authority of German literature. In 1945 the Schutzverband Deutscher Autoren (Protective League of German Authors, or SDA)

³⁹⁵ W. Unger and Dr. Hans Flesch of the Centre for German-Speaking Authors Abroad, Memo to David Carver of the London Executive, 5/25/1957. Letters Recip. German Group, English PEN Archive, HRC.

³⁹⁶ Quoted in Stephan Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, 144.

formed in the Soviet zone of Berlin as a successor to the previous Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller (Protective League of German Writers, or SDS), which had been infiltrated by the Nazis. In collaboration with the socialist Kulturbund headed by Johannes Becher, the SDA staged a conference in Berlin to debate the future of German literature.³⁹⁷ By the group's second conference in 1947, the fault lines of the Cold War were beginning to show. Participants advocated either an "engaged" literature on the one hand, or used the pejorative "politicised" to critique the didacticism of communist-inspired literature on the other. Socialists in turn denigrated "apolitical" literature as part of their larger critique of Americanized liberalism. The American Melvin Lasky, correspondent for the journals *Partisan Review* and the *New Leader*, gave a speech that dominated press coverage of the conference. He urged writers to fight for "cultural freedom". On the other side, the leader of the Soviet delegation, playwright Wsewolod Witalyevich, argued that "the world is divided into barbarism and peace" and that "German writers and the German people [must] find their place in the[se] ranks," choosing either side.³⁹⁸ The Cold War's division between East and West had begun to supplant the division between writers who had stayed within Germany and those who had fled.

PEN members who attended the 1947 SDA conference, notably Johannes Becher, insisted on the existence of cultural unity. German culture and literature needed to overcome both the exile/resident divide and the east/west divide. "A

³⁹⁷ Quoted in Brockmann, 152. On the SDA see also Ernst Fischer, *Der "Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller": 1909 – 1933* (Frankfurt: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1980).

³⁹⁸ Quoted in Brockmann, 152-3.

division of Germany,” Becher argued in 1947, gesturing forward to the partition that eventually divided Germany into two in 1949, could “threaten the peace of the world” because “there is... no West German or East German literature.” Instead, he maintained, “there is only *German* literature, which will not allow itself to be circumscribed by zonal boundaries.”³⁹⁹ Becher used this same line of logic within PEN. He argued that allowing various exile branches to exist, while the German state struggled to reform itself without its best writers, represented a potential disaster for both Germany and the world as a whole. The exile question, ultimately, had no easy answer. Indeed, exiled writers hailed from many countries, not just from Germany. PEN needed to formulate a policy that encompassed all its displaced writers who wished both to remain aboard and to remain PEN members.

Living in Exile

Hermon Ould first connected the welfare of émigrés to PEN’s new humanitarian identity at a PEN Congress in 1955. Ould’s speech recalled both the Toller episode and the Dubrovnik Congress. “In Yugoslavia,” Ould said in 1951, “for the first time we found ourselves confronted with delegates from one of our centres—the German—unable to express themselves freely... It was a dramatic moment in our history.” Ould placed this episode within a wider context. “For nearly twenty years the world has witnessed the displacement of all sorts and conditions of men, women and children.” Though a range of people had emigrated,

³⁹⁹ Quoted in Brockmann, 155. My emphasis.

writers, he argued, felt its effects most acutely. “This upheaval, amounting almost to a second *Völkerwanderung*”—a reference to the mass migrations that occurred across Europe in the early middle ages—“has fallen with particular severity on writers.” The persecution of writers by fascists and the plight of the exiles had pushed PEN to find its true calling, he argued. “In addition to the hardships and losses born by others, [writers] have lost their most precious possession—their language, the very substance and soul of their craft,” Ould explained.⁴⁰⁰ Speaking out against “the trials and tribulations of refugee writers”, he asserted, had become PEN’s mission during wartime.⁴⁰¹

Exiled writers obviously retained the ability to speak their native languages. Ould referred here instead to refugee writers’ loss of a community of readers, of an audience. The likes of Feuchtwanger might have countered that exiles could return to their countries of origin. They could try to publish back home while remaining abroad, or try writing in their hosts’ language. PEN members pursued all of these options, but an Exile Center continued to exist and to debate the challenges of exile. As the UN set itself the task of helping resettle refugees, PEN likewise found speaking out about the plight of exiles a compelling way to partner with other internationalist groups and to claim a mantle of authority. PEN’s experience with the “trials and tribulations” of exiles was linked by the early 1960s with their efforts to help those experiencing trials and tribulations behind the Iron Curtain.

⁴⁰⁰ Hermon Ould, Speech at the 23rd International P.E.N. Congress in Lausanne, 1951. Box: 23rd Congress Lausanne, PEN Archive, HRC.

⁴⁰¹ Hermon Ould, Speech at the 23rd International P.E.N. Congress in Lausanne, 1951. Box: 23rd Congress Lausanne, PEN Archive, HRC.

Paul Tabori, head of the Writers-in-Exile branch in London, exemplified this link. Tabori, a Hungarian academic and writer, first arrived in London in the 1920s not as an exile but as an emigrant. As the Cold War forced him to sever ties with his homeland, he came to see himself as an exile. Tabori devoted the second half of his life and career to answering the question: what does it mean to be an exile? His answers to this question sought to enrich understandings of the writer's role and PEN's mission. Exile, Tabori argued, could be understood in multiple ways: as separation from land, from state, from language, from community, from history. Tabori, unsurprisingly, emphasized separation from language. His definition of exile took its cue from the UN's recently devised definition of the refugee. A brief foray into the UN's policy on post-War refugees therefore helps clarify Tabori's line of logic.

Europe had experienced massive demographic changes during the Second World War. Over forty million people had been "displaced" during the 1930s and early 1940s.⁴⁰² Not to mention the approximately six million Jews killed in camps, or the almost one million who resettled to Israel after 1948 when that state was created for "the ingathering of the exiles." The refugee problem persisted until well after the war's end. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was formed under American guidance in 1943 as an international relief agency. UNRRA was subsumed under the UN umbrella in 1945, where it operated until 1947. UNRRA existed to provide "food, clothing, shelter...medical and other

⁴⁰² Martin Conway and Jose Gotovitch, *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940-45*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 13..

essential services” to war victims.⁴⁰³ It worked with volunteer charity organizations to distribute tools, medicines, food and farm equipment to areas of the globe suffering from shortages. In 1947 UNRRA was disbanded, its various tasks distributed to the newly formed World Health Organization (WHO) and International Refugee Organization (IRO). By 1951 the IRO reported that despite improved conditions and the ability to access their homelands, large refugee communities persisted. In some places they were even growing. The IRO established a Committee on Stateless Persons and Related Problems in 1951 to investigate this problem.⁴⁰⁴

This committee defined the refugee (“displaced person” or D.P. in the period’s parlance)⁴⁰⁵ using a psychoanalytic lens. A refugee, according to the UN

...owing to fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion, is outside of his country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or, who, not having a nationality and being outside of the country of his formal habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to return to it.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ On UNRRA see Grace Fox, "The Origins of UNRRA," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 65, No. 4 (Dec. 1950), 561-584; and Jessica Reinisch. "'We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation': UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland," *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 2008, Vol. 43 Issue 3, 451-476.

⁴⁰⁴ Reinisch, 452.

⁴⁰⁵ David Cohen, "The 'Human Rights Revolution' at Work: Refugees and Displaced Persons in Postwar Europe" in Stefan Ludwig Hoffmann and Dieter Gosewinkel (eds.), *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁴⁰⁶ UN Charter Documents. "Functions of the High Commissioner," *Human Rights: International Documents* (Netherlands: Sijhoff & Noordhoff International Publishers BV, 1978), 85.

The UN's definition rested on one fundamental tenet: a fear of persecution based on either identity or belief. This fear, in turn, encouraged the refugee to remain outside of the state. A person need not have experienced a state's violence physically in order to claim refugee status.

Tabori's effort to define exile took a cue from the UN's definition of the refugee. In his study *Anatomy of Exile*, which he funded largely with a grant from UNESCO to the PEN-in-Exile Center, he identified an exile as

a person compelled to leave or to remain outside his country of origin on account of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion; a person who considers his exile temporary (even though it may last a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit—but unable or unwilling to do so as long as the factors that made him an exile persist.⁴⁰⁷

Like the UN definition of the refugee, the exile experienced persecution in matters of conscience. Tabori also goes one step further. The dimensions of time and space shape his definition. The exile, much more than the refugee, builds his identity around the conviction that he will *eventually* return home.

Tabori wrote here from his own experience, as someone who had begun his time abroad as a voluntary emigrant and had come to think of himself as an intellectual exile. Unlike most people labeled refugees or exiles in the post-45 period, Tabori had left his country by choice long before the war. He had chosen to live in England for personal reasons. "I left my native city, Budapest, when I was eighteen and for the next six years I studied and worked in seventeenth countries.

⁴⁰⁷ Tabori, *Anatomy of Exile, A Semantic and Historical Study* (London: Harrap, 1972), 27.

Then I went home, took a second degree, married, and began to plot to get away as soon as possible.” After finishing a Ph.D. in economics and political science at Péter Pázmány University in Budapest, he worked first in Hungary and then in London as a journalist and freelance writer. After a school tour of western Europe, he felt that England called him most. Five years later “I departed for good, not as an exile but as an emigrant.”⁴⁰⁸ He began to attend London PEN Center meetings as a foreign guest.

When the war broke out, he saw himself—as someone who had spent years himself learning to navigate British culture—as a natural guide for the hundreds of writers taking temporary shelter in London. He founded the PEN-in-Exile Center in 1939 to help European writers streaming in from the continent. He considered both himself and the Writers-in-Exile Center to be a conduit through which the needs of foreign writers could be communicated to Britain and wider world. In turn, he hoped Exile PEN might encourage English-speakers to treat the refugees with greater sensitivity. Tabori aided the Jameson and Ould-led effort to help stranded and needy writers. Indeed, relief efforts preoccupied the Exile center throughout the war.

Despite serving as President of the Exile branch, Tabori insisted that he himself was not an exile. Indeed, he clarified, he felt most empowered to represent exiles precisely because he did *not* share their plight. Tabori would later present his detachment to the local English-speaking audience as a political asset:

⁴⁰⁸ Paul Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile*, 13.

I have been intimately involved with exile affairs... But though I often had to speak, fight, and apologize for them, I had no intention whatsoever to establish a free Hungarian movement, recruit a legion to liberate my fatherland, or return to take office there. Those of my exile friends who would listen I tried to advise by stressing the simple truth that it was very difficult to live a suitcase life—that after a while they had to unpack, literally and symbolically... And perhaps my own peculiar attitude, my non-involvement, may have given me a somewhat more balanced approach, a slightly less biased understanding of the exiles' plight and pride, glory and shame.⁴⁰⁹

Tabori's account of his life gives some insight into his perception of the nature of exile. He, like the legions from the provinces who had flocked to Paris, London, and other metropolises of their own free will, was an intellectual emigrant. Exile, in contrast, was involuntary. One did not choose to enter exile. Circumstances forced one into exile.

Exile, moreover, could be considered a psychological condition as well as a practical experience. Tabori considered it the duty of the Writers-in-Exile PEN Center to explore the psychological dimensions of exile. With funds secured largely through UNESCO, Tabori edited translations of exiles' writing. Titled *The Pen In Exile*, these three volumes, published between 1956 and 1966, favored little-known writers who explored the exiled mindset.⁴¹⁰ Tensions about the status of exiles

⁴⁰⁹ Tabori, *Anatomy of Exile*, 13.

⁴¹⁰ The following people contributed to this volume, in the order their contributions appear: Z.A. Građowski, Azel Heyst, Andreja Johansons, Jerzy Kuncewicz, Georges Mikes, Ernst Öpik, Lew Sapieha, Vladamir Stedry, A. Svabe, Imre Vamos, T. Zavalani, Artur Adson, Peteris Aigars, Fricis Dziesma, Andreja Eglitis, Bela Horvath, Laszlo Javor, Rozsa P. Kovacs, Zinaida Lazda, Jerzy Niemojowski, Michael Perneki, Bronislaw Przyluski, Gustav Suits, Maria Under, Arved Viirlaid, Henrik Visnapuu, Stanislaw Balinski, Charles Benedek, Anslavs Eglitis, Karl Einer, Adolf Fierla, Margalit Gondos, Erno Halasz, Helena Heinsdorf, Andor Janos, Joseph Kalmer, J. Kowalewski, Vera Larina, H.J. Lisiewski, Teodozja Lisiewicz, Josef Mackiewicz, August Mälk, Sari Megyery, Peter Munk, Hermina Naglerova, George Rezes, Pierre Rouve, Ladislav Cs. Szabo, S.T. Tung, Olexa Woropay, Stefan Legezynski. Tabori, *The PEN in Exile*.

amidst their host cultures also motivated the volumes' publication. Cries that the exiles should "go home" had been heard since the beginning of the war.⁴¹¹ "Recently there has been a certain amount of discussion about the *raison d'être* of exiled writers and their PEN Centre," Tabori admitted in the introduction to his second edited volume. "Some very well-meaning English, French and Italian friends have told us that it would be better if we gave up the hopeless struggle and went home."⁴¹² These volumes aimed to educate the local population, to "show the exile *in his exile*."⁴¹³ Tabori preferred pieces set in the present to wistful longings for the homeland. The selected stories ranged in topic and tone, and form. Humorous pieces critiqued the barbarity of English cuisine.⁴¹⁴ Such stories sat somewhat jarringly next to the few that explored the mesmerizing lure of totalitarian collaboration.⁴¹⁵ The publications offer little synthetic insight into the nature of exile.

Tabori instead aimed to historicize and analyze the concept of exile as a whole in *Anatomy of Exile*. As part of his research, Tabori mailed his proposed definition of exile, cited above, to PEN members-in-exile. Respondents challenged Tabori's definition more often than they supported it. Tabori had assumed that exile had an end, objected one. The Spanish term, offered another, seemed much

⁴¹¹ Letter, Canby to Ould, 1941/6/13, Pen Letters Recip., English PEN, HRC. See also Norman Angell, *You and the Refugee: the Morals and Economics of the Problem* (Middlesex, Eng.: Harmondsworth, 1939).

⁴¹² Tabori, preface to *Pen in Exile*, 6.

⁴¹³ Tabori, preface to *Pen in Exile*, 6.

⁴¹⁴ Z. A. Grabowski, "Devil's Kitchen", *PEN in Exile*, 10-19.

⁴¹⁵ Charles Benedek, "Martha", *PEN in Exile*, 116-124.

more apt: a *distierro* was a man deprived of his land. A ripping up of roots defined exile. One woman noted that the exile lives in two times, the present and the past—in the material world and in memory. Variations of the German idea of inner emigration also featured prominently. Many suggested exile was a psychic state. One person went so far as to suggest that all writers were exiles. By becoming a writer, “by being different, strange, non-conformist, all essential criteria of the creative spirit,” a person “exiled himself from the world of common sense.”⁴¹⁶ Dr. Joseph Wittlin, doyen of the Polish Writers-in-Exile group, noted that the entire question could not be separated from “the same doctrine which makes us believe that our earthly stay is exile.” Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister of the Czech Government in Exile, the offered the shortest answer. “I want to go home,” he wrote in one simple sentence on an otherwise blank white page.⁴¹⁷

Most writers assumed that, while the exile had been uprooted, his or her language provided a source of continuity. Only one person suggested that language itself might become a source of alienation. “Language changes fast,” the historian C.V. Wedgwood, then serving as President of the English branch. Not herself an exile, Wedgwood offered an explanation of the sometimes clumsy and untranslatable passages in some of the pieces in Tabori’s UNESCO-sponsored volume. “Words move out of fashion or alter in meaning; allusion and subtleties fade away as the society which gave rise to them alters.” By their very dependence on words, she concluded, “the great writers of the past must all, as the years go by,

⁴¹⁶ Tabori, *Anatomy of Exile*, 32.

⁴¹⁷ Tabori, *Anatomy of Exile*, 28.

become ‘writers in exile.’”⁴¹⁸ The writer in exile, moreover, experienced his plight differently to other artists. “The painter, the musician, the craftsman can take his art or his craft with him,” she wrote. In contrast to artists working in other mediums, in exile “the writer cuts himself off from the very instrument of his art.”⁴¹⁹

Tabori’s interest in exile not just as a practical experience but as a mental attitude reflected the popularization of psychological discourses during the 1950s. The psychological turn helped encourage the growth of Exile Studies as a new academic discipline. The Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt established its Archiv of Exilliteratur in 1947, and the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar, founded in 1955, began collecting texts by Germans published in exile and the personal papers of exiles themselves. Work on a major reference book called *Deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-1945* was begun in the mid-1960s, eventually published in 1973.⁴²⁰ The period also witnessed the establishment of the US based Society for Exile Studies, which began to work in collaboration with yet another German counterpart, the Gesellschaft für Exilforschung.⁴²¹ The field proliferated from the 1960s onwards, as the radical group of German writers and activists known as the Sixty-Eighters urged great public awareness of the status of their exiled compatriots abroad.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ Wedgwood, Foreward to *The PEN in Exile*, 4.

⁴¹⁹ C.V. Wedgwood, “Forward” to Tabori, *PEN in Exile*, (New York: Living Books, 1966), 4.

⁴²⁰ Manfred Durzak (ed.) *Deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973).

⁴²¹ Idesbald Goddeeris, “The Temptation of Legitimacy: Exile Politics from a Comparative Perspective,” *Contemporary European History* (2007), 16, 395-405.

⁴²² Wulf Koepke, “German-American and Exile Studies: Still a Divided Stream?”, *Monatshefte*, vol. 86, no. 3 (Fall, 1994), 361-366. J.M. Ritchie, *German-Speaking Exiles in Great Britain* (Amsterdam: Rodopi,

Many commentators agreed with Tabori that exile was a state of mind. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's 1944 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a social and psychological analysis of the supposed failures of the Enlightenment, exemplifies this move. These representatives of the Frankfurt School, based temporarily in the United States, offered a diagnosis of the state of the exile. "In considering the term 'homeland', a word of some importance to any refugee, [the exile] rejects mythological associations. Nor does he accept the materialistic 'settled life and fixed property'." Homeland, argued the pair, was "the state of having escaped."⁴²³ While at first this formulation seems an empty paradox, on second glance it invites scrutiny. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the exile provides his own homeland. The state of exile, in short, was a state of awareness.

Tabori not only agreed that exile was a state of mind, he experienced the psychological shift into exile himself. The precariousness of his own position was brought powerfully home to Tabori with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Faced now with the impossibility of returning home, Tabori felt his own status change. Collective personal pronouns filled his correspondence. He began to number himself among the exiled. "We do not, cannot, go home," he wrote in 1966, "and...we believe that as exiled writers we represent the true literatures of our countries."⁴²⁴ One writer had reflected in response to Tabori's call for definitions of exile that, for

2001). Ernst Loewy (ed.) *Gesellschaft für Exilforschung: Nachrichtenbrief 1984 bis 1993 mir Gesamtregister* (München: Saur, 1995).

⁴²³ Heilbut, 162.

⁴²⁴ Tabori in preface to *Pen in Exile*, 7.

him, exile meant “you lose your ‘I’ and you become a ‘we’.”⁴²⁵ Involvement in humanitarianism, and sense of communion with fellow writers, was to provide Tabori with a new sense of purpose during the Cold War, a means of expressing his newfound identity as an exile. The persecution of Hungarian writer Tibor Déry in 1956 provided the catalyst for Tabori’s—and eventually PEN’s—foray into humanitarian activism.

Tibor Déry and Hungary

The effort to help Hungarian writer Tibor Déry in 1956 came after a tense period for PEN, as the group tried to stay on neutral ground amidst the escalating polarization of the Cold War. At the 1955 Congress in Vienna, presiding PEN President Charles Morgan described the ideological battle lines being laid down from America to Russia, Estonia to Peru. He began by declaring himself frustrated with “pressure by certain of our members to renew the attempts made long ago to encourage the formation of a Soviet Centre.” PEN had done all it could to establish relations with the Soviets, he assured the group. “Wishing to prove that the P.E.N. is indeed an international assembly, and a world association of writers, the International Secretary did in fact on July 2, 1954, write to Mr. Simonov, Secretary of the Executive of the Soviet Writers Union,” he maintained. No reply had been received. PEN still had centers in Eastern Europe, he noted. The real problem of the Cold war, he announced, lay with how to react to reports of suppression of

⁴²⁵ Anon., quoted in Tabori, *Anatomy of Exile*, 33.

intellectual exchange behind the Iron Curtain.⁴²⁶

Three possible positions faced members, Morgan suggested. First, a person could advocate for one side or the other, for communism or liberalism. Morgan criticized both options. All Communist members, he assumed, wished to propagate communist principles. Liberalism harmonized with the PEN ideal, but its idealism blinded it to realities. “Because their ideals are liberal and international”, liberals believed they could communicate with communist writers “in the hope that they may become reconciled with us and genuinely accept our common basis of liberty in writing or thought.”⁴²⁷ This point of view, he suggested with barely suppressed disdain, “may or may not appear to you to be carrying optimism to the point of naiveté.”⁴²⁸ Morgan advocated third way. A middle ground between the poles of the Cold War was being forged by “men who feel that PEN was founded and still exists to proclaim and safeguard certain principles and that it would in fact cease to be PEN and become a different organisation, if it were to surrender these principles.”⁴²⁹ PEN should push to include writers from Communist countries, but strict guidelines ought to be passed to screen new centers from these areas, he concluded.

The Congress exploded in uproar as Morgan shouted to finish his speech. Delegates from Centers in Eastern Europe led the outcry. “Is there any reasonable

⁴²⁶ Charles Morgan, speech, “The Dilemma of the Writer”, 1955 PEN Congress at Vienna, reprinted in Writers in Exile Center minutes. International Presidents, Box 10, International PEN Archive, HRC.

⁴²⁷ Charles Morgan, speech, “The Dilemma of the Writer”.

⁴²⁸ Charles Morgan, speech, “The Dilemma of the Writer”.

⁴²⁹ Charles Morgan, speech, “The Dilemma of the Writer”.

hope that the delegates from such a Centre will enter into genuinely free discussions with us?" he demanded, as Czech, Hungarian, East German and Polish writers objected to his proposal. "Will [they] not use their place among us for the purposes of propaganda, penetration, and ultimately of domination?"⁴³⁰ Morgan implored eastern members who objected to ask themselves whether their responses accorded with their consciences. Only their consciences would tell them whether they were "entitled" to membership in PEN. "Writers who are refugees from tyranny are entitled to our protection, and...writers who are the instruments of tyranny are not entitled to be received by us."⁴³¹

The Vienna Congress took place as the world stood poised to enter the most militaristic phase of the Cold War. Though the Korean War had ended, by 1955 NATO had galvanized its military apparatus had been galvanized. West Germany joined NATO that year, and by December had been rearmed by the Americans. The Warsaw Pact had solidified alliances throughout the Eastern Bloc. The Cold War settled likewise over PEN Congresses, as both sides worked to antagonize the other. Bulgarian PEN called for affirmation of "the great ideas of humanism", asking writers to condemn the fact that "these victories of the human spirit could be used for the destruction of life and culture through atomic warfare."⁴³² American writers vetoed this call for "humanism", noting that PEN had already passed a resolution criticizing the use of nuclear weapons some years ago. The Americans in turn

⁴³⁰ Charles Morgan, speech, "The Dilemma of the Writer".

⁴³¹ Charles Morgan, speech, "The Dilemma of the Writer".

⁴³² Minutes of PEN Executive Board Meeting, June 22, 1955, American PEN Archive, I. Governance, Box 5/2, C0760, Princeton..

suggested a resolution condemning the “dampening of the spirit of the writer, in all its forms”, which the Bulgarians, Hungarians and Czechs all duly rejected.⁴³³ PEN members on either side of the Iron Curtain bandied back and forth resolutions which seemed intentionally designed to provoke the other.

The preservation of lines of communication between *individuals* began to emerge as the safest and most popular form of consensus. The Swiss Center proposed a conciliatory resolution along these lines:

The P.E.N. Club, meeting in international session at Lausanne, Switzerland, composed of writers from all parts of the world, and of men and women of many races and cultures, has given a living demonstration that human beings of every political belief can sit down at a conference table and discuss their difference... We believe that what is possible for one group of human beings, is possible for their nations... [We therefore] issue an urgent appeal to the governments of all countries to exhibit the same spirit of tolerance as their writers.⁴³⁴

This seemingly benign, almost bland, resolution was vetoed by every center present. Discord between east and west was coming to seem insurmountable. Morgan’s suggestion that centers in totalitarian countries be monitored was, in the end, defeated by the assembly.

Many in London, however, maintained doubts. Paul Tabori communicated his own skepticism to the Writers-in-Exile Center upon his return from Vienna to London in unequivocal terms. “The older I get, the less patience I have for liars and

⁴³³ Minutes of PEN Executive Board Meeting, June 22, 1955, American PEN Archive, I. Governance, Box 5/2, C0760, Princeton..

⁴³⁴ Cited in Minutes of Executive Committee, 2/20/1955, PEN American Center, I. Governance, Box 9/9, C0760, Princeton..

hypocrites,” he wrote in his branch newsletter. His reaction to the eastern writers’ objections that “if they wrote something ‘unsuitable’ [they] were—at the most—given a friendly warning and urged to do better”⁴³⁵ seemed ridiculous. Reflecting on events unfolding in his native Hungary, Tabori felt no anger or resentment toward his former country-men, he asserted. “They do not make me furious—only sad and filled with pity.”⁴³⁶ Tabori advocated action. Considering that tensions between east and west seemed to be easing, writers needed to renew their commitment to the PEN mission. “Now that... the Cold War has thawed a little, many people of goodwill and honesty say that we, exiled writers, are too intransigent.” People who expressed such opinions, Tabori argued, failed to understand the fundamental nature of the literary artist:

A writer writes not only for himself, not only for his public but also for the future. His conscience is his supreme tribunal. His responsibility is tremendous for under the principle of *scripta manent* the printed word is far mightier and longer-lived than the... chess-game... of foreign secretaries... The fact that a few American flyers are released, that British women are allowed to leave Czechoslovakia, that Russian or Polish musicians perform in Paris, changes nothing in this responsibility. And we betray ourselves if we make a pact with the enemies and traitors of human dignity and literary honesty.⁴³⁷

A form of censorship did exist in the West, he admitted. “There is an economic self-censorship... which few can escape; there is a censorship of good taste, of libel laws

⁴³⁵ Paul Tabori, “The Writer’s Freedom—The Writer’s Responsibility”, PEN Exile Center Minutes, 1955 PEN Congress at Vienna. Reprinted in *PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre*, n. 191, October 1955, Folder: PEN News Nos. 184-202, 1953-1964, PEN English Center Archive, HRC.

⁴³⁶ Paul Tabori, “The Writer’s Freedom—The Writer’s Responsibility”.

⁴³⁷ Paul Tabori, “The Writer’s Freedom—The Writer’s Responsibility”.

and of contemporary taste.” But, Tabori averred, “these limitations are largely voluntary, the often self-defensive actions of public opinion and society.”⁴³⁸ Tabori’s juxtapositioning of the concepts of “human dignity” and “literary honesty” underscore the similarities between the two concepts. A person’s ability to distinguish the valuable from the mediocre in aesthetics also related to their capacity to form moral judgments. A person with discerning aesthetic sensibilities likely also possessed a healthy capacity to distinguish right from wrong.

This line of logic spoke to the 1920s iteration of the PEN ideal—to the idea that writers’ creative insights allowed them also to serve as moral compasses. Instead of advancing this claim for PEN as a whole, however, from the mid-1950s on Tabori began to use this discourse to highlight the special insight and status of exiled writers. The Austrian writer Franz Theodor Czokor had begun to make the connection between exile and empathy back in 1947. “People who have experienced this emigration have a strong affinity for the renewal we’re now forging. We’re doing the best we can with what we’ve come to know.”⁴³⁹ Their supposedly greater capacity to distinguish between right and wrong pushed exiles like Tabori to consider themselves the leaders of PEN’s humanitarian turn.

Tabori used his newfound authority to establish PEN’s first Persecuted Writers Fund in 1956. The Fund would aid Hungarian writers who had been jailed

⁴³⁸ Paul Tabori, “The Writer’s Freedom—The Writer’s Responsibility”.

⁴³⁹ “Menschen, die aus dieser Emigration kommen, haben ein starkes Gefühl für alles, was rein und sauber ist den neuen Dingen, die wir aufbauen. Nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen werden wir unser Möglichstes tun.” Czokor, “Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International P.E.N. Club, held on the 2nd of June at the Congress-House, Zurich,” 6/2/1947, International Congresses, 12-17: Zurich, PEN International Archive, HRC.

after the Revolution, particularly its two most publicized victims, Tibor Déry and Julius Hay. The campaign to free Déry, in particular, helped establish PEN's humanitarian credentials. Déry, born in Budapest in 1894, had been an active member of the Communist Party. When Béla Kun's faction of the party rose to power and proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1920, Déry was exiled. After living in Austria, France, and Germany, he returned to Hungary in 1935. Though he eventually made his name as a novelist in his own right, Déry first survived by translating works from French and German into Hungarian.⁴⁴⁰

Déry became a poster-child for liberals in the West, an emblem of the persecution and intellectual censorship writers in the East faced. The Hungarian situation received increasing attention from the English-language press. *The Economist* ran a story in 1957 which described Déry as the world's greatest living writer.⁴⁴¹ *Time* magazine was even more effusive. "In later years, though still a Communist, Déry turned the power of his pen against bloodthirsty Stalinism, became a close adviser of the moderate Imre Nagy. As a leader of the potent Writers' Union, he was a powerful voice behind the revolution that brought Khrushchev's tanks rumbling into Hungary last year."⁴⁴² Déry's situation reflected the sorry state of civil society in Hungary itself, most concluded.

The PEN-in Exile branch, led by Tabori, requested that PEN help the silenced writers spread word of their condition. Hungarian PEN, he argued to PEN's

⁴⁴⁰ Mario Szenessy, *Tibor Déry* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970).

⁴⁴¹ Szenessy, 150..

⁴⁴² "Hungary: Writers Sentence", *Time*, Monday, Nov 25, 1957.

membership, existed now in name only. Hungarian PEN—which had by then been infiltrated by the Communists—responded by broadcasting two reports over Radio Free Europe on November 3rd and November 24th celebrating the vitality of the Hungarian Center. The head of the Hungarian Center, George Boloni—dubbed by *Time* magazine a “hack essayist” and Kadar’s “literary commissar”⁴⁴³—eventually admitted that Hungarian PEN no longer enjoyed complete freedom. He published an article in a self-edited magazine called *Life and Literature* in Budapest in July of pleading Tabori to let the matter lie—Boloni was “simply the chairman” of the PEN, “appointed by the Governor to ‘conduct affairs’.”⁴⁴⁴

Tabori sent a summary translation of Boloni’s piece in English to all PEN Centers. With it he cited additional conversations with Hungarians who had left the country during the preceding year. Tabori argued that since 1949 the center in his former homeland had become a mere shell. No meeting, no elections, and no genuine activities had taken place. The international executive, he argued, should not be deluded by the Radio Free Europe broadcasts. Hungarian PEN existed merely for the purpose of sending delegates to international congresses, delegates who served as Communist mouthpieces and spies.⁴⁴⁵ David Carver, the new salaried Secretary who had replaced Hermon Ould in 1951, expressed anger that Tabori had exceeded his jurisdiction in mailing all centers. Tabori’s personal relationship with

⁴⁴³ “Books: Voices of Silence”, *Time*, Monday, July 7, 1958.

⁴⁴⁴ “Minutes, Executive Committee”, 6/8/1957, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

⁴⁴⁵ “Minutes, Executive Committee”, 6/8/1957, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

Charles Morgan, and Morgan's own interventionist stance, however, allowed Tabori to continue sending his missives.

With Morgan's backing, Tabori decided to draft a resolution for the upcoming PEN Congress in Tokyo. The resolution asked the Congress to establish a Commission to "examine the past and present status of the Hungarian PEN Center" and to "suspend the Hungarian P.E.N. Center until the Commission has ended its investigation and presented a report to the International Executive."⁴⁴⁶ The Resolution was brought before the Tokyo Congress.⁴⁴⁷ After "a very long and, at times, heated discussion," with all of the Eastern Bloc countries voting against the resolution and the of West in favor, the Congress voted to expel the Hungarians.

Severing relations with Hungarian PEN, of course, did little to aid imprisoned writers. Some delegates, such as the American Langston Hughes, pointed out that expulsion of the Hungarian Center did more to assuage Western consciences than it actually helped Hungarians. "What can Hungarian members of PEN do?" Hughes asked at an American Executive meeting; the situation of writers living with totalitarianism represented "that of the American Negro."⁴⁴⁸

If Hungarians at home were impotent, Tabori decided he should act. He issued yet another press release on behalf of Exile PEN lobbying for Déry and other writers' release. The effectiveness of the statement hinged on the ideological range

⁴⁴⁶ "Minutes, Executive Committee", 6/8/1957, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

⁴⁴⁷ "Minutes, Executive Committee", 6/8/1957, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

⁴⁴⁸ "Minutes, Executive Committee", 11/4/1959, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

of the writers who signed—the statement should seem ecumenical, neither explicitly moderate nor radical—and these writers’ relative fame and renown. Tabori’s statement brought together signatories ranging from the communist Louis Aragon to the conservative T.S. Eliot. It also included the names of writers who had declined PEN membership, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, as well as the usual roster of PEN members such as Karl Jaspers, Erich Kästner, and the anti-Communists Alberto Moravia and Ignazio Silone. The statement read as follows:

We wish to call attention to the fact that the Hungarian government still holds in prison many of the leading Hungarian writers and intellectuals, including the noted authors Tibor Déry and Julia Hay. These men have been imprisoned for alleged crimes against the State, without public trials and without proper judicial process. As individuals with a connection through art to these persecuted writers, we appeal to the conscience of the Hungarian government, as a member of the community of nations, either to give these men fair public trials immediately or to release them from prison.⁴⁴⁹

The Hungarian government eventually reduced Déry’s sentence to three years, releasing him in 1960. The Hungarian PEN Center, after being “reorganized” by a committee comprised of Tabori, Morgan, Carver and André Malraux of the French branch, was then reinstated. This experience of helping liberate Déry and Hay convinced Tabori of the need for a permanent committee devoted to helping persecuted writers.

⁴⁴⁹ “Minutes, Executive Committee”, 6/8/1957, American PEN Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 9/9, Princeton.

Writers in Prison Committee

Paul Tabori used the annual PEN Congress of 1960, held in Rio de Janeiro, to persuade members that PEN needed a permanent committee to help writers facing censorship. Tabori's efforts at the Congress led to the establishment of a fund to help persecuted writers. This fund would give rise, by 1961, to a separate Writers in Prison Committee. The Writers in Prison Committee became crucial to PEN's adaptation to the Cold War context. The mere fact that it even existed—in contrast to the tension such a suggestion would likely have provoked before World War II—underscores the changes the organization underwent during the early phase of the Cold War.

Credit for the fact that the 1960 Congress took place in South America went to UNESCO, which offered subsidies to ferry European writers across the ocean as part of its mission to encourage ties between different parts of the world. PEN obtained the Rio subsidy partly because the Congress of the year before had proved such a success. Held in Tokyo, the Japanese government had funded writers' fares to Asia as part of its an effort to "increase ties between East and West."⁴⁵⁰ UNESCO considered the subsidy of a PEN Congress in another non-European location a perfect opportunity to push the group beyond its North Atlantic comfort zone.

The question of how to aid persecuted writers featured prominently at the Rio Congress, thanks in no small part to Tabori's tactics of persuasion. In advance of

⁴⁵⁰ Charles Bracelen Flood, "Report on Trip to Japan," 10/28/1961, PEN American Center Archives, C0760, I. Governance, Box 8/1, Princeton.

the meeting, Tabori had prepared a list of writers imprisoned throughout the world. Persecuted writers were organized by country, and included individuals from Albania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.⁴⁵¹ The list, printed simultaneously in Portuguese, French and English, was distributed on the floor of the Congress (Figure 6). Tabori circulated this list on the Congress floor. He hoped the lists would provoke sufficient concern to warrant the establishment of a permanent Committee devoted to helping imprisoned writers.

The assembled delegates reacted to Tabori's compilation of names in precisely the way he had hoped. "[We] are deeply shocked by the lists of 53 colleagues submitted to the Congress," announced the Austrian PEN Center. The Austrians offered a resolution:

The XXXI International PEN Congress protests against the persecution of writers still suffering for their writings and opinions throughout the world; and expresses its deep concern that some of them, notable Tibor Déry and Julia Hay, though freed from prison, are still not allowed to earn their living by their pens. The Congress therefore calls upon all PEN Centres to do their utmost in the spirit of the Charter to support the work of a Permanent PEN Committee for Writers in Prison to reestablish the freedom of writing wherever it is suppressed.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵¹ From Albania: Kudret Kokshi, Etehem Haxhiademi, Musine Kokalari, Kocho Tasi, Donat Kurti, Peter Gjini, Mar Ndoja. Hungary: Istvan Bibo, Jozsef Gali, Gyula Obersovszky, Gyorgy Adam, Gabor Tanczos, Ferenc Kunszabo, Sandor Fekete, Istvan Eorsi, Andras Sandor, Paul Locsei, Mihaly Lendvai, Gyorgy Fazekas, Domokos Kosary. Brazil: Dr. Oldrich Albert, Dr. Stanislav Berounsky, Dr. Silvestre Braitto, Jan Doklil, Dr. Bedrich Fucik, Ladislav Jehlicka, Dr. Zdenek Kalista, Ladislav Karhan, Dr. V. Klima, Josef Kostohryz, Frantisek Krelina, Josef Palievo, Vaclav Prokupek, Vaclav Renc, Dr. F. Silhan, Vit Bohumil Tajovsky, Jan Josef Urban, Jan Zahradnicek, Dr. Stanislav Jarolimek, Dr. Adolf Kajpr, Josef Marsalek, Jan Anastaz Opasek, Dr. Miloslav Skacel, Dr. Ruzena Vackova, Dr. Stanislav Zela. International Congresses: Rio 1960, PEN International Archive, Folder 3, HRC.

⁴⁵² Manifesto Submitted by the Austrian PEN Centre, July 1960, International Congresses: Rio 1960, PEN International Archive, Folder 3, HRC.

The Austrian resolution passed with no objections—perhaps partly because many writers from the Eastern Bloc did not avail of the UNESCO subsidies in the wake of the fight that had divided the Vienna Congress. The Rio Congress voted to establish an “International Writers Fund” to aid persecuted writers. Tabori was appointed its chair.

Tabori put forward a resolution in Brazil calling for a secure funding base for the Committee. He also argued that the International Writers Fund should be used not just to free imprisoned writers, but to support the translation and publishing needs of such individuals—uniting, in one move, all of his and the Exile Center’s interests. “In view of a growing need to assist writers using the languages of lesser currency to publish their works in the major languages” PEN needed to support “the work of creative writers everywhere,” in every sense. In addition to helping persecuted writers, this ambitious fund would “assist, financially and otherwise, writers of all International PEN member-countries to attend international writers’ congresses and professional sessions” and “to gather, evaluate and publish information

PEN/BR/JUL60/DOC.2/PIF

XXXI CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL DOS P.E.N. CLUBES
 XXXI CONGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL P.E.N.
 XXXI CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL DES P.E.N. CLUBS

BRASIL- BRAZIL- BRÉSIL

Julho/Juillet/July 24-31, 1960

ESCRITORES NA PRISÃO EM ALBANIA
 WRITERS IN PRISON IN ALBANIA
 ECRIVAINS INCARCÉRÉS EN ALBANIE

KUDRET KOKOSHI

Data da prisão	}	1944
Time of arrest		
Date de l'emprisonnement		
Duração da sentença	-Prisão perpetua	
Length of sentence	-Life imprisonment	
Durée de la condamnation	-À vie	
Motivo da condenação	-Por ser membro da Organização de Resistencia Nacionalista.	
Motive of condemnation	-For membership of Nationalist resistance organisation.	
Motif de la condamnation	-Pour appartenance à l'Organisation de la Resistance Nationaliste.	

ETEHEM HAXHIADEMI

Data da prisão	}	1946
Time of arrest		
Date de l'emprisonnement		
Duração da sentença	- Prisão perpetua	
Length of sentence	- Life imprisonment	
Durée de la condamnation	- À vie	
Motivo da condenação	- Por atividades anti-comunistas	
Motive of condemnation	- For anti-communist activities	
Motif de la condamnation	- Pour activités anti-communistes	

MUSINE KOKALARI -(Mulher - Woman- Femme)

Data da prisão	}	1946
Time of arrest		
Date de l'emprisonnement		
Duração da sentença	- (anos	
Length of sentence	-20 years	
Durée de la condamnation	- (ans	
Motivo da condenação	- Por participar de uma organização anti-comunista, descoberta em 1945.	
Motive of condemnation	- For participation in an anti-communist organisation uncovered in 1945.	
Motif de la condamnation	- Pour participation dans une organisation anti-communiste découverte en 1945.	

Figure 6: Writers in Prison

International Congresses: Rio 1960, PEN International Archive, Folder 3, HRC.

on the situation of writers everywhere, concerning professional standing, publication facilities, and contacts with fellow-writers throughout the world.”⁴⁵³ Tabori suggested for the Fund’s leadership a slate of colleagues who had been most supportive of his lobbying efforts on behalf of Déry: John Hersey and Storm Jameson of the English branch, André Malraux of the French, and Victor van Vriesland of the Dutch branch.⁴⁵⁴ While administered from the London, the fund was incorporated in the US, with all financial transactions managed by the New York branch.⁴⁵⁵ The Fund united Tabori’s two interests—the cause of literary translation and aid for the persecuted—under a common rubric: the umbrella concept of freedom of expression.

PEN’s Writers-in-Prison program soon won grants from both UNESCO and the Ford Foundation. The fact that the Writers-in-Exile Center, in concert with the International office, ran the Committee while the fund itself was administered in New York irked the American branch. The American center had just regained its footing after its dissolution during the war, and sought a substantive rather than administrative role, especially in relation to the questions of the Cold War. “Tabori seems to be all [the British have] as ‘idea man’,” American PEN President Lewis Galantière wrote in frustration to fellow-member Robert Halsband. “He has no business sense whatever, no administrative capacity, and a tendency to unrealistic

⁴⁵³ Resolution proposed by the Writes in Exile Centre of International PEN, Brazil Congress, July 24-31, 1960, International Congresses: Rio 1960, PEN International Archive, Folder 3, HRC.

⁴⁵⁴ Resolution proposed by the Writes in Exile Centre of International PEN, Brazil Congress, July 24-31, 1960.

⁴⁵⁵ Letter from David Carver and Paul Tabori, 11/22/1966, Box 3, F: P.EN. Archive - International Writers Fund, 1960-66, General Correspondence, 1 of 2, HRC.

optimism that is unbelievable.”⁴⁵⁶ Yet the Americans were being asked to balance the ledgers of this unrealistic optimism. The Europeans “leave the rest to us... It’s the old story: let the Americans find the money, they’re rich; and let them do the work (which is worse).”⁴⁵⁷ The Americans agreed, however, on the wisdom of saying little at the present moment. The situation might ultimately play out in the Americans’ favor. “The central argument to be used is that if Britishers don’t come through with money, [is that] Britain will lose the International Secretariat.”⁴⁵⁸ The Americans, as the holders of PEN’s checkbook, might eventually benefit. “It was only to be expected that the seat of the Empire would be situated in that part which contributed most to its prosperity, costs, or whatever,”⁴⁵⁹ wrote Galentière—foreshadowing the tension that would arise in the 1960s between the British, American, and French branches as PEN began to professionalize.

By 1961, the work involved in administering the International Writers Fund led to the establishment of a Writers-in-Prison Committee. Tabori provided the guiding force behind the committee, and after the foundation of Amnesty International in 1961 tended to rely on that group for research and information about persecuted writers. Peter Berenson, Amnesty’s founder, had attended a meeting of the Writers in Prison committee a year before, in search of a models for

⁴⁵⁶ Letter, Lewis Galentière to Robert Halsband, 7/18/1967, PEN American Center Archive, C0760, I. Governance, Box 7/5, Flo - Isaacs, Julius, Princeton.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter, Lewis Galentière to Robert Halsband, 7/18/1967.

⁴⁵⁸ Letter, Lewis Galentière to Robert Halsband, 7/18/1967.

⁴⁵⁹ Letter, Lewis Galentière to Robert Halsband, 7/18/1967.

the humanitarian group he planned to launch.⁴⁶⁰ While Berenson went on to found Amnesty, the personal relationship established between the two groups guaranteed PEN unhampered access to Amnesty's files.⁴⁶¹ This collaboration occurred despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that the two groups staked their authority on radically different grounds. Amnesty claimed authority precisely because its members lacked expertise, because any regular person—and by association, every regular person—could join. PEN's Republic of Letters, on the other hand, still considered itself a model to the world.⁴⁶²

While the Writers-in-Prison Committee remained marginal compared with the bulk of PEN's programmatic activities, its existence became increasingly significant as the Sixties wore on. The fact that the Committee most often targeted persecuted writers in the East pushed PEN further to the Western side of the iron curtain. The fight to defend the persecuted also reinforced PEN's prestige with funders and non-members. Most importantly, PEN's humanitarian turn, as many have noted of the wider post-War turn to human rights rhetoric, also seemed an appealingly neutral path through the worst days of the Cold War.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ Discussed in Wilfred Schoeller, "Das Erbe der Spaltung: Rueckblick auf sechs Jahrzehnte", an account of PEN available through the German PEN website: www.pen-deutschland.de/htm/aktuelles/60-jahre-PEN-Zentrum.php (5/5/2009).

⁴⁶¹ Wilfried Schoeller, *Das Erbe der Spaltung: Rückblick auf sechs Jahrzehnte*, (2009) reflection available through P.E.N.-Zentrum Deutschland.

⁴⁶² Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴⁶³ For a discussion of the literature on human rights in the post-1945 world, specifically with reference to their seeming neutrality, see Samuel Moyn, "Bibliographical Essay", *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Conclusion

During the early Cold War period, PEN's organizational mission changed. By the 1960s, PEN began to pursue activities that the founding generation would likely have deemed unfitting for an apolitical artist. PEN's humanitarian transformation also diverged from the activism of the 1930s and the Second World War. Ernst Toller's speech at Dubrovnik in 1933 had caused a sensation, and Storm Jameson's decisions to ally with the British government to aid refugees during the War almost divided English PEN. In contrast, Hungarian writer Paul Tabori's Writers in Prison committee made humanitarian lobbying central to PEN's peacetime identity, not just a response to crisis situations.

PEN's embrace of humanitarianism grew partly from its ideological context. Writers could make this move partly because an institutional apparatus had been established after 1945 devoted to making similar claims. The newly established United Nations and its subsidiary, UNESCO—which became PEN's chief patron by the mid-1950s—could claim impartiality due to their supranational status. “Politics” could still be cast as the province of *states*, not of organizations or international groups.

Exiles led PEN's own shift to the new humanitarian ethos. As the debate about whether and how to readmit German PEN members demonstrated, exiles inserted into group discussions the notion that a person's cultural identity remained separable from his location, even in peacetime. Yet exiles disagreed about what truly made one an “exile.” As both Germans and Paul Tabori would eventually

conclude, exile was a state of mind. No matter a writer's location, he could be remain separate from but still feel kinship with members his cultural community. From here, only one logical step was required to argue that a writer could feel kinship with any other person who was undergoing persecution—and that it was his responsibility to act on this bond. Paul Tabori's own life exemplified this line of logic.

A speech made by Hermon Ould at the 1951 PEN Congress demonstrates the influence humanitarian ideas had begun to exert on the PEN Club. "How, then, can it be claimed that the PEN Club is not concerned with politics?" he asked rhetorically, beginning with the theme that dominated the 1920s. "PEN is non-political... [because] it does not identify itself with any political party." But PEN had a duty to intervene if political ideologies became aggressive or exploitative: "it is our right and duty to resist with all legitimate means at our disposal." In the post-War period, he concluded, "bit by bit we have found how an independent body of authors—and I stress the word 'independent'—drawing its membership from every part of the world, can best serve the ideal uniting them." That ideal, he concluded, stood "above all for the inalienable human rights of the individual."⁴⁶⁴ Humanitarianism, in Ould's eyes, had not radically changed the group. Its promise had been latent in the PEN idea from its founding era.

⁴⁶⁴ Hermon Ould, Speech at the 23rd International P.E.N. Congress in Lausanne, 1951. Box: 23rd Congress Lausanne, PEN Archive, HRC.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMERCIALIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

1950-1970

While Paul Tabori pushed PEN at the Rio Congress in 1960 to embrace a humanitarian mission, the vast majority of PEN members back home remained preoccupied with other matters. During the 1950s and 1960s, discussions among PEN members pivoted instead on one topic: concern that market forces were eroding literary culture. This anxiety manifested itself through a variety of discussion topics, at both domestic meetings across various branches and at International Congresses. No matter the discussion topic assigned—from “the machine age”, to “the mass media” to “the writer as independent spirit”—conversations tended to return to the same set of concerns. As one German reporter wrote, the bulk of the 1970 PEN Congress could be summarized as follows: “There is a new kind of tyranny arising, the so-called Consumer Society. “Books have become 'goods' in the commercial sense... [writers] are experiencing 'personal' industrialisation, de-personalisation of their work into 'goods'....Less and less [is] being read,” he concluded: “a crisis of books and readers.”⁴⁶⁵

Why did the rank-and-file members of PEN become so preoccupied with the threat of commercial culture during the 1950s and 1960s? Especially considering the other activities PEN pursued at the time, from the establishment of the Writers in Prison Committee discussed in Chapter Six, to the tensions of the Cold War that

⁴⁶⁵ Gustav Rene Hocks, “Die Literatur ist weltweit im Engpass: Eindruecke vom Internationalen PEN-Kongress in Dublin/ Die Vorschläge Heinrich Bölls,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 18, 1971. Box 9, uncatalogued materials, Folder 1: International Presidents and Candidates, 1 of 2, PEN International, HRC.

will be examined in Chapter Seven? Sharing their concerns about what seemed to be the all-pervasive threat of market forces provided PEN members a neutral and safe topic of conversation. The forward march of global capitalism seemed a force just as threatening as state power. Yet unlike discussions of human rights, censorship, or language hierarchies, the danger of mass culture and communication seemed to threaten all writers equally, transcending their linguistic, cultural, and geographic divides.

Debate about the merits of commercial ethos, however, still provided writers a lens on the most important issues of the day. Indeed, their concerns mirrored debates occurring within the wider culture. From William Whyte's sociological commentary in *The Organization Man* (1956) to the diagnoses offered by the Frankfurt School, discussion of mass culture provided a way of commenting on both totalitarianism and capitalism without taking the step of joining a political movement. Yet the German reporter's comment in 1970 demonstrated that discussion of commercial culture might also encode writers' political positions. The threat of "tyranny", coupled here with the Marxist concept of alienation of labor, threatened writers' "personal" individualism. The reporter described a leftist critique of Cold War culture that remained attentive to the promises of liberal democracy.

In Europe, discussion of the threat of mass culture frequently morphed into analyses of the "Americanization of culture", suggesting the degree to which writers associated mass culture with the United States. American writers, however, expressed even more anxiety than Europeans about market impingement. They

associated market forces with Hollywood and popular culture, the supposed antitheses of literary values. Anti-commercial jeremiads served also as a critique of American hegemony—both within PEN and in the wider world.

Such discusses at meetings jarred with the program of professionalization PEN pursued at the International level. The centers most vocal in the debates about the commercialization of literature, the British, American and French, spearheaded PEN's professionalization. As writers met at congresses and decried literature's vulnerability to profit motives, both the International Executive in London and governing committees in other countries amended earlier, more exclusive membership requirements. Executives were also busy applying for grant money, through governments, foundations, and UNESCO. They increased membership drives, both as another source of income and as proof of their purchase with writers in general—evidence required to strengthen their appeal to funders. Yet the drives to fundraise and recruit threatened to undermine PEN's very premise: that it represented values bigger than worldly concerns.

The nature of PEN's move both to professionalize and to guard against the market become clear in three stages. First we step into PEN meetings themselves, to gain a sense of how mid-rank members experienced PEN and their writerly realities. We then move on to place members' conversations within their wider cultural context. We end by circling back to PEN, to evaluate the ways the its leadership steered the organization through its "crisis of books and readers." Ultimately, endless stagings of debates about the tyranny of mass culture helped writers negotiate PEN's development into a modern, bureaucratic NGO, with all the

professional fundraising, publicity and management apparatus that entailed. It also provided a covert way of debating the values at stake in the Cold War struggle.

Vision Has Been Replaced by Television

During the Fifties and Sixties, PEN members in different centers around the world repeated the same conversations about mass culture and the threat of the commercialization of literature over and over again. But in sifting through these discussions we should guard against the note of exasperation that inflects the German reporter's account quoted above. These conversations functioned as important rituals, reassuring the membership that their integrity, and the integrity and autonomy of Literature itself, remained unsullied.

Discussion of the apparent commercialization of literature occupied, in various forms, virtually every semi-annual PEN Congress from 1947-1970. "What is the Machine Age Doing to Culture?"⁴⁶⁶ asked Americans at a domestic Congress in 1948. Writers answered resoundingly: turning out commodified literature with an efficiency Henry Ford would have admired. In 1957, writers gathered in London to discuss "The Author and the Public," which culminated in a session examining "The Technique of the New Mass-Communication Media." While the title of the Congress united author and public, by the Congress's end most had agreed that because of new media such as television, writers could barely attract the attention of their

⁴⁶⁶ "What is the Machine Age Doing to Culture?" proposed topic of 1948 Congress in NYC," 1948, Folder 1: International Congress 20, Copenhagen and New York, HRC.

distracted audience. By the 1965 Congress in Bled questions about public relevancy had shifted into concerns about “The Writer in Contemporary Society,” where it became clear that uncertainty and doubt had replaced John Galsworthy's earlier confident declarations about the writer's pivotal social role. Writers gathered in Menton in 1970 to discuss “Literature in the Age of Leisure.” By this point, session titles made no effort to cloak frustration in formality: “What is the future of the novel?” the conference demanded: “Are people still interested in fiction?”⁴⁶⁷

In addition to entire Congresses devoted to such topics, UNESCO also funded a number of exclusive round tables, where the most well-known writers—travel and lodging provided courtesy of UNESCO—would discuss a theme of the organization's choosing.⁴⁶⁸ PEN's alliance with UNESCO in 1946 gave officials from the Paris-based body inordinate influence on PEN. UNESCO made grants contingently, offering programmatic suggestions alongside its financial support. In this sense, it virtually created the global civil society it had been commissioned to organize. The breakdown of specific topics UNESCO wished PEN to address highlights the

⁴⁶⁷ “PEN Newsletter, Number 10, Spring 1970,” 1970, Folder: PEN Newsletter Nos. 6-12, 1966-1973, HRC.

⁴⁶⁸ Keith Botsford, “Botsford to Unesco,” May 30, 1965, Box 1618 CA 1001/3, UNESCO. UNESCO justified these round tables as part of its overall mission to encourage the free exchange of ideas. “Ces tables rondes, et le debat organisé par l'UNESCO dont les thèmes et toute autre information accompagnent cette lettre, inaugureront une nouvelle étape pour PEN. Elles nous semblent particulièrement importantes de? par le lieu de la rencontre... les thèmes à discuter et la haute qualité des invités. En même temps, nous espérons vivement qu'elles inaugureront une nouvelle étape dans de telles conférences internationales en offrant à la fois l'informalité, la discretion, l'intimité et un minimum d'obligations formelles et un maximum d'occasions pour la conversation privée et l'échange libre d'opinions.” English: “These roundtables and the debate organized by UNESCO, whose topics and other information accompany this letter, will inaugurate a new era for PEN. They seem particularly important to us because of the place of the meeting... the topics to be discussed, and the high quality of the guests. In addition, we sincerely hope that they will inaugurate a new era with regard to such international conferences by fostering informality, discretion, intimacy while minimizing formal obligations and maximizing occasions for private conversations and the free exchange of opinions.”

relationship between literature and commercial mass media. “A return to spoken language in literature,” “the influence of periodicals/the press, radio, and television on contemporary literature”, and “cinema and the nonfiction novel” headlined different events.⁴⁶⁹ UNESCO helped encourage the perception that new forms of communication threatened writers worldwide.

PEN sessions almost always pivoted on a conjunction. The Writer in the Electronic Age. Literature and New Media. Literature cowered on one side of these conjunctions and a commercially-driven threat loomed at the other end. Instead of taking it as a given that the mass culture of the day would naturally influence contemporary writing—because both grew from society—these sessions posited an opposition. Variations of this topic became so pervasive that one member exasperatedly remarked that the next PEN Congress should simply be titled The Writer as Someone Who Gets Kicked Around a Lot. The discussion at the New York Congress of 1966, devoted to “The Writer as Independent Spirit,” even more explicitly formulated the relationship as antagonistic. It aimed to do no less than to “seek clarification of the meaning for writers of gigantism in book and magazine publishing, the new relationship between creative and documentary writing in our times, the role of the writer as public figure, and the seeming usurpation by the social sciences and psychology of literature's immemorial role as the delineator of the nature of man.”⁴⁷⁰ By presenting these topics to discussants as oppositions, both

⁴⁶⁹ “le retour au langage parlé en littérature”, “l’influence sur la littérature contemporaine de la presse périodique, de la radio et de la télévision”, “le cinéma et l’école du regard” [the nouveau roman].” L. Gomes Kachado to David Carver, March 12, 1965, Box 1618 CA 1001/3, UNESCO.

⁴⁷⁰ “PEN News: Jan-Feb 1966,” March 1, 1966, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

UNESCO and PEN posed the relationship as a problem to be solved. While all of these topics at first glance might seem rather different, in reality the sessions all grew out of anxiety about the market. Whether the specific topic began as a discussion of the impact of new mass media, of television, of film, or the growth of publishing houses, writers ended by lamenting the turn toward market imperatives.⁴⁷¹ Few defended the artistic value of film or television. Writers blamed what book historian Ian R. Willison has called “Massmediatisation” for changes in literary culture.⁴⁷²

Publishing, television, radio, film, even psychoanalysis: what couldn't be called to account for literature's diminution? Looking carefully at the tangle of conversations about commercialization, a general pattern emerges. Once it had been established that the commercialization of literature did indeed exist, and that it threatened the integrity of literature, it remained for writers to take a side, either for accommodation or resistance. Marghanita Laski of the Indian branch stood for resistance. “Using mass communication media [is] commercial writing at its very lowest,” she argued. “Degrading and abominable,” this was “writing of which one

⁴⁷¹ Sessions during these years were notoriously sprawling, with discussion topics veering off on so many tangents they are almost impossible to contain here. Dr. Phyllis Bentley of English PEN, charged with summarizing one international congress, confessed the following to the Executive Committee. “There had been plenty of individual pronouncement but little or no development. There was coherence, she had discovered, but only after much searching... She had taken forty-six pages of notes which she had had to index in order to put together all the scattered pieces.” (PEN News Winter 1955, p. 12 FINISH CITATION). The tangents or “scattered pieces” I mention in this chapter – from television to psychoanalysis – are those which surfaced most frequently.

⁴⁷² Ian R. Willison. “Massmediatisation: Export of the American Model?” in Jacques Michon et Jean-Yves Mollier (eds.) *Les Mutations du Livre et de l'Édition dans le Monde, du XVIIIe siècle à l'an 2000*. Saint-Nicolas, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001.

felt thoroughly ashamed.”⁴⁷³ Laski's view was extreme. J.B. Priestley of the English branch presented a more moderate position, though only after signaling his alignment with the general consensus. “You may wish, as I have often wished, that the media of mass communications had never been invented; but they have been invented... [and] the writer should go after his audience wherever that audience may be.”⁴⁷⁴ Such ambivalent acceptance suited most members, and the majority sided with Priestley.

Often the language writers used to present their positions signaled their stance on the question of accommodation vs. resistance. Norman Podhoretz of the American branch, for example, maintained at the 1965 Congress that there existed “no evidence that the mass media had had a bad effect on the consumption of culture, rather the contrary.”⁴⁷⁵ His use of the phrase “consumption of culture”, as opposed to the elevated rhetoric about Literature favored by the majority of fellow congregants, betrayed his position. He proceeded to argue that writers simply needed to negotiate the morass of mass market fiction and position their work above it. If a writer already considered books as a commodity, they were less likely to rail against the commodification of culture.

Of all of the perceived threats to literature, television loomed largest. “Vision

⁴⁷³ Quoted in *The Author and the Public: Problems of Communication*, Report on the 1956 PEN Congress (London: PEN International, 1957), 133.

⁴⁷⁴ Quoted in *The Author and the Public*, 133.

⁴⁷⁵ “Minutes: Unesco Round Table: New Values and New Means of Expression in Artistic Creation,” July 1, 1965, Box 1618 CA 1001/3, UNESCO.

has been replaced by television,” commented Priestley.⁴⁷⁶ Television also interested the French Center, which invited its Minister for Information and other figureheads from television and radio to an annual meeting.⁴⁷⁷ On the other side of the world, in Australia, the Melbourne center offered to host a Congress in the early 1960s devoted to “The Effects of TV on Literature.” The International Executive declined their offer, deeming Australia too far away to travel. In frustration, the Australians decided to discuss the matter among themselves. In 1963 they invited an American TV and film scriptwriter supply advice on how members might break into the business.⁴⁷⁸ By 1965 the topic did feature at an International Congress. The overarching theme of the Bled Congress, “The Writer and Contemporary Society,” rapidly morphed into a discussion of the merits and demerits of television. An English writer believed that there “was still hope for it if intellectuals would become involved in it and co-operate in its development,” while a Dutch commentator contended “that television had no serious place in the work of a writer, except to supplement his income, since the inevitable team-work, sub-editing, etc, were the antithesis of all a writer stood for.”⁴⁷⁹ Here lay a key problem. Television, unlike writing, required collaboration. Less individualistic by nature, the final product could not be attributed to one creative will.

The newer the form of media, the more likely writers would dismiss it.

⁴⁷⁶ “PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre, n. 193,” October 1956, Folder: PEN News Nos. 184-202, 1953-1964, HRC.

⁴⁷⁷ André Chamson to David Carver, July 11, 1958, Archives P.E.N. Club, IMEC.

⁴⁷⁸ “Minutes 1963,” October 29, 1963, Box 1, F. 5: Minutes of Meetings 1959-1963, State Library of Victoria.

⁴⁷⁹ “PEN Newsletter, Autumn 1966,” Autumn 1966, Folder: PEN Newsletter Nos. 6-12, 1966-1973, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

During the 1950s and 1960s television came under scrutiny more than established media such as radio. Some centers, however, proved more open to experimentation than others. The French Center in particular tended to assimilate new techniques and forms of communication earlier than other branches. French PEN had even hosted its own radio show. Radio PEN first broadcast in France in December 1938, and under the stewardship of Henri Membré produced fifteen separate programs. Membré believed the French people could use literary fortification as they stared down the Nazi menace. The programs themselves usually took the form of case studies. Each segment spotlighted the work of a single author, such as Victor Hugo, placing him in historical context. French PEN remained unique during the period in its desire to reach not just writers and men of influence, but the general public.⁴⁸⁰ Radio PEN continued broadcasting until German occupation began in March 1940. After the war the French Executive praised the radio broadcasts, but argued that there no longer existed a sufficient state of emergency to warrant the time and effort required to produce them.⁴⁸¹ Mass media was not the natural province of writers.

Some members pointed out the intellectual imprecision which tended to infect PEN discussions of the market menace. In an attempt gently to goad his fellow writers, the Englishman Arthur Calder-Marshall noted exasperatedly in 1956 that “this phrase Mass Media has an intellectual sneer on its lips.” He went on to evoke with relish the type of middle-brow intellect and cultural milieu he believed

⁴⁸⁰ Henri Membré, “FIRST TRANSMISSION - Radio PEN,” December 15, 1938, Archives P.E.N. Club, IMEC.

⁴⁸¹ Henri Membré, “FIRST TRANSMISSION - Radio PEN,” December 15, 1938, Archives P.E.N. Club, IMEC.

encouraged such short-sightedness.

I can imagine the man who coined it, a Failed Famous Writer turned international civil servant, faced with that astonishing mixture of the comparatively good and the comparatively bad with the superlatively mediocre. How to lump films and radio and television together? How to place in a single category Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* and Mrs. Dale's *Diary*, the films of Greta Garbo and the Three Stooges... I see him pacing his antiseptic office in some building accepted by an international committee as proper to the United Nations as it is devoid of any style at all... trying to find the formula which would cover these manifold expressions of the human spirit—and then, after the second Alka-Seltzer and the third Benzedrine—he has it. “Mass Media,” he barks into his recording machine.⁴⁸²

With this description, Calder-Marshall pointed to the concern which underpinned fears of new, commercially-driven forms. The sheer proliferation of material meant it was becoming increasingly difficult to sort the good from the bad from the “superlatively mediocre”. Yet this had been part of PEN’s goal since its foundation. As both the production of books changed and new forms of story-telling grew, many writers found it easier to dismiss innovation in the arts in favor of older categories which seemed stable and fixed. Not even Calder-Marshall was immune, as his dismissal here of the international style of architecture suggests.

Most attendees interpreted Calder-Marshall’s evocation as a parody. Few bothered to respond. Few, that is, except UNESCO delegate Roger Caillois, fresh from the UNESCO's newly-minted (international style) headquarters in Paris. Caillois represented UNESCO's interests to PEN, and in turn described PEN's deliberations on the state of literature back to UNESCO. UNESCO had provided the funding for the session at which Calder-Marshall made his comments. This entitled

⁴⁸² P.E.N. International, *The Author and the Public: problems of communication*.

Caillois, a non-PEN member, to a place at the table. He rose to agree with Calder-Marshall's warnings. "I perceive one particular danger," he observed, "which lies in the belief in the competitive nature of literature against everything that is not literature."⁴⁸³ This move threatened to ghettoize writers, to and render literature powerless.

Vigilance

The twin threats of mass media and market impingement shook some centers so strongly it propelled them to action. By the late 1960s both the English and American centers set up special committees to deal with this burgeoning threat. The English Center christened its the Vigilance Committee, the Americans called theirs the Committee for the Protection of Writers. Neither pursued specific projects. Instead they met intermittently to report to their respective Executives on domestic threats to writers. The Vigilance Committee's first report to the English Executive drew together all the different threads that help make this topic such a formidable rhetorical knot. "

There has been enormous social and technological change during the 40-odd years of P.E.N.'s existence which has radically affected the situation of writers as much, if not more, than that of the rest of the population," began its founding report of 1968.

It is suggested that this Vigilance Committee should open its mind to the

⁴⁸³ P.E.N. International, *The Author and the Public: Problems of Communication*.

'hidden persuaders', and to receiving and correlating information on this theme – possible examples are the 'Smith's' variety of censorship, TV, ... [and] the spread of 'American' methods of editing and publication. This... represents P.E.N.'s best chance of detecting the debasement of standards of literary integrity, which we all know takes place.⁴⁸⁴

The most common strands of the discourse against mass media and commercialization all featured in the report. References to technological change and to television figure prominently. The report also cites changes in editing and publishing methods and their American origins—part of “the debasement of standards of literary integrity.” A hint of Cold War paranoia also features here. The Committee stood for “vigilance”. It guarded against “hidden persuaders” and “censorship.” Eradication of these threats would protect literary culture. It might also help PEN pragmatically. The Vigilance Committee represented “a way of involving the general membership and arousing a vital interest in PEN and of emphasizing to younger writers that it is a force for the future.”⁴⁸⁵

Sometimes the concern that writers would lose their individuality manifested itself in paeans to privacy. The French Center devoted a domestic conference to the topic “The Writer and the Right to Privacy.” A Polish writer and Parisian-resident Jan Parandowski argued that literature was founded on introspection and discretion. The growing culture of celebrity and media scrutiny surrounding well-

⁴⁸⁴ Vigilance Committee Report, PEN American Center Archives, English Correspondence, 68/11/12, Princeton University..

⁴⁸⁵ David Carver, “agrees that proposal for new committee = good,” 70/6/5 , P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

known French writers threatened to pollute their creativity.⁴⁸⁶ Elmer Rice of the English branch was more explicit, labeling radio and film “great industrial enterprises” which “go out to seek writers to supply the material. So that this more or less puts the writer in a position of being a industrial employee rather than an original creative artist.”⁴⁸⁷ As Rice's words suggest, fear of the loss of autonomy and individualism underpinned writers' words. His assertion captured the prevailing tone of the critiques of mass communication. Writers might be shorn of their creativity, transformed into proletarian writing machines.

The pervasiveness of the language of the Cold War in discussions of media and commercial culture seems especially notable given the almost complete absence of discussions of geopolitics at meetings themselves. Conversations about totalitarianism or communism took place in the context of the Writers-in-Prison committee, and in correspondence between individuals. Congresses, hoped the International Executive, would foster unity and create common ground. Discussions of mass media and commercialization provided such common ground. Yet mass media worked on writers in the same manner as communism and totalitarianism. The imperative to reach a broad audience “homogenized” literature. Editors threatened to “censor” writers' work to render it more appealing.

In addition to allowing members to critique the communism, discussion of the market simultaneously provided space for criticism of liberalism. Television

⁴⁸⁶ Jean-Francois Robin, “Au PEN Cub, confrontation internationale sur: L'ecrivain et le droit au secret de la vie privee,” *Argus*, October 2, 1958. Archives P.E.N. Club, PN2.B14.01, IMEC.

⁴⁸⁷ “PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre, n. 193.” Folder: PEN News Nos. 184-202, 1953-1964, HRC.

and the commercialization of publishing had been exported by Americans. Discussion of this dynamic allowed writers to stake out a new version of the apolitical middle ground that had for so long been crucial to PEN's identity.

Concerns in Context

Yet what had changed since 1939? Did the concerns writers felt about mass media and the commercialization of literature square with reality? To some extent writers' discourses shared a lineage with larger critiques of mass culture. A slice of these concerns, however—those related to changes in the publishing industry—were real. A brief survey of the changes the publishing industry underwent during the post-war era helps contextualize PEN members' complaints. PEN members were right; something had begun to change during this period. The shifts, however, reshaped the publishing industry—not, as some members argued, literature itself.

Seismic shifts in the production and consumption of books occurred between 1945 and 1970. These shifts fell into four categories. First came production changes in the book publishing industry, especially the availability of less expensive editions, such as paperbacks. Second came the changes in readership spurred on by these cheaper editions. Third, books competed with new commodities on which consumers could spend their disposable income. Finally, structural changes in the ownership and organization of publishing houses stimulated the revolution in consumer choice.

These shifts occurred most profoundly in America and Britain, the two

countries, significantly, where the battle cry against the commercialization of literature rang loudest. France experienced a degree of these changes. German PEN concerned itself more with harnessing these shifts to ensure greater translation and dissemination of German writing. The louder the complaints against commercialization of literature the more likely members of that PEN Center felt the negative effects of shifts in the publishing industry. Examining the ways these shifts occurred helps clarify why PEN members felt exceptionally threatened by the market during the 1950s and 1960s.

Post-war shifts in the publishing industry seemed especially jarring when contrasted to the idyllic, largely romanticized, pre-war world of the gentleman publisher. When PEN formed in 1921, virtually all publishing houses were owned by individuals or families. These personal owners favored direct involvement in their companies. The markets these publishers targeted rarely crossed national lines. As publishing industry scholars Greco, Rodríguez and Wharton write of the United States, “the U.S. Book publishing industry in 1945 seemed to be an established, cozy world of editors, publishers, booksellers, and readers:”

Traditions inexplicably bound these participants together, and publishing was for the most part a cultural institution dominated by the great trade houses. Publishers and editors, whether an Alfred A. Knopf or a Maxwell Perkins, were keenly aware of their role in the literary life of this nation. Yet financial matters often took a back seat when issues of literary importance and taste were discussed. They were, after all, independent publishers and editors, the guardians of the intellectual life of the United States.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ Greco and Wharton, *The Culture and Commerce of Book Publishing in the Twenty-First Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

The notion that Alfred A. Knopf and other publishers cared little for profits was fanciful, as biographies of publishers often affirm.⁴⁸⁹ Yet the veracity of this claim mattered little. Perceptions shape discourses. PEN members perceived the publishing industry of the pre-War and post-War periods to be diametrically opposed to each other.

After World War II, a series of changes reshaped the publishing world. The first reshaped the form of the book itself. Between 1952 and 1970, book sales grew ten percent per year, thanks largely to the rise of the paperback.⁴⁹⁰ These new books began to appear in less orthodox venues, from grocery stores to bus stations. Self-help manuals, genre mysteries and other “ ‘sure-fire’ (i.e. cautious), mass-paperback[s]” led the surge.⁴⁹¹ In the United States, for example, 1949 became the last year that paperbacks and hardcovers sold in equal proportions, about 175 million copies each that year. By the mid 1950s paperbacks vastly outnumbered hardbacks.⁴⁹² Relative proportions between genres also began to shift. The raw number of works of “literary” fiction did not decrease during this period, but they became literally less visible as other forms proliferated. As French member Yves

⁴⁸⁹ Of William Heinemann, the classic gentleman publisher: “Though raised in England, William, unlike his brothers, was essentially a cosmopolitan, largely as a result of his unorthodox education. After a spell with a tutor in London he was sent away to study at a Dresden Gymnasium and elsewhere in Germany... He was well read in Continental literature, loved its art and music, and considered most of the British to be relatively Philistine.” (4-5) Yet Heinemann never forgot the business side of his business. “He always took meticulous pains over the appearance of his books, over the quality of the paper, typeface and binding, and his brain seemed to be equipped with a built-in computer when calculating productions costs.” (6) John St. John. *William Heinemann: A Century of Publishing 1890-1990*. London: Heinemann, 1990.

⁴⁹⁰ Benjamin M. Compaine and Douglas Gomery, *Who Owns the Media?: Competition and Concentration in the Mass Media*, 66.

⁴⁹¹ Willison, 575.

⁴⁹² Willison, 66.

Gandon complained, bookstores used to have “standards”. In the past, they had stocked books on literary, artistic or musical subjects. Now these spaces were “giving way to sports and media sections.”⁴⁹³ PEN members could likely claim as large a readership as before in real terms. Yet they sensed their audience dissipating as their own visibility within bookstores and the larger literary and cultural landscape decreased.

The rise of the paperback sometimes frustrated PEN members even more than newer media like television. Rather than distracting people away from reading itself, paperbacks made the *wrong* kind of reading material more accessible. They thus robbed writers of their rightful audiences. The majority of paperbacks produced were “trade” imprints, the industry term for mass market fiction, but synonymous to many literary writers with the lowbrow. Classics also comprised a significant portion of paperback production, most famously the Penguin imprint in Britain and la Pléide by Gallimard in France. These editions proved ragingly popular. Yet some PEN members resented this even more than the rise of trashy novels. The popularity of inexpensive classics suggested that when readers wanted “literary fiction” they preferred to reach for a safe canon rather than take a chance on newer, lesser-known contemporary writers. At an evening discussion hosted by English PEN in 1948, one member noted that “there has been a tremendous revival of... nineteenth century novelists,” but attributed their growing popularity to an anti-intellectual nostalgia for the past. People wanted to read Henry James, for example, because he “gives a description of a world in which old well-established

⁴⁹³ P.E.N. Club Français, “Bulletin du Centre Français et de la Maison Internationale des P.E.N. Clubs,” November 1, 1950, BNF.

things hold good and are not doubted."⁴⁹⁴ The popularity of nineteenth century classics at the perceived expense of contemporary literary writers signaled not a total failure of taste—a reader's fault—but rather misdirection: the fault of literary tastemakers.

Yet not only did varieties of reading materials proliferate during the 1950s and 1960s. So too did cultural options in general, from film to television to motorcars and consumer durables. While expenditure on books in real terms grew across countries, proportionally it declined as other goods claimed a greater share of peoples' income. Publishing houses scrambled to ensure they attracted a significant share of this new purchasing power. To do so, they both sought out profitable books and diversified into new industries. A wave of mergers began to transform the publishing industry. The celebrated "gentleman" publishers Alfred A. Knopf and Pantheon were absorbed by Random House. Random House was in turn bought by RCA. RCA owned the broadcasting company NBC. In a similar vein, the publishing house Holt, Rinehart and Winston, itself the result of a merger, was bought by CBS, another broadcaster.⁴⁹⁵ Corporate leaders considered all of these fields complementary. Cross-media conglomerates sought products which could be marketed across other subsidiaries. "In addition to shaping what manuscripts are considered market-worthy and which authors 'bankable,' there is increased pressure to publish and record writers and artists whose work complements

⁴⁹⁴ Desmond MacCarthy, "statement on the state of literature in England," June 1, 1948, Folder 1: International Congress 20, Copenhagen and New York, HRC.

⁴⁹⁵ Compaine and Gomery, 66.

products produced in other branches of these far-flung empires.”⁴⁹⁶ This bleeding of lines between publishing and other industries contributed the impression PEN members shared that mass media were subsuming the publishing industry. The spate of mergers did not slow until the early 1970s – coinciding, not coincidentally, with a decrease in the pitch of PEN members’ complaints about market impingement.⁴⁹⁷

PEN members reported feeling a real increase in pressure from publishers to make their work more marketable. In response, many branches organized discussion evenings devoted to practical topics, from how to write for television to how to how to pitch a manuscript to a new publisher. “Hawk your wares!” heard Australians in 1965. Their guest-speaker went so far as to advise writers that stewardship of their own work did not end with publication. If they wanted to be read, they had to market themselves alongside their work. “Mr. Garter... warned us that our work was not ended when we finished a book and had it published. Because of the competition... it was up to Australian writers to 'sell' their own works... by seizing every opportunity to publicize them and try to create public demand.”⁴⁹⁸ Even the German branch occasionally joined the conversation, which demonstrates its purchase with the wider membership. German members tended to

⁴⁹⁶ Greco, Rodriguez, and Wharton, *The Culture and Commerce of Book Publishing in the 21st Century*.

⁴⁹⁷ Though it then picked up again in the 1980s and 1990s, to the point that now virtually all noted publishers are part of larger media conglomerates: Time Warner owns Little, Brown; Bertelsmann AG owns Bantam Doubleday Dell; News Corporation owns HarperCollins; and Viacom, whose chief holding is Paramount Hollywood Studios, owns textbook publisher Prentice Hall and Simon and Schuster, the largest book publisher in the US. Greco, Rodriguez, and Wharton, *The Culture and Commerce of Book Publishing in the 21st Century*, 234..

⁴⁹⁸ “Minutes AGM 1965,” November 30, 1965, Box 1, F. 6: Minutes of Meetings 1964-70, State Library of Victoria.

be less critical of the commercialization of publishing and more interested instead in questions about translation, which they hoped would ameliorate the growing isolation of Germany writers and German literature. Led by Erich Kästner, West German writers met to discuss practical concerns such as how to promote juvenile literature and translations to the new publishing conglomerates.⁴⁹⁹ Writers seemed increasingly aware that the publishing business meant business.

As publishing houses grew, the figure of the older gentlemen publisher seemed to die. PEN's attitude towards publishers can be witnessed in its membership policies. During the first phase of PEN's existence, only the American branch had insisted that the "P" in PEN could also stand for "publisher," because "publishers shepherd work from creation to dissemination, often playing a crucial editorial role along the way."⁵⁰⁰ While members in other branches, most notably the English, disagreed with this policy and refused to admit publishers to their ranks, publishers played a very active role in American PEN. Indeed, the noted publisher John Farrar almost single-handedly revived American PEN in the 1950s.⁵⁰¹ By the 1960s, however, even the American branch had become much more stringent on this point, deciding only to admit editors who sometimes also published their own work.⁵⁰² It was not until 1971 that the American executive discussed re-liberalising membership policies for publishers. It did so by creating a

⁴⁹⁹ Wilfried Schoeller, "Das Erbe der Spaltung: Rueckblick auf sechs Jahrzehnte," 2009.

⁵⁰⁰ Chute, *American PEN: The First Fifty Years*.

⁵⁰¹ Chute. *American PEN: The First Fifty Years*

⁵⁰² "Minutes Ex Com 1968," December 5, 1968, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

new “associate” category of membership, which did not carry the same voting privileges as full membership. Yet the American membership considered even this liberalization risky, and wondered if the inclusion of business-oriented publishers might damage perceptions of PEN and hurt their chances of attracting philanthropic grant money.⁵⁰³

Press coverage only served to heighten the impression many felt that publishers were pursuing business at the expense of quality literature. A sample of headlines taken from the popular press suggests PEN members' concerns echoed the general tone of the popular press. *Time* magazine in the US went so far as to coin a new term for this phenomenon” the “non-book.”⁵⁰⁴ “The nonbook is usually not written at all,” argued *Time*, grouping anthologies, Readers Digest editions, quickly-assembled advice manuals, and ghost-written autobiographies under its neologism. “The concern of the nonbook manufacturer is not that his product be good, merely that it be sold. The nonbook is merchandise aimed at the same non-people who are the most frequent targets of the film and TV industries. What they read is new, light, dry, smooth... and contains almost no calories.”⁵⁰⁵ American PEN devoted a special issue of its newsletter to analysis of the *Time* article, asking “have books ceased to become literature and become forms of merchandise?”⁵⁰⁶ “Yes”, the newsletter answered. Such PEN articles tended to capture snippets of public

⁵⁰³ “Minutes Ex Com,” December 1, 1971, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

⁵⁰⁴ “The Era of Non-B,” *Time*, August 22, 1960.

⁵⁰⁵ “The Era of Non-B,” *Time*, August 22, 1960.

⁵⁰⁶ “PEN News: April 1961,” April 1961, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton University.

discourse, distill them, then project them back to the membership as “literary questions”.

While writers felt immediate pressure from publishers, and alarmist press accounts magnified their concerns, writers blamed consumers most for the disregard of literary standards. Publishers merely responded to consumers, whose ill-taste prompted them to buy the types of lowbrow “sports and media” books Gandon had complained of. Anti-commercial rhetoric often only thinly veiled wider class tensions. Some argued that while the perceived post-War democratisation of literature *was* pulling up newer readers from the lower classes, this simultaneously weakened the position of the pre-War middle classes which had formed the very core of the audience for literary fiction.⁵⁰⁷ English members gave expression to this problem most strongly. Storm Jameson, for example, argued in a piece for the English PEN newsletter titled “The Sad State of English Writers” that post-war social transformations, higher taxes and living costs, were hitting hardest “precisely that portion of the middle class which bought literary fiction.”⁵⁰⁸ Television seemed to have brought this shift into even starker focus. “The mass audience, of course, has not sprung up overnight, it has grown over the years of universal education,” wrote English writer Angus Wilson. “Nevertheless... television has suddenly brought home to the writer the true meaning of the mass audience.”⁵⁰⁹ The middle classes had

⁵⁰⁷ Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7. On the pre-war period in Britain, see Daniel LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

⁵⁰⁸ “PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre, n. 188,” Autumn 1954, Folder: PEN News Nos. 184-202, 1953-1964, HRC.

⁵⁰⁹ P.E.N. International, *The Author and the Public: problems of communication*.

long been credited with being the primary audience for literature.⁵¹⁰ Now the middle class included new members whose tastes offended PEN members.

As the number of readers increased while taste levels seemed to dip, many PEN members argued that the democratization of reading could even be a *negative* for literary values. “The taste for literature is a *gift*,” argued English writer V.S. Pritchett, “so mass education doesn't mean the expansion of an audience.”⁵¹¹ Statements such as this demonstrate why discourses about the debasement of literary standards flourished among PEN members. They complimented the organization's older concern, dating back to the 1920s, with the effort to codify and define literary hierarchies. PEN members had long struggled to define and maintain a cultural space for the brand of literary writing their members tended to pursue. With modernism on one side, which seemed wholly form-driven, and mass market fiction on the other, which seemed solely content-driven, PEN members often argued that the ability to combine both sides of this equation—to produce work both artful and relevant—was, as Pritchett explains, a “gift.”

Many voices outside of PEN echoed writers' anxieties about mass culture. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer coined the phrase “The Culture Industry” in their 1944 essay “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”, part of the seminal volume *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.⁵¹² Adorno and Horkheimer argued

⁵¹⁰ Ian P Watt, *The Rise of the Novel; Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).

⁵¹¹ “PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre, n. 193.”

⁵¹² Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1944).

that mass culture had a political dimension: it existed to ensure the masses' obedience to capitalism. Starting with a Marxian definition of a cultural sphere subject to political forces, they argued that production imperatives drove cultural expression. The drive for maximal profit results in a mass culture that soothes with banal formulaic products designed to capture the largest audience at the lowest cost. Art had revolutionary potential before. Now it existed merely to lull workers into passivity, trapping them in "a circle of manipulation and retroactive need."⁵¹³ Enlightenment was supposed to have brought mankind pluralism, they argued. Instead society had suffered a fall into the clutches of a corruptive capitalist industry with exploitative motives. The Frankfurt school has been extensively criticized since the 1970s for its elitism, its totalizing reduction of people into consumers who lack agency, its denial of any space for contradiction and resistance.⁵¹⁴ Yet Adorno and Horkheimer clearly tapped into an urgent concern many writers felt during this period. Indeed, they likely nurtured writers' concerns, as their study reverberated through the academy and wider intellectual circles.⁵¹⁵ PEN, like many outside its

⁵¹³ Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry", 121.

⁵¹⁴ Beginning with the Birmingham school, most critics of consumption have sought to reintroduce consumer power and agency, often by focusing on subcultures or market niches instead of the mass market. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in Hall (et. al. eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Michael de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); and John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (London: Routledge, 1989). In response to a widespread sense that the "cultural turn" had gone too far, many who work on consumption are turning back to older theorists—not just the Frankfurt School, but also Thorstein Veblen, John Kenneth Galbraith and even Herbert Marcuse. See, for example, Juliet B. Schor, "In Defence of Consumer Critique: Revisiting the Consumption Debates of the Twentieth Century" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 611, *The Politics of Consumption/The Consumption of Politics* (May, 2007), 16-30.

⁵¹⁵ On the impact of the Frankfurt School and the dissemination of their ideas see Rolf Wiggershaus *The Frankfurt School: its History, Theories, and Political Significance*. Trans. Michael Robertson. (Cambridge:

borders, worried about the threat the market posed to the autonomy of the Republic of Letters.

While discussion of market forces assuaged PEN members' anxieties and helped them skirt divisive political topics, these sessions did not help portray the Republic of Letters as a relevant, vibrant place to the outside world. A *New York Times* reporter confirmed this impression when in 1968. After attending that year's International Congress in Dublin, he noted that PEN was widely considered "a joke". "Other professional associations may strike terror or boredom into the heart; but the PEN has never caused anything but mirth," he remarked. "There is a perennial sense that PEN could be useful for something, if one could only figure out what it might be... Its most useful function has been handing out letters demanding the release of imprisoned writers... [but] Unfortunately, PEN can't do much beside write letters, because it can't agree about much."⁵¹⁶ While the International Executive naturally denounced this article, and similar whispers about PEN's lack of relevancy from other sources,⁵¹⁷ it had to change this impression. PEN had to convince

MIT Press, 1994). For information on the dissemination of the "culture industry" model, see Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (London: Sage, 2002); Heinz Steinert, *Culture Industry* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).

⁵¹⁶ Wilfred Sheed, "The Good Word: The PEN Joke Again," *New York Times*, 11/3/71, Book Review, BR2.

⁵¹⁷ The American Executive published an article in *Publishers Weekly* which aimed to acquaint publishers with recent PEN activities. Interestingly, it begins on the defensive, with a rebuttal of the accusation that PEN was irrelevant and out-of-date in the modern world – which demonstrates the extent to which even PEN itself assumed this impression was a given. "The American book trade, when it thinks of PEN at all (which isn't likely to be often), is apt to come up with a mental image of stultifyingly dull lit'r'y cocktail receptions... There is a certain historical basis for this widely held if comic misapprehension," the article conceded, outlining the narrative of PEN's breakdown in the 1930s. But, it went on, PEN now plays an active role in fostering translations, giving voice to writers in prison, and now played an active role in American culture. "Who speaks to the world on behalf of American writers?" concluded the article. "The voice of American PEN, which has at times been faltering and almost inaudible, but is now coming through

younger writers, funders, and the wider community of its relevance if its post-War reincarnation was to survive for longer than a decade.

PEN Hawks its Wares

While writers gathered at local and international meetings to discuss the dangers of the profit motive and its mass proliferation, PEN was undergoing substantial organizational changes, both within specific branches and at the international level. Branches described the imperative for growing their organizational capacity in different ways. Yet all agreed that the problems stemmed from one front: PEN had perilously little funds. To ameliorate this, two avenues needed to be pursued: more aggressive fund-raising and growth of the membership base. The latter would bring in more dues and, perhaps more importantly, enhance perceptions of the organization's relevance. This in turn would reap fundraising rewards. Funders looked at membership rolls when determining if an organization seemed a good investment. Yet both of these avenues suggested problems: could PEN continue to represent transcendent, immaterial human values if it resorted to recruitment and fundraising drives? The endless conversations about the commercialization of literature at International Congresses described above provided an outlet for such concerns. Executive Committees, meanwhile, channeled their energies into modernisation.

Before World War II, PEN branches financed their operations primarily

loud and clear." Roger H. Smith. "Onward and Upward with American PEN," *Publishers Weekly*, April 9, 1973. PEN American Center, Princeton University.

through membership dues. The levels varied, though the ten dollars annually charged by the American branch and the five pounds charged by the English were typical. Occasionally a wealthy member might donate above the standard membership fee in order to help a branch out of a short term crisis. John Galsworthy became the most generous standard bearer in this regard when he donated the funds from his Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932. No other branch, however, received such a large lump sum. This type of giving remained highly unusual before the War.

Government support, on the other hand, remained almost nonexistent during this period. The only PEN branch explicitly to reference government support during the 1920s and 1930s was the French, which referred frequently to the beneficence and patronage of Philippe Berthelot, an official at the Quai d'Orsay during the early 1920s. Other European governments similarly sponsored PEN activities by donating reception halls in significant public buildings for international Congresses, as occurred in Edinburgh and Dubrovnik in the 1930s. Both the Edinburgh and Dubrovnik Congresses also treated attendees to elaborate tours of their historic sites, which culminated in cocktail receptions hosted by local officials. Governments above all viewed PEN Congresses as a useful means of advertising their cultural patrimony and splendors.

PEN faced a new professional reality by the end of World War II. As PEN, following Tabori's lead, recast itself as a humanitarian outfit, it faced a host of competitors. PEN needed to position itself in relation to these organizations. It needed to redefine its niche. As the member Alexandr Blokh noted, "PEN had

perhaps not sufficiently shaken off its 'grand bourgeois' origins and brought itself up to date... It had an essential role to play as a non-governmental organisation... To achieve this... it needed to revise its methods of working."⁵¹⁸ The first step along this road involved securing its finances. Organizational soundness hinged on financial soundness: PEN needed a permanent staff to oversee the growing administrative challenges posed by organizing international Congresses and letter writing campaigns. But if members voiced any complaint as frequently as the tirades against commercialization, it was that PEN was perilously poor. That needed to change. PEN needed to learn to market, to sell, its own image.

When it came to concerns about lack of funds, the International Executive sounded the loudest note of peril. Until the late 1960s, the English Centre and the International Executive remained practically intertwined, with the same volunteers performing administrative tasks for both sides. Both sides also shared quarters in Glebe House, a townhouse in Chelsea. A branch member held the long term leasehold on this property, whose rate remained very low, and had donated it to English PEN. English PEN's finances must therefore be considered alongside those of the international executive. Like all national Centers, English PEN funded its operations with membership dues. International PEN in turn followed the same model. It counted the national centers as its members, in the same way local branches counted individuals, and collected an annual fee from national centers. Yet despite the low rent on Glebe House, both English and International PEN often ran a deficit, and could barely pay a meagre stipend to its one paid staffer, Hermon

⁵¹⁸ Jerusalem minutes 1974, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Jerusalem 1974, PEN International, HRC.

Ould and then later David Carver. “It is a ridiculous situation for an organisation of the stature of International PEN not to be able to pay its International Secretary,” one member protested.⁵¹⁹ “We must face the fact that we seem to be insolvent.”⁵²⁰

The problem, the International Executive decided, stemmed from lack of bureaucratic accountability and cohesion. International PEN responded to its budgetary crisis by raising membership dues, but decided the greater problem ultimately lay with the fact that many member centers neglected to pay these dues at all. Led by representatives from English PEN (“the English Centre [can] no longer continue to make up the deficit for International PEN”⁵²¹), the International Executive resolved to ban centers that remained in arrears for more than three months. This, however, raised cries of protest from a large section of the membership: “Writers [aren't] rich!”⁵²² To base membership to PEN on fees disadvantaged poorer writers in favor of the middle class and wealthy, reinforcing precisely the old-fashioned, elitist image PEN was trying to shake. Such an action would draw a similar line between rich and poor nations. But most importantly, this proposal ran contrary to the PEN ethos: individuals should be admitted on the basis of their writing, not their pocketbook. In practice, therefore, the Executive did not enforce the resolution.

⁵¹⁹ International Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 1974, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Jerusalem 1974, PEN International, HRC.

⁵²⁰ Peter Elstob, Minutes, 44th AGM., Series V, 2:3, HRC..

⁵²¹ International Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 1974, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Jerusalem 1974, PEN International, HRC.

⁵²² International Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 1974, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Jerusalem 1974, PEN International, HRC.

Alternate sources of revenue needed to be found. Two possible routes lay before International PEN: explicitly commercial forms of fundraising, or government and private grants. The Executive pursued the commercial route first. They began inviting advertisements for placement in *PEN News*, the English branch newsletter which the International Executive also distributed internationally. The majority of the ads came from television writing schools. “Train by post for the most profitable market in writing!”⁵²³ At least every issue of *PEN News* from 1962 onward contained an advertisement for either the TV Scriptwriters' School of Fleet Street or the Television Writing School of Harley Street.⁵²⁴ This made for a strikingly paradoxical juxtaposition when the *PEN News* also featured one of its many critiques of television writing. English PEN's second commercial effort took the form of a members' bar and restaurant in Glebe House, whose start-up costs were provided by member Frank Lee in memory of his wife Cecile.⁵²⁵ The restaurant proved a limited success. The restaurant, combined with ad revenue from the newsletter, combined to raise enough funds to push English PEN out of the red—but little more.

English PEN therefore also needed to pursue gifts from grant-making bodies. To do this they needed first to secure tax exempt status. On this count they turned for advice from the London Library, which had recently rewritten its entire constitution to prove that they performed charitable service for the public.

⁵²³ Ad repeated in *PEN News* during 1961-63. Box 5, PEN American Center Archives, Princeton..

⁵²⁴ *PEN News*, August 1962., PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 11/2, Princeton.

⁵²⁵ *PEN News* no. 12, 1973., PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 11/6, Princeton.

Members of the London Library board advised PEN to perform its own self-analysis: was there anything about PEN which might disqualify it from being considered a charity? Running and profiting from a bar and restaurant, the Executive decided, considerably contradicted PEN's claims to charitable status. The Executive voted to close the restaurant and bar. It simultaneously incorporated The Glebe House Foundation, a body which could receive grants tax free on behalf of PEN.⁵²⁶

With tax exempt status newly in hand by 1962, International Secretary David Carver sought funding from the British government. Their applications positioned writing in relation to other arts. "Writers of books really are remarkably inexpensive in terms of national finance. They require no opera house, no National Theatre, no National Gallery, no Festival Hall. They do not even require a Burlington House, a Royal Society, or a Royal Institution." All writers wished for was security for Glebe House, both the administrative heart of PEN and a reception center for writers from around the world. "All that the English Center of the PEN Club is asking for is a place in which writers may meet, where out of town and foreign visitors may have a bed for the night. That is all."⁵²⁷

PEN supplication to the British Government failed to acknowledge that these other art forms, from theatre to painting to performance, arguably provided a type of tangible, didactic and uplifting service to the general public. PEN, on the other hand—with its exclusive membership requirements and a program only writers

⁵²⁶ "PEN Newsletter, Number 12, Autumn 1973," 1973, Folder: PEN Newsletter Nos. 6-12, 1966-1973, HRC.

⁵²⁷ Executive Minutes, May 1966, Box 8, uncatalogued materials, PEN English Center, HRC.

could participate in—arguably did not fulfill a similar function.⁵²⁸ Perhaps because of this line of reasoning, British government support remained low throughout this period. In 1963, however, PEN's efforts proved successful, when it received its first grant of from the Arts Council. Though funds were to be “somewhat arbitrarily divided between English Centre activities and the activities of International PEN,” the grant aided PEN enormously.⁵²⁹ Besides standard operating costs, both sides were to channel their funds toward support of Glebe House, increasing its capacity to function as a meeting center for writers from both home and abroad.

English and International PEN focused the majority of their energy on raising funds from private donors. This effort took the form of the PEN Project, launched in 1967 with a glossy brochure proclaiming the organization's importance to writers worldwide and emphasizing the its roots in the traditions of British liberalism. The PEN Project aimed to raise money to renovate Glebe House, providing adequate office accommodation, a lecture hall for meetings and discussions, and a club house to be designed at a reduced fee by the architect Lord Holford.⁵³⁰ While the effort did bring in additional private donations from members and support from the Wates Foundation, the Project ultimately foundered. By 1975 their landlords, now determined to renovate the decrepit building, used the expiration of their lease as

⁵²⁸ In the literary field, libraries arguably provided this space. Thus it is unsurprising that the London Library and British Library enjoyed more government support than PEN.

⁵²⁹ PEN Newsletter, No. 10, Spring 1970. Box 8, uncataloged materials, Folder: PEN Newsletter Nos. 6-12, 1966-1973, HRC.

⁵³⁰ Their landlord, the Church Commissioners, supported their petitions, who wished the organization to stay on the premises and helped them obtain planning permission for the renovations.

an excuse to up the rent by 500%.⁵³¹ Unable to meet this increase, PEN vacated Glebe House in 1975. It would not be until the early 1980s that the charitable, nonprofit model would begin to pay substantial dividends⁵³² but by the late 1960s a tone had been set: the English branch had decidedly ruled out commercial activities, though mostly for pragmatic reasons and less out of a deep concern about what such activities implied.

American PEN, like English, also ruled out commercial activities as a means of fundraising. Fear of commercialization animated the American branch most profoundly. American members, more than those in other branches, felt deeply concerned about the threat commerce and mass culture posed to literature—to the point that it strictly forbade commercial forms of fundraising altogether. Like other Centers, American PEN relied on membership dues to fund operating costs. Like other centers, it found this barely sufficient. Its financial burden during the 1950s and 60s grew from the imperative to reconstruct after its virtual dissolution during the War. It needed to reestablish a membership roster, organizing monthly cocktail receptions, and produce a regular newsletter. But even this proved challenging, and like English PEN, American PEN soon began to explore alternate options.

Unlike English PEN, American PEN skipped commercial fundraising options and jumped straight to exploration of philanthropic giving. American PEN had

⁵³¹ “Minutes Ex Com 1975,” February 28, 1975, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

⁵³² Today PEN's operating costs are met not just by foundation and government funds, but by corporations as well. International PEN's website lists the following donors: Bloomberg LP, Clifford Chance, The John S. Cohen Foundation, FONT International, Iberian American Foundation of International PEN, ICORN, Japan PEN, The Neil Krietman Foundation, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fritt Ord Institute, Oxfam Novib, PEN American Center, Pentagram, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Sulzberger Foundation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Temple Translations, TrustAfrica, UNESCO and other donors who wish to remain anonymous. <http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/go/about-us> (12/3/2009).

begun lobbying for tax exempt status before the War, but had been repeatedly denied. John Farrar, post-War head of the New York PEN, teamed with an active local member and children's book author named Marchette Chute to lobby for tax exempt status in the early 1950s. They achieved their goal in 1953, surprisingly quickly given the resistance American PEN had been met with on the same question before the war.

The New York executive had an inkling the effort would be somewhat easier in the post-War period. The State Department had demonstrated an interest in the organization, approaching PEN in 1946 requesting that it furnish the names and addresses of all members, with the justification that it hoped to promote international exchange.⁵³³ New York PEN complied. The request probably seemed quite benign, given the fact that that the French government had asked that branch for similar information, and UNESCO also requested membership rolls in its efforts to facilitate communication between countries.

American PEN's first philanthropic grant of \$5,000 arrived in 1954 from the Farfield Foundation. Tagged for operational support, the grant helped American PEN reestablish its program. Subsequent Farfield grants were to be used to send American members abroad to PEN Congresses. The Farfield grant acted as seed money. It demonstrated to other Foundations that PEN was a worthy investment.

The American Executive used this grant as a push to embark on an ambitious

⁵³³ Harry Warfel, "State department requests info on PEN, starting a file," July 13, 1946, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton University. "The Organizational Liaison Branch of the Division of International Exchange of Persons is compiling a file of information concerning the principal professional, scientific, and cultural organizations in the United States for the purpose of facilitating and implementing the Department's program of spreading abroad information on various phases of American life and to bring about an international exchange of knowledge and skills."

fundraising program. It approached many foundations, but achieved success primarily with the Ford Foundation.⁵³⁴

The American Executive, like their fellow members in London, also began to explore other options. Through the early 1960s monthly cocktail parties held at the Algonquin formed the core of New York PEN activities. While some, notably Susan Sontag by the mid-60s, complained that these evenings only encouraged PEN's old-fashioned image, the Executive argued that these evenings helped writers feel part of a community. The Executive debated from providing drinks at cost to charging a premium, and funneling the profit back into the organization. But this was dismissed as impractical (“the whole point of the cocktail evenings are to introduce new, young writers, many of whom already find it difficult to afford the drinks”) and unseemly (“PEN is not a business, and members shouldn't be made to feel they are entering a saloon”).⁵³⁵ The outcry from members at this suggestion rang so loudly, the Executive never again floated commercial fundraising ideas. For a decade, American PEN's membership growth remained stagnant.

Similar activities seemed less threateningly commercial outside of America. The French Center stood in contrast to the English/International and American branches as the most consistently successful and stable in terms of fundraising and financial soundness, and as the center least concerned about commercialization. The French branch also differentiated itself when it came to lobbying for funding from

⁵³⁴ Among them The Pew Memorial Trust, The Stern Family Fund, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Pforzheimer Foundation, the van Ameringen Foundation, and the Lamont Charitable Trust.

⁵³⁵ The American PEN, Vol. 1, No. 2, 27. PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 11/3, Princeton.

UNESCO. French PEN benefited most from the UNESCO relationship. Two factors encouraged this development: the fact that UNESCO, headquartered in Paris, could receive frequent visits from members of the French branch such as Yves Gandon; and the fact that UNESCO's delegate back to PEN was a Frenchman, Roger Caillois, who regularly left UNESCO offices to observe local PEN meetings. Through Caillois, UNESCO began to grant PEN funds. Some were tagged for Glebe House, but the majority of which went to the Maison Internationale—a revival of the international house Jules Romains had established in the 1930s. Thus in 1947 UNESCO gave PEN \$12,000, the majority of which represented “a grant-in-aid for the purpose of assisting the Maison Internationale in Paris,” and the rest which went to “help the similar house in London, and help Centres in smaller countries establish libraries of foreign books.”⁵³⁶ UNESCO justified this preference by arguing that that the French Center's Maison Internationale enjoyed more stability than Glebe House.

Yet the French Center, like the English, found it difficult to meet general operating expenses, and soon began to explore commercial options—most notably through its annual book sale, its *Vente des Livres*, which proved so successful it virtually underwrote the Maison Internationale. The *Vente des Livres*, a giant book sale with a festival-like atmosphere, took place over the course of an autumn week in a grand hotel function room. French PEN asked members and their publishers to donate copies of books, the proceeds of which went to Maison Internationale. Books were likely to sell for higher prices, the Executive gently encouraged, if signed by their authors. And the fair itself would attract more attention if said authors

⁵³⁶ UNESCO Archives, Paris, File 24..

attended. French PEN placed advertisements for the Vente all around Paris and in relevant newspapers and literary magazines. These notices promised the general public the opportunity to buy editions of books signed by great literary men—and perhaps, if they lingered at the Vente long enough, to meet and interact with some of these coveted writers. The success of the event varied from year-to-year depending on the fame of the specific writers who participated. The French Executive thus underscored the importance of participation to its most famous members, imploring their attendance through both direct mailings and the branch newsletter.⁵³⁷ Such ads underscored what the Vente really sold: fame and prestige, a chance to mingle with the current Pantheon of French writers.

This subtext was not lost on many French members, some of whom raised objections to the Vente. The Vente des Livres—with its reception hall milling with people, stands and tables offering books for sale, and accompanying music and other cultural offerings—seemed just as commercial an enterprise as a restaurant in Glebe House. This bothered some members, who wrote letters to the French Executive protesting that the fairs detracted from the gravity of PEN's mission. In the French case, however, this concern was voiced using the language of politics: members wrote letters arguing that PEN would be seen to wield less political authority if it pursued publicity-oriented activities like the book fair. “It is important to recall,” asserted the French Center newsletter in response to members' objections, “that the Book Sale is not intended to provide an organization with a

⁵³⁷ P.E.N. Club Francais, “Bulletin du Centre Francais et de la Maison Internationale des P.E.N. Clubs,” November 6, 1955, BNF.

more or less political character with the means to survive.”⁵³⁸ Because it underwrote the budget of Maison Internationale, which received writers from abroad, the French Executive argued, the book sale transcended its carnival atmosphere and served an important cultural and political function.

What is significant here is that the same *type* of activity which bothered English and American members bothered French members—and French members participated just as heartily at international congresses in debates about the commercialization of literature—but French members were more likely to fear they were becoming less political, not that they were becoming more commercial. Indeed, when they did talk about the commercialization of literature, French writers tended to locate it as a force outside of French literature that was invading and acting upon France, not something that emanated from within.

The French stood in direct contrast to the Americans, who assumed the commercialization of literature was such an *American* problem they acted preemptively. But this led to a curious paradox: because American members guarded against commercialism and the destructive impact of mass media far more other centers, in reality they behaved in a much less commercial manner than members in other countries. This same dynamic is evident in relation to technology and mass communications in general. The French center tended to be more dynamic in relation to new media, for example in their early adoption of radio. The Americans, on the other hand, boycotted new media, television and commercial

⁵³⁸ “Il est bon de rappeler,” asserted the French Center newsletter in response to members' objections, “que la Vente des Livres n'est pas destinée à faire vivre une organisation à caractère plus ou moins politique.” P.E.N. Club Français, “Bulletin du Centre Français et de la Maison Internationale des P.E.N. Clubs,” October 1958, BNF.

techniques more vociferously than any other center. A pattern emerges: the more threatened by market forces a branch was perceived to be, the less commercially it conducted its affairs. Commercialism was a question of perspective.

Locating Commercial Forces

If commercialism was a question of perspective, all PEN centers shared a common vantage point: not only did market forces threaten literature, this threat emanated above all from the United States. Most members associated the shifts in the publishing industry with the United States, no branch more so than the New York Center. Yet, as we have seen, in reality these assumptions produced the inverse when it came to actual branch activity. Exactly *because* the American branch assumed the threat of commercial culture lay so close to home, they most guarded against the threat. The tyranny of commercial culture was a discourse with which American writers were well versed. The French branch, on the other hand, placed the same topics and anxieties within a framework most familiar to them, and understood the conflict between PEN's ideals and their branch's actions as a political question. They, like most PEN members, associated the commercialization of literature not with their own country or actions, but with Hollywood. Yet as the examination of actual branch activities above demonstrates, writers' assertions that literature was being corrupted and commercialized, and this association with America, did not hold in reality.

Yet when questions of national origin are left to the side, the progress of

capitalism is usually portrayed as totalizing, homogenizing and unstoppable. The literary critic Pascale Casanova falls prey to the same assumption that shaped PEN conversations: the fear that market forces will obliterate all local distinction. A world Republic of Letters may have existed in the past, she argues, but the “world system of literary prestige” governed from Paris began to give way in the 1960s and 70s. The forces of commercial globalization, she argues, are destroying literary values. In a chapter called “From Internationalization to Globalization” she contends that

American (or Americanized) large-scale literary production, having effortlessly succeeded in making articles of domestic consumption pass for 'international' literature, poses a grave threat to the independence of the world of letters as a whole. What is being played out today in every part of the world literary space is not a rivalry between France and the United States or Great Britain but rather a struggle between the commercial pole, which in each country seeks to impose itself as a new source of literary legitimacy through the diffusion of writing that mimics the style of the modern novel, and the autonomous pole, which finds itself under siege not only in the United States and France but throughout Europe, owing to the power of international publishing giants.⁵³⁹

The dismantling of the World Republic of Letters over the past few decades, Casanova suggests, has allowed a new type of mass-produced, globally marketed book to proliferate: a form of “world fiction”, usually written in a Modernist style, like the novels of David Lodge and Umberto Eco. The age of true Literature, she concludes, is being replaced by a self-conscious simulacrum. Casanova sounds a tone similar to that heard at PEN Congresses forty years before. “Under these

⁵³⁹ Casanova, 169.

circumstances," she concludes, "a genuine literary internationalism is no longer possible, having been swept away by the tides of international business."⁵⁴⁰

Globalisation has destroyed internationalism, as the conclusion to her chapter signals before we've started reading. Casanova presents PEN's decades old fear in new packaging. In doing so she underscores that fact that denunciations of the market are venerable rituals of the literary world, and should be read with cautious skepticism.

Yet Casanova's own argument gives us the tools to rectify this lapse in her reasoning. Her driving motivation stems from her desire to expose the myth of meritocracy, to overturn "the fable of an enchanted world...where universality reigns through liberty and equality," the idea that some works gain recognition because they possess genuine superiority, an assumption in turn premised on "the notion of literature as something pure, free, and universal." In short, she is trying to counter precisely the transcendent conception of literature which PEN members in the 1950s and 60s argued they were defending against market forces. By evoking the spectre of globalization, Casanova just replaces one universal with another. PEN members' discussions of the commercial threat performed similar work. A denationalized, all-pervasive market offered a totalizing force much easier to critique during the Cold War than the other ideologies with ambitions to subsume the globe.

⁵⁴⁰ Casanova, 172.

Conclusion

Membership dues, grants, and foundation support—but nothing that could be likened to a bake sale. Unlike the English branch, American PEN, in its effort to fundraise, pursued everything except commercial avenues. They, unlike the Europeans, perceived themselves to be vulnerable to the seductions of mass culture. As part of their efforts to increase their relevancy and thus attract more grant money, PEN branches began to revamp themselves in the hopes of appealing to younger members. The spirit of the late 1960s was in the air, and American PEN President Lewis Galantière responded in turn. “American PEN stands at a crossroads.” It needed to modernise, or else “recede into its earlier flabby gentility.”⁵⁴¹

By 1970, PEN had stitched itself back together and transformed into a fully operational NGO. Diatribes against mass culture no longer headlined congresses. They only surfaced occasionally as footnotes to larger issues. Eventually references to the commercialism of literature became framing devices for other conversational topics, and not the main feature of Congresses themselves. Efforts to broaden the membership base in two regards propelled this change. First came pushes to find questions that appealed to a younger, more dynamic audience. Second came the growing participation of writers from less dominant countries, who pointed out that the threat of commercialization simply did not effect them in the same way. “The

⁵⁴¹ Lewis Galantière, “finding a pres,” 1968, C0760, I. Governance, Box 5/1, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton.

'threat' of electronics does not mean the end of the Gutenberg era," said Alberto S. Florentino of the Philippines in response to what seemed to him needless hysteria at the 1966 New York Congress. "Our electronic threat is that people lack a lamp to read by. Our problem is not the degradation of language, but the search for a language in which to write."⁵⁴²

Writers' ultimate fear—that literature itself would be obliterated—never transpired. Discussion of this topic instead performed crucial intellectual work. It allowed members from different centers to voice opinions about the ways international political and literary hierarchies were shifting, and the way these shifts, in turn, were forcing realignment between the branches of the international Republic of Letters. Indeed, PEN's real problem, many soon began to argue, lay not with threats to the Republic of Letters, but with its restrictive boundaries.

⁵⁴² "Another kind of electronic Problem." PEN News, Series IV, 3:7, HRC..

CHAPTER SEVEN
AN INTERNATIONAL PEN
1962-1970

In 1965, the London-based Secretary of PEN International, David Carver, issued a call to all PEN branches worldwide. “We are an increasingly *international* organisation,” he wrote to the Presidents and Secretaries of centers. “This has been apparent to the International Secretariat for a number of years. PEN is no longer a European organisation, or even a European-centered organisation.”⁵⁴³ The time had come, Carver informed the Presidents and Secretaries of branches around the world, for PEN to seek “a more representatively international President.”⁵⁴⁴ Of all the possible candidates the London Executive might have chosen from among its membership, it approached the American writer Arthur Miller, who had barely, until that point, even heard of the group. Miller’s election to the Presidency in 1966 caused a fracas, particularly when French PEN posed Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias as a rival. Why was Miller, not even a PEN member, considered a solution to the organization’s need to “internationalize”?

The election contest of 1965 brought to a head long-simmering tensions about PEN’s relationship to the Cold War. As had become typical PEN practice, however, most felt reluctant to discuss with each other directly the political or ideological sources of their disagreement. They instead traded barbs about the need

⁵⁴³ David Carver, Letter to all branches, April 21, 1965, Folder 1: International Presidents and Candidates, 1 of 2, HRC.

⁵⁴⁴ David Carver, Letter to all branches, April 21, 1965, Folder 1: International Presidents and Candidates, 1 of 2, HRC.

to internationalize. Multiple parties tried to colonize the term “international” during the 1960s, beginning well before this election episode and continuing for some years after. As the Americans pushed further into Vietnam and the Soviets allied with the Cubans and other left-leaning nations, PEN too tried to extend its global reach. PEN became an arena in the mid-Sixties for members, primarily from Europe and America, to offer competing interpretations of the humanist ideal.

This chapter begins with the local, within PEN itself, and then branches out to place the Miller/Asturias election contest in its wider context, first the Cold War, then the literary sphere. We begin with the two writers themselves. After discussing the election struggle, we place both it and PEN within the wider context of the cultural Cold War. Superpowers were busy crafting competing versions of the ideal society, efforts that pushed them to establish hegemony over other parts of the globe. Largely because of such efforts, writers from places with less developed literary scenes found opportunities to attend PEN Congresses. Latin American writers, for example, attended the 1966 American PEN Congress at the behest of UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, and the American State Department. Freshly arrived in literary centers, such writers pushed long-standing PEN members to consider more critically exactly who and what they included under the umbrella term “international.”

The challenges offered by the likes of Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa, however, ultimately affirmed the tension built into the PEN charter. Writers from literary peripheries experienced very different material problems, from low literary rates to lack of sound publishing infrastructures. Despite these challenges, they too

considered their literary art an expression of universal human experience. PEN's grand rhetorical gestures were beginning to reach a wider audience—potentially transforming PEN's Republic of Letters into a World Republic of Letters.

The Miller/ Asturias Election Battle: Cast of Characters

The election of the playwright Arthur Miller to the Presidency of PEN International unfolded as a drama peopled by a distinct cast of characters. The two protagonists, Miller and Miguel Asturias, drew their support from different poles of the PEN. Administrative figures maneuvered negotiations, from staffers such as David Carver and an American named Keith Botsford in London, to French PEN officials such as Yves Gandon and Jean de Beer in Paris. Each of these individuals played a crucial role in shaping the 1966 election effort, an episode that helped redefine PEN's role during the Cold War.

At the center of the drama stood Miller himself. The American playwright-cum-political activist-cum pop culture fixture was born in Brooklyn in 1915. He became famous for plays which critiqued both the American Dream and the ethos of the Cold War, gaining the most fame for dramas such as *All My Sons*, *The Crucible*, and *Death of a Salesman* – the last which garnered him a Pulitzer Prize in 1949. The press often covered Miller from the late 1940s through 1960s, particularly after he was called to testify before Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956. Miller refused to reveal the names of friends and colleagues who had been involved in Communist Party activities, telling the

chairman “I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him.”⁵⁴⁵ The Judge subsequently found Miller guilty for contempt of Congress in May 1957. This incident not only served to heighten his public profile – no doubt partly because he was accompanied to the hearings by Marilyn Monroe, soon to become his second wife, who risked her career to support him in Washington – but also confirmed his commitment to political activism in support of writers' free speech.⁵⁴⁶

On the other side stood Miguel Ángel Asturias, the Guatemalan novelist, intellectual, and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1967. Born in 1899, Asturias's first published work treated “The Social Problem of the Indian,” a thesis that grew out of his law studies at the University of San Carlos. A ladino of European extraction, Asturias argued in this thesis that Guatemalan Indians be encouraged to assimilate, a perspective informed by a devotion to French notions of civilization—a characteristic he shared with other Latin Americans of similar background striving to differentiate themselves both from a Spanish colonial legacy and growing American influence.⁵⁴⁷ Asturias arrived in Paris in 1923 “as a Catholic bourgeois

⁵⁴⁵ Miller at the HUAC trials, quoted in Christopher Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama*, Vol. 2: Williams, Miller, Albee (Cambridge: Press Syndicate, 1984), 191.

⁵⁴⁶ Christopher Bigsby, *Arthur Miller: The Definitive Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), 528. While an enormous body of work on Miller exists, Bigsby's recent biography aims to synthesize the popular Miller with the academic Miller. Before publication of this biography, Bigsby could also be credited with producing the most serious and sustained critical study of the playwright. His book *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) foregrounds Miller's, using brief interludes about his life as connecting devices between critical readings. Bigsby's work represents a revival of interest in Miller, whose reputation began to wane in the mid-Sixties, as critics began to agree that Miller was unable to produce strong female characters, that his plays repeated the same themes, and that his style was outmoded. Terry Otten provides a useful summary of this reaction as part of his effort to resuscitate interest in Miller's later work. Otten, *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

⁵⁴⁷ Stephen Henighan, *Assuming the Light: the Parisian Literary Apprenticeship of Miguel Angel Asturias* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

ladino whose law thesis had resounded with an aching need to consolidate his pseudo-European identity through closer contact with French culture.”⁵⁴⁸

Asturias’s contact with France began in 1923 and spanned his lifetime. In the twenties he regularly attended lectures on the religions of the Mayas by Professor Georges Raynaud at the Sorbonne, becoming Raynaud's disciple. Raynaud’s influence – and the larger interest in Paris at the time in “authentic”, “tribal” cultures – promoted Asturias to recast his relationship to his home country. He repositioned himself as a representative of indigenous Latin America. He launched his writing career using this persona. He returned to Guatemala in 1933, at which point he published his most famous works: *El Señor Presidente* (1946) and *Viento Fuerte* (1950). Both critiqued the ways power was exercised over Guatemalan people, in the form of a ruthless local dictator in the first instance, and through an indictment of North American economic imperialism in the second. His work pioneered the techniques of magical realism, the genre later to become a hallmark of the Latin American Boom. Asturias remained in Guatemala until the American-backed toppling of Arbenz's government in 1954. Now out of favor in his home country, Asturias spent the rest of his life in exile, first in Argentina and then eventually Paris, where he became a member and eventually President of the French PEN Center. He died in Madrid in 1974 and was buried in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁸ Henighan, 25.

⁵⁴⁹ The critical scholarship on Asturias in English is small compared to that in French. In addition to Henighan’s *Assuming the Light*, see Jean Franco’s essay “Miguel Angel Asturias”, in Carlos A. Solé and Maria Abreu, *Latin American Writers* (New York: Scribner, 1989), 865–873. See also René Prieto, who argues that assessments of Asturias’s literary significance must be revised in light of his ground-breaking fusion of indigenous and surrealist imagery: *Miguel Ángel Asturias’ Archaeology of Return* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). In French, see Dorita Nouhaud, *Miguel Angel Asturias: l’écriture*

Surrounding these two famous writers gathered a crowd of supporting characters. First came David Carver, Executive Secretary of PEN International in London. When PEN diffused its governing power after the Second World War by devolving decision-making capabilities onto a multi-national Executive Committee, the organization needed a permanent bureaucracy to coordinate the increased level of administration this shift necessitated. The Executive hired Carver as the first salaried Executive Secretary. Not a writer himself, Carver, a product of English public schools, nevertheless considered himself an exemplary *homme de culture*. He performed as an opera baritone until the Second World War, at which point he became the Duke of Windsor's aid and spent the war with his royal employer in the Bahamas. An "immense Englishman," Miller recalled him as "a Sidney Greenstreet without the asthma."⁵⁵⁰ His position provided ample confirmation of this status: his PEN duties sent him to all corners of the globe, from Paris to Rio to Tokyo, as he interacted with luminaries and supervised the orchestration of the various PEN Congresses held in these capitals. Carver was not himself a writer, though he did try his hand occasionally, as is evident in a devoted interview with his idol Bertrand Russell, published in an edition of the PEN Newsletter in the 1960s.⁵⁵¹ His longtime assistant, Elizabeth Patterson, described him as arrogant and old-fashioned,

antérieure (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991) and Marc Cheymol, *Miguel Angel Asturias dans le Paris des "années folles"* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1987). The following volume in Spanish provides a range of critical perspectives in Spanish: Lucrecia Méndez de Penedo (coordinadora), *Actas del Coloquio Internacional "Miguel Angel Asturias: 104 años después" 2-4 de junio 2003*, Universidad Rafael Landívar (Ciudad de Guatemala: Universidad Rafael Landívar, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales, 2003).

⁵⁵⁰ Arthur Miller, *Timebends: A Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1987).565.

⁵⁵¹ "Memories of Bertrand Russell." *PEN Newsletter*, Number 11, Winter 1971. HRC, 3:2..

“imperious and pompous.”⁵⁵² Yet Carver proved a gifted administrator, and he bore the burden of running PEN almost exclusively until his death in 1976.

By the mid-1960s, Keith Botsford accompanied Carver in his administrative duties. Botsford was born in Belgium in 1928 to, as his personal website proudly announces, American parents who could trace their ancestry back to the Yankees who cleared the hills of Connecticut the 1630s on one side, and the Dutch of the Hudson River Valley on the other.⁵⁵³ He attended English public schools and American high schools before studying at Yale and the Iowa Writer's Workshop. He forged a close relationship with the writer Saul Bellow, with whom he established a magazine featuring new writing called *News From the Republic of Letters*.⁵⁵⁴ He spent much of the post-War period in Europe, particularly Paris, where he wrote a handful of novels and short stories,⁵⁵⁵ though his later translations of historical scholarship from French and Italian into English proved more durable.⁵⁵⁶ After serving as a Professor of Journalism and Lecturer in History at Boston University, Botsford retired to Costa Rica. He lives there today, where he is at work on a

⁵⁵² Elizabeth Patterson, *Postcards from Abroad: Memories of PEN*.

⁵⁵³ Botsford's personal website: <http://keithbotsford.com/> (12/9/2010)

⁵⁵⁴ *News from the Republic of Letters*. <http://www.bu.edu/trl/> (12/9/2010)

⁵⁵⁵ *The Master Race* (Wingate, 1955), *The Eighth-Best Dressed Man in the World* (Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1957), *The Search for Anderson or Anderson Minor* (St. Martins Press, 1982), *The Mothers* (Toby Press, 2002).

⁵⁵⁶ Marcella Olschki. trans. Keith Botsford. *Sixth Form 1939* (Toby Press, August 2002); Lucetta Scaraffia. trans. Keith Botsford. *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1999); Emilio Gentile, trans. Keith Botsford, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Silvio D'Arzo trans. Keith Botsford. *The House of Others* (Marlboro Press, 1995). Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, trans. Keith Botsford. *Inevitable Illusions: How Mistakes of Reason Rule Our Minds* (John Wiley & Sons Inc: 1994; Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution: Volume VI, Books 11, 12 13* (Livingston Publishing: 1973).

“collective biography” of the Non-Communist Left between 1930 and 1968. In 1964, still a young man in his thirties, Botsford arrived in London to assist Carver in the administration of PEN.

Botsford’s appointment as Carver’s assistant in the offices of the International Executive in London infuriated the French Executive, particularly the last of our cast of supporting characters: poet, novelist, journalist, literary critic, and very active member of the French executive Yves Gandon. Gandon was born in France in 1921. His first publication, a book of poems called *Ventres de Guignol*, was published in 1922 and acclaimed by writers as prominent and influential as Paul Valéry (himself later a head of French PEN). Gandon’s oeuvre, a dozen volumes of poetry published under the title *Le Pré aux Dames* – and particularly his most famous poem, “Blason de la Mélancolie” – was hailed as uniquely capturing “the French sensibility.”⁵⁵⁷ After serving as president of the Société des Gens des Lettres from 1957 to 1959, Gandon became active in French PEN, assuming the presidency of the branch in 1967. He, along with other members of the French branch such as Jean de Beer, had long been hoping for greater influence in the International Executive. He resented the fact that the Executive remained permanently in London, and had been pushing for Executive power to be split between London and Paris. This long-standing organizational tension—and Gandon’s resentment at London’s persistent influence within PEN—partly fueled the manner in which the Miller election unfolded.

⁵⁵⁷ Bulletin de la Maison Française, Winter 1961. IMEC, 3:4..

Inside the fighting PEN

Arthur Miller described his introduction to PEN, which coincided with the invitation to assume the Presidency, in his autobiography, *Timebends*. He was staying in Paris with his wife, Inge, in her Parisian apartment, whose thick walls and high windows belied the house's beginnings as home of the Spanish Embassy in the Sixteenth Century. There in Paris, Miller received a call from David Carver and Keith Botsford, who announced they were en route from London and wished to visit him. Botsford, Miller remembered, phoned to introduce Carver.⁵⁵⁸

It all began in 1965 with a call on the crackling French telephone... I had a hard time making out that it was 'Keith calling from London' and that he had to see me tomorrow and would fly to Paris with someone named Carver, who would explain everything. Keith Botsford, a novelist and teacher, had been one of the editors – along with Saul Bellow and Aaron Ascher, who was by this time my editor at Viking – of *The Noble Savage*, a lively but short-lived periodical to which I had contributed two short stories a few years earlier. Now he was saying something about 'PEN', of which I had only vaguely heard.

Next day Keith, with whom I had only a passing acquaintance, arrived at Inge's apartment on the rue de la Chaise... Keith quickly gave the floor to Carver... He had served as secretary general of PEN for many years now and had obviously given much of his hope and time to it, 'but I must candidly tell you, Mr. Miller, we are now at such a point that if you do not accept the presidency, PEN will be no more.'

The Presidency of PEN? I hardly knew what the organization did... PEN, Carver explained, was established after the war—the First War—by such people as John Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw, G.K. Chesterton, H.G. Wells, John Masefield, Arnold Bennett, Henri Barbusse, and a number of like-minded others in England and Europe who thought that an international writers' organization might help prevent another war by combating censorship and nationalist pressure on writers. Or course it didn't stop the Second World War, but in the thirties it helped draw the world's attention to the menace of Nazism by expelling the German delegation, which had refused

⁵⁵⁸ Miller, *Timebends*, 564-5.

to condemn Hitler's censorship and brutality toward writers. But the point now was that they had come to the end of the string.

....

I had no connection with PEN and no desire to run any organization....
'I couldn't possibly run a...'

'I run everything. You need only appear for the international congresses that come up periodically, perhaps once a year.'

'You want a figurehead.'

'Not at all. The president has real power if he chooses to take command of it.'

'Why me?' I asked...

Despite its valuable work, PEN had not made a bridge to the generation now in its twenties and thirties and had come to be regarded as tame and largely irrelevant... A fresh start was needed, and it was me.⁵⁵⁹

Carver told Miller the truth: PEN indeed faced accusations of irrelevancy in the context of the Cold War and increased radicalism of some writers. Declarations decrying the group's apparent irrelevancy, however, punctuated every decade and generation of PEN's history. And this trend persisted after Miller's election: by the late Sixties and early Seventies, Susan Sontag and other younger writers would contrast their engagement with what they perceived to be the old guard's tepidness.⁵⁶⁰ Intergenerational tension formed a hallmark of PEN's organizational culture, a crucially regenerating force.

Miller's involvement, he was told, would not only enliven the group. It would increase PEN's relevance outside of Europe and help it to internationalize. The push to internationalize had become a familiar call within PEN by the mid-Sixties. Thus the French had supported the establishment of an the Ivory Coast PEN Center. The

⁵⁵⁹ Miller, *Timebends*, 565-567.

⁵⁶⁰ Minutes, Activities Committee Meeting, American PEN, 10/11/1966. 1. Governance, Box. 2, Folder 1, Princeton University Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Americans had begun to do likewise with various Latin American Centers. These initiatives likely grew also from desires present within these Centers' wider national context to retain influence in these areas.⁵⁶¹ At the most practical level, however, PEN's embrace of a more inclusive internationalism grew from its need to secure its funding base. With UNESCO's prompting, PEN had begun to spearhead translation efforts and the publication of volumes bringing together writers from minor languages, and coordinate more representatively international Congresses.⁵⁶² UNESCO had begun to hint that it would withdraw funding if PEN did not try to become more inclusive—which meant, hinted UNESCO delegate Roger Caillois, that PEN International should find a non-European President for the first time in its history.

The need for non-European leadership echoed through an organizational structure designed specifically to privilege voices from this region. For Carver and the members of the Executive stationed in London, the most expedient way to “internationalize” involved making use of existing branches, of highlighting the diversity PEN already encompassed. PEN was indeed heavily western European, Carver acknowledged. Besides a Congress in New York in the 1930s, the only two non-European Congresses had been held in Japan in 1957 and Rio de Janeiro in

⁵⁶¹ On American hegemony in Latin America see John Coatsworth, *The United States and Central America: The Clients and the Colossus* (New York: Twayne, 1994). For a summary on the literature on American influence in Latin America, see Ana Margheritis and Anthony W. Pereira, “The Neoliberal Turn in Latin America: The Cycle of Ideas and the Search for an Alternative,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 34:3, Contested Transformation (May, 2007), 25-48.

⁵⁶² “Draft Resolution: Cooperation with International Cultural Organisations: Assistance to International Art Associations.”1956/11/13. UNESCO Archives, Paris. Box 1564 CA 601/1.

1960, both of which had been partially funded by the host governments.⁵⁶³ Carver suggested a solution: PEN could retain its administrative structure and slate of programs while simply electing a President from outside of Europe. Victor van Vriesland of the Dutch branch had announced his retirement from the International Presidency in 1965. The timing was perfect. Carver sent word to the members of the Executive Committee that the search for a new President had begun.

According to PEN custom to date, Presidential elections at Congresses were a mere formality. The London Executive, sometimes in tandem with the outgoing President, approached a potential President well in advance of the Congress at which he would be elected (and it was always a “he” - there had never been a woman President of PEN International), ensuring the election at the Congress itself remained a mere formality. Carver's first choice in 1965 had been the recently crowned Nobel laureate John Steinbeck. Steinbeck, however, flatly refused the honor, a reaction that surprised Carver. (Though this would have been less of a surprise had Carver been aware of Steinbeck's long record of refusing to participate in American PEN activities “for the sake of getting my work done.”)⁵⁶⁴ Botsford then approached his longtime friend, Nobel Prize winner Saul Bellow. Bellow also

⁵⁶³ The justification for this was financial: because the majority of members lived in Western Europe, it made little sense to hold a conference far away, because the majority of writers would not be able to afford to attend. This explanation was offered to the Australians when the International Executive decided to postpone their Congress in the 1960s. The only International Conferences held far away which were successful were so because the respective national governments subsidized the travel of the representatives from abroad: Japan in 1957 and Brazil in 1960.

⁵⁶⁴ “I have always avoided meetings and congresses and clubs. And as far as I know I have never made a speech in my life. The very idea scares me to death... I am also worried that one acceptance would let down the bars... It becomes increasingly difficult for a writer to find the time to write. It is considered that he should do everything else first... The only answer is to turn mean for the sake of getting my work done.” Letter, John Steinbeck to Robie Macaulay, 12 June 1926. PEN American Center, Princeton.

refused. It was Bellow who suggested Miller.⁵⁶⁵ Botsford passed on the Miller suggestion to Carver; Carver agreed; and the two men set out for Paris the following week, where they secured Miller's consent in the exchange recounted above.

Yet before Carver and Botsford could return to London and send a nominating memo out to all Committee members, Yves Gandon heard that the two men were in Paris. Considering he was currently head of the French PEN, Gandon expressed puzzlement that two key PEN administrators had stayed only a few blocks away from French PEN headquarters at the Maison Internationale and yet had not bothered to contact him. He began quietly to ask around about the nature of Carver and Botsford's visit, and learned that Miller had been asked to assume the PEN Presidency. Furious that he had not been consulted, and convinced that the Americans were trying to take over PEN, Gandon decided to act before the other side.

Gandon, too, knew of the growing consensus within PEN about the need to ensure the next President be more "internationally orientated" than in the past. With this in mind, he decided to trump the International Executive and nominate his own candidate for President. He surveyed the ranks of the current French PEN membership for a suitable candidate, and quickly landed on Miguel Asturias. Asturias, he acknowledged, was a member of the Paris Center currently active in French-speaking literary circles. Yet his Guatemalan provenance, and the critiques of oppression and censorship that enlivened his novels, represented precisely the type of international orientation he believed PEN should embody. Gandon,

⁵⁶⁵ Email, Keith Botsford to Megan Doherty, 26 June 2010.

mirroring Carver and Botsford's actions a mere week earlier, travelled across town to consult with Asturias in person. Asturias, honored at the invitation, agreed to allow his name to be put forward for the Presidency. Gandon returned to the Maison Internationale and coolly drafted a letter nominating Miguel Asturias as the next President of International PEN. Instead of sending his nomination to the Executive Committee, however, he mailed his letter to every existing PEN Center around the world.

In London, Carver responded with fury. Vriesland, approached by members worldwide about the news of his apparent successor, called Carver from Amsterdam demanding to be briefed. Instead of replying merely to Vriesland, Carver decided to follow Gandon's lead and send a letter to every PEN branch around the world. On April 21 1965, Carver copied his blistering eight-page rebuttal of Gandon to every national PEN Center.⁵⁶⁶

Carver began by professing embarrassment on behalf of all PEN members. He noted that Miller had already been approached and had accepted nomination. Gandon made all PEN members complicit in insulting Miller by disregarding his nomination, he asserted. The letter is most revealing, however, for the line of logic Carver uses to justify Miller's nomination. Instead of ignoring the fact that Miller, especially when contrasted to Asturias, might be dismissed as merely more of the same—culturally, socially and ideologically, no different to the slate of western European men who had held the office to date—Carver decided to approach this

⁵⁶⁶ David Carver, Letter to all branches, April 21, 1965, Folder 1: International Presidents and Candidates, 1 of 2, HRC, University of Texas at Austin.

issue head on. He argued that, in fact, Miller offered the best next step on the road to PEN's internationalization.

The ideal candidate, Carver asserted, should come from outside Western Europe. But, before PEN struck truly distant shores, it was only fair that “a long-standing and powerful Centre” should receive a turn at the post. Outside of Europe, the American branch was arguably the most active, yet had never supplied an International President. Moreover, the current serving President, Victor van Vriesland from the Dutch branch, represented a “small” language. It did little to further the cause of international representation if the next President also wrote in a language few members read. And people read American literature—it had become genuinely “a great literature.”⁵⁶⁷ In addition, it made sense that one of the organization's two *linguas franca* should again be represented. Seeing as French had been more recently represented than English (Vriesland being deemed closer to French than the English speaking circles), it was time a another English-speaker had a turn. Finally, after meeting all of these practical requirements, Carver concluded that the ideal PEN President should be “a writer of great distinction, so that the weight of his authority can be felt all around the world,” someone “sufficiently well-known for a majority of Centres to feel that he truly represents them.” Above all it needed to be “the kind of man...who can reconcile, in his person, all the tendencies represented in PEN.”⁵⁶⁸ Only Miller, he concluded, gesturing to Miller's reputation

⁵⁶⁷ David Carver, Letter to American PEN. April 21, 1965, P.E.N. American Center, 1. Governance, Box 9, Folder 10. Princeton University.

⁵⁶⁸ David Carver, Letter to American PEN. April 21, 1965, P.E.N. American Center, 1. Governance, Box 9, Folder 10. Princeton University.

for standing up to both American and Soviet forms of censorship, met all of these criteria.

The French argued that since the leadership of PEN had been devolved onto the Executive Committee after the Second World War, while the Presidency itself continued to be passed from country-to-country like a baton, an unnecessary tension persisted between the Presidency and the group's administration. Gandon and co-French member Jean de Beer likened the Executive staff in London to the civil service: perhaps they enjoyed continuity and security that overpowered the office bearers they aimed to serve. The proposed French solution: the Executive should be rotated, specifically between London and Paris. The British described this suggestion as severely impractical, as no doubt it was. Moreover, as part of their rebuttal they recalled the "revolutionary" attempt of French writer Jules Romains to supplant his New York based European PEN Center for the London branch. The fracas thus arose partly from PEN's peculiar administrative structure. Customs shaped by long-standing Anglo-French rivalries, as well as a lack of real accountability on the part of the London-based Executive, encouraged poor communication between branches.

All sides agreed that PEN needed to internationalize, but within PEN's organizational context this concept bore its own history and set of referents. When English and French members accepted the need to share power, they still tended to assume this meant a toggling of power between London and Paris. Leaving the bounds of their centers, for them, did not necessarily signify leaving Europe. They used the term "international" not necessarily in reference to territory. Nor did they

use it in reference to language. When Carver described Miller as internationally-appealing, “the kind of man...who can reconcile, in his person, all the tendencies represented in PEN”, he referred mostly to his politics. Miller’s refusal to release names of members of the American Communist Party to the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952 led to his censure by the Committee, and triggered the State Department to deny him a visa to attend the opening of his play *The Crucible* in London in 1954. Though politically liberal, Miller was the type of American who might be acceptable to socialist writers in other parts of the world. Carver used “international” to reference an ideological middle ground between liberalism, socialism, and communism. Thus Miller could be cast as a much more “international” candidate than Asturias.

When news of the Miller/Asturias PEN fracas hit the international press, as it was bound to, given the vitriol involved, Miller was largely depicted as someone able to tread the ideological line. In the words of an anonymous German PEN member quoted in *Der Spiegel*, Miller, although an American, was “ein guter Mann, kein Johnson-Mann”—a good man, not a Johnson-man.⁵⁶⁹ The press placed the election struggle squarely within the pre-existing confines of the Cold War: Miller was judged by the extent to which he did or did not represent American interests.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹“Schriftsteller: Franzoesisch koennen,” *Der Spiegel*, June 23, 1965.

⁵⁷⁰ It remained difficult during this period for American intellectuals to criticize government policy without being branded as “anti-American.” Dwight Macdonald tried submitting an article to *Encounter* in 1958 ironically entitled “America! America!” that aimed to temper reflexively patriotic discourse among intellectuals, and the magazine rejected his piece. For a discussion of the challenges facing writers who wished to criticize government policy without alienating themselves from the wider community, see Julius Jacobson, “Revising the History of Cold War Liberals,” *New Politics*, 28, 2000. In 1965 Miller seemed, especially to the Europeans involved with PEN, relatively successful at treading this fine line. It would take longer, however—not until the CFF’s dénouement—until liberal and leftist critiques of American policy were received with less hostility. See, for example, Christopher Lasch’s 1969 essay “The Cultural

Asturias, similarly, as a well-known supporter of Arbenz and a critic of American hegemony, could easily be cast as a puppet of the non-Stalinist left.⁵⁷¹ Asturias's outspoken criticism of American capitalism in his native Guatemala made him seem more explicitly a participant in the Cold War—something from which a leader of PEN, the conceit still lingered, should refrain.

Eventually the fighting had to end and the matter had to be resolved. Once it became clear to the French that Miller would indeed win the support of the majority of branches – including those in the Eastern Bloc, significantly that of the Yugoslav PEN, important considering the Congress at which the election was to take place would be held in Bled – Asturias withdrew his candidature. Miller was thus free to travel to Bled for the 1965 PEN Congress. In the venerable traditions of PEN International, the Congress unanimously elected Miller President.

Cultural Politics

Many historians now agree that the Cold War represented, above all, a *Kulturkampf*: a cultural struggle between competing ideologies to win over hearts and minds, a battle in which opposing sides used remarkably similar tools.⁵⁷²

Cold War: A Short History of the Congress for Cultural Freedom”, in *The Agony of the American Left* (New York: Vintage, 1968).

⁵⁷¹ After spending time in Paris, Asturias returned to Guatemala in 1933, briefly worked as a journalist before, then joined the diplomatic corps. He was elected to the Congress in 1942. Eladia Leon Hill, Miguel Angel Asturias (New York: Eliseo Torres & Sons, 1972), 177.

⁵⁷² An enormous body of scholarship now exists on cultural and intellectual life in the context of the Cold War. See Footnote 32 for references to works that discuss this shift. The following is a list of the most notable works of this turn in relation to US historiography. See Nancy E. Bernhard, *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Michael Curtin,

Struggles within PEN must be placed within their wider political context. During the 1960s, governments on either side of the Iron Curtain staged international congresses that proffered competing definitions of the writer and intellectual. The PEN Congress that elected Miller at Bled in 1965 stood as one of many international conferences organized during this period that brought together writers from around the world. These events tended to be organized, either openly or covertly, by the Coninform and the CIA respectively. While the PEN Congress ritual predated the Cold War, by the Sixties these events became caught in a mutually referential web of Congresses. Around the world during this period, intellectual allegiances was refined and performed at writers' conferences.

The first of these dueling Writers' Congresses occurred in the immediate post-War period. On October 5, 1947, the Communist Information Bureau met for

Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Paul N. Edwards, *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America* (1996); Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995); Richard Fried, *The Russians are Coming, The Russians are Coming: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); Woody Haut, *Pulp Culture: Hardboiled Fiction and the Cold War* (London: Serpant's Tail, 1995); Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*; Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); Lisle Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (1999); Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research & Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Christopher Simpson (ed), *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1998); Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

the first time in Belgrade. The Cominform replaced the now defunct Comintern, and provided the base from which Stalin launched challenges to the Americans' recently pronounced Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. The Soviets lacked America's economic power, and at this stage had not yet cracked the code of the atomic bomb. What the Soviets lacked in raw economic and military power, however, they ameliorated with the skills of *Kulturkampf*, of cultural and civilizational struggle. Experts in the use of propaganda and culture as tools of persuasion, the Soviets marshaled emblems of their centuries-long achievements in literature, music, and the arts. Russian propaganda portrayed the US as culturally barren, a nation of Coke-drinking, gum-chewing philistines. The Americans responded almost immediately in kind. The Central Intelligence Agency, the country's first peacetime intelligence bureau, was created by the National Security Act of July 26, 1947. The NSA officially granted the CIA the authority to coordinate military and diplomatic intelligence, but it also left the door open for the Agency to act on the cultural front.⁵⁷³ According to a rather vague formulation, the CIA was authorized to

⁵⁷³ Since the end of the Cold War, scholarship on the conflict has shifted. Before the 1990s, a preoccupation with statecraft, diplomacy and the study of “hard” power dominated Cold War historiography. Since then, programs of cultural exchange and the study of “soft” power have risen to the fore. State sponsorship of artists has received particular attention, one assumes partly because examining cultural agents provides such a straightforward lens onto this aspect of the relationship between states. The focus on individuals who did not necessarily conceive of themselves as agents also allows historians room to explore questions of identity and the nature of cultural hegemony. The State Department’s sponsorship of Jazz musicians alone has received particular attention. See S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); and Stephen A. Crist, “Jazz As Democracy? Dave Brubeck and Cold War Politics,” *The Journal of Musicology*, 26:2, Spring 2009, 133-174. For a discussion of the shift to culture within Cold war historiography—which also includes a survey of the political and diplomatic histories that preceded the turn—see Robert Griffith, “The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies,” *Reviews in American History*, 29:1, (March 2001), 150-157.

complete unspecified “services of common concern” and “such other functions and duties” as the National Security Council (created under the same act) deemed appropriate.⁵⁷⁴

While various artistic fields served as battlegrounds—painting, music, dance—both sides almost immediately recognized the potentially powerful benefits of winning writers over to their cause. The Coninform struck first, sending its ideological storm troops to Berlin for the East Berlin Writers' Congress at the Kammerspiel Theatre in October 1947. The Soviets acted even more boldly by 1949, when they secretly supported a delegation of Russian writers, led by A. A. Fadeyev, head of the Union of Soviet Writers, to mount the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf Hotel in Manhattan in March of 1949. They followed up with a similar conference in Paris, the World Congress of Peace, held in April 1949.⁵⁷⁵

The Americans, not to be upstaged, also crossed the Atlantic. They countered the World Congress of Peace by covertly funding their own counter-conference in Paris, the International Day of Resistance to Dictatorship and War, on April 30 1949. After attending this Congress, American intellectual Sidney Hook reported that “The French public, by and large, is shockingly ignorant of American life and culture. Its picture of America is a composite of impressions derived from reading the novels of

⁵⁷⁴ Quoted in David F. Rudgers, “The Origins of Covert Action”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:2 (Apr., 2000), 249. On the CIA see Salli Pissani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991) and Evan Thomas, *Very Best Men, Four Who Dared: The Years of the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995);

⁵⁷⁵ For an overview see David Bathrick, “Kultur und Öffentlichkeit in der DDR.” *Literatur der DDR in den siebziger Jahren*. Ed. Peter-Uwe Hohendahl and Patricia Herminhouse. (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983). 53-81.

social protest and revolt (Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is taken as a faithful and *representative* account), the novels of American degeneracy (Faulkner) and inanity (Sinclair Lewis), from seeing American movies, and from exposure to an incessant Communist barrage which seeps into the non-Communist press.” His proposed solution: nothing short of an “informational re-education of the French public.”⁵⁷⁶

The CIA agreed, but needed to find an appropriate vehicle for such “reeducation” efforts. They soon found this vehicle in Germany. German intellectuals Ruth Fischer and Franz Borkenau, anti-Stalinist ex-Communists (Borkenau had once been the official historian of the Comintern), met with German-American intellectual Melvin Lasky in a Frankfurt hotel in August 1949 to discuss their ideas for a permanent structure dedicated to organizing intellectual resistance to Sovietism. Fischer later described her plan in a letter to an American diplomat. “I think we talked about this plan already during my last stay in Paris, but I have a much more concrete approach to it. I mean, of course, the idea of organizing a big Anti-Waldorf-Astoria Congress in Berlin itself. It should be a gathering of all ex-Communists,” she explained, “plus a good representative group of anti-Stalinist American, English and European intellectuals.” Together these individuals would declare their “sympathy for Tito and Yugoslavia and the silent opposition in Russia and the satellite states,” thus “giving the Politburo hell right at the gate of their own hell. All my friends,” Fischer concluded with satisfaction, “agree that it would be of

⁵⁷⁶ Francis Stonor Saunders's *Who Paid the Piper? The Cultural Cold War, the CIA, and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2000), 69-70 provides a useful overview of this period. Her rather sensationalist account, the only new material for which came from interviews with the wife of the CCF head Michael Josselson, has received a great deal of criticism from academics. See also Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997).

enormous effect and radiate to Moscow, if properly organised.”⁵⁷⁷

Here the Marshall Fund entered the fray. Marshall Fund aid, in the form of fifty thousand dollar grant, was quickly offered to enable this vision to be “properly organised.”⁵⁷⁸ Lasky recruited the support of West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter and several prominent German academics. The CIA funded the travel costs of intellectuals living in America and France, such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Sidney Hook, Nicholas Nabokov, and Tennessee Williams.⁵⁷⁹ Similarly, the British Foreign Office's own hastily created answer to the CIA and the Coninform, the Information Research Department (IRD), covertly funded the travel expenses of British writers such as Hugh Trevor-Roper, A. J. Ayer and Peter de Mendelssohn. From Paris arrived Raymond Aron, André Malraux, and Jules Romains, among others; from Italy Ignazio Silone, Guido Piovene and Franco Lombardi. From this meeting in Berlin in June of 1950, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was born.⁵⁸⁰

The CCF was to function as the chief vehicle through which CIA funds, channeled through a front called the Farfield Foundation, were directed for “reeducation” efforts to counter Soviet propaganda. The Farfield Foundation, of course, had provided American PEN with some of its first foundation grants in the early 1950s, paving the way for the group to attract more substantial support from Ford and other foundations. American PEN remained ignorant of the true source of

⁵⁷⁷ Quoted in Stonor Saunders, 71.

⁵⁷⁸ Pissani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*, 103..

⁵⁷⁹ Pissani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*, 97..

⁵⁸⁰ See Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left, and the Cold War: Calling the Tune?* (London: Cass, 2003).

these grants, and would remain so until 1967. Until, that is, the exposé of this covert funding in 1967 discredited the CCF, turning floodlights of the world stage to full capacity and exposing for the first time the complex and elaborate lattice of strings holding up many of the key figures of the *Kulturkampf*. In the meantime, the CCF viewed PEN as one of a constellation of groups it might use to further the Western agenda. Through the promotion of writers and intellectuals whose work complemented American ideology, the CCF aimed to win the hearts and minds of people straddling the middle zone between America and Russia.

Considering that Miller had never been to a PEN meeting, let alone heard of the group, members of the French branch began to question whether he was a CIA plant.⁵⁸¹ The PEN election of Miller took place a few months prior to the CCF's denouement. Yves Gandon, however, was convinced some CIA connection existed. Why else, he reasoned, would the Executive approach Miller, not even a PEN candidate? The thought occurred to Miller, too. "It passed through my mind," he wrote in his memoir, "that the government might have wanted me to become president of PEN because they couldn't otherwise penetrate the Soviet Union, and

⁵⁸¹ French PEN began to keep a file on American motives in 1964, which featured an unsourced article by a writer named Alexei Surkov called "Literary Reactionaries are Stirring up Troubled Waters." The article accused PEN of towing the CCF line: "However loudly the henchmen of imperialism cry about the 'apolitical' nature of literature and art, they have always been an arena of bitter ideological struggle and will remain one until communism becomes finally established on earth. It is no coincidence, for example, that an organisation such as the 'Congress for Cultural Freedom', which has among its members the most arrogant reactionaries, was set up just when the 'cold war' began. This organisation is inspired from across the Atlantic and subsists on money assigned annually by the US congress for subversive activities in the socialist countries. It has been doing everything in its power to badger in a systematic fashion the youthful culture of the socialist countries. Those who inspire it are unable to mobilise in the service of the 'cold war' really great or popular cultural figures, and have to make due with second-raters, such as out-of-work Trotskyites, turncoats from Communist parties, renegades of every description, and suchlike rabble... a one-time respectable international writers' organisation as that of the PEN Clubs has changed its tone to suit those people." Jan 1, 1964, Archives P.E.N. Club, PN2.I06.03, IMEC.

they figured that traveling behind me could be their own people... One of the early people who approached me about PEN – I can't remember his name now [Miller is likely referring to Botsford] – but people would later say about him, 'Why, that guy was an agent all the time.'" But, Miller hastily concluded, "I have no evidence of that – it was gossip."⁵⁸² When Keith Botsford, an American, suddenly began issuing directives from the London office to Centers around the world in 1964, Yves Gandon became convinced that the American PEN branch was acting within PEN in the same way the American government had been acting in the wider world: it had imperial ambitions to take over International PEN Executive.

Botsford was, in fact, an agent of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.⁵⁸³ He had been sent by Michael Josselson, head of the CCF, to London to offer his services to Carver. Josselson hoped to establish a presence within PEN despite the fact that the German writer Arthur Koestler, both a longtime PEN member and a CCF collaborator who had been exiled in London since the Thirties, warned Josselson that PEN was not amenable to the CCF agenda. PEN, Koestler wrote, "was run by a bunch of 'arseholes' who worried that the campaign for cultural freedom 'meant fanning the Cold War.'"⁵⁸⁴ Carver had, in fact, been approached by the CCF – "courted indirectly," in the words of Botsford – but never became an agent

⁵⁸² Miller, *Timebends*, 567.

⁵⁸³ In addition to his papers, which may be viewed as part of the CCF archives in Chicago, Botsford wrote to me in an email, "You know who I am? Where I've been and what done? Read me? ... The culture politics of the Congress for Cultural Freedom?" Email, Keith Botsford to Megan Doherty, June 25, 2010.

⁵⁸⁴ Quoted in Stonor Saunders, 362.

himself.⁵⁸⁵ Botsford had been instructed by Josselson to nudge the London Executive toward a candidate amenable to the American position.

When Botsford's friend Bellow suggested PEN might approach Miller, suggested that Miller might have an interest in protesting Soviet censorship considering his own plays had been mercilessly edited on Russian stages.⁵⁸⁶ Miller appealed to the CCF because his critical eye had turned toward the Soviets, and he wished to enter the USSR and establish contacts. Miller himself denied any knowledge that his election had been orchestrated by the CCF, but he did reflect that PEN appealed to him most because it potentially offered a way into the Soviet Union. "What if I wanted to invite Soviet writers to join PEN?" he reported asking Carver at the Paris meeting in Inge's apartment. "Carver's mouth dropped open. 'Why, that would be wonderful! Of course! Yes!'"⁵⁸⁷ But Miller's candidacy also appealed to Carver, not himself a CCF agent, because of Miller's political centrism—what Carver would go on to describe in his letter to all PEN branches as Miller's "internationalism." As Miller himself later reflected, "PEN stood stuck in the concrete of... traditional Cold War... positions, but like the western governments at this point, it was now trying to bend."⁵⁸⁸ This is what "international" meant to the press, to Botsford, and to others in the context of the Cold War: a candidate who

⁵⁸⁵ On 31 May, 1957, Arthur Miller was held in contempt of congress for refusing to testify to the House Unamerican Activities Committee. Joseph Loftus, "Miller Convicted in Contempt Case: Playwright is Found Guilt of Defying Red Inquiry" *New York Times*, 31 May 1957, 1.

⁵⁸⁶ Email, Keith Botsford to Megan Doherty, 26 June 2010.

⁵⁸⁷ Miller, *Timebends*, 567.

⁵⁸⁸ Miller, *Timebends*, 568.

stood clearly on neither side of the Iron Curtain, but tried to straddle it.

Literary Apolitics

A few months after Miller's election at Bled, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was exposed as a CIA front. As word spread that the Farfield Foundation, the Agency's chief funding mechanism, had been a phoney philanthropic body, American PEN found itself under scrutiny. The press took a greater interest in the dénouement of larger groups such as the CCF, but within PEN the Americans felt called upon to answer to their colleagues, especially the French. The New York PEN branch issued a press release, which it also circulated to all branches worldwide:

It has been reported in the press that P.E.N. has received funds from the Farfield Foundation, to which the C.I.A. made contributions. The relevant facts are these: the Farfield Foundation is a bona fide charitable corporation whose funds come from several private sources. Among its stated purposes is the encouragement of "language and literature" through the "exchange of persons." For more than ten years its grants to the American Branch of P.E.N. have been used for the purpose of paying the expenses of American delegates to International P.E.N. congresses and committees in Europe, all such delegates having been appointed and instructed by the Executive Board. It also made a grant of \$2,000 towards initiating the 1966 International Congress in New York. The Executive Board accepted these grants in the same spirit as those from many other foundations, and with no knowledge that they may have been derived from the C.I.A. They may in fact have been derived from the private contributions made to the Farfield Foundation.⁵⁸⁹

American PEN was able to survive the CIA taint partly because its funding base had

⁵⁸⁹ Revelations of CIA funding of PEN – which had been receiving small grants from the Farfield Foundation, the CIA front, since the mid-1950s – surfaced alongside the denouement of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Roberts Halsband of American PEN issued a statement to the press clarifying PEN's position. Robert Halsband, "Resolution on PEN Funds," 1967 [undated], American PEN Archives, 1. Governance, Box 6, F- Fleming, Thomas, Princeton University.

diversified. Farfield grants numbered a very small percentage of the funds PEN raised through membership dues and help from other foundations. The presence of Miller at the International level also helped. Miller's reputation as "ein guter Mann, kein Johnson Mann" helped ameliorate the stigma of the CIA.

CIA interest in PEN proved so potentially explosive not only because of its ideological agenda, of course. The episode also challenged the PEN ideal, that literature stood aside from politics. The press described the Miller election and the CIA revelations as one more example of the bitterness of the Cold War. PEN members explained it to each less as a result less of geopolitics than of literary politics.

The conventions of the literary world prompted our characters to depict the election as a drama, in which they themselves performed as starring members. Thus Miller recounted his meeting with Carver and Botsford in his autobiography as a story replete with dialogue. Lewis Galantière, head of the American branch, described Gandon's move in sending out a announcement of Asturias's candidacy as "literary *gaullisme*."⁵⁹⁰ This gaullisme functioned first on a practical level. "The French offensive" said Galantière, was designed not only "to thwart the election of an American international president" but of their long-cherished struggle "to capture the International Secretariat."⁵⁹¹ Gandon's nomination of Asturias, Galantière suggested, grew from a venerable tradition of French literary

⁵⁹⁰ Letter, Keith Botsford to Arthur Miller, 4/24/1965, PEN International Archives, HRC, International Presidents and Candidates, Folder 1..

⁵⁹¹ Letter, Lewis Galantière to David Carver, 4/26/1965, PEN American Center Archives, Princeton University, 1. Governance, Box 9, Folder 10.

imperialism. PEN members placed the election struggle squarely within both their organization's own institutional history, and the larger contours of the shifting hierarchies of the literary world.

Indeed, some PEN members relished trading references to somewhat worn stereotypes about literary capital that circulated in writerly circles. Thus Botsford wrote to Arthur Miller that the "French plot" represented "true literary mediocrity." Similarly, Gandon wrote Jean de Beer that Miller's plays were "two dimensional." Botsford's language became even more colorful as the scandal progressed. The French Center included "none of the good writers in France", and instead housed writers given to the kind of sensationalism that pleased mass market, popular audiences. In Botsford's estimation, Gandon "crams bosoms on to the page like some shove cream puffs into their mouth." He summed up Gandon's failings as the last cries of a fading French superiority: Gandon was "one of those Frenchmen who are sure that just because they write in French they are making a contribution to civilization." Over time the French would have less and less credibility in the literary world, he asserted. "If the French sound dreadful it is because they make a big noise in Paris," he assured Miller, "but you should see Hong Kong or Bulgaria or Greece!"⁵⁹² Botsford referred to France's faltering colonialism because the parallel resonated: just as empires were collapsing in the wider world, they seemed to be doing so as well within the literary world. With their pointed, punning references to the "plots" of the other side, their casual gestures towards the concept of "true"

⁵⁹² Letter, Keith Botsford to Arthur Miller, 4/24/1965, PEN International Archives, HRC, International Presidents and Candidates, Folder 1.

literary merit and “good” writing, PEN members traded references to literary hierarchies, of which they assumed their interlocutors shared the same knowledge.

This shared understanding of how the literary world worked functioned only when all sides shared similar referents. No matter the actual language in which they wrote or spoke, if the most damning criticism was an accusation of “two dimensional literary mediocrity,” all participants in the conversation had to agree that such a thing as objective literary quality did in fact exist. And not only that it existed: but that it could be recognized by all, no matter the language they spoke or traditions from which they sprung. Botsford references a hierarchy of quality, the legitimacy of which he assumes his interlocutors recognize.⁵⁹³

Likewise, when Miller entered his first PEN Congress at Beld in 1965, he surveyed the floor with an eye accustomed to seeking out “true” literary writers. “I kept trying to identify delegates and was given meaningless names of editors of unknown newspapers and magazines and professors at colleges I had never heard of, and the depressing futility of so voluble yet powerless a gathering of people all but convinced me that I had been had.” Soon, however, he picked out familiar faces in the crowd of unknowns. “I noticed that Ignacio Silone, the fiercely anti-Communist novelist, was able to sit quietly taking to Pablo Neruda, the Chilean Communist poet. And some hard searching turned up other creators: Rosamund Lehmann, Richard Hughes, Charles Olsen, Robie Macaulay, Roger Shattuck, and Susan Sontag among the writers in English, and Yugoslavia’s Nobel laureate *Ivo Andrić*. It turned out we were all equally skeptical of any reality here but all secretly hoping to see something come of this largely gestural meeting.”⁵⁹⁴ Miller began to take PEN seriously when he noted the participation of writers whom he deemed to be serious. And to be serious member of the Republic of Letters

⁵⁹³ Faith in notion of transcendent literary quality, indeed, shapes Botsford’s interests to this day. On his personal website he outlines a list of books he suggests everyone should read – a canon - professing his continued belief in “readings that... are 'literary'.... [that are] superior to the rest.. texts worth reading because they have something to say and a particular way of saying it” - an effort motivated by his faith in “the universality of literature (and the other arts)” which is “far greater than the spurious 'internationalism' than the United Nations, world courts or, for that matter, the notion of democracy.”
<http://keithbotsford.com/Guide.html>

⁵⁹⁴ Miller, *Timebends*, 576-7.

meant, in Miller's words, to be a "creator."⁵⁹⁵ This is what it meant, to these writers, to be "international."

To accept membership of PEN, and to adhere to its charter, meant ultimately to profess believe at some level in the existence of literary writing as something which transcended politics, as something worthy of protection. Writing was humanistic, universal, international. All members who entered the literary field accepted these rhetorical conventions. By doing so they gained a passport to meet with other writers in the discussion space created by PEN Congresses—they gained access to an international community.

A line must be drawn, however, between employing these conventions to understand the machinations of cultural politics, and using them to make broader historical assessments. Many critics of the Cold War *Kulturkampf* tend to judge the behavior of the actors involved against the criteria of the literary world itself.

Frances Stonor Saunders, for example, sums up what she believes was the central point at stake during these Cold War battles. Official documents relating to the cultural Cold War systematically undermine the

[government's] myth of altruism... The CIA's engagement in cultural warfare raises... troubling questions... Did financial aid distort the process by which intellectuals and their ideas were advanced?... Were reputations secured or enhanced by membership of the CIA's cultural consortium? How many writers and thinkers who acquired an international audience for their ideas were really second-raters, ephemeral publicists, whose works were doomed to the basements of second-hand bookstores?⁵⁹⁶

Such criticism stems from the same assumptions that built PEN. Political intervention partly bothered writers because they wished to ensure that artistic

⁵⁹⁵ Miller, *Timebends*, 567.

⁵⁹⁶ Stonor Saunders, 5.

merit remained uncorrupted. The premise underlying Saunders's comment here mirrors the beliefs that shaped PEN: the assumption that literature *does* in fact occupy a realm above politics.⁵⁹⁷

"Politics" will inevitably intrude upon "literature." These fields do not exist wholly distinct from each other. Indeed, the assumption that these fields *should* be cordoned off through an artificial separation of powers forms one of the central conceits of PEN's version of the Republic of Letters. This artificial separation, in turn, encourages governments to act covertly. Bodies such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom operated in secret because of the assumption that politics has no place in artistic or literary affairs. This perhaps explains why news of American PEN's ties to their Government proved far more scandalous than similar facts about French PEN. French PEN had been supported by the French Government from its inception in 1922, when it enjoyed the patronage of Philippe Berthelot.⁵⁹⁸ Over the years the French government provided more funding for French PEN than the rest of the branches combined. Yet no scandal erupted. Because this support was given quite openly, stemming from a longer tradition of government patronage of the arts, recipients were less likely to feel that government support fundamentally threatened their integrity.

⁵⁹⁷ One critic has come close to making a similar argument. Giles Scott-Smith's *Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and Post-War American Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2002), argues that while the American and Soviet governments must be credited for funding such schemes that were premised on the assumption that an "apolitical culture" existed, both sides shared a similar understanding of "civilization" that served as an essential prerequisite for such policies. Scott-Smith, however, stops short of suggesting where this shared conviction that civilized people separated culture and politics came from. He simply explains that believe in this notion operated hegemonically on all sides of the Iron Curtain, leaving little room for agency and contributing even less to our understanding of the sources of this belief.

⁵⁹⁸ Refer back to Chapter Six for a discussion of French PEN's methods of organization building.

The assumption that a pure literary field could and should exist stemmed from the same worldview that led people like Carver, when trying to explain what it meant to be international, to assert that Miller could “reconcile in his person” all the tendencies of PEN. At the PEN Congress the following year, Latin American writers began to reintroduce the idea that human experience was also variegated.

The 1966 PEN Congress

By the mid-Sixties, PEN had declared its intention to become more inclusive and international. Besides the struggle at the Executive level to use category to serve particular interests, what did the move to internationalize PEN mean in practice? The 1966 PEN Congress, held that year in New York, marked two turning points in PEN’s efforts to extend its reach. First, while London remained the seat of the group’s International Executive, the New York branch began to assume a greater role in staging “international” events. Second, in response to the grand claims of international brotherhood made at the beginning of the Congress, Latin American writers demanded a special session of their own to debate what “world fellowship” and the “role of the writer” meant from their perspective. Together these developments signaled the beginning of a shift in power within PEN International.

As early as 1960, David Carver had been sending pointed missives to branches around the world requesting rather forcefully that they pay their

membership dues.⁵⁹⁹ The news that PEN was “nearly broke” became a leitmotif of English PEN’s branch meetings. By the mid-1960s, however, the situation had deteriorated to such a degree, Carver proposed that English PEN copy the French practice of trading quite literally on the prestige of its members, writing in 1966 to alert them that

We have...decided to turn to our most prominent members and ask for their help - not financial help, or rather only indirectly. We are asking you to donate to International PEN one of your manuscripts - preferable full length: annotated proofs, prose or poetry in long hand, a short story or play, are equally acceptable.

We have made arrangements with the long established autograph firm, Charles Hamilton Inc. in New York, to auction these manuscripts...in New York, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.⁶⁰⁰

New York was beginning to supplant London as a cultural capital for writers.⁶⁰¹

This same year, the New York branch staged the largest PEN Congress to be held since the War. It advised the London branch that it possessed plentiful funds for the occasion, supplied by UNESCO, which again sent Roger Caillois as its delegate, by Ford, and of course by its longtime backer, the Farfield Foundation. The National Council for the Arts provided the biggest support for the Congress, a substantial

⁵⁹⁹ The first word of English PEN’s dire finances had circulated in the Spring 1955 newsletter. PEN News: Bulletin of the English Centre, n. 190, Folder: PEN News Nos. 184-202, 1953-1964, HRC.

⁶⁰⁰ David Carver to all PEN Centers. Box 3, F: P.EN. Archive - International Writers Fund, 1960-66, General Correspondence, 1 of 2, HRC.

⁶⁰¹ Domestically, New York became a magnet for culture and the arts after the Civil War, as it grew into a financial and social capital during the Gilded Age. See Sven Beckert, *Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). It took well into the twentieth century – not until the 1950s and 1960s, precisely the period discussed here—for New York to become an artistic magnet in an international sense. See Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

\$41,000,⁶⁰² which they stipulated had to be matched. A smaller grant of \$8,750 followed from the New York State Council on the Arts,⁶⁰³ and the remainder of the funding was secured through the membership fees – only a possibility because the buzz of the Conference had pushed the membership from 820 to 1,100 people.⁶⁰⁴ The media attention and increased membership applications generated by the Congress soon propelled American PEN to sound financial footing, and by 1968 the group had enough extra revenue to hire a permanent professional staff and maintain a stable headquarters. The Congress proved to be American PEN's professionalization catalyst.⁶⁰⁵ “The 1966 International Congress in New York marked a coming of age for American PEN.”⁶⁰⁶

When the Farfield Foundation's true nature became apparent, the Congress organizers strenuously denied that the Congress would serve any CIA interests. To

602 The American PEN, Vol. 1, No. 2, 27. PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 11/3, Princeton.

603 P.E.N. Fundraising Files, C0760, I. Governance, Box 6, F - Fleming, Thomas, PEN American Center, Princeton..

604 Lewis Galantiere, “Objectives of Development Committee 5-Year Plan - PROGRESS REPORT,” 1970, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton University.

605 And also its rhetorical tool out of allegations of CIA collaboration. Lewis Galantiere, head of American PEN at the time, noted that the Farfield money had largely been used to send famous American writers abroad, most famously Arthur Miller and John Steinbeck to Moscow to talk to Soviet writers in XXXX. But the real importance of PEN, he argued, was embodied by Congresses exactly like the one just staged in New York. “It's the mass at the Congress that generates the feeling of really widespread good will, not Miller or Steinbeck enjoying talks and drinks with a few Russians.” He went on to argue that, similarly, it did not matter if certain PEN members had received CIA support, because PEN's significance lay not in individuals but in its collective heft. While he is right that the majority of Farfield funding was used to finance the travels of the more famous members, the first grant *had* provided operational support. Overall, Galentiere was sympathetic towards the ideological positions of both the CCF and individuals who had accepted funding. “The Congress for Cultural Freedom... is tarred with the anti-communist brush – though it is actually run by quite liberal, or open-minded, people.” Lewis Galantiere, “to Sontag re: politics v. literary,” November 2, 1967, P.E.N. American Center, Princeton University.

606 “Onward and Upward with American PEN”, *Publishers Weekly*, 5/9/1973. PEN American Center, C0760, I. Governance, Box 8/1, Princeton.

this end, they ensured all PEN Centers that socialist and communist writers from Latin America and the Eastern Bloc nations would be admitted into the US. They assured the writers themselves they could use the visit to do and say what they wished.

Lewis Galantière, President of the New York branch, prepared the following information for the press to publicize both PEN's literary credentials and its international reach. He began by explaining the origin of the PEN acronym, noting that the "E" in the group's title could stand for many things. In the end, this detail mattered little, he asserted. "The fact is that the creative intellect and the creative imagination have joined in the greatest talents to produce works that are received and read as Literature, however librarians may classify them."⁶⁰⁷ PEN, he declared, "is made up of admirable writers who devote their gifts to satisfying the world's insatiable thirst for information and enlightenment."⁶⁰⁸ Writers' mission—to spread enlightenment through their creativity—had been established.

Galantière moved from there to explain the identity markers that divided PEN's Republic of Letters. "Some 8,000 writers make up the underlying membership of International P.E.N.," he noted. "They are grouped in 79 centers in 58 countries; more centers than countries, primarily because the world contains more cultures, more languages in which living literatures flourish, than states—even today."⁶⁰⁹ PEN was above an idea, he pointed out, "remote and abstract." Yet

⁶⁰⁷ Lewis Galantière, "A Word on International P.E.N.," *The Writer as Independent Spirit: Proceedings of the XXXIV International P.E.N. Congress*. (New York: PEN American Center, 1968), ix.

⁶⁰⁸ Lewis Galantière, "A Word on International P.E.N.," ix.

⁶⁰⁹ Lewis Galantière, "A Word on International P.E.N.," ix.

as time had progressed, the group “moved towards more concrete goals under both external and internal pressures.”⁶¹⁰ He concluded his statement by asserting PEN’s universality and authority. “P.E.N. is the only worldwide association of writers that exists. Governments, UNESCO, and the press recognize it as the spokesman for the universal literary community.”⁶¹¹

When the Congress itself open on June 12, Roger Caillois praised the assembly’s “ecumenism”, for its relatively high representation of writers from outside of Europe and North America. Sixty Asian writers from fifteen separate countries, twenty-three writers from seven different Latin American countries, and nine writers from Africa had travelled to the meeting, he noted, most of whose fares had been funded by UNESCO. Six observers from the Soviet Writers’ Union were supposed to have attended, he noted, but they “abruptly canceled, on the eve of the Congress.” Writers in Cuba had failed to respond at all, he said, despite the fact that “P.E.N. is resolutely apolitical.”⁶¹²

The theme of the Congress itself, “The Writer as Independent Spirit”, featured precisely the type of anxious rumination about the “electronic age” and “mass mediatization” that had preoccupied so many branches over the previous decade. Marshall McLuhan, who’s analyses had so provoked American members years earlier, had even been called on to deliver a keynote speech. A group of Latin American writers at the conference found this preoccupation tedious and

⁶¹⁰ Lewis Galantière, “A Word on International P.E.N.”, x.

⁶¹¹ Lewis Galantière, “A Word on International P.E.N.”, xi.

⁶¹² Lewis Galantière, “A Word on International P.E.N.”, xii.

frustrating, and began to skip sessions to speak to each other one-to-one. Among the writers present were M.A. Montes de Oca, Carlos Fuentes and Homero Aridjis of Mexico; Pablo Neruda, Nicanor Parra and Manuel Balbontin of Chile; Victoria Ocampo of Argentina; C. Martínez Moreno of Uruguay; Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru; Haroldo de Campos of Brazil.

Most of these writers were participants in the Latin American Boom, the literary movement of the 1960s and 1970s that challenged both the conventions of Latin American literature and introduced the outside world to the political and cultural struggles occurring in the region. The Cold War began to unfold in the region following the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the Americans' attempt to thwart it through the Bay of Pigs invasion. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the rise of military dictatorships, many American-backed, and the development of cities and concomitant growth of a literate middle class contributed to conditions that encouraged a revolution in literary culture. Many young members of this rising middle class began to reach for markets and audiences beyond Latin America through translation, travel, and exile. Publishing houses like Barcelona's avant-garde Seix Barral helped circulate writers' works, and Paris became a magnet for exiles—following in the footsteps of slightly older writers like Miguel Asturias.⁶¹³

Writers of the Boom combined avant garde techniques influenced by European modernism, as well as the native Vanguardia movement, with

⁶¹³ Elizabeth Coonrod Martinez, *Before the Boom: Latin American Revolutionary Novels of the 1920s* (New York: University Press of America, 2001); Jean Franco, "Globalisation and Literary History", *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 25:4, 2006, 441–452; Jean Franco, *Critical Passions: Selected Essays* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, *The Censorship Files: Latin American Writers and Franco's Spain* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

impassioned social and political messages.⁶¹⁴ While some critics cite Asturias's *El Señor Presidente* of 1946 as the first work of the movement,⁶¹⁵ more locate its beginnings with Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela* (1963) or Vargas Llosa's *The Time of the Hero* (1962).⁶¹⁶ Regardless of chronology, most works of the genre shared distinctive features. They fragmented time and perspective, discarding linear plots and employing multiple perspectives and voices—all with a style that inclined toward neologisms, puns, and profanity. Gabriel García Márquez's magical realism is often considered today the exemplar of the genre. "It relied on a Cubist superposition of different points of view, it made time and lineal progress questionable, and it was technically complex. Linguistically self-assured, it used the vernacular without apologies."⁶¹⁷ This was not, in short, the style of literature that had always found the readiest home within PEN.

American PEN had specifically pushed for these writers to attend, but when they arrived at the Congress they found the set discussion topics marginal to their interests. Pablo Neruda later wrote in his memoirs that outside of the PEN Congress, he received an enthusiastic reception. "I was touched by the echo my poems, violently anti-imperialist, stirred up in that North American crowd," he reflected. In 1966 the New Left was approaching the height of its influence. While

⁶¹⁴ Coonrod Martinez, 2.

⁶¹⁵ Pope, Randolph D. (1996), "The Spanish American novel from 1950 to 1975", in González Echevarría, Roberto, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature, Volume 2: The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 226–279

⁶¹⁶ Shaw, Donald L., "Which Was the First Novel of the Boom?", *The Modern Language Review*, 89: 2, April 1994, 360–371.

⁶¹⁷ Pope, 231.

the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had already been passed, the Black Power Movement was on the verge of hitting the mainstream. Students for a Democratic Society stood poised to enter its most active phase, which would culminate in the anti-Vietnam demonstrations of 1968.⁶¹⁸ “I understood many things there, and in Washington and California, when students and ordinary people showed approval of my words against imperialism. I learned on the spot,” Neruda concluded, “that the North American enemies of our peoples were also enemies of the North American people.”⁶¹⁹ A disconnect existed with events on the PEN Congress floor and those occurring across the United States. This did not mean that PEN opposed the Left, or that it willfully remained isolated from its wider context. In fact, Neruda wrote, “During my visit I discovered—and this does honor to my comrades, the north America writers—that they exerted relentless pressure to see that I was granted an entry visa to the United States. I believe the P.E.N. Club even threatened the State Department with an open letter of censure if it continued to deny my an entry permit.”⁶²⁰ The absence at the Congress of any discussion of events occurring in the wider world instead stemmed from the organization’s familiar desire to appear both universal and impartial by seeking a neutral common ground.

When Arthur Miller, who was presiding over the Congress as President,

⁶¹⁸ Howard Brick’s recent book *Age of Contradiction : American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) has helped to restore depth to our understanding of the American 1960s. To counter the popular tendency just to associate the Sixties with the counterculture, Brick reintegrates the histories of both the student movement and the counterculture, arguing both had intellectual, not just experiential, dimensions.

⁶¹⁹ Pablo Neruda, *Memoirs*. Trans. Hardie St. Martin (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 325.

⁶²⁰ Neruda, *Memoirs*, 326.

heard that the Latin Americans were boycotting the sessions to converse amongst themselves, he invited them to stage a discussion openly. A separate round table session, divorced from the Congress proceedings themselves, would allow the Latin Americans to explain their true concerns to the assembly. The writers agreed, and on the last day of the Congress, June 18th, they staged a conversation for the larger group. The delegates were asked to speak either in English or French, the two Congress languages, so that the entire assembly could understand. Most spoke in French, with the exceptions of Fuentes, Oca, Balbontin, who spoke in English. Homero Aridjis spoke his native Spanish, and his wife translated his words into English.⁶²¹ Miller began the session by posing one question: “Who are you writing for?”⁶²² The answers proved striking. While they underlined the stark material discrepancies that faced Latin Americans, most concluded by invoking the same imagined literary ideal long evoked by PEN.

If politics and the market had long been the bugbears for PEN, for Latin American writers developments within these two fields posed their greatest chances for progress. The first problem facing Latin Americans stemmed from lack of a publishing infrastructure, and a the absence of a literate audience large enough to buy their books. “The number of Latin American writers who could live by their writing was very small,” said Martinez Moreno.⁶²³ Vargas Llosa agreed. Peru “had no reading public, therefore no publishers; the Peruvian writer was a kind of freak, a

⁶²¹ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer,” *The Writer as Independent Spirit: Proceedings of the XXXIV International P.E.N. Congress*, 109-120.

⁶²² “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 109.

⁶²³ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 109.

figure picturesque but abnormal.”⁶²⁴ Aridjis noted that “in Mexico City, even though the volume was destined for all Latin America, [a typical print run] was only 2,000 copies.” It could be larger, he noted, were it not for “the defective distribution system.”⁶²⁵ Those who could buy books, said Vargas Llosa, “the educated minority with enough income to... finance a cultural life”, reneged on their responsibilities: they were “traditionally suspicious of culture.”⁶²⁶ Latin American writers faced far more difficult material conditions than Europeans or Americans, but even those with the means to appreciate literature too often failed to respond. Writers needed to guide and educate their native cultures.

The necessity of political engagement also faced Latin American writers to a degree incomprehensible to those from the North. Vargas Llosa noted his fatigue at receiving so regularly the question “Why are so many Latin American—especially Peruvian—writers politically committed; militants?”⁶²⁷ Instead of discussing explicitly the political situation in Peru—the long-raging dispute over Standard Oil’s claim to oil fields, the instability of Fernando Belaúnde Terry’s government, which would give way to left-leaning Juan Velasco Alvarado’s coup and military dictatorship in 1968—Vargas Llosa used precisely the same humanitarian discourse employed by Paul Tabori during the creation of the Writers in Prison Committee. The answer to the question about why so many took political stances,

⁶²⁴ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 111.

⁶²⁵ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 119.

⁶²⁶ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 111.

⁶²⁷ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 112.

he wrote, “was that to feel oneself part of such a society was very difficult. A writer tended... naturally to be moved by a sense of political responsibility and to point to other men’s responsibilities.” Vargas Llosa concluded with a sentence that almost exactly mirrored Tabori some ten years earlier: “[the writer’s] own miserable condition has a write made him automatically a defender of others who were in misery.”⁶²⁸ Carlos Fuentes similarly criticized the Congress for insisting an ocean divided the artistic apolitical writer from the didactic political writer. He called for a halt to talk of “the ‘pure’ versus the ‘committed’ writer.” “Both are the defenders of the writer as an independent spirit,”⁶²⁹ he concluded—affirming that he too assumed a separation in fact existed.

The lack of markets and the political conditions at home were to be blamed for the fact that so many Latin Americans lived abroad. But even at home, a writer could be alienated from his culture. “There are different kinds of exile,” said Vargas Llosa, echoing the debate about exile the had divided German writers: “this is inescapable when a writer is not buoyed up by a traditional culture.” Many who stayed at home had to exile themselves “spiritually”, to seek “cultural nourishment” by reading foreign works, “English, French—even American.”⁶³⁰ Neruda agreed that “the crucial thing in Latin America was to obtain respect for the writer.”⁶³¹

Neruda made one of the final comments of the session. He offered an

⁶²⁸ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 112.

⁶²⁹ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 114.

⁶³⁰ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 112.

⁶³¹ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 118.

iteration of the cosmopolitan ideal as a solution both to the question that had begun the session, and to the problem facing Latin Americans. “Latin American writers are magnetized by two poles,” he wrote: “universal culture and the condition of their own peoples”:

The question before [us] was, for whom am I writing? For the few, those who knew of Mallarmé and Rimbaud, or for the peoples of [our] continent? “You are a committed writer,” people constantly say to [me], either with approval or with fury. [I] am indeed committed: [I] carry on [my] back the shadow of sixty or eighty million Latin-American illiterates. [My] ambition [is], as Gabriela Mistral put it, “to give shoes to little children in the Antarctic winter of Chile.”

This is a great tradition and it goes back to the first strike by Chilean workers in 1848. If I speak of it, the reason [is] that almost all Chilean writers inherited this tradition. As Fuentes and Vargas Llosa indicated, literature cannot refrain from taking up a position that seeks to endow the world with justice, freedom, the creative spirit. By giving their own peoples such works, Latin-American writers will be giving them to all men.⁶³²

Neruda argued not only that political commitment could be reconciled with literary writing, but that the two remained indistinguishable. Chilean writers did not seek to engage in political debates, they wished to express the peculiarities of local conditions. Those local conditions, according to Neruda, had nurtured a long history of left-wing labor activism. The imperative to give voice to his native culture and people, went this line of reasoning, made it impossible to deny their material reality. The *act* of expressing this local reality, rather than the details of the reality itself, made Neruda a writer. On this basis he related to other PEN members, as all great writers—truly international and cosmopolitan writers—felt the impulse to distill

⁶³² “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 118.

local contingencies and “give them to all men.”

The special session on Latin American literature ended with a resolution from the Chilean PEN Center. The Chileans asked the Congress to help “bring [the session] to a happy conclusion” by affirming their support of four basic Latin American aspirations:

1. The inclusion of Spanish literature in the curricula of all universities in the countries where P.E.N. Centers are present.
2. The inclusion of Latin-American texts in the curricula of secondary schools.
3. The fostering of joint ventures between Latin-American publishers and other publishers with a view to bringing out translations of classic and modern Latin-American literature.
4. The nomination by International P.E.N. of a commission, made up of Latin Americans and others, to draw up a basic collection of 100 best books of Latin-American literature, for translation by selected P.E.N. members, the same to be offered to American, French, British, and German publishers.⁶³³

The Congress gladly voted their support of these resolutions, and the motion passed unanimously. The fact that such potentially revolutionary recommendations passed with no debate reveals, paradoxically, a reality about the power PEN actually commanded. Most members present, if pressed, probably would have admitted that PEN had no power to enforce the first two points. Even the influence it possessed on this front proved scanty, given its enforced isolation from the governments that set policy on educational curricula. As for the second two proposals, variations of it had been suggested as early as the 1920s, when Henry Canby had attempted to establish a publishers clearing house in Paris with the help of the Committee on

⁶³³ “The Situation of the Latin-America Writer”, 117.

Intellectual Cooperation. UNESCO had included similar initiatives under its brief in the post-45 period. Suggestions from within PEN that collected volumes of translated works be released tended to be deferred to UNESCO. UNESCO then did the work of trying to spearhead such efforts, a small number of which came to fruition.⁶³⁴

To criticize the resolution for being hollow or ineffective, however, would be to miss its point. PEN Congresses provided a space for writers from around the world to table suggestions, to compliment and complain, to explain to each other what it meant to be a writer. The fact that PEN existed meant writers had a place to go to carry these concerns. Sometimes PEN would act on them; sometimes they would be deferred out to other bodies; sometimes they would simply be forgotten. PEN created a central gathering point for writers to bring all of their ideas about what it meant to be international. That very act—the participation in these conversations—this is what it meant to be international.

Conclusion

The full meaning of the election of Arthur Miller to the PEN Presidency becomes clear only when interpreted from multiple angles: from the specific conditions within PEN up to the broader framework of the Cold War and the conventions of the literary sphere. PEN's peculiar Executive structure invested the

⁶³⁴ See, for example, PEN International, *International P.E.N. Bulletin of Selected Books. Issued with the assistance of UNESCO* (London: PEN International, 1981). These lists were printed in both English and French, circulated among PEN centers, and sent to libraries and publishers.

London Executive with inordinate power to handpick candidates. Miller, unlike Asturias, appealed to the London Executive because he allowed PEN to stay within its linguistic and ideological comfort zone while undergoing a rhetorical shift toward internationalism. Miller's name, however, would not have risen to the fore were it not for his reputation as someone able to straddle the ideological divides of the wider political context. His tenure, in turn, would not have appealed to the wider PEN membership if he had not shared the beliefs of the literary sphere. As Latin American writers would demonstrate at the New York Congress the following year, an international writer embraced his local culture's distinctive circumstances as part of a larger calling to express this humanity to the world.

Yet these three optics—PEN, the Cold War, the literary world—are also inseparable. PEN's peculiar administrative alignments spoke to long-standing tensions derived from the literary field: practical matters of bureaucratic organization gave some a genuinely powerful platform from which to mount interventions in both literary and political matters; and interests from the political sphere always sought access to the levers of influence in both PEN and the wider literary field. PEN's call to internationalize became entangled with all of these realms. As Neruda would argue similarly at the 1966 Congress, writers were not disconnected artists floating above political or institutional contexts, but historical actors engaged simultaneously in an array of pursuits.

As PEN members negotiated the competing claims of these different spheres, they increasingly gestured toward the concept of an "international" community of writers. This does not

mean that PEN *was* in fact international. Writers continue such debates to this day.⁶³⁵ The organization was, however, learning to speak the language of global citizenship. In this sense PEN worked in concert with a number of other organizations, such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and the United Nations, groups which also spoke exhaustively of forging world communities. Being “international” in this context meant to adherence to a set of practices and familiarity with a set of shared referents, regardless of geographical location. By providing writers, for the first time, an institutional context to give form to this practice, PEN International pushed them to talk about what it meant to be international. Just as groups of people sharing similar languages and histories had learned to consider themselves citizens of nation-states in previous centuries, writers became part of a twentieth century effort to create a global community.

Writers slipped in and out of multiple roles, using PEN as a stage on which to perform these different identities. When Arthur Miller attended his first PEN Congress at Bled in 1965, some locals welcomed him with relief because he was American. Having an American President of PEN, some hoped, would help steer Yugoslavia away from Soviet influence. “I am not an ‘American’,” Miller insisted to his audience. “My government doesn’t like me, never did. I don’t represent the American people either,” he went on.⁶³⁶ Miller stood before his fellow writers at the Congress as simply that: a writer. As he reflected to himself, “The simple and nearly absurd fact was that with an American as President, they [the hosts in Bled] thought their cultural independence from the Sovietized East more safely confirmed. We were in a world of pure symbolism here, to the point that I wondered if all of life

⁶³⁵ This conversation also continues among academics. See Earl Fitz, “Internationalizing the Literature of the Portuguese-Speaking World,” *Hispania*, 88:3, Special Portuguese Issue (Sept., 2002), 439-448; and Núria Vilanova, “The Emerging Literature of the Peruvian Education Underclass,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 17:1 (Jan., 1998), 1-15.

⁶³⁶ Miller, *Timebends*, 576.

was this same sort of dream.”⁶³⁷

Miller illustrated this point by recounting an anecdote from the night before. He had been sitting in a strip club with fellow PEN members, debating the ethnicity of the woman on stage. As the woman dropped her blouse, the men discussed her appearance. “Bogdan was Croatian, the two journalists were Slovenian and Serb, and now each began trying to foist her off on the others – she was too short for a Slovenian or too fair for a Serb and so on.” When the woman’s act ended and she strode from the stage, clothes under her arm, Miller reached out and asked where she was from. “Düsseldorf,’ she said, and went on out with no pause.”⁶³⁸ On the stage of the strip club, her home nationality became unrecognizable: she was simply a woman who took off her clothes for men. Nationality and language melted away and her function solely defined her purpose.

When Miller stood on stage before his audience of writers the following year at the New York Congress, he cast himself in a similar role: his fundamental identity, he argued, was not simply American. He was himself. And that self was a writer. That personal insight prompted Miller—to return to a quotation used in the introduction of this project—to urge PEN to see itself as a fulfillment of the Republic of Letters. “[We] ought to make more possible a view of literature as literature,” he urged the Congress, “as an expression of universal human conditions. PEN is the twentieth century realization of the Republic of Letters, and to universalize culture

⁶³⁷ Miller, *Timebends*, 576.

⁶³⁸ Miller, *Timebends*. 576.

is our ultimate aim.”⁶³⁹

⁶³⁹ “Report on 1966 Congress.” PEN Newsletter, Autumn 1966. PEN English Centre Archives, Box 8 (uncataloged acquisition) Folder: No. 6-12, 1966-73. Harry Ransom Research Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

CONCLUSION
**“SPECIALIZED CELLS IN A SINGLE ORGANISM,
MANKIND”**

Many possible endings suggest themselves to a story about a group of writers. We could summarize PEN's narrative. This would take us back to the 1920s, to remember Mrs. Dawson Scott, whose London-based dinner club urged writers to serve as veritable cultural diplomats. The PEN Club, she hoped, would help Europe recover from the cataclysm of the Great War. Then we could reflect on John Galsworthy's reinterpretation of the PEN idea. Galsworthy, more than any other writer, encouraged PEN to spread abroad. Different groups, from the American to the Yiddish, reinterpreted the PEN idea. Yet the assumption that writers did indeed guide a fallen world required no explanation. Galsworthy's vision of the cosmopolitan ideal, which delicately balanced domestic loyalty with international cooperation, offered members one fundamental directive: art and culture remained humanity's best hope for peace.

Continuing through our chronological recapitulation, we could then move through the challenges PEN faced during the 1930s and 1940s. Ernst Toller asserted his right to speak out against totalitarianism. The Hitler émigrés encouraged PEN to accept that a writer's relationship to his culture grew from language and psychic connections, not just geographical location. Storm Jameson argued that PEN could and should help refugees, even if it meant association with the government. Jules Romains tried to save civilization by carrying it with him across the Atlantic. Paul Tabori affirmed in the post-War period that writers' bonds of fellowship should inspire them to help others facing persecution. While PEN's Writers-in-Prison Committee set to work protecting writers from the

vagaries of the Cold War, rank and file members plotted to save literature from the threats of commercial culture. By the 1960s, PEN had become a fully-fledged international organization. Writers around the globe—from France, to America, to Latin America—pushed PEN to expand its definition of internationalism.

After walking through this sequential narrative, we could stand back and reflection on its conclusion. The Republic of Letters, for so long used to describe the relationships writers forged using words, had finally found institutional embodiment. PEN International argued that a Republic of Letters existed. This Republic founded itself on the promise that a shared humanistic culture united the globe. Because PEN announced so often that it embodied universal human values, outsiders began to believe in it. Governments tried to enter its frontiers. Funders gave it money. Writers from marginalized parts of the globe pushed to join. In the 1920s, the Republic of Letters had existed in writers' imaginations only. Over the years, PEN provided a space for writers to call this idea forth with their words. As people began to believe in these words, the Republic of Letters ceased to be an idea. By 1970 this centuries-old idea had found institutional expression, in the form of PEN International.

In addition to moving through the chapters of PEN's history, we might also conclude by outlining the contours of the group's practice. We could discuss the Republic's veritable constitution—its set of guiding principles, discerned through its tradition and practice. PEN's Republic of Letters operates according to a shared set of assumptions. Culture and art bear humanistic values and national traditions, not states or political movements. Because of this authority, culture must guide politics. Writers interpreted guidance, by the 1930s, to include pointed critique. Language, which bears

shared histories and cultures, organizes the Republic more decisively than state lines. Writers owed each other aid in times of struggle. Literary citizenship should never be offered to mere commercial hacks—though definitions of the market threat varied. And finally, humanistic values needed to be embraced by all as universal: membership of the Republic of Letters should be made available to any qualified writer who sought entry.

Both these options—moving linearly through PEN’s history, discussing the constitution of its Republic of Letters—might neatly round off this story. Yet neither choice gives us a sense of why PEN survived so many challenges to its existence and so many adaptations of its working model. Neither alternative provides a sense of why writers continue, to this day, to enliven PEN meetings with their presence and words, offering myriad iterations of who the writer is and what global culture means. The PEN idea bore multiple meanings over the decades—perhaps as many as the members who joined. Scores of speeches from PEN Congresses did not make their way into this dissertation. Their words still sit enclosed in folders, grouped by topic. “Translation schemes”, announces one. “Africa”, “postcolonialism”, “copyright”, “relative prestige of leaders”, “literary prizes” and “prison writing”, assert others. When opened, the folders release a barrage of perspectives. A young Susan Sontag instructs American PEN to stop discussing trivial matters and face up to the realities of Vietnam. Chinua Achebe fumes that he tried to stand for the PEN Presidency, but was unceremoniously vetoed in favor of yet another European. Norman Mailer swaggeringly bans women from meetings, only to be countered by a newly-formed Women’s Writers Committee. Writers at PEN meetings clamor to this day to be heard—by their fellows, and by the world.

Allowing the speeches of two such writers out of their folders therefore seems the

most fitting way to end a dissertation. Especially considering writers themselves have never arrived at a tidy conclusion about why the PEN idea speaks to them. Both the American writer Kurt Vonnegut and the Swedish writer Artur Lundkvist spoke at the 1973 PEN Congress in Stockholm. These two writers offered summations of the PEN idea. Their words provide ample evidence of why PEN's cosmopolitan promise proved so appealing throughout the twentieth century. Long selections of both Vonnegut's and Lundkvist's speeches sit below. Reading through them in full provides some sense of what it felt like to attend a PEN Congress. Both speeches embody the ethos of the Republic of Letters. Both recall PEN's missionary flavor, its conception of writers as priests of culture, the work they perform in their ministrations to a fallen world. Both speeches will lead us, finally, to a discussion of PEN's achievements during the twentieth century, and to a consideration of the cosmopolitan promise expressed in its Charter.

The 1973 PEN Congress took place in May in Stockholm. While Peace Accords had been signed in Paris that January, technically ending the war in Vietnam, both the Americans and Soviets continued to use southeast Asia as their ideological battleground. Oil prices had begun to skyrocket, signaling the beginning of another world financial crisis and dawning awareness of an equally urgent energy crisis. Globalization was fast becoming a catch-word of the decade. Per Westberg, a Swedish writer and the current International PEN President, had offered his country's capital city for that year's congress. Westberg delivered the Congress's opening remarks. For the event's conclusion he chose two writers who had gained reputations for speaking to the problems of the period: Kurt Vonnegut and Artur Lundkvist. Vonnegut, from the safety of a POW bunker, had watched the Allied fire bombing of the medieval German city Dresden. His

German captors then put him to work clearing corpses from the ruined city's moon-like, barren surface. During the 1960s he had spoken out against the Americans' unrelenting barrage of bombs in Vietnam. Lundkvist, meanwhile, was an elder statesman of Swedish letters. He served as a figurehead of the "third stance", a Swedish movement that advocated a neutral stance between the two superpowers. First we will hear Vonnegut, then Lundkvist, in the order they delivered their speeches.

Vonnegut began by noting that while "journalists and teachers are often bullied or fired in my country—for saying this or that", "writers of novels and plays and short stories" usually fared better. Why? They were, perhaps, simply not important enough, he suggested—revealing the depth of his disappointment over intellectuals' seeming impotence in the face of American military power. "That ends the public part of my speech," he said. "I hope it will be translated into all major languages and be distributed far and wide," he added as an ironic addendum to his lament about writers' lack of influence. Before leaving the podium, however, Vonnegut paused and turned back to the microphone.

I have a few additional words for you, my colleagues. Please don't repeat them outside this room. While it is true that we American fiction writers failed to modify the course of the war, we have reason to suspect that we have poisoned the minds of thousands or perhaps millions of American young people. Our hope is that the poison will make them worse than useless in unjust wars.

We shall see.

Unfortunately, that still leaves plenty of Americans who don't read or think much—who will still be extremely useful in unjust wars. We are sick about that. We did the best we could.

Most writers I know, all over the world, do the best they can. They must. They have no choice in the matter. All artists are specialized cells in a single, huge organism, mankind. Those cells have to behave as they do, just as the cells in our hearts or our fingertips have to behave as they do.

And there is more to our situation than that. In privacy here, I think we can acknowledge to one another that we don't really write what we write. We

don't write the *best* of what we write, at any rate. The best of our stuff draws information and energy and wholeness from outside ourselves...

Where do these external signals come from? I think they come from all the other specialized cells in the organism. Those other cells help us with their energy and their little bits of information to increase the organism's awareness of itself—to dream its dreams.

But if the entire organism thinks that what we do is important, why aren't we more influential than we are? I am persuaded that we are tremendously influential, even though most national leaders, my own included, probably never heard of most of us here. Our influence is slow and subtle, and it is felt mainly by the young. They are hungry for myths which resonate with the mystery of their own times.

We give them those myths.

We will become influential when those who have listened to our myths have become influential.⁶⁴⁰

Vonnegut's speech bristles with the humanist hope that has shaped PEN's Republic of Letters since its founding. He begins with an acknowledgement of writers' relative lack of material power. Here he echoes Galsworthy's remark to Ould back in 1927. "Writers have no great, at least no direct influence, on world affairs," Galsworthy had said almost fifty years earlier. Indeed, Vonnegut in 1973 almost exactly repeats Galsworthy's views from the 1920s. "Such influences as [writers] exert are vague and, as it were, subterranean," Galsworthy had expanded. Vonnegut couches the writer's role in similar, thought much more hardened, imagery. Vonnegut's statement throbs with the memory of combat, of firebombs and poison gas. Abuse of political power can spread through a culture like a cancer. Killing this cancer with the poison of their words: this represents writers' highest service to the human organism. Both Galsworthy and Vonnegut used organic metaphor when elucidating the PEN ideal. Where Galsworthy had evoked fields and trees in his fiction and speeches, Vonnegut gives us a militarized world. Like undercover agents, writers crouch like soldiers in armed cells, waiting for

⁶⁴⁰ Kurt Vonnegut, Speech to 1973 PEN Congress, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Folder: Stockholm, 1973, 2/2, PEN International, HRC.

the right moment to attack and spread their poison. Yet with a new clause and change of perspective, Vonnegut's setting seems to brighten, and his "cell" transforms. Writers are part of a flourishing organism, akin to the regenerating building blocks that transform fingertips, hearts—mankind itself. The "entire organism" may remain ignorant of the power of these tiny but crucial cells, but their power could not be disputed. Writers, though they might remain invisible to the everyday eye, remained an integral part of the entire human organism.

Awareness of their integrality, their centrality to the human project, in turn animates writers. Writers cannot exist without it: they "draw information and energy and wholeness from outside ourselves." Recalling Hegel, Vonnegut suggests that a force "outside ourselves" inspires the best of writers' work. This "energy" and "wholeness" remain secular and material. Indeed, Vonnegut's "little bits of information" recall a decidedly atomistic and Stoic worldview. Writers' primary task lay with working "to increase the organism's awareness of itself"—precisely the type of self-awareness the cosmopolitan Immanuel Kant had advocated as the cornerstone of Enlightenment and the definition of humanity.⁶⁴¹

Yet how, exactly, were writers to encourage people to become aware of themselves, of their common humanity? Artur Lundkvist closed the 1973 Congress by picking up Vonnegut's train of thought. "It is very much the task of the author to be able to imagine what is happening to humanity," he agreed, "so as if possible to make what is happening more obvious, elucidate it and perhaps transform it." But, Lundkvist urged the writer, the greatest challenge of the twentieth century lay with using this awareness to

⁶⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?", 1784 newspaper article, collected in *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1959).

perfect the balancing act all human beings faced: that between the local and the global.

Many people among us congratulate themselves on their *awareness*. This concept has become a watchword, a slogan which has already accompanied us through several generations. More often than not it is taken to imply *political awareness*. But... Is not a more comprehensive awareness required?

The truth is that we can never be fully or sufficiently aware. This is something we must continually be fighting for, struggling for, something which we must unremittingly renew and deepen. If we confine ourselves to the writer, this continuing process, this expansion of awareness is part of his job, so to speak. This is what enables him to some extent at least to perform what is perhaps his most important task: to contribute through his writing towards the enhancement of other people's awareness...

I like to think of the writer as an instrument, a species of seismograph which not only registers hidden movements, subterranean tremors, events at the core of what is merely seen to happen, but also elucidate these observations in a particular way, reveal their implications, translate them to a more conscious level. In this way I see the writer as a specialist, a person whose type of ability, training and manner of functioning make him uniquely fitted to discover and communicate important realizations.

The main difficulty confronting the writer, especially in a period which is accelerating and being transformed as rapidly as our own, lies in realizing what is actually happening, what is about to happen, what we are heading for, so as to be able to represent it, make it intelligible to many open eyes, to warn and anticipate. If he can do this then he is a writer of what I would call *global* importance. If not he remains a writer of more or less *local* relevance....

Probably no writer can achieve complete globality of perspective, experience or perception. He must invariably revert to certain local conditions, ways of life, types of community, natural conditions with which he is particularly familiar and which are particularly amenable to his artistic representation.

The risk of the global approach lies in a predilection for abstraction and theorizing, insufficient contact with the palpable, the sensorily immediate, the humanly relevant. The global writer must not lose sight of the way in which mankind generally and his reality lag behind, nor of the enormous transformation that is needed. But nor must he lose sight of the essence of his task.⁶⁴²

The essence of the writer's task lay not with a concrete political program. Nor did the writer *know* something that made him fundamentally different or better than his fellow men. Their set of *skills* differentiated writers. Writers possessed an ability to

⁶⁴² Artur Lundkvist, "The Global and the Local", Speech to 1973 PEN Congress, Box 15, uncatalogued materials, Folder: Stockholm, 1973, 2/2, PEN International, HRC.

sense tendencies latent in all of us. Lundkvist too gives us images drawn from nature, of a world shaken by quakes only writers are equipped to detect. As “a specialist, a person whose type of ability, training and manner of functioning make him uniquely fitted to discover and communicate important realizations” the writer owed it to his fellow men to communicate his insights. Yet just as Vonnegut couched his fundamentally hopeful vision of the role of the writer in somewhat dark metaphors, so too does Lundkvist advise caution. “Complete globality of perspective” is probably something “no writer can achieve”.

If the balance between the local and the global encapsulated the writer’s task, so too does Lundkvist’s speech encapsulate the cosmopolitan worldview. The writer is shaped most fundamentally by local circumstances, by “ways of life, types of community, natural conditions with which he is most familiar.” But to “enhance other people’s awareness” he must also step outside himself. The ability to straddle realms requires a strong internal compass attuned to universal human values. Without this, the “global writer” runs the risk of losing “sight of the way.”

Lundkvist ends his speech by suggesting that mankind needs an “enormous transformation.” This begs the question: what, if any, transformation did PEN preside over? What did it achieve? The answer must itself be cosmopolitan, in that the local circumstances that shaped PEN’s practice must be reconciled with the loftiness of its rhetoric. We may look for PEN’s achievement in three areas: its effect on writers’ lives; on literary production; and, finally, on twentieth century culture and politics as a whole.

In relation to writers’ conditions, PEN’s achievements seem self-evident. Many refugee writers received typewriters and financial donations during the World War II.

Scores of writers facing persecution and imprisonment have been aided, from Tibor Déry on, since PEN began its humanitarian lobbying efforts in the 1950s. Yet at the same time, it remains difficult to declare with certainty that such outcomes would not have been achieved without PEN's existence. Refugees received aid from other bodies besides PEN. Writers whom PEN aided from the 1960s on also received attention from Amnesty International, from the United Nations, and from the press. PEN did a great deal to change writers' material conditions. Yet it remains impossible to separate PEN's efforts from a constellation of like-minded bodies, from writers' unions to humanitarian groups.

PEN's contributions to literature figure even less prominently. Here too PEN achieved notable reforms. Many obscure writers from less widely spoken languages have been translated and anthologized in PEN volumes organized using UNESCO grants. From the 1970s on, American PEN began to administer a set of prizes, whose prestige value and cash benefit have surely been appreciated by their recipients. Prizes like the PEN/Faulkner Award, however, are of middling rank compared to the Nobels and Bookers of the world.⁶⁴³ Just as the anthologies published by the organization likely live on in libraries, not in bookstores or in the public mind. Other interests remain more influential in shaping aesthetic judgments. Editors at journals and magazines, members of the boards of prize committees, those who help determine teaching appointments to MFA faculties—these people play a much more powerful role in defining literary hierarchies and shaping public tastes.

It is the final of these three areas—twentieth century politics and culture—to which PEN has made its most lasting contribution. PEN gave practical form to an idea writers had discussed and speculated about for centuries. By bringing the Republic of Letters to

⁶⁴³ English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 61.

life, writers informed the wider world that literature and art needed to be protected and promoted. They may continue to feel their invisibility, as Kurt Vonnegut notes above. Before 1921, however, no forum had existed at an international level to announce to the world that literature mattered, and that communication between writers proved the existence of a shared humanistic culture. By arguing that a global space *should* exist for writers from around the world to gather, PEN began to act as if it already did. PEN's most important achievement grows from allowing writers to talk to each other. Sometimes they talked themselves in exhausting circles, as the debate about commercialization demonstrated. Yet through this century-spanning conversation, PEN argued that writers should be taken seriously as guardians of culture, because the world really did share a set of values that bound it into a global community. By repeating this often enough, politicians, funders and other writers began to take PEN at its word.

PEN International and its Republic of Letters prove that a cosmopolitan worldview must not necessarily be the exclusive province of jet-setting sophisticates. A determination to harmonize local contingencies with a shared set of ideals generates much lofty rhetoric. But cosmopolitan ethos can also help increase equality of opportunity, encourage the critique of political abuse, and produce concrete movements for reform. Unlike other ideologies with global ambitions, cosmopolitanism's fault lies with its reluctance to plot a clear *telos*, many critics disparage; it points toward no inspiring utopia. "The idea might give you the warm and fuzzies," said one observer, "but it's nothing for which you'd be willing to go to war."⁶⁴⁴ Which was precisely PEN's point. Elimination of the will to wage war had been PEN's mission, its ideal, and its ultimate goal since its first dinner at the Florence restaurant in London back in 1921.

⁶⁴⁴ Silby, quoted in Appiah, 157.

And that seems as good a place as any to end its story.

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APPENDIX I

ITERATIONS OF THE PEN CHARTER

1922, DRAFTED BY GALSWORTHY

- The PEN stand for Literature in the sense of Art (not Journalism, nor Propaganda) and for the diffusion of Literature as art from country to country.
- The PEN stands for hospitable friendliness between writers, in their own countries, and with the writers of all other countries.
- The PEN stands for the principle that its members shall do and write nothing to promote war.
- The PEN stands for humane conduct.
- Such words as nationalist, internationalist, democratic, aristocratic, imperialistic, anti-imperialistic, bourgeois, revolutionary, or any other words with definite political significance should not be used in connection with the PEN; for the PEN. has nothing whatever to do with State or Party politics, and cannot be used to serve State or Party interests or conflicts.

1927, BRUSSELS CONGRESS

4. Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers, and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals.
5. In all circumstances, particularly in times of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.
6. Members of P.E.N. should at all times use what influence they have in favor of good understanding and mutual respect between nations

1948, COPENHAGEN CONGRESS

The P.E.N. Club affirms that:--

1. Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers, and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals.
2. In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.
3. members of the P.E.N. should at all times use what influence they have in favor of good understanding and mutual respect between nations; they pledge themselves to do their utmost to dispel race, class and national hatreds and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace in one world.
4. The P.E.N. stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression and freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong. The P.E.N. declares for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace. It believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organized political and economic order renders a free criticism of government, administrations and institutions imperative. And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.

APPENDIX II
PEN CONGRESSES

1923	London	1952	Nice
1924	New York	1953	Dublin
1925	Paris	1950	Edinburgh
1926	Berlin	1951	Lausanne
1927	Brussels	1954	Amsterdam
1928	Oslo	1955	Vienna
1929	Vienna	1956	London
1930	Warsaw	1957	Tokyo
1931	Amsterdam	1959	Frankfurt
1932	Budapest	1960	Rio de Janeiro
1933	Dubrovnik	1964	Oslo
1934	Edinburgh	1965	Bled
1935	Barcelona	1966	New York
1936	Buenos Aires	1967	Abidjan
1937	Paris	1969	Menton
1938	Prague	1970	Seoul
1941	London	1971	Dublin
1946	Stockholm	1972	Tokyo
1947	Zurich	1973	Stockholm
1948	Copenhagen		
1949	Venice		

APPENDIX III
PRESIDENTS

PEN International

1921	John Galsworthy
1933	H.G. Wells
1937	Jules Romains
1941	Committee: Hu Shih 1941-47 Denis Saurat 1941-47 H. G. Wells 1941-46 Hermon Ould 1941-47 Thornton Wilder 1941-47 with {E. M. Forster 1946-47 {François Mauriac 1946-47 {Ignazio Silone 1946-47
1947	Maurice Maeterlinck
1949	Benedetto Croce
1953	Charles Morgan
1956	Alberto Moravia
1959	Victor van Vriesland
1965	Arthur Miller
1969	Ignazio Silone

International Secretaries

1921	Marjorie Watts
1926	Hermon Ould
1951-1974	David Carver

English PEN

1921	John Galsworthy
1933	H.G. Wells
1937	J.B. Priestley
1938	Henry W. Nevinson
1939	Storm Jameson
1945	Sir Desmond Maccarthy
1951	Veronica Wedgwood
1958	Richard Church
1959	Alan Pryce-Jones
1962	Rosamund Lehmann
1967	L.P. Hartley
1971	Sir V.S. Pritchett

American PEN

1922	Booth Tarkington
1924	Carl van Doren
1925	Henry Seidel Canby
	American P.E.N. stops meeting in 1942
1947	Manuel Komroff
1951	John Farrar
1955	Marchette Chute
1965	Lewis Galantière
1969	Charles Bracelen Flood

German PEN

1924	Alfred Kerr
1933	branch expelled

German PEN-in-Exile

1934	Heinrich Mann
1940	Alfred Kerr
1947	Hermann Friedmann
1950	Richard Friedenthal
1952	Hans Flesch-Brunningen
1957	Ossip Kalenter
1967	Will Schaber
1973	H.G. Adler

1947	German PEN reestablished Hermann Friedmann, Erich Kästner and Johannes R. Becher share presidency
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1950	Günther Weisenborn
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1951	German PEN splits into GDR and DDR branches
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West

1951	Erich Kästner
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East

1951	Johannes Tralow
1960	Heinz Kamnitzer

French PEN

1921 Anatole France
1924 Paul Valéry
1934 Jules Romains
1941 dissolved

European PEN in America

1941-1945 Jules Romains

1946 reestablished—Jean Schlumberger
1951 André Chamson
1959 Yves Gandon
1973 Pierre Emmanuel

APPENDIX IV**PEN CENTERS ACCORDING TO FORMATION DATE**

(n.b.: When PEN refers to its “140 current centers”, it counts various regional branches subsumed within national centers. I have counted here only branches that produced their own letterhead and newsletters, and then used this material to communicate with other branches internationally. I have also, as with all of these Appendices, limited myself to the time frame treated by this dissertation).

1921	England
1922	France America Belgium (one Center, but separate meetings for Walloon- and Flemish-speakers) Sweden
1923	Romania Bulgaria Spain Czechoslovakia Denmark Italy Norway Romania
1925	Germany (1933—expelled) Argentina Finland South Africa Switzerland (1949—splits into separate languages)
1926	Canada Austria Netherlands Poland Hungary Mexico Chile Kingdom of the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs (cease functioning, 1941; reform as separate branches in 1950).

