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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.6f3u-8rwd
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“GREAT NATURE, REFUGE OF THE WEARY HEART:” A REGIONAL AND LITERARY EXPLORATION OF THE EARLY GROVE PLAYS OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Television-Radio-Film-Theatre Arts
San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jeremy denOuden
December 2015

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

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by

Jeremy denOuden

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TELEVISION-RADIO-FILM-THEATRE

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2015

Dr. David Kahn	Department of TRFT
Dr. Alison McKee	Department of TRFT
Dr. David Cremean	Department of Arts and Humanities Black Hills State University

ABSTRACT

“GREAT NATURE, REFUGE OF THE WEARY HEART:” A REGIONAL AND LITERARY EXPLORATION OF THE EARLY GROVE PLAYS OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB

by Jeremy denOuden

In 1872, a group of San Francisco newspapermen came together to start their own men’s club. This group, which named itself the Bohemian Club, was an outgrowth and a representative of the rapid development of the city of San Francisco at that time. Shortly after its founding, the club began making an annual retreat to the redwood forests north of the city. Eventually, the club began producing elaborate performances of musical dramas, referred to as Grove Plays, written and performed exclusively for club members at these summer retreats. This thesis, which takes its name from a line in one of these plays, makes connections between the regions of San Francisco and the American West, and the early development of the Bohemian Club and its Grove Plays, through an archetypal analysis of the first Grove Plays within the context of Western American literature as established by William Everson. The ultimate purpose of this work is to provide an argument that the early Grove Plays of the Bohemian Club are an important and overlooked part of Western American and Californian theatre history.

DEDICATION

My gratitude to everyone who provided encouragement and support during this process.

Thank you!

This work is dedicated to my loving wife, who believed in me when I could not.

I love you!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: A RECKONING OF RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Every summer, sequestering themselves amidst the redwoods north of San Francisco, thousands of men gather for two weeks to produce a play. The men are all members (or invited guests) of a highly exclusive, private club, and the play is written, directed, staged, and performed by club members; each play is produced a single time, for an audience composed entirely of club members. This select group of men, with such unusual and secret summertime activities, is known as the Bohemian Club, and their clubhouse can be found in the heart of San Francisco. Their yearly sojourn north to the club property—Bohemian Grove—is referred to as their Midsummer Encampment, and the theatrical production that closes the two-week excursion is known as the Grove Play.

Within this thesis, each of these institutions—the club, the Grove, and the play—are defined and placed within the context of late nineteenth century San Francisco and the American West. The primary significance of this thesis is twofold. First, the Bohemian Club Grove Play, produced among a cathedral of redwood trees, removed from the polluting influences of the city, represents a form of theatrical production that evolved apart from many of the traditional forces felt by more commercial theaters. Second, despite the unique development of the form, little to no in-depth textual analysis of any of the Grove Plays exists, especially from a historical or regional perspective.

This study is divided into six chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter addresses the city of San Francisco, its journey from tent-filled mining town to urban metropolis, its significance to conceptualizations of the American West, and the ways the city's various social centers form "cultural frontiers," as Barbara Berglund calls them in her book *Making San Francisco American*. Once the setting is established, chapter three explores San Francisco, and the greater Bay Area, as a literary region, locating it within the larger realm of Western American literature, concluding with special attention paid to Bay Area poet and Bohemian Club member George Sterling. From there, the study turns its attention to the club itself, with chapter four focusing on a detailed history of the Bohemian Club, from its founding in 1872 to the devastating effects of the 1906 earthquake and fires, as well as its activities within the city. Chapter five moves the study into the majestic redwoods with the history of the Midsummer Encampment and the evolution of the associated outdoor productions. Finally, chapter six serves as the conclusion to the study, bringing together the previous chapters through an examination of the first several Grove Plays, and closing with an in-depth textual analysis of the 1907 Grove Play, *The Triumph of Bohemia*, written by George Sterling.

Defining what constitutes "the West" is perhaps the most significant task this study must address. For this reason, this study turns to the definition of the American West offered by Patricia Nelson Limerick in her book *The Legacy of Conquest*. Limerick prefaces her definition by suggesting that previous definitions of the West were founded upon the concept of a process of civilizing the wilderness: the basic idea being that as the wilderness became less and less "wild," the land became more and more "American." As a result, once the West was sufficiently settled, it was no longer distinct from the rest of the United States. In a sense, the West was no more; the American frontier was closed. This concept of the West being connected to the frontier is associated with the late nineteenth century scholar and historian Frederick Jackson Turner and is known as the Turner (or Frontier) Thesis of the West. In contrast, Limerick indicates that instead of a process, the West should be thought of primarily as a place. In other words, the West is the West regardless of who is currently living there or claims control of it. Limerick admits that creating the borders for the region is not an easy task, but offers a rough outline of where the American West can be thought of as existing within:

> In choosing to stress place more than process, we cannot fix exact boundaries for the region, any more than we can draw precise lines around "the South," "the Midwest," or that most elusive of regions "the East." Allowing for a certain shifting of borders, the West in this book will generally mean the present-day states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota and, more changeably, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana. . . . This certainly makes for a complicated package, but the West as place has a compensatory, down-to-earth clarity that the migratory, abstract frontier could never have. (26)

This definition may be a bit large and unwieldy, but it is helpful in that it provides a starting point, a place of reference, that can be used as a foundation for more refined definitions. For this reason, the regional definition of the West is the most essential.

As part of their study, "Before the West Was West: Rethinking the Temporal Borders of Western American Literature," authors Amy Hamilton and Tom Hillard trace some of the directions traveled by the conceptualization of "the West." Their primary argument, as the title of their article implies, is that there is a benefit to considering literature written outside the typical boundaries of the field, particularly literature written before the nineteenth century and located in the regionally non-West. Hamilton and

Hillard use *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, written by Mary Rowlandson and published in 1682, as a prime example of a text situated outside the traditional regional and temporal frameworks of the American West. Although the subject of this thesis on the Bohemian Club's Grove Plays falls within the traditional definitions of place and time concerning the American West, it is helpful to briefly examine the arguments presented by Hamilton and Hillard in order to create a sense of the current state of Western American studies.

Beginning with the first issue of the Western Literature Association's peer-reviewed journal, *Western American Literature* (*WAL*), published in 1966, Hamilton and Hillard trace the attempts at a definition of the field through a number of more recent publications. They establish a foundational definition by referencing an editorial by J. Golden Taylor as well as articles by John R. Milton and Don D. Walker from the first issue of *WAL*. Hamilton and Hillard state that the three men, in conjunction, "identify key characteristics of western American literature: a literature bounded by region, individualistic and rural in theme, and, most importantly, in opposition to the social, urban-themed literature of the East" (289). At its very beginnings then, the field of Western American literature was defined primarily within the context of region (and themes often associated with that region). Hope for Hamilton and Hillard arrives with a quote from an article written by Jim L. Fife in the same inaugural issue of *WAL*. Fife's quote begins by exploring the idea that the entire continent has been referred to as "the West" at one point or another throughout history and that this fact "suggests that the word 'West' does not describe a geographical entity so much as it names an idea" (289). The quote concludes with Fife indicating that despite the difficulty defining the idea of the West, "it is clear it has something to do with the romantic ideal of America's destiny" (289). While enthusiastic about Fife's initial contention that "the West" describes an idea more than a region, Hamilton and Hillard are discouraged by Fife's turn toward "America's destiny," which is closely associated with nineteenth century America and the expansion westward. This development, however, should not be surprising to Hamilton and Hillard as it hearkens back to the Turner Thesis associating the West with the frontier. America's destiny, especially within the context of Western American studies, is synonymous with the concept of Manifest Destiny, the idea that Americans were destined to settle the entirety of the North American continent. So, as the Turner Thesis goes, so goes Manifest Destiny: as long as there were areas unclaimed by the United States (i.e., the frontier), there was a West to settle. Once the frontier was inhabited by a certain number of American settlers, America's destiny was fulfilled, and the idea of "the West" no longer served any purpose. In this way, Fife promotes a much more limited definition of the West in the context of time *and* region in contrast to the other definitions that focus on region only.

Less than a decade after its inaugural publication, the Western Literature Association (WLA) amended its constitution and, in the process, revised its definition of what comprises the literature of the American West. In an attempt to affirm previous definitions and, at the same time, subvert them, the new definition reads, "The literature of the American West is interpreted to include the literature of the American frontier in *any region* of the United States, the literature of the Trans-Mississippi United States and the literature of other nations sharing with the United States the frontier experience" (emphasis added by Hamilton and Hillard 290). Again, the emphasis on the frontier creeps into the WLA's understanding of what the West is; however, as Hamilton and Hillard point out, the WLA expands the definition to include any region, not just of the United States but the world, that may share the frontier experience. In doing so, the WLA has broadened the definition almost to the point of unhelpfulness. If everything is the "West," then nothing is. Hamilton and Hillard are aware of the danger represented by a reliance upon frontier and later clarify, "In considering 'the frontier' as one component of the 'West,' we don't intend to situate the frontier as the *only* way of conceiving the West, acknowledging also the many lived experiences, narratives, and stories that are indeed part of any western landscape prior to and/or separate from Euroamerican interventions" (emphasis by Hamilton and Hillard 294). Despite this claim, Hamilton and Hillard quickly reaffirm the importance of the frontier in the very next sentence: "Yet the history of North American 'frontiers'—whether defined by borders of settlements or zones of contact between peoples, cultures, and landscapes—is *much* older than the nineteenth century and *much* more geographically widespread than the states west of the Mississippi" (emphases by Hamilton and Hillard 294). Therefore, even though the pair may not believe that the frontier should be the *only* way to think about the West, they imply that it is, nonetheless, the most significant.

One of the reasons why some scholars of the West cling so tightly to the concept of the frontier might be because of the difficulty in defining the West itself. As a result, scholars grab onto the defining characteristic of the frontier in order to approach the task of defining the West from a more solid foundation. The problem with this approach, however, is that it can conflate the two areas of study. The question, then, is not *if* frontier studies and Western literary studies overlap, but rather, *how much*? In a Venn diagram representing the relationship between the two fields, three options exist: one, frontier studies is contained entirely within Western literary studies; two, the opposite; or three, the two overlap, but neither is consumed by the other. Of the three options, the third makes the most sense, as there are numerous areas where each field exists apart from the other. To place one area of study entirely within the context of another forces scholars on the fringe of the subordinate field to consider issues that may have little to no bearing on or importance to the topic being addressed. Therefore, if the statement "not all frontier issues are Western literature issues" and its opposite are true, then the frontier cannot be considered the most important characteristic to Western literary studies.

The West, and Western literature by extension, begins as a region. It may not have exact borders, but it is a place one can point to on a map. From this assertion, a variety of directions of study open up, but it is essential that any definition of the West begin with the regionality inherent in the name itself. This study has previously addressed the approximate boundaries of this region in the quote from Patricia Nelson Limerick. As Hamilton and Hillard have shown, however, it is not enough to rely entirely upon region for a definition. At the same time, they have shown that attempts to further define "the West" have resulted in definitions that are both too broad and too narrow. In light of these factors, an archetypal approach to a definition may provide an alternative method to think of and organize the seemingly ambiguous and indefinable characteristics that make up "the West."

Archetypal literary criticism takes as its starting point, as its name implies, the concept of the archetype. The development of the idea of archetypes is attributed to early twentieth century Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. Perhaps Sigmund Freud's most famous pupil, Jung took Freud's ideas and combined them with the teachings of a variety of classical and contemporary philosophers, such as Plato and Nietzsche, and established a way of thinking about the conscious and unconscious mind that continues to influence the field to this day. According to Anthony Stevens, in his article "The Archetypes," Jung developed the concept of the archetype after "he became convinced that some universal structures must exist which are common to both the mind and the brain of all men and women and that they must underlie all human experience and behavior" (76). This is not to say that archetypes are concrete pieces of knowledge that can be defined; rather, they are akin to the sort of primal knowledge that allows a baby bird to break through its shell or the newborn child to suckle its mother's breast. These are not skills that are learned or taught but somehow known. In the same way, archetypes emerge from somewhere both within and without the individual. As a sort of example, Stevens talks about fingerprints: everyone has them, yet no two are the same. Fingerprints are universal and, at the same time, individual, or as Stevens puts it, "archetypes similarly combine the universal with the individual, the general with the unique. While they are common to all humanity, they are nevertheless manifested in every individual in a manner peculiar to him or her" (79). As Stevens' initial quote indicates, Jung's concept of the archetype is inspired, in part, by

Plato's theory of ideals. Plato suggested that for every real thing, there is an ideal form of that thing within an ideal unconscious reality. These are considered the pure forms. Mark Ryan, in his article delineating Northrop Frye's influence on archetypal criticism, "Fearful Symmetries: William Blake, Northrop Frye, and Archetypal Criticism," states that, for Jung, archetypes

> are the building bricks of consciousness that are repeated in the literature, art, and architecture of different cultures all over the world. For example, Jung considers the image of a mandala or wheel to be the oldest archetype, and due to its replication it is to be found not only in the unconscious of any one individual but also on a collective level. (174)

The point about the unconscious is an essential one for Jung. As Ryan indicates, Jung believed that the unconscious mind forms the foundation for the conscious one; therefore, if there are ideas that are common to all of humanity that form a significant portion of that foundation, it is important to know what those are. This is one of the reasons why psychiatry and psychoanalysis were so important to Jung. They are much less important, however, to archetypal literary criticism, at least as it is practiced today. The divorce between archetypal criticism and the collective unconscious in archetypal literary criticism has been facilitated largely by the theory and literary criticism of Northrop Frye.

After introducing Jung's conceptualization of the archetype, Mark Ryan continues by exploring the history of archetypal literary criticism. He begins with Maud Bodkin's book, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, published in 1934, which is significant as the first full-length work using the psychoanalytical ideas presented by Jung in the practice of literary criticism. Ryan quickly makes the connection between Bodkin and Jung, stating that "Bodkin's main thesis, taken from Jung, is that certain poems possess a special emotional significance due to the excitation of unconscious forces known as archetypes, which have been described as recurring, primordial, inherited images that determine an individual's present experience" (174). For Bodkin, as for Jung, that the images were unconscious, primordial, and inherited is of utmost importance. Ryan indicates that these elements were so significant that Bodkin uses her own dreams and emotions to further analyze the various symbols and images she addresses in her book. For many archetypal critics, especially those closely aligned with Jung's theories, the use of intuition is essential to fully understand a work of art. Following this tradition, Ryan quotes from George W. Digby's 1957 work, *Symbol and Image in William Blake*, further articulating the ideas first presented by Bodkin: "There is always something implied in the work of art, which is beyond thought; something lit up for a moment by the imagination, which is beyond words. If we allow ourselves to enter fully into the experience of a work of art … we can become immediately aware of this ineffable quality" (175). Such ephemeral and ambiguous language makes the practical application of archetypal criticism difficult, but by de-emphasizing the influence of the unconscious and intuition, Frye moves toward a more accessible process of archetypal criticism. According to Ryan, Frye's critical influence can be seen in Philip Wheelwright's statement, a decade after Digby's work, that archetypal critics must gather "archetypal evidences on a broad base from literature, myth, religion, and art and [seek] to understand such evidences on their own terms as far as possible instead of imposing extrinsically oriented interpretations upon them" (175). Wheelwright's assertion not only distances the critic from "the collective unconscious" but also implies that criticism based on those theories is inferior to others that rely on textual evidence.

To best understand Frye's influence upon archetypal criticism, Ryan provides two statements from Frye regarding the role of archetypes in literary criticism. The first quote works to define the concept of the archetype within a literary context. An archetype, according to Frye, could be thought of as "an element in a work of literature, whether a character, an image, a narrative, formula, or an idea, which can be assimilated to a larger unifying category" (176). Here, Frye substitutes the concept of the collective unconscious with that of the larger unifying category. By doing so, Frye disassociates the collective unconscious from the archetype, if only in name. The second quote puts further distance between the archetype and the collective unconscious by indicating the importance of the archetype as "a unit of a work of literary art, which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience" (180). As indicated in these two quotes, the emphasis for Frye is the notion of unification. He is primarily interested in conducting a unified discourse over diverse materials, and while that task might be possible using Jungian language and reasoning, Ryan quickly points out that Frye cautions against this practice, as he recognizes that "the analysis of a recurrence of symbols that supports a unifying critique of literature does not have to be specifically psychoanalytical" (180). By distancing the archetype from the collective unconscious and Jungian reasoning, Frye formalizes archetypal literary criticism and allows it to be viewed as a legitimate mode of criticism. Each of these developments arises out of Frye's desire to have greater structure and empiricism in the study of literature. As Ryan points out, “such striving for consistency was the basis of Frye’s literary critical agenda, which was a response to the schools of literary thought that preceded the publication of his seminal work, *Anatomy of Criticism*, and their tendency to refer to ideas outside of the symbolic networks of literature itself” (181). In other words, too many scholars were projecting their own conceptualizations and understandings onto the texts, and too few were using similar symbols and images from alternate texts to create understanding.

For the purposes of this thesis, chapter three will take a deeper look at the construction of a Western literary archetype, utilizing the work *Archetype West* by literary scholar and poet William Everson. In his conceptualization of archetypal criticism, Everson comes down somewhere between Jung and Frye. Having spent time as a Catholic monk, Everson is very comfortable with the more mystical elements of Jungian archetypal reasoning yet realizes that a good argument cannot exist on ephemera and so works to defend his mystical analyses with concrete examples. In the foreword and preface to his book, Everson presents four arguments for the utilization of an archetypal approach for examining the literature of the American West. He begins by referring to a challenge within Western literary studies that can be seen as similar to the one Hamilton and Hillard are attempting to resolve: the immensity of the literary West. Everson states, “The vast literary prolixity of the West defies synthesis. Schools and trends abound, some with the blessing of remote sages. Movements are born and die overnight. Individual writers loom like unexplored islands out of the sea of Western words, to disappear in a decade” (xi). And so, rather than attempt to combine all of these disparate “islands” of Western literature into a cohesive whole, Everson sees his work as “no more than a tentative probe into the underlying ethos” (xi). In other words, for William Everson, archetypal criticism is a way to explore the fundamental characteristics and spirit of the region and the writing associated with it in the absence of more tangible methods. On this note, Everson states that he makes use of the archetype because he is unable “to make sense of regionalism from any other perspective” (xiii). Continuing, he clarifies that “too many writers exist who use the materials of a locale without partaking of its ethos” (xiii). Everson seems to be saying that it is not enough to merely take the elements of a setting and call it a regional work; it must also address the underlying spirit of that setting. Here Everson highlights the potential liability of the archetypal approach, informing that since the modernist movement in the early twentieth century, the regionalist approach has been viewed as “provincial and myopic, emphasizing content at the expense of quality, and hence constituting a threat to both culture and art” (xiv). In sum, the modernist argument is that the author that best represents the region may not be the region’s best author. Everson responds that this is simply “a symptom of cultural immaturity, and if a region remains vital its archetype will continue to throw up figures of sharpening definition in the context of its subsistent regional ethos, until quality achieves parity with content” (xiii). That is, as long as a region produces writers, the quality of writing from the region will continue to improve until it best represents the character and spirit of that region.

William Everson’s third argument for using archetypal criticism to explore the literature of Western America is the simple fact that “the impress of place on man’s artifacts is something not only authentic but absolutely ineradicable" (xiv). This is something that everyone seems to know without really recognizing it. Robert Frost will always be associated with New England, William Faulkner with the South, Mark Twain with the Mississippi River, and John Steinbeck with California. Each author's works are deeply rooted within a region where he spent a significant portion of his life. But how can the regionalism of these authors and their works be fully understood without a deeper understanding of what makes one region different from another region? One must therefore perceive the ethos of a region in order to best comprehend the writing from that region. This, at its core, is what the archetypal approach strives to achieve. The fourth, and final, of Everson's arguments for using archetypal criticism to study the writing of the American West, is merely a restatement of his task in *Archetype West*. He pursues

> the archetype of the Western writer as a recurrent motif shaping the course of the literature actually produced here, a motif evolving out of West Coast experience, and manifesting itself through local attitudes, a habit of mind resulting in practices, procedures and approaches which eventually result in the emergence of a composite image. (xiv)

This study seeks to locate the Grove Plays of the Bohemian Club within this same composite image. By doing so, this study will be able to demonstrate how these plays are a reflection and an outgrowth of their location on the American West Coast, as well as their importance and function within the club itself.

Finally, as the primary focus of this project, the literature and research surrounding the activities and history of the Bohemian Club should be addressed. The officials and members of the Bohemian Club take their privacy very seriously. Interviews and statements are rarely, if ever, given to media or researchers, with exceptions for internal publications. As a result, very little scholarly work has been published regarding the club and its activities. Additionally, within the last three decades, the club has become most well-known for the large number of political and economic heavyweights rumored to be members. These rumors have led to numerous conspiracy theories concerning the club and its activities. Most often centered on its Midsummer Encampment activities and club symbols, theories run the gamut from members making back-room deals to the club being an extension of the New World Order, the Illuminati, or a satanic cult. Similarly, almost the entirety of scholarly work on the Bohemian Club is concerned, first and foremost, with the sociological implications of the club's membership. Outside the club's own writings, only a handful of texts are worth considering; among those, all but two either fall outside the scope of this particular study or repeat information from earlier works.

In 1974, perhaps due to Richard Nixon's association with it, not one but two books about the club were published. The first, written by G. William Domhoff, is titled *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study in Ruling-Class Cohesiveness*. While it discusses the Bohemian Club, Domhoff is primarily concerned with the club membership and how the Grove fits within a larger classification of meeting places for the rich and powerful. As the book deals primarily with the sociological composition of the club (and other "retreats") during the 1970s, it holds little value for this study, especially in light of the other publication that year. The second title on the Bohemian Club published in 1974 was John Van der Zee's *The Greatest Men's Party on Earth: Inside the Bohemian Grove*. While the premise of the book is Van der Zee's time working on the kitchen service staff at the camp, he intersperses his experiences with bits of history about the club, particularly as it relates to the activities at the Grove. Much of his information concerning the early history, however, is taken directly from the club's *Annals*. That being said, writing as an outsider, Van der Zee offers a unique perspective as he synthesizes the information.

Nothing on an academic level would be written about the club until 1990 when Joanne Lafler contributed the article "Seeded in the Grove Itself: Theatrical Evolution at the Bohemian Club" to an anthology of essays on theatrical practice in the American West titled *Theatre West: Image and Impact*. Her study is perhaps the most useful of those on the club as she presents not only a female perspective on the theatrical activities of the all-male club but, more importantly, traces the evolution of the club's Cremation of Care ceremony from its informal, humble origins to its ritualistic, sophisticated modern form.

Four years later, a pair of doctoral dissertations were written about the club, each focusing on a different aspect of the club. The first, written by Peter Martin Phillips for a Ph.D. in sociology at U.C. Davis, is titled "A Relative Advantage: Sociology of the San Francisco Bohemian Club." As the title suggests, it is primarily concerned with the sociological and political implications of the club and its summer encampments. Phillips spends very little time discussing any of the theatrical or more artistic elements of club activities, and he focuses much of his study on the wealth and influence of the men who attend the events. As such, Phillips' dissertation is not relevant to the primary focus of this thesis. The second dissertation, "The Bohemian Grove Theatrics: A History and

Analysis from the Club's Beginnings in 1872 up to the Encampment of 1992," by Gary John Graves for a Ph.D. in theatre at U.C. Berkeley, is much more helpful, as the title suggests. Like Van der Zee and Lafler before him, much of Graves' history is taken from the club's *Annals*; however, Graves delves deeper into the entire history of the club and also incorporates accounts found in the memoirs of various prominent club members. As his main point of analysis, though, Graves examines the development of the Low Jinks performances, and the prevalence and purpose of cross-dressing as part of the productions. Unfortunately, this makes Graves' work less useful than if he spent more time addressing the Grove Play. On the other hand, the dissertation has been immensely helpful in identifying additional resources from early in the club's history that may only have a brief mention or two of the club and its activities.

Finally, the last piece relevant to this study is Martin Harries' article, "Misrecognition and Antimodernism in the Grove Plays of the Bohemian Club," published in the Fall 2004 edition of *Modern Drama*. This study comes closest to the purpose of this thesis, as it is primarily concerned with a couple of the early Grove Plays; however, Harries is more interested in the dissonance between the underlying message of the plays and the beliefs and lifestyles of club members than in any relationship between the plays and other literature of the region or time period.

Now that the literature of the various fields has been explored briefly, the next chapter will look at the transformation of the city of San Francisco from an uninhabited peninsula into a significant American metropolis.

CHAPTER TWO

“THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF AMERICA’S WESTERN EMPIRE:” A BRIEF EXPLORATION OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO

The best route into San Francisco is from the north. Compared to the regions down by the peninsula to the south, or across the bay to the east, the area north of San Francisco, known as the Marin Headlands, remains (amazingly, it seems) sparsely populated and relatively undeveloped. As a result, when traveling from the north, one comes around the small mountain there to have the Golden Gate Bridge and the city of San Francisco suddenly overtake one’s view. It is as if, in the words of Gunther Barth from his book *Instant Cities*, the fog of the ocean conjured up the magnificent city called San Francisco (xiii). Crossing the Golden Gate, it can be difficult to believe that the vibrant metropolis that lies ahead began as little more than “an abandoned military outpost and a secularized mission” (Barth 95). In less than fifty years, the peninsula would grow from a sleepy port town of about nine hundred people in 1848 to a bustling city of more than 340,000 at the turn of the century (135).

The story of San Francisco is just over 150 years old, not a long time for a city of its stature, especially if one considers that it has had to rebuild itself many times due to fires and earthquakes. During that time, the city has gone through several dramatic changes. Whereas Frederick Jackson Turner and Gunther Barth believe that the frontier, and by extension the city of San Francisco, had bloomed and been settled by the end of the nineteenth century, Barbara Berglund, by applying Patricia Limerick’s model of Western conquest to her own concept of cultural frontiers, shows that even as “San

Francisco developed into an urban metropolis—the jewel in the crown of America's western empire—social fluidity declined and a social order more in step with nationally dominant hierarchies became prevalent . . . conflict and disorder rooted in the organization of race, class, and gender remained pivotal" (2). Despite San Francisco's ascension to a significant American city, it still regularly deals with the legacies left by the battles fought in and through its cultural frontiers.

In the almost three decades since its publication in 1987, Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest* completely reoriented the conversation about the American West that had been established over the previous century. At the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson Turner declared that the frontier was officially closed. In Turner's mind, once the West achieved a specific population, it was, for all intents and purposes, settled. According to Turner's thesis, the American West reached that point with the 1890 census.

For nearly a century, Turner's thesis was irresistibly appealing to scholars of the American West because, by proclaiming the closing of the West, it gave these scholars a "major turning point" to center their studies on, much like the American Revolution for New England and the Civil War for the South. Limerick points out that, "Left without a major turning point, Western historians had to create one. The opening and closing of the frontier were set up like flags marking the start and finish of a race course, to give the West its significant chronology" (23). One of the major issues resulting from this Turnerian model of looking at the West is that it limits the importance of the region to a specific time period and location, as if the history of the American West did not exist before the first non-native people arrived and has had no continuing influence on the country as a whole. Limerick emphasizes that one reason for this stark division is because "Turner's frontier was a process, not a place. When 'civilization' had conquered 'savagery' at any one location, the process—and the historian's attention—moved on" (26). Alternatively, Limerick proposes that, in contrast to Turner's emphasis on the study of a process, "the history of the West is a study of a place undergoing conquest and never fully escaping its consequences" (26). By refocusing the narrative of Western history, Limerick de-emphasizes the importance of the white settler and creates opportunities for alternative stories to be told.

"Whether the target resource was gold, farmland, or Indian souls, white Americans went west convinced that their purposes were as commonplace as they were innocent" (41). Limerick's comment on the motivation of American settlers heading west could just as easily apply to perceptions about western expansion held by many, even to this day. When people think about the American West, unless they happen to be a Western scholar, their perceptions are heavily influenced by the media they have consumed about the West. Whether it is a favorite John Wayne Western, the Oregon Trail video game, or a trip to a ghost town or an abandoned mine, the narrative is commonly the same one offered by Limerick, that the reasons for settling the West were ordinary and innocent. Out of this, Limerick extrapolates: "If the motives were innocent, episodes of frustration and defeat seemed inexplicable, undeserved, and arbitrary" (42). Often these episodes were a result of conflict with native and nonwhite people as well as from the fickle unpredictability of Mother Nature. It was as if these episodes of difficulty were a personal insult to the American settlers' noble goals. Changing our approach to the West from one of settlement to one of conquest, we more clearly see the motivations of Americans heading west as a desire for control: control over native people, control over nature, and control over nature's resources. Seen from this perspective, the differences between Turner's and Limerick's conceptions of the West are much starker, and as a result we begin to see the importance of Limerick's analysis. Turner's model for Western history may provide us with a convenient timeline; Limerick's model, on the other hand, allows us to better examine the lingering effects of Western history on the twenty-first century (e.g., issues of immigration, the environment, authority). Limerick also shows that Western history is far from over. "The West was once the Wild West, the old image held, and then, heroically, law and order were introduced and the wilderness was mastered" (173). Limerick is referring specifically to the historical view of law enforcement in the West, but it is also a great summary of Turner's view of the West as civilized versus savage. However, as Patricia Limerick takes pains to emphasize in her book, any mastery of the West that has taken place is in appearance only.

Does Turner's theory of the West have any value to twenty-first century scholars then? Certainly it does, once it is understood within the context of its time. "Turner's formulation," Barbara Berglund asserts in the conclusion to *Making San Francisco American,* "symbolized the establishment, however precarious, of a distinctly American social order organized around the largely positive and optimistic qualities he ascribed to the American national character" (220). Placed in the proper perspective, we see that Turner's proclamation concerning the closing of the West functions primarily as a sort of naming device, indicating that the expansive and seemingly uninhabited lands of the West can officially be considered American. This follows closely with Limerick's point that "Euro-American ways of thinking were dominated by the ideas of civilization and savagery," which led to the belief that "Savagery had its charms but was fated to yield before the higher stage of civilization represented by white Americans" (190).

The story of the West is the story of conquest, the foundational question being, who has control? Those able to conquer the land, extract the resources, and subdue the savage would succeed. These were the individuals who won the West. Here Limerick's main argument rings true—we, as Americans and Westerners, must continually face the residue left by the conquest of the West, because in many ways we are still trying to conquer the land, extract the resources, and subdue the savage. But when we take a moment to closely examine "where we are and how we got here" (323), we begin to reverse the assumptions of a West that ended with the nineteenth century and begin working toward a better understanding of the context behind many of the issues still felt today.

In contrast to many other areas in the West (and elsewhere), the American conquest of the peninsula that would become home to the city of San Francisco required little, if any, conflict or bloodshed. As a result, instead of being violently destroyed like a number of other indigenous settlements throughout the history of America, Gunther Barth describes the Spanish-Mexican village of Yerba Buena as being "simply swallowed by the instant city that rose on its site" (108). To fully understand the implication of Barth's statement, we must define the term "instant city."

When it comes to urban studies, one can say that Gunther Barth literally wrote the book on instant cities. Barth's book, *Instant Cities*, published in 1975, begins by exploring the development of instant cities around the world and throughout history, and it concludes with a study examining the rapid urbanization of Denver and San Francisco. In the introduction, Barth offers a preliminary definition that he refines and expands throughout the book:

> In contrast to cities in general, instant cities came into existence Athena-like, full-blown and self-reliant. Some instant cities rose in response to the command of a ruler, the design of government, or the bidding of a faith. However, most emerged only when several conditions were met simultaneously. The presence of something valuable in or on the land, such as gold, silver, timber, trade, or people worth exploiting was one condition; the abrupt influx of people of diverse skills, motivated by personal gain, was another. Originally, the nature of the site was important, but with man's increasing ability to control his environment through technological advances, almost any locale could be made habitable. (xxii)

Many, if not all, of the resources Barth lists could be readily found within close proximity to San Francisco, but the discovery of gold was the most influential to the city's development. Without the California gold rush there is little likelihood that San Francisco would have developed into the major metropolis it became. The "abrupt influx of people" that the gold rush brought was the primary cause for the rapid growth of the city.

People from all walks of life arrived in San Francisco every day, not intending to stay there very long, but once there, they realized that the city where multitudes would pass through daily lacked many of the comforts that most treasure seekers, arriving by boat or returning from the fields, had gone without for months and months. As Barth points out, “Many came to [California] seeking gold but when they saw [San Francisco] concluded that riches could also be found there” (139). Had it not been for individuals deciding to create businesses in San Francisco, thus encouraging consumption and creating demand for the varied goods and services they offered, the city would not have grown as quickly. Yet Gunther Barth is disappointed that “Original [architectural and cultural] achievements disappeared in the flood of made-to-order imitations of eastern and European models that served the daily needs much more readily than did genuine creations that consumed time” (185-6). Barth faults the early citizens of San Francisco for falling back onto the cultural forms and values they were familiar with before their journeys west. From this assumption, Barth concludes that “The cultural life of [San Francisco] was at once an inspired extension and a slovenly imitation of the customs and manners of eastern metropolitan centers” (188).

On the surface, Barth’s estimation of San Franciscan cultural life may be entirely accurate; however, if we extend Patricia Limerick’s model of Western conquest to include cultural institutions, as Barbara Berglund does in her book, *Making San Francisco American*, we see that what Barth calls “slovenly imitation” is not the whole story. In fact, Berglund argues that “the emphasis on the imitative tendencies of western cities like San Francisco has not only oversimplified their cultural contours but also obscured the fact that perhaps some of the desire for imitation came from the kinds of social hierarchies embodied in eastern—already defined as distinctly American—cultural forms” (222).

In her book, Berglund makes the case that the role of conquest in Western expansion was something that happened not only on the open prairie, in defining and maintaining the boundaries of land, but also in the culture wars taking place within the cities themselves. To help facilitate the conversation, Berglund introduces us to the concept of the "cultural frontier." She defines and demonstrates the importance of the cultural frontier when she states:

> As meeting grounds on which residents worked, ate, lived, and played, cultural frontiers functioned as vital terrain on which people came face to face with one another and enunciated varied and competing racialized, gendered, and class-based views of themselves and those around them. In the context of the city's newness, rapid growth, diversity, and social fluidity, they served as sites of mixture and segregation in which notions of self and other were articulated. (2)

Berglund, with the concept of the cultural frontier, offers a way to both expand upon and move past the macro-level views of the West presented by Turner and, to an extent, Barth. Focusing on the various institutions where citizens and visitors alike had opportunities to interact with others, Berglund emphasizes the fact that, even though the land had been settled, San Francisco was far from being settled culturally. One of the major factors in the culturalization of the city was the fact that "By 1890, San Francisco's population numbered nearly 300,000 and the city possessed proportionally more foreign-born residents than any other American city" (12-13). And that says nothing about gender populations. As a result of these population differences between San Francisco and other American cities, San Francisco and its inhabitants were forced to deal with race, class, and gender issues that many other cities did not need to, in ways which, even if "slovenly imitated," would have wildly different results and consequences.

A significant part of the difficulty navigating the social waters in San Francisco during the late nineteenth century was due to the fact that San Francisco was a city in transition: not quite fully American but no longer a fully frontier town. This tension was felt even at the level of popular locations for leisure and entertainment. As Berglund phrases it, “Ranging from the virtuous to the vicious, places of amusement tended to be situated within conceptualizations of the city that positioned the disorder of a wild, western frontier city at one end of a continuum of possibility and a well-ordered yet urbane and cosmopolitan port city at the other” (59).

More than a century later, the city of San Francisco is still trying to find its place on that continuum of possibility. May 15, 2011, saw the hundredth anniversary of Bay to Breakers. For those unfamiliar with the event, it is a 12-kilometer race that starts a couple blocks away from the San Francisco Bay and ends perhaps a couple dozen feet from the Pacific Ocean. During the preceding decade, Bay to Breakers became known for the many people who participated naked as well as for runners who participated under the influence of large quantities of alcohol (and other substances). With the hospitalization of twenty-six participants in 2010 due to alcohol poisoning and residents along the course having to deal with runners passing out or vomiting, among other things, in their yards, Bay to Breakers had become an event that “was regularly maligned as representing all things disorderly and uncivilized about the city,” while at the same time being “lovingly mythologized as embodying the freedoms from restraint associated with the Wild West and celebrated for its reputation as a place of excess” (60). Although Barbara Berglund made the previous statements about the early San Franciscan vice district known as the Barbary Coast, the sentiment holds up just as well in the context of Bay to Breakers. Race organizers were, perhaps, mindful of this historical tension in the city when, for the 2012 race, they prohibited the consumption of alcohol but allowed participants to run in the nude.

In conclusion, through the adoption of Berglund's conceptualization of the "cultural frontier," a framework is provided that allows for a deep understanding of "How the West Was Won." Berglund not only proves Limerick's primary point that the story of the West is much more than the story of white Americans "civilizing" the lands between the Pacific and the Mississippi, she also shows that, in the case of San Francisco, many of the most important battles were not fought on literal battlefields but on social and cultural ones, and these battles continue to this day.

CHAPTER THREE

“ ‘MID DOMES THE SEA-WINDS REAR AND OVERWHELM:” WILLIAM EVERSON’S ARCHETYPAL WEST AND GEORGE STERLING

There is something about the landscape of California that profoundly influences the wide variety of people who call the state their home. In his study, *Archetype West: The Pacific Coast as Literary Region*, William Everson attempts to break down the dynamics of the Western archetype found within the literature of California. Although Everson shows that such an archetype exists, he never succinctly defines what it is. The goal of this chapter is to put forth the basic themes and components of Everson’s *Archetype West*, as well as to show George Sterling’s place within the literature of the region.

William Everson, in the preface to his book, mentions that “archetypes are to be known rather than defined, experienced rather than understood” (xiv). The statement might be frustratingly vague, but it provides a direction for those in search of a definition. Even though an archetype is better “known” and “experienced,” this does not mean that it cannot be defined or understood at all. Everson’s quote, however, indicates that the task will not be an easy one. A literary archetype, by Everson’s understanding, is something like an arc. It has an inception point, a climax (or apotheosis), and a culmination point. Depending on the archetype, some points on the path are more defined than others. A second term should be defined briefly before moving forward—an apotheosis, as indicated, is roughly the same as the climax point of an archetype. This is the instance of the archetype in which it comes closest to being fully realized; there are no pieces missing. Every characteristic element of the archetype is present and accounted for. The next section of this chapter lays out a simple and succinct explanation of what these archetypal elements are for Western literature as presented by Everson in *Archetype West*.

Perhaps the easiest way to think about the Western archetype is as a cord of three strands: participation, nature, and violence. Each strand is distinct, yet they are all intertwined. The first of these strands is participation or identification. For the purposes of this thesis, this should be understood as the process by which someone identifies with a particular lifestyle, internalizes the important aspects of it, and so develops a life that could be characterized as authentic, that is, a lifestyle that accurately represents what that person holds to be true. William Everson prefers the word autochthonous.

For the Western archetype, the inception occurs with Joaquin Miller, specifically in his book *Life Among the Modocs* (Everson 168). Miller can be seen as the inception point of this literary archetype because of the authenticity with which he lived, his autochthonous character. Miller “identified with the West and appropriated the archetype into his being, adhering to it as the determining way of his life” (27). Miller lived the life he wrote about. Living for a time with a tribe of Native Americans in California, it is upon these experiences that his *Life Among the Modocs* is based. Miller identified with the Native Americans he lived with, internalized their values and way of life, and lived in a way that was true to those impulses. Therefore, at the inception of the archetype there is an emphasis on the affirmation of both the image and the persona of the archetype. Reflecting on the lives of Richard Henry Dana, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain—other significant authors of the West from Miller's time—Everson points out that "the later careers of Dana, Harte and Twain are successful but sad, haunted by the pathos of capitulation in a way that Miller's life is not. And indeed the Beat Generation on the Counter Culture will later substantiate his witness" (31). For Everson, Joaquin Miller's relative obscurity is less important than the fact that Miller wrote who he was.

Before discussing the emergence and apotheosis of the archetype in the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, the preemergent figure of John Muir should be mentioned, as Everson indicates, "it is almost enough to say that until Muir had written Jeffers could not speak" (50). What was it, then, that Muir brought that allowed Robinson Jeffers to achieve the apotheosis of the archetype? Muir represents the second strand found in the Western archetype. He concretized the subconscious belief in many Americans, but particularly Western Americans, that nature is divine. In his writing, Muir calls for an authentic portrayal of nature, and in doing so, presents the divine found in nature. Nature's ability to reveal the divine can be seen most clearly in the black-and-white photography of Ansel Adams, perhaps the best example of the Western archetype in image as opposed to literature. Muir's ideas came through the strongest during his fight to save Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite. "In mobilizing public opinion to save the Hetch Hetchy [Muir] appealed directly to the American's native sense of identity between Nature and God" (52). Although he would ultimately fail in his attempt to save the valley, it was through his efforts on this front that the inherent pantheism of the West achieved popular recognition. The only reason Muir is not the figure of apotheosis, according to Everson, is a result of his place in history. "[Muir] simply, as a humble observer, set down to what he saw and how he felt about it, and, in doing so, spelled out the way it was. He did not achieve apotheosis in this regard because, like all nineteenth century observers, he lacked the insight into violence which the First World War would precipitate; but he shaped the platform out of which that intuition could emerge" (50).

For Everson, there is a violence to the West, which is the third of the major strands found in the Western archetype. Everson makes his point most eloquently when he draws on the fact that the sun sets in the west: "West is the sundown quarter, and the sundown means death. Long before the sun sets the gathering shadow hovers over the land, announcing the actual disappearance of light" (60-61). There is a darkness, an untamed wildness, that is not present in any other region of the country. It is not until the appearance of Jeffers that this darkness makes its presence felt in the writing of this region, and it is not until the First World War that anyone is able to put that darkness into words. Everson says of the war, "humanity [demonstrated] in a massive slaughter its utter unworthiness of the sublime dignity which the majesty of landscape enjoins" (60). It is out of this experience that Jeffers writes.

Because of the subversive nature of this violence, however, Jeffers cannot rely on naturalism as the best mode to depict the West, but rather on an unrealism. Sensing this thrust, Everson suggests that "if it is asked how the quality of unreality … can be applied to the regional archetype, which is of necessity rooted in space and time in the phenomenal world, it can be said that the dream itself, with its unreal meshing of the most familiar objects in an atmosphere of unreality, points to the answer" (70). Thus, the violence of the Western archetype not only comes from the depictions of actual violence, eroticism, and other dark themes, but also from the breaking apart or deconstruction of everyday objects in a dreamlike atmosphere of unreality.

This concept of unrealism, however, should not be conflated with the surrealist art movement. While both use the dream state as their point of reference, the two differ in what they emphasize. The surrealists choose to focus primarily upon the non-real elements of dreaming and place the more realistic elements in the background. The nuance of unrealism, on the other hand, is grounded in realism, but rather than shutting out all elements of non-reality, as in naturalism, unrealism allows non-real elements to seep in, flavoring the end product but never overpowering the realism the work is grounded in.

It is at this place in the archetype where George Sterling enters the scene. More than any other aspect of his poetry, Sterling's use of unreality had a profound effect on Jeffers' own poetry. At the same time, Sterling represents a link to and an evolution of Joaquin Miller's autochthonicity. It is because of these connections that Sterling is an important figure to the study of Robinson Jeffers as well as to Western literature more generally.

Born in Sag Harbor, New York, on December 1, 1869, George Sterling strained against the Puritan virtues, pressures, and expectations of the highly structured New England society. According to Thomas Benediktsson, George Sterling had tremendous admiration for his mother's father, Wickham Havens, who "was one of the last great American whaling captains" (12). In fact, Benediktsson points out that Havens' life and career were the subjects of several of Sterling's poems "in which the central idea is much the same; the grandfather is symbolic of a masculine strength and a Yankee capability that are lacking in the poet and in general are lost to the world" (12). This is in stark contrast to Sterling's father, who was disliked by his son and only mentioned in one of Sterling's poems. This is most likely because, as the eldest of nine, George saw how his father "drank heavily and surrendered to his wife a major share of responsibility as a parent" (13). Upon reflection, it is unfortunate that Sterling's own life would have more in common with his father's life than with his grandfather's.

With these influences in mind, it is little wonder that a young George Sterling would seek acceptance from his peers, and begin a process that would continue throughout his life. Along with his friend, Roosevelt Johnson, Sterling formed a group whose primary purpose was to push back against the rigors of Sag Harbor's Puritan values. This group became known as the "Night Hawks" (15). It is important to note, however, that as rebellious as Sterling was with Johnson and the Night Hawks, it was not a characteristic that came to him naturally. While he was away at St. Charles College, preparing to enter Catholic priesthood, he was studious and obedient. Benediktsson explains that the reason for the abrupt shift in character is rather obvious, especially when taken in consideration of Sterling's later associations, "He felt out of place there—and he was not the sort to rebel alone" (16).

Near the end of his time at St. Charles, George Sterling and Roosevelt Johnson befriended a famous boxer, Pete McCoy, who had come to retire in Sag Harbor. The two young men (Sterling was 18 at the time) looked up to McCoy, and McCoy appreciated the praise. After Sterling returned to St. Charles that fall, McCoy decided to enter a small-purse fight against a younger boxer and was soundly defeated. Humiliated at losing to a fighter he could have easily beaten a year or two before, "McCoy threw himself over the rail of the steamer that was taking him back to Sag Harbor" (18). The next summer, Sterling would decide not to return to St. Charles College.

What then can be made of this brief association with the boxer, and why might it be significant? Thomas Benediktsson gives a great explanation when he states:

> In some ways, Sterling's summer friendship with McCoy was a trivial incident in his life; yet it involves some important elements of his character—the worship of masculinity which strongly affected his relationships with both sexes; the desire to be associated with a prestigious person, later manifested in the ways in which he ingratiated himself with famous literary men; and, finally, the obsession with suicide which was so tragically woven into his later experience. (19)

It is this latter point that is essential to this study. As previously indicated, William Everson places a premium on the importance of darkness and violence as part of the Western archetype and states that the primary inspiration for these themes in Jeffers' writing comes from World War I. A significant portion of Sterling's writing, however, predates The Great War. It is, therefore, the specter of McCoy's suicide, and those of his friends and loved ones later in Sterling's life, that allow Sterling to tap into the stream of darkness and violence before Jeffers, as well as to be able to present it in a way that would influence Jeffers' own presentation of those themes.

After Sterling decided not to return to St. Charles College in the summer of 1889, he returned home to live with his parents. As can be imagined, this was not an ideal situation for any of the parties involved. Fearing their son had no ambitions, George Sterling's parents encouraged him to follow his uncle "Frank C. Havens, who had left

Sag Harbor under similar circumstances many years before, [and] now was a wealthy Oakland realtor" (Benediktsson 20). And so, in 1890, with few better options available, George Sterling pursued a future in California.

Just as had happened during his time at St. Charles College, Sterling's first year in Oakland was a rather industrious one; however, all of that changed with the arrival of his boyhood friend, Roosevelt Johnson, in 1891. As a direct result of Johnson's presence in Oakland, during the next two years, Sterling would meet two men who would have a profound influence over the course of his life. The first was Joaquin Miller; the other was Ambrose Bierce, both significant representatives of gold rush California. Sterling's relationship with Miller was short-lived but potent. Miller had an estate known as "the Hights" in the Oakland hills, where those attracted to his fame and persona could meet the legend in the flesh. Johnson and Sterling made regular pilgrimages to Miller's estate, the summer and fall of that first year, and it was there that Sterling learned from Miller the first and primary thread of the triple-threaded Western archetype, that of identification. As Benediktsson details, "Miller's flamboyant rejection of middle-class values gave Sterling a lasting impression of how a poet should act. Sterling was all his life preoccupied with being a poet, and there is no doubt that his posturing in later years can be traced to this grand poseur" (22).

One year later, Sterling was invited by Albert Bierce to his camp northeast of Oakland. It was here that Sterling met Albert's brother, Ambrose. This would grow to be one of the most important relationships in Sterling's life. For the next four or five years, Sterling was able to maintain a balance between his social life and his professional life, spending most evenings and weekends with fellow artists and bohemians, while during the week he followed in his uncle's footsteps. This division became much more difficult to maintain when he married his personal secretary, Caroline "Carrie" Rand, on February 7, 1886. That being said, Sterling remained successful enough that he and his wife were able to reside in a cottage they rented in Piedmont; additionally, within the year after his marriage, Sterling decided to become a poet. Once the decision was made, Sterling began sending manuscripts to his friend and famous poet/writer Ambrose Bierce, who would become Sterling's biggest promoter and most influential critic.

Sometime between the year or so before he was married and 1901, Sterling ascended as one of the ringleaders of a group of artists and writers who would often meet at his home in Piedmont. As Sterling rose to prominence within the Piedmont artists' colony, his relationship with his wife began to suffer. Benediktsson indicates that, "as [Sterling] passed thirty and remained only Havens' personal secretary, it became increasingly evident to his family that he would not become a captain of commerce" (25). At the same time, Benediktsson later points out that, "the true crisis in [Sterling's] domestic life did not begin until he became bosom friends with another young writer, one who was not content merely to pose as a Bohemian; he was Jack London, and Sterling met him in the Spring of 1901" (28). London's primary influence upon Sterling was to expand upon the lessons of Miller and Bierce. While Sterling's first mentors taught him how to be a poet in the West, it was London who gave Sterling permission to be himself and listen to his own impulses.

With the help of Ambrose Bierce, Sterling's first book of poetry, *The Testimony of the Suns and Other Poems*, was published in 1903. This led to greater recognition, especially within San Francisco, as well as to an invitation to join the Bohemian Club as a non-dues-paying member. These developments, in addition to his roles within the Oakland and San Francisco artists' communities, earned him the title "King of Bohemia." Sterling's newfound fame only exacerbated the situation at home as he spent more time in San Francisco at the various bohemian locales with his artist friends as well as more time in various love affairs. In a probable attempt to reclaim their marriage and refocus and encourage his literary career, the Sterlings moved away from the industrious and cosmopolitan life of Oakland and San Francisco to the relatively pastoral setting of Carmel-by-the-Sea in 1905. Already fond of the outdoors, and secretly tired of the various social rituals associated with his visits to San Francisco, "Sterling was eager to sample another type of Bohemianism—an unencumbered wilderness life far from the distractions of the city" (33). This time spent in Carmel would be significant for two reasons. First, the impulse to move away to the rugged, undeveloped coast of California both confirms and advances the impulses of the second thread of the Western archetype, which is grounded in an appreciation for nature. Second, it provided a foundation upon which Sterling could further build his identity as a poet. Throughout their time in Carmel, "visitors were numerous, and mussel bakes or hikes to the beach were frequent occurrences. To most of those present, Sterling seemed the embodiment of the spirit of the place" (35). The second reason Sterling's time in Carmel would be significant is also what he would become the most well-known for—the founding of the Carmel artists' colony.

Sometime in the fall of 1903, George Sterling had a discussion with the novelist Mary Austin in which it was decided that Carmel would provide an ideal setting for an artists' colony. While Sterling and his wife emphasized the escape from the temptations and distractions of the city and the benefits of a quiet, reflective life as the reasons for their move, Benediktsson suggests that "Sterling [did] not seem to have been totally honest with himself. At the same time that he was extolling the virtues of a solitary life, he was writing glowing letters about Carmel to all of his friends, and he had designed a living room with entertaining clearly in mind" (35). For a while, despite the regular flow of visiting artist friends, Carmel remained relatively quiet, but a series of events over the course of 1906 and 1907 would change everything.

The first of these events was the infamous 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and the resultant fires. As a result of the extensive damage caused by the earthquake and the fires, many of the Bay Area's bohemians and artists fled to Carmel seeking refuge. This had the effect of surging the population of artistically inclined individuals at Carmel, which encouraged Sterling to spend even more time away from his writing, one of the primary reasons he and Carrie had moved. Sterling must have found some time to write, though, as his poem "A Wine of Wizardry" was published in September 1907 by Ambrose Bierce in *Cosmopolitan.* This brought Sterling (and Carmel by extension) additional recognition, primarily as a result of the Baudelairean decadence of the poem, which led to more people coming to Carmel; however, this group of visitors was different than the previous one. While the initial visitors to Sterling's Carmel were fellow artists and bohemians, this new set were more likely literary tourists: they wanted to see where the man who could write such fantastical and disturbing poetry lived. Sterling did not, by any means, appreciate the intrusions into his relatively quiet life, but the third, and final, of this series of events would ensure that the idle days of beach picnics and clambakes would never return. Benediktsson indicates that "The furor [over "A Wine of Wizardry"] had barely subsided when another sensational item reached the press. On November 13, the beautiful blonde poet Nora May French committed suicide with cyanide at Sterling's Carmel home" (39).

With Sterling already haunted by the specter of suicide, Nora May French's decision to take her life forced those demons to resurface in a new way, as a result of the proximity of her death. Additionally, French's suicide put into motion a series of events that would result in similar fates for a number of the members of the Carmel artists' colony, including both Sterling and his wife. Shortly after her death, "the Carmel group began to talk obsessively, 'almost voluptuously,' about suicide as the only appropriate death for a poet," until eventually "They divided [some cyanide] into small vials for each person, with the pledge to use it when the time came that life was too painful or too meaningless" (40).

Despite the darkness that hung over his life there, Sterling was able to maintain a small degree of happiness, particularly regarding the respect and admiration he was given by the other artists living and visiting Carmel. Similarly to his time with the Piedmont group, Sterling became known as the "King of Carmel." In fact, Benediktsson quotes a reply Robinson Jeffers once sent to Sterling a number of years after the latter had left the area, stating that "You have long been a fixed star in my sky—since for my delight I came upon Wine of Wizardry in some magazine many years ago—and living about Carmel the past ten years I have felt myself again and again an intruder in your domain, but now the lord of the region has made me welcome" (qtd. in Benediktsson 160). This quote is significant because one, it affirms the fact that George Sterling was considered an important figure to Carmel, and two, it shows that Jeffers had read and was familiar with Sterling's poetry.

Eventually, his friend and mentor, Ambrose Bierce, would disappear into Mexico in 1913; Sterling and his wife would divorce within a year after that; his best friend, Jack London, would overdose on morphine in 1916; and his former wife would swallow her cyanide pill in 1918. After his divorce, Sterling left Carmel and would not return for any significant length of time. In 1918, Sterling moved into the Bohemian Club, where he lived until he took his own cyanide pill in 1926. During those last years, while he was living at the Bohemian Club, Sterling "was aware that many viewed him as a link with the pre-earthquake era … and was careful to cultivate the role of a living symbol of San Francisco's Bohemian past" (53).

Now that it has been established that George Sterling was a significant figure to Carmel, Robinson Jeffers, the Bohemian Club, and the literature of the American West, it might also be beneficial to take a brief look at one of his poems. As previously mentioned, Sterling's "A Wine of Wizardry" was first published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1907 and was the first poem for which he developed a national reputation. Thomas

Benediktsson gives an excellent summary of the poem, while also arguing that it signals a shift in Sterling to a more decadent aesthetic.

> As the poem begins, the speaker is drinking from a crystal goblet of red wine and musing into its depths. While he meditates, Fancy, a personification so abstract that she seems completely separate from his consciousness, "awakes with brow caressed by poppy-bloom," and wings her way to numerous bizarre and sinister scenes. Throughout the poem she remains unrealized except as a winged female figure, alternately fascinated, repelled, or disappointed by the various stages of her journey. As a dramatization of the visionary possibilities of the poetic sensibility heightened by wine, Fancy's very abstractness is a fin-de-siècle version of transcendence, an attempt to explore imaginatively the possibilities of rapture-in-horror. Yet there is a sort of self-directed irony in the poem which generates not horror but humor. The imaginative journey is not so serious an attempt to explore sensation as it is an occasion for effects of imagery and color, and an opportunity for *epater le bourgeois* by being simply outrageous. (88)

It should also be noted that the poem, like many of his other poems, makes multiple references to the natural world, particularly astronomical, but it is unique for its focus on the bizarre and the sinister. Written only a year or two before "A Wine of Wizardry," Sterling's Bohemian Club Grove Play, *The Triumph of Bohemia*, is perhaps the closest Sterling comes to capturing the Western archetypal structure, but he ultimately fails on account of the play's limited use of violence and darkness, of which we see in abundance in "A Wine of Wizardry." As a result, as much as the Bohemian Club Grove Plays reference and are inspired by Sterling's *The Triumph of Bohemia*, they place themselves closer in relation to the Western archetype.

CHAPTER FOUR

“DRAWN TOGETHER BY A SIMILARITY OF TASTES:” ON THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB

In a mysterious brick building, surrounded with ivy, in the heart of San Francisco, sits the headquarters of the Bay Area’s oldest (and most infamous) secret society, the Bohemian Club. Only a few blocks from Union Square and the City’s high-end shopping district, few notice the presence of the unmarked building, and even fewer know what is inside. As a result of the mystery surrounding the Bohemian Club, and its headquarters in San Francisco, many conspiracies regarding its purposes and activities have been developed. These theories are based primarily on conjecture and rarely on fact. The truth is that the Bohemian Club is a secret society only in that it is a highly exclusive men’s club. It has granted access to a number of scholars who have written in-depth studies on the history and practices of the club. Based on these studies it is possible to see that, despite the level of secrecy and the high-ranking membership, the Bohemian Club is a natural outgrowth of the culture from which it was born. That being said, the purpose of this chapter is not to refute or confirm the numerous conspiracy theories written about the Bohemian Club and its membership; rather, it is to find the club’s place within the development of San Francisco from a mining/harbor town into a metropolis around the beginning of the twentieth century.

Before diving into the history of the club itself, it may be helpful to first explore the history of the term “bohemian” and how it may have come to be applied to a group of gentlemen who, by every appearance, would appear not to be so. The origin of the term "bohemian" is generally attributed to Parisian writer Henri Murger. While Murger did not coin the term, the stories found in his *Scenes de la vie Boheme*, first published in 1844, did much to cement a popular understanding of the term. As a way of better understanding the concept of a bohemian, John van der Zee, in his book on the Bohemian Club, *The Greatest Men's Party on Earth*, explains the appeal of bohemianism to mid-to-late nineteenth century American artists:

> In America, where to be a poet or a painter during these years—the time of the Gold Rush, Civil War, and Reconstruction—was almost by definition to be poor, isolated, and ignored, the idea of a community of artists living and working in opposition to the reigning middle-class values of punctuality, industry, thrift, and financial success was a reassuring and compelling example, a method of self-justification, and a source of hope. (13)

From Paris, the concept of "bohemian" traveled across the Atlantic to New York and eventually arrived in San Francisco through the writings of a young Bret Harte in 1860 and 1861. The bohemianism he presented, however, appears to have lost something in the translation. As van der Zee points out, Harte, in his attempt to bring bohemianism to the American West, "seems to have looked to New York and the Pfaff's circle instead of to Murger's Paris as the capital of Bohemia, and to have mistaken pioneer local color for bohemianism" (15). Because of this shift in thinking, an important change occurred that would allow for the members of the Bohemian Club to consider themselves bohemian. Harte's emphasis on artistic community and "pioneer local color" made room for the deployment of a class of bohemians who did not find the opposition to middle-class values a prerequisite to being a bohemian. They became what van der Zee calls "regularly employed bohemians" (16). One of these "regularly employed bohemians," James F. Bowman, wrote editorials for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and, with his wife, would frequently invite his friends (who, in time, would invite their friends) to Sunday brunch (16). After a while, these Sunday gatherings reached a critical mass, which forced Bowman to realize that "what was needed … was a club, an official, permanent meeting place with its own hall" (16). And so, according to *The Annals of the Bohemian Club*, Bowman, along with several other like-minded journalists, organized a meeting for February 5, 1872, in the editorial rooms at the offices of the *San Francisco Examiner*, "and there took the first steps toward the formation of the Bohemian Club" (1:18). From this meeting, and a follow-up meeting on the seventeenth, the founding members agreed to send out invitations to other journalists for a final meeting, again at the *Examiner*, on February 23. At that time, many important regulations and bylaws were adopted; however, most of these were altered, or discarded entirely, over the first couple of years of the club. One of these regulations that, in hindsight, is particularly ironic to note considering that William Randolph Hearst would eventually join the ranks of members, was "Proprietors of newspapers, being rich and in authority, were to be altogether debarred from membership" (1:22). In fact, due largely to financial reasons, the club's membership, initially restricted primarily to working journalists, shifted so rapidly in such a short period of time, van der Zee indicates, that by the fall of 1880, less than a decade after the founding, "it was no longer possible to be both bohemian and a Bohemian" (23).

Regulations and bylaws were not the only things decided upon, though. It was at this meeting where the name Bohemian was officially adopted. This feat, however, was not accomplished without a fair bit of controversy and contention. According to the *Annals*, it was Colonel J.C. Cremony who first suggested the name Bohemian, which was supported by founding members Bowman, future first president Thomas Newcomb, and Daniel O'Connell (1:21). Even so, not everyone supported the name. Several individuals disagreed with the name because it was not considered to be respectable.

> The popular notion of a Bohemian, they declared, was a fellow who buttoned his seedy coat to conceal his lack of clean linen; a long-haired, impecunious person, of talent perhaps, but a painter of pictures shivering in frosty attics, or a writer of poetry starving in cheap restaurants, or else a predatory disreputable character who devoted his cleverness to borrowing money from his friends which he never repaid. (1:21)

It could be argued that these gentlemen had an accurate view of a "true" bohemian, but the supporters of the name would not be dissuaded. Colonel Cremony then took up the cause, issuing forth fiery polemics on the ideal clubhouse and on the values and purpose of the club. After the opposition had been thoroughly worked over by Colonel Cremony, O'Connell jumped in, leaving little room for opponents to respond. O'Connell began his argument by asking if the club, at its very beginning, would submit to the concept of respectability. He then continued by referencing popular and well-esteemed artists who were considered to be bohemian, most notably future club member Joaquin Miller. Finally, O'Connell concluded by

> extolling the true Bohemian as a man of genius who refused to cramp his life in the Chinese shoe of conventionality, who loved art more than filthy lucre, whose purse was ever at the disposal of his friends, and who lived generously, gaily, free from care, and as far from the sordid, scheming world of respectability as the south pole is from the north. (1:25)

Needless to say, these arguments persuaded enough of the doubters for the name to become official; in addition, any future attempts to reconsider the name at future meetings were quickly voted down. This single act, the naming of the club, had a greater impact on the overall purpose of the club than any other action then or since. In fact, at the meeting a week later, on March 1, a number of amendments to the constitution were suggested and approved, many inspired by O'Connell and Colonel Cremony's vision of the club. *The Annals of the Bohemian Club* provided an excerpt of one of the most significant changes:

> The objects of the Club shall be the promotion of social and intellectual intercourse between journalists and other writers, artists, actors and musicians, professional or amateur, and such others not included in this list as may by reason of knowledge and appreciation of polite literature and the fine arts be deemed worthy of membership. (1:26-27)

As was previously mentioned, this change was the first step toward opening the doors to individuals who may not have had much interest or ability in the arts but who had a lot of money. After establishing the foundational organization of the club, the next task was to find a space it could call its own. Within a matter of weeks, the club found some space to rent in the Astor House, located "on the southeast corner of Sacramento and Webb Streets" (1:27). All of this took place in time for the first formal meeting of the Bohemian Club within its own space on March 25, 1872. At this meeting, the club's first set of officers (Thomas Newcomb for president and Henry Edwards for vice president) were nominated and officially elected on April 1.

Now that the club had a constitution and bylaws, its own space to hold meetings in, and a governing body, the Bohemian Club was ready for its first official event. The entertainment held on April 13 was the first of a regular monthly gathering held on the last Saturday of each month. The *Annals* informs us that the term "High Jinks" was suggested and quickly accepted as the title for these monthly entertainments. Apparently, “the word is Scotch and was used synonymously with frolic, but more frequently referred to a drinking bout into which some game was introduced”; however, the author of the *Annals* swiftly asserts that the Bohemian Club’s use of the term has a much more prestigious history, as the club “borrowed the name directly from Sir Walter Scott’s novel of ‘Guy Mannering,’ [sic] where the High Jinks, presided over by Counselor Pleydell, is of a rather more elevated character than the drinking bouts referred to” (1:34).

The basic structure of these entertainments was established at the very first one on April 13, 1872, and continues, in slightly altered form, to this very day. Fortunately, *The Annals of the Bohemian Club* provides an excellent description of the structure of the High Jinks. This excerpt is significant because of the direct influence the High Jinks has had upon the development of the Midsummer Encampment, which will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

> The method of procedure is briefly this: The member chosen by the trustees, or directors, to conduct the festivities, is a man noted for some one of those talents for the fostering of which the Club was formed and which the Club ever delights to honor. He is called ‘Sire.’ The Sire from his own store of wisdom, if he has any, selects a topic for the evening, literary or otherwise, and selects from the members at large men to deal with it—poets, essayists, orators, humorists, musicians, singers and painters. He then issues a printed invitation to the Club, setting forth the nature of his entertainment with all the originality he or his friends possess. On the appointed evening the Club seats itself individually on chairs hired for the occasion, while the Sire enthroned, as it were, in an easier chair on a platform at one end of the room, with a gavel in his hand and a huge Loving Cup filled with punch placed within easy reach on a lectern in front of him, brings the meeting to order. Then is the theme of the evening discussed in prose, enshrined in verse, solos are sung about it, and glees, instrumental pieces and orchestral effects make it their motive, all of which, served up with an accompaniment of such liquid as each

> member prefers, together with the incense of tobacco, forms a mellow and pleasing entertainment. (1:34-35)

In addition to the High Jinks, a second entertainment, known as the Low Jinks, developed as a postlude to the High Jinks. The first Low Jinks were spontaneous and informal, relying primarily upon various members' quick wit and improvisational abilities. As the club grew larger, the appointment by committee of the Low Jinks sire, and the cozy impromptu nature of the exercise became increasingly difficult, the Low Jinks became more formalized and scripted. Since the beginning, though, the primary tone of the Low Jinks has always been lighthearted and good-natured.

Over the course of the next year, the club established for itself both a mascot and a motto. The symbol with which the club decided to associate itself was that of an owl. Not much is provided regarding the reasoning behind the selection of this particular creature, but it is reasonable to assume that it was probably a result of the owl's frequent association with wisdom, night activity, and the wilderness. The first appearance of the owl occurs "on an invitation to a Jinks in December, 1872, surmounting an elk's skull and horns in a small circular design" (1:37). While the elk skull and horns have faded into memory, the owl quickly began appearing on all things associated with the club, a tradition that remained constant throughout the club's history and continues with the same enthusiasm today. In much the same way, the club's motto, "Weaving spiders, come not here," is taken every bit as seriously as when it was first adopted. The quote comes from a moment at the start of Act II, Scene ii of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Titania's fairy helpers perform a song with a dance in an effort to shoo away all the pesky little creatures that might disturb their queen from her slumber. The full line, in context, states:

> You spotted snakes with double tongue,
> Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
> Newts and blind-worms, do not wrong,
> Come not near our fairy queen.
> . . . .
> Weaving spiders, come not here;
> Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
> Beetles black, approach not near;
> Worm nor snail, do no offence.
> . . . .
> Come our lovely lady nigh;
> So, good night, with lullaby. (II.ii. 9-30)

The fairies sing this song as if to say, "Leave our queen alone, so that she might sleep in peace and get some rest." Similarly, the Bohemian Club chose this line as its motto as a way of saying, "Leave your business at the door so that we might better enjoy each other's company." The image, it would seem, is one of the businessman as spider, constantly building webs, looking to trap its next deal. This is not the ideal of most club members, who appreciate the opportunity to enjoy some art of one form or another and socialize with other likeminded individuals. One gets the impression upon reading the *Annals* that were a club member to discuss business within the confines of the clubhouse, it would be more of a theoretical discussion *about* business than an attempt to broker a deal *for* business. As indicated in the *Annals*, the club picked this quotation because of "its ancient enmity for the dull plodder whose sole ambition in life is money-getting" (1:38).

Apparently, the ideals and the monthly entertainments of the club were popular as the club grew rapidly during the first four years, growing from the initial 24 charter members in 1872 to more than 230 members by 1875. In 1876 the club made its first move. “A suite of six rooms and a spacious hall” had become available to rent above the California Market on Pine Street (1:126). These accommodations met the needs of the Bohemian Club for over ten years until, due to a merger with the Union Club in 1889, the Pacific Club offered to transfer the lease of its space on the corner of Post Street and Grant Avenue (3:53). The Bohemian Club eagerly accepted the deal (which included a good number of carpets and furniture) and moved from a single story of six rooms and a hall to three stories of several rooms each. Despite the improvements in the number and quality of clubrooms, however, the members would not be satisfied until they had a space they owned—one that included “a proper auditorium with a stage for the Jinks” (3:177). And so, at the end of 1891 and into 1892, an arrangement was made to purchase a lot for the purpose of building a clubhouse, on the corner of Sutter and Mason streets.

The author of *The Annals of the Bohemian Club* creates the impression that the club intended for the building on Sutter and Mason to be its home indefinitely. Alas, this would not be the case. On the morning of April 18, 1906, San Francisco was rocked by a giant earthquake, decimating most of the city. Virtually everything that was not destroyed by the earthquake was incinerated by more than 30 fires that raged through the city in the days following the event. The clubhouse was one such casualty. While a number of club members attempted to save what they could, much had to be left behind. As a result of this tragedy, a new clubhouse needed to be built. The *Annals* do not elaborate as to why the club could not be rebuilt at Sutter and Mason, but in early 1907 a lot was purchased at the corner of Post and Taylor streets; in 1909, the cornerstone was laid; and on November 12, 1910, the new clubhouse officially opened (5:3-8). The clubhouse at Post and Taylor remains the center of Bohemian Club activity to this very day.

The early history of the Bohemian Club is fascinating on its own, but an examination of the club that does not consider the time and place of its founding provides only part of the story. This is especially important when utilizing institutional histories, such as *The Annals of the Bohemian Club*, as they tend to portray the institution as if it was created and existed entirely separate from the world around it. This is almost never the case. For example, by the time of the Midwinter Fair of 1894, the Bohemian Club had existed for a little over 20 years. Michael H. de Young, editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and a prominent member of the Bohemian Club, was the primary organizer and financier of the fair. It would, therefore, be safe to assume that de Young did not represent the entirety of Bohemian Club involvement in the planning and execution of the event. However, no mention of the Midwinter Fair, nor any club member's association with the event—including de Young's—is ever found within the pages of the *Annals*.

During its first 50 years as an American city, San Francisco experienced an increase in population like no other place in the world. Gunther Barth indicates that San Francisco went from a population of about 1,000 in 1850 (118), to more than 340,000 by 1900 (135). The greatest growth occurred during the first 20 years, as the city had nearly 150,000 people living in it by 1870. The timing is significant because it shows that the Bohemian Club was formed just as population growth, while still substantial (averaging an additional 64,000 people per decade between 1870 and 1900), began to slow. This decline in growth is what allowed San Franciscans to begin to order their city in ways that corresponded to how they wanted to live their lives. The major battlegrounds on which this ordering took place are what Barbara Berglund calls “cultural frontiers”; however, there were just as many locations and institutions that, while not cultural frontiers themselves, existed on the borderlands of the frontiers and aided the ordering that was occurring within. These were places such as churches, schools, and gentlemen’s clubs/societies that existed outside of the day-to-day financial activities of the city but, in one way or another, continued to have an effect on them.

Berglund defines a cultural frontier as the “central components in what made up the rhythms of city life” (2). She further indicates that “observers often evaluated their quality and quantity as reflections of the city’s progress or decline” (2). These defining characteristics become muddied somewhat, as Berglund is quick to dismiss institutions (churches, schools, hospitals) and public streets and parks from the list of potential cultural frontiers. Helpfully, she does this by attempting to further define cultural frontiers, stating that they “were firmly embedded in the market relations that gave rise to popular and consumer cultures” and “were semipublic commercial spaces in that they limited the public that occupied them by virtue of their commercial nature” (2). While supplementing the initial definition, these statements do not clearly show why institutions and public spaces should be excluded from a list of cultural frontiers. Both are essential to the rhythms of city life and are often counted toward a city’s progress or decline. The missing piece of the puzzle occurs near the end of the passage when Berglund explains that “cultural frontiers functioned as vital terrain on which people came face to face with one another and enunciated varied and competing racialized, gendered, and class-based views of themselves and those around them" (2). In other words, "they served as sites of mixture and segregation in which notions of self and other were articulated" (2).

These quotes, in addition to the examples Berglund provides, help create a more complete understanding of what a cultural frontier is. Berglund's emphasis on mixing and interactions indicates that her interest is in places whose purpose is primarily social. That is to say that cultural frontiers are places where people go to observe other people, as might be the case for Chinatown or the promenade at the Mechanics' Fair, or to be seen by others, as might be the case for the promenade or Woodward's Gardens. While this could be said of some individuals in connection to churches, schools, hospitals, or public spaces, the desire to see or be seen is not what comes to mind when these institutions and spaces are considered. Additionally, Berglund emphasizes the importance of the presence of some type of monetary transaction as an admission ticket into the cultural frontier itself. These admission costs served as one way of limiting the individuals who participated in one cultural frontier or another. In many cases, the amount required for admission also determined an individual's function within each cultural frontier. Those who carried luggage or cleaned the rooms for guests at the Palace Hotel, for example, might spend their nights and weekends carousing the Barbary Coast but probably would not consider visiting Woodward's Gardens unless, perhaps, they were working there, too.

In light of these issues, where do gentlemen's clubs, such as the Bohemian Club, fall on the spectrum of cultural frontiers? On the one hand these clubs are inherently social: a group of men who share similar interests and values come together to consume alcohol and share ideas. At the same time they are extremely exclusive groups, made up almost entirely of white males, with many requiring significant membership fees/dues. In this regard, gentlemen's clubs in general, and the Bohemian Club in particular, would appear to fail Berglund's requirement that a cultural frontier be a place of interaction and mixing between various social spheres, specifically those of gender and ethnicity. Because of the difficulty locating the Bohemian Club as a cultural frontier, for the purposes of this thesis, the Bohemian Club will not be formally considered a cultural frontier but will be explored in the following pages as if it was.

To better understand where the Bohemian Club fits within the cultural landscape of San Francisco at the end of the nineteenth century, it is essential to be familiar with the role of private men's clubs across the same terrain. As part of his dissertation on the Bohemian Club, *The Bohemian Grove Theatrics: A History and Analysis from the Club's Beginnings in 1872 up to the Encampment of 1992*, Gary John Graves provides an excellent summary. Contrary to modern sentiments toward private men's clubs, Graves asserts that it "was a well established institution in late 19th century San Francisco" (14). Furthermore, according to Graves, private clubs "were a major aspect of the social scene," so much so that "a man might maintain memberships in several clubs at one time" and may even "visit several different clubs in one evening" (14). The private men's club, therefore, was more than merely a handful of men gathering together to drink and swap stories; they could go to any old bar for that. Gentlemen's clubs also afforded the members particular statuses and benefits that were otherwise unobtainable or difficult to procure outside the assistance of those institutions. The clubs one was a member of indicated to others what one's beliefs, values, and social class might be. Aside from alcohol and card games, most clubs also offered other services to their members. For example, a copy of the Bohemian Club's constitution and bylaws from 1904 references a club barber shop (61). Graves also points out that "at the turn of the century more that half the secret societies in the United States paid death, sick, accident, disability, funeral, or other benefits" (44). Suddenly something that was one thing has become something else. Organizations known primarily for their drinking and gambling provided significant social services for their members in the form of insurance and housing, amongst other things.

How then is the Bohemian Club different from other men's clubs, such as the Freemasons or the Jolly Corks, or other San Franciscan clubs, such as the Union Club or the Pacific Club? The Bohemian Club's distinction comes from two significant characteristics: one from its founding members, the other from its professed focus. As was previously mentioned, the founders, and the majority of original members of the Bohemian Club were all newspapermen of one sort or another. In contrast to the declining state of newspapers today, according to Graves, "newspaper publications exploded in San Francisco after the 1860s" (33). The paper trade in San Francisco developed into such a booming market that "ambitious young editors," Graves continues, "started papers the way prospectors went searching for gold in the California Mother Lode or silver in the Nevada Comstock Lode" (33). In other words, people were starting newspapers with reckless abandon, often staking their life's savings or going into debt to start these papers. They believed, much as the miners did, that they were only one big find away from making their fortune. That being said, it took much more to start and run a newspaper than it did to stake a claim. One would need printers and typesetters, reporters and editors. So it should not be taken lightly when Bohemian Club member Jerome Hart states in his reflections on the early days of San Francisco, *In Our Second Century: From an Editor's Notebook*, that "In 1877, there were in San Francisco seven dailies printing general news," which, it should be noted, "does not include special journals [such as], commercial, shipping, theatrical, etc. Fifty years later there were five general dailies in San Francisco" (76). From this short passage, it can be surmised that in order to meet the demands of writing, printing, and distributing seven papers every day, in addition to unknown numbers of weeklies and "special journals," San Francisco had to have been home to a large number of newspapermen. The Bohemian Club, therefore, being founded by and for newspapermen, filled a need for a group of people who did not have a place to call their own. Regardless of what the Bohemian Club would become, the original vision for the club was a place exclusively for individuals associated with the making of newspapers. The initial membership of the Bohemian Club consisted of peers and colleagues between whom certain shared vocabularies and interests already existed. It was not until they recognized the potential financial benefits of expanding the club's membership that it became much less exclusive (at least in regard to the professions of its members). Despite losing one of its distinguishing characteristics, the Bohemian Club strengthened the status of the second.

In addition to their shared professions, it was club members' appreciation of art and literature that brought them together. This was a feature that was also unique to the Bohemian Club. Not only did members enjoy consuming and conversing about art and literature, they also enjoyed participating in these pursuits. Within the first decade of the club's existence, drawings and sketches were often made of club activities, and theatrical elements found their way into the club's regular Jinks nights. So important was this aspect of the club that it was incorporated into the very first article of the club's constitution. According to the 1904 edition of its constitution and bylaws, the Bohemian Club "is instituted for the association of gentlemen connected professionally with literature, art, music, the drama, and also those who, by reason of their love or appreciation of these objects, may be deemed eligible" (27). By foregrounding the "love or appreciation" of the arts, the Bohemian Club differentiated itself from other private men's clubs. Whereas other fraternities and clubs might profess a purpose other than socializing, drinking, and gambling, the Bohemian Club, from its founding to today, has made the pursuit and appreciation of the arts its primary concern.

Although started as a monthly gathering to socialize and read essays addressing particular literary and other topics, Jinks nights evolved into actual productions ranging from art shows of member-produced paintings, sculpture, and other visual artwork to orchestral concerts to short dramatic performances. This shift from semiformal speeches and addresses to artistic endeavors exemplifies the value placed upon the arts by the membership of the club and can be seen most clearly in the development and evolution of the Bohemian Club’s most cherished (and most controversial) event, the Midsummer Encampment.

CHAPTER FIVE

A TRADITION FROM A FAREWELL: THE EVOLUTION OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB MIDSUMMER ENCAMPMENT

To the outside observer, there is an odd migration that occurs around the end of July or beginning of August every year. Private jets from around the world descend upon Northern California, filling the hangars and airfields surrounding San Francisco. Arriving on these planes are members of the Bohemian Club, each of them eagerly anticipating two weeks of leisure amongst the redwoods. Some may be participating in a performance or delivering a speech; even so, most of their time will be spent drinking and carousing and urinating on trees. These men have traveled from near and far to participate in what has become the most anticipated event on the Bohemian calendar: the Midsummer Encampment. Although the name and the wooded location imply simple, rustic facilities, many of the camps at what is known as Bohemian Grove have become quite elaborate, allowing members to enjoy their time in nature with many of the creature comforts they enjoy away from camp. Bohemian Club Midsummer Encampments have come a long way from the very first one held on Saturday, June 29, 1878.

The institution that is the Midsummer Encampment owes its existence to Henry Edwards. Affectionately referred to as “Harry,” Edwards was one of the founding members of the Bohemian Club and was also a member of the California Theatre stock company. His importance to the club is evident in the fact that he was the club’s vice president its first year and president for four of the next five years. So when Harry chose to move to New York when the fortunes of the California Theatre began to diminish after the mysterious death of William C. Ralston, his fellow club members decided to throw him a going-away party, which matched, if not exceeded, how dearly he would be missed. After much debate, and the appointment of a 24-man committee, it was decided that the celebratory Jinks would be held at Camp Taylor, located on Paper Mill Creek in Marin, north of San Francisco. The *Annals* indicate that there were nearly a hundred men who participated in this first-of-its-kind Jinks (1:160). To get to the campsite, club members first took a ferry across the strait known even then as the Gold Gate. Once on the other side, they took a short train ride to their final destination.

The Annals of the Bohemian Club describes the general atmosphere of the first excursion into the wilderness, relating that "after spending the afternoon roaming the woods, disporting in the stream or idling in the sun, each according to his bent, [club members] gathered at nightfall around the campfire and listened to song and story while the owls stared down from their hollow trees and at measured intervals hooted their approval" (1:160). While perhaps more informal and celebratory than a typical clubroom Jinks, the weekend adventure proved to be an enormous success. A night by bonfire in the great outdoors was good for the soul. Porter Garnett, in his treatise on the Bohemian Club Midsummer High Jinks entertainments, *The Bohemian Jinks: A Treatise*, describes the night's activities as resembling the typical house Jinks activities, "save for the added freedom and zest imparted by the surroundings" (19).

When the topic arose the following year, the primary concern, besides the financial concerns raised by the board, was not whether an outdoor Jinks should be repeated but where it should be held. Sometime during the discussions it was proposed to hold the encampment further north in the redwoods. After the board was assured of the financial feasibility of the extended journey, a site was selected near Duncan's Mills, near Guerneville and the Russian River. Highlighting a theme, which will be one of the chief concerns of future encampments, the club *Annals* proclaim that, in that sylvan setting,

> the dwellers of the city . . . found themselves, it may be said, in more senses than one, for they had dropped the masks and costumes of the money-getter, and become again as Nature made them. Here, leaping from the train, they dispersed through the woods, laughing and shouting like boys out of school, while the mighty trees looked down upon them in benignant silence. (1:208)

A Bohemian Club tradition was born.

Despite the board's earlier misgivings about the location of the event, its concerns must have been relieved as the next two Midsummer Encampments (in 1880 and 1881) were both held at the same location: near Duncan's Mills, near Guerneville and the Russian River. However, whether these woods would be sufficient for a permanent retreat for the Bohemian Club can never be known. As the name implies, Duncan's Mills was home to a lumber mill. During the fall of 1881, the Bohemian Club heard that the area in and around the site of its encampment had been heavily cut and harvested. In response to this news, the club appointed Jerome Hart and Joseph Tilden to find a new location. Hart and Tilden not only discovered the rumor to be true, but they found that a significant portion of the surrounding trees had been harvested as well. And so the search for a new location began. In his memoir/history of San Francisco, *In Our Second Century*, Hart provides details of the search and selection of the new location, of which there is little to no mention in *The Annals of the Bohemian Club*. After lamenting the fact that much of the area had been cleared, Hart tells of how they discovered what would later become the permanent midsummer retreat for club members: Bohemian Grove.

Hart and Tilden began the search around Guerneville, but quickly realized that "it was useless to consider any site in that vicinity since the trees were gone," at which point they "determined to go down the Russian River by boat, as far as the other railway" because "It was essential that the ground selected should be quite near a railway to transport the Bohemians and their impedimenta" (Hart, 335). After a couple hours, discouraged by the lack of trees along the river, the pair decided to stop for some lunch. During their brief stop, they discovered a grove of redwoods set back a bit from the river and owned by a farmer named Meeker. Hart and Tilden found Meeker to be a kindred spirit, despite his being a bit reclusive and mysterious. Hart relays that "Meeker loved the redwood trees. He loved them so much that he defied the lures of the lumber-men. He hoped to lease the grove, or perhaps sell it to some group or association that would preserve it for its beauty. He was a little ahead of his time; in those days everybody wanted to convert redwoods into saleable lumber" (336).

At this point in the story, the chronology begins to break down as the reports of the next decade of Midsummer Jinks locations differ between Hart and the club *Annals*. Hart asserts that the members of the club were so dissatisfied with Meeker's Grove that "the Club next year sought a new site" (338); whereas *The Annals of the Bohemian Club* indicate that Meeker's Grove was successful enough that they offered to buy it, and, except for the shrewd negotiation tactics of Meeker, they would have. The *Annals* also state that they returned to Meeker's Grove in 1883, 1884, and 1886. If club members did try out a different location, as Hart indicates, it was probably during the 1885 encampment as it is one of the few entries lacking enough detail to determine its location. Here again, Hart's account diverges from the club *Annals*; while Hart tells of two or three outings at Austin Creek (roughly two miles north of Guerneville) and one at Mill Valley (just across the bay and the closest of any) before forming an exploratory committee, the *Annals* state that the committee was formed in May 1887, and it was this committee who suggested the location at Austin Creek. Encampments were then held at that location from the summer of 1887 through the summer of 1891. The festivities were then moved closer to home in Mill Valley for the summer of 1892. Despite the significance of the 1892 High Jinks toward the development of the Grove Play, the location was the least popular, due in part to its proximity to the city. As Hart relates, "the neighborhood was so populous that the Club had no privacy; non-members wandered about freely, commented, criticized, and even tried to slake their thirst at the Club's wine-room. That settled Mill Valley. It was too near San Francisco" (338). After the experiment in proximity, Hart has the club returning to Meeker's Grove, then back to Austin Creek, and finally ending up at Meeker's Grove, but, again, his testimony is at odds with the club's, as the *Annals* indicate the club returned to Meeker's Grove in 1893 and has met there to this day.

In March of 1898, Vanderlyn Stow, then vice president, called the members of the Bohemian Club to vote on the creation of a committee to formulate a plan to finance the purchase of Meeker's Grove. Even though the club had held a majority of its encampments at the site, there were still many who were hesitant about an expenditure that large. Partway through the debate, General William H. L. Barnes, well regarded within the club for his oratory skills, was approached by those in favor of the purchase and asked to speak on behalf of their cause. The *Annals* offers up the following account of what happened next:

> The General replied with a somewhat determined nod, addressed the Chair and was granted the privilege of the floor. Then ensued, from just the man who knew all about eloquence, oratory and the logic of a great defender, what was perhaps the most fervently convincing appeal in support of a cherished project ever delivered before the Bohemian Club or any other similar organization. He could say nothing in rebuttal concerning the arguments of the opposition because he had heard none. So, naturally enough, he must confine his remarks exclusively to a sentimental view of the main subject at issue. This he did with amazing tact and wondrous flights of metaphor, dotted here and there with earnest periods of sound logic, and all who remember the masterly effort of that afternoon cannot fail to remember that William H. L. Barnes had never before been so thoroughly in earnest. … When he had finished he lolled into a seat amid a very cyclone of applause and then there was a brief period of congratulatory handshaking, even with many over-cautious Bohemians who had hither to been opposed to the purchase. (4:77-78)

General Barnes' oration persuaded enough club members for the motion to pass, and so the club made its first significant steps toward owning its own location for its Midsummer Encampments. The next steps occurred in May the following year when Stow, by then the president, called the club together to vote on the final authorization to purchase the grove of redwoods "on the Russian River, near Guerneville," which passed without the need for any fiery rhetoric from General Barnes. Finally, in the spring of 1900, the last payment was made on the property, transferring ownership fully into the hands of the Bohemian Club.

Bohemian Grove was consecrated by the club on Sunday, August 11, 1900, the day after that year's Jinks, before everyone packed up and shuffled back to the city.

Members were called together with a bugle, which was followed by an introductory address by President Stow. After designating one of the largest (and probably most central) redwoods as "The Monarch of the Grove," General Barnes was given the stage and spoke for the better part of an hour. The *Annals* indicate that his primary topic was that of the California redwood. One of his most significant statements was that the California redwood "existed naturally, he said, in no other clime than ours, and, consequently, was in every way a tree beneath whose shades the Bohemian Club should erect its eternal summer home" (4:138). General Barnes continued in this vein, highlighting various incredible facts concerning *Sequoia sempervirens,* such as its growth from almost inconsequential seed to towering giant, its ability to survive by the mists and fogs that roll in off the coast, and the fact that many of these trees are older than civilization. Most significant, though, was his conclusion, which convinced club members that the right decision had been made. General Barnes accomplished this feat by "drawing a happy analogy between the ever-living majesty of the trees in Bohemia's forest and the Club's eternal fealty to camaraderie, to friendship, to tradition and to memory" (4:138). Barnes' speech was so moving that several newspapers wished to print it in their pages but, alas, could not as he was not in the practice of writing down his speeches but delivered them extemporaneously.

With the context of the various locations established, it is now easier to move to exploring the various alterations to the Midsummer Encampment that led to the development of the Grove Play. The first and perhaps most significant event—not simply in the evolution of the Grove Play, but in the history of the club—is the introduction of the Cremation of Care ceremony. Thought up by Frederick Somers (a name that will come up again later), the Cremation of Care ceremony made its debut at the 1880 Midsummer Encampment, and was an instant success. Even though no two ceremonies are exactly the same, *The Annals of the Bohemian Club* provide a general description of a typical Cremation of Care:

> Seated on logs, or lying on the ground, the Bohemians smoke their pipes in the balmy night air and listen to the addresses and music of the High Jinks. At the conclusion of these services the sound of martial strains is heard approaching; there is a red glare of torches, and a band of musicians, robed in somber gowns, is seen slowly advancing though the trees. Following the band comes a company of men, also robed in long gowns, with hoods concealing their faces, each carrying a torch, and preceded by the High Priest of Bohemia in his robes of office. Following these comes another company, bearing on its shoulders a bier, and on the bier a coffin, and in the coffin lies the enemy of mankind, the sworn foe of Bohemia, Dull Care. Following these again, and guarding the corpse, are imps, devil-masked and garbed in crimson, horned and cloven-hoofed, brandishing torches. As the funeral procession approaches, the Club members silently arise, and, two by two, with arms locked, follow it, soberly and with decorum. (1:240-243)

The odd procession continues through the redwoods to a clearing where the coffin is placed upon a funeral pyre, at which point the high priest climbs a platform and addresses the crowd. In contrast to the ominous start to the ceremony, the comments made by the high priest are lighthearted and poke fun at a number of club members. At the conclusion of his speech, the pyre is lit by the torches of the imps, and, as the coffin is engulfed in flames, the fireworks, which are hidden inside, fill the night sky while the band plays a lively song. After the performance, club members return to camp for a midnight dinner and the Low Jinks presentation. The basic structure of the weekend activities stayed roughly the same, even after the introduction of the Grove Play, until 1913 when the encampment was expanded from a single weekend to two full weeks, moving the Cremation of Care to the first Saturday night, the Low Jinks to the middle Saturday, and the Grove Play to the final Saturday as the conclusion.

The Cremation of Care ceremony is significant for more than just what it represents in connection with the values of the club; it also represents the initial introduction of theatrical elements into the Jinks activities of the club that would eventually lead to the elimination of the "Paper Jinks." The next infusion of theatricality into the Midsummer High Jinks, and what many consider to be the beginning of the end of that form (or the inception/emergence of the Grove Play) occurred at the encampment at Mill Valley in 1892. Porter Garnett gives a description of this stage in the evolution of the Grove Play, stating that "the sire, having devised a plan or framework, would invite some of his fellow members to clothe the skeleton which they would do by contributing original papers or poems, by signing songs or furnishing a musical interlude," which is not that dissimilar from the standard Paper Jinks experienced at the clubhouse, but Garnett continues stating that, "all of these various elements were woven together as parts of a performance given in costume and with the aid of various spectacular effects" (20). And so the 1892 High Jinks constitute the first steps toward a cohesive, unified High Jinks, particularly as it related to the Cremation of Care ceremony. Frederick Somers is again found at the forefront of innovation as the sire of the Jinks, officially titled "The Sermon of the Myriad Leaves" but referred to casually as the "Buddha Jinks," so called because of the seventy-foot-tall plaster Buddha, modeled after the daibutsu located in Kamakura, Japan, which served as a "spectacular effect" at the back of a 300-foot-diameter amphitheater performance space that was cleared out by Somers in the weeks before the performance. Spread out at the foot of the statue were seven altars: one for the high priest; two for the priests of the leaves; three for the priests of the trees; and one for the high priest of Bohemia, before which was placed the coffin in which the personified Care was placed. For this event, each member was provided a kimono. Audience members, of which there were around two hundred, wore plain white kimonos, while the musicians were clothed in red, and the priests were each in a different color based on their priestly rank or division. After the various priests delivered their sermons, interspersed between choruses, the Cremation of Care ceremony began and was completed in the same performance space instead of moving to an alternate location as in previous years.

Following Frederick Somers example, Joseph Redding, the sire of the 1893 High Jinks, upon the return to Meeker's Grove that year, also decided to clear out a circular amphitheater for the ceremony, but this would be only 200 feet in diameter. Redding's Jinks was officially called "The Sacrifice in the Forest" but became known as the "Druid Jinks" or "Joe's Jinks." Although also consisting primarily of individual speeches and songs strung loosely together as in previous years, the Druid Jinks is significant for two main reasons: its use of "spectacular effects" and its contribution to Bohemian Club mythology. Additionally, but of less significance, Redding was the first sire who insisted upon extensive rehearsals leading up to the performance. Unfortunately, though, according to *The Annals of the Bohemian Club,* Redding was not as demanding of his technological performers. The Druid Jinks represent the club's first foray into electric lighting at the Grove. Through the use of what is referred to as a "steam donkey" or a "donkey engine," Redding wanted to take the High Jinks to the next level with electric lights as opposed to torches and paper lanterns. However, the *Annals* relates that this innovation almost shut down the entire show. The account begins with everything going well when "just as dinner was concluded a wild-eyed messenger, pale and disheveled, rushed up to Mr. Redding and informed him that the donkey engine failed to work" (3:212). Faced with the potential demise of his High Jinks production, Redding initiated a flurry of activity attempting to get the engine up and running. Things were looking grim when "without warning the donkey engine was seized with an inspiration and started on its own four wheels for the grove as though about to open the play with itself in the principal role, but as suddenly changing its mind it swerved and proceeded to climb the acclivity back of its station, taking itself seriously for a wild ass of the hills instead of the steam donkey of commerce that it was" (3:213). The situation worsened when "the donkey finally lost its equilibrium and went over on its side among the bushes with a dreadful clatter of wheels and belts and hissing of steam" (3:213). Although the fate of the Druid Jinks looked bleak, Redding and his crew were able to get the engine back up in its proper position and, with the well-timed arrival of an electrical engineer, working again.

The production began with the discovery that the Druids intended to use the space to sacrifice their prisoners, at which point the high priest of Bohemia stepped in and asked the prisoners to be afforded an opportunity to give a defense. Out of respect for the visiting bohemians, the Druids permitted each of the captives to speak before sending them to their fate. Between the six condemned, five different ancient European cultures were represented: a Celt, a Roman, two Norsemen, a Barbarian, and a Gaul. For each of the five cultures, the prisoners delivered a speech or performed a song celebrating the virtues of their people and, their arguments found inferior or irrelevant, were sentenced to death. When General Barnes' turn as the Gaul arrived, however, he spoke on the same theme as the high priest of Bohemia had before the Druids and their captives arrived, "Love one another," and requested that he and the other prisoners be set free "for the sake of peace on earth and good will to men" (3:220). The Gaul's arguments convinced the Druid high priest to change his mind, but only after a final test, as the ideas were so divergent from their previously held beliefs of "an eye for an eye." And so a golden egg was brought forth, of which it was said, "that the hand of guilt or false doctrine touching it would be covered with blood, but the hand of him who embodied truth would produce a miracle" (3:220). When the Gaul placed his hand upon the egg, it fell apart and a white dove flew out, removing all doubt from the minds of the Druids, who decided that the captives could be released and, with the aid of the high priest of Bohemia and others, that the body of Care would be an acceptable substitute in place of the former prisoners. At this point, the High Jinks transitioned into the Cremation of Care ceremony. Following the procession to the site of the ceremony, the Druid priest provided a funeral oration when, just as they were about to light the effigy on fire, Satan and his minions appeared to reclaim his servant Care. Before the devils could grab Care's body, though, the Druid priest jumped in the way, proclaimed his newfound faith, and set his torch to the pyre.

By merging elements of the Cremation of Care ceremony with the High Jinks, Joseph Redding emphasized and further defined the importance of the Midsummer Encampment, the ceremony that had come to symbolize the excursion, and the club members' relationship to them both. Joanne Lafler, in her essay on the development of the Cremation of Care ceremony, "Seeded in the Grove Itself: Theatrical Evolution at the Bohemian Club Encampment," relates that starting from Redding's Druid Jinks and going forward, "The conflict between the collective Bohemians and the personification of Care, implicit in the Cremation ceremony, became a unifying theme of the High Jinks; providing the semblance of a plot" (28). Concerning the Druid Jinks, she states that, "Care was identified with the bloody paganism of the Druids and slain symbolically as speeches proclaimed the triumph of Christianity and the Bohemian brotherhood" (28). Lafler continues showing how Care, and the Bohemian Club's relationship to it, was further defined in subsequent years:

> In the "Gypsy Jinks" of 1894, Care was vanquished when a band of gypsies asserted the superiority of art and nature over crass materialism. The special significance of the redwood grove was strongly indicated in the High Jinks of 1895, when allegorical cohorts of Care—Death, Disease, Poverty—were driven from "this sacred grove" by the Bohemian brotherhood in the guise of Pan and his cohorts in an impressive series of illuminated tableaux. (28-29)

These themes and representations of Care will come up again (and again) after the development of the Grove Play, but the early incorporations of these elements are important as they represent an expanding focus on the various shades of the characteristics of both Care and the Bohemian Club. Additionally, as Joanne Lafler indicates, these efforts are the first manifestations of cohesive plot elements within the production of the High Jinks.

Finally, one of the last significant changes made to the High Jinks productions during the 1890s was that of performance space. Starting with the “Gypsy Jinks” in 1894, the High Jinks ceremonies moved away from the amphitheater-type spaces of the Buddha Jinks and the Druid Jinks, and instead established a much more traditional, proscenium-type theatre space. Within Meeker’s Grove was found an area with two perfectly positioned redwoods that could serve as a proscenium frame, with a hill running up the back of the space. The steep hillside allowed for the implementation of a multitude of levels, the likes of which would be virtually impossible to recreate on a traditional stage. This feature was used most dramatically for the opening of the Gypsy Jinks. As described in the third volume of the club *Annals*:

> High upon the hillside a spot of flame appears developing into a little campfire, the growing light of which gradually shows a gypsy lad in a gay costume adding fuel, while his tent nearby glows in rich color amongst the pale green bushes. Then another flame appears lower down and with it another picture, and still another until the hill side is dotted with campfires … As these tableaux develop from the darkness betraying the soft colors of the tents and the trunks of the trees and the bushes in the warm, flickering flow of the fires and the picturesque costumes of the swarthy figures, artfully blended with the foliage, a low murmur of approval began in the audience, until finally with a barbaric clash of the music two powerful calcium lights were turned up on the hillside, bringing the whole scene together in a blaze of beauty and the murmur of the audience burst into hearty applause. (262-263)

The hillside would be used for dramatic entrances by important characters, as the shadows allowed actors to get into position before a bright light would illuminate their presence. Most significantly, during this time before the Cremation of Care ceremony was moved to its own night, the ceremonial procession, carrying the bier that held the effigy of Care, would start at the top of the hill and work its way down and through the audience, club members following as they passed, to the site where the ceremony would be held.

Although the previous descriptions of the Druid Jinks and the Gypsy Jinks create the impression of fully theatrical pieces of art, that is not actually the case. Porter Garnett in both *The Bohemian Jinks: A Treatise* and his introduction to the first volume of Grove Plays refers to the High Jinks productions of the 1890s as composite. This means that, while the sire may have conceived of the general theme and setting for the performances, “the principal speeches were written by the persons who delivered them, and such music as was used was not especially composed for the occasion” (introduction xiv). All of that would change in 1902 with the production of *The Man in the Forest* by Charles Field and Joseph Redding.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRIUMPH OF BOHEMIA:

AN ARCHETYPAL ANALYSIS OF THE EARLY GROVE PLAYS

The very first Grove Play almost did not happen. If not for a fortuitous sequence of events, the 1902 Midsummer Encampment would have featured yet another in a series of highly dramatic, composite High Jinks. Joseph D. Redding, sire of the 1893 Druid Jinks discussed in a previous chapter, was again chosen as sire for that year's production. Unfortunately neither the *Annals* nor Porter Garnett's accounts indicate why, but Redding felt it necessary to withdraw as sire for the Jinks. Despite this move, Redding wished to remain involved and so volunteered to organize the music in addition to composing an original piece for the production. A new sire, Richard M. Hotaling, was selected, and quickly went about the business of developing an appropriate theme for the redwood stage. From the suggestion of a fellow club member, Hotaling decided that the setting would be a Native American village where a representative for Bohemia had just been taken captive. After he presented his ideas to the club president, Frank Deering, and the club secretary, Charles K. Field, the latter volunteered to write the text to frame the performance, but did not believe the premise provided a solid plot for him to offer much more. At this point, everyone involved still assumed that this would be a typical High Jinks production, in the more recent dramatic style. Not until Hotaling shared a Native American legend he had heard from yet another club member did Field have the inspiration to write the play. According to Porter Garnett, in the introduction to the first volume of Grove Plays, "The story was of a despairing tribe in a land afflicted with drought, who were visited by a stranger, a man unlike themselves, having light hair and white skin, who, by magic summons, brought up corn from the paroled earth and game to the deserted water courses" (xv). This legend provided enough of a plot for an entire play. When Redding heard about what Field was attempting, he decided that a single original composition would not be enough, and the very first Bohemian Club Grove Play was born: *The Man in the Forest: A Legend of the Tribe*, "a play written entirely by one member of the Club, with music composed entirely by another" (xv).

After telling the tale of the first Grove Play, Garnett goes on to hypothesize about what might have occurred had things fallen out differently. Had Field not found an adequate plot, the composite Jinks might have remained. Had Redding composed only the one piece and not the music for the entire show, the dramatic and textual elements might have gained prominence over the musical. Unfortunately, as there are no recordings made, especially of these early productions, and the scores do not appear to exist outside of the Bohemian Club's library, this study is focused entirely upon the texts of the plays; however, it should be noted that, as indicated, the musical element was extremely important to the High Jinks as well as to the Grove Play productions. In fact, as the hillside stage was developed and built up, a literal pit was dug in front of the stage area from which a full orchestra could play.

Even though the musical component will not be fully examined here, it is a significant piece in what makes this excursion into the redwoods a product of the American West. Again, the Bohemian Club was founded during a time when the American West generally, and San Francisco specifically, was struggling to find its identity. Within the first decade of its existence, the Bohemian Club chose to make a yearly excursion into the “wilderness” part of its identity. At the same time, the literary archetype of the American West was beginning to emerge among the writings of Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Joaquin Miller. In fact, William Everson argues that the archetype’s inception point can be traced to Miller’s *Life Amongst the Modocs*, published in 1873, as Miller so strongly identified with the American West. The archetype then travels through the nature writings of John Muir until finally achieving its fullest realization through the recognition of violence in the writings of Robinson Jeffers. This chapter focus, therefore, on the early Grove Plays’ place within the archetype of Western American literature. It also explores the idea of the Grove Play having its own archetype, and locates where each of the early plays falls within the spectrum of that archetype.

The inception point of the Western archetype for William Everson is one of identification. This is why he places it with the writings of Joaquin Miller as opposed to Twain or Harte. Unlike the latter authors, whose Western writings feel as though written by visitors to the West, Miller wrote about the West in a genuine and authentic way that communicated his wholehearted acceptance and adoption of the region and the people who lived there. In the same way the Grove Play archetype finds its inception through identification. At the Bohemian Club’s founding, an emphasis was placed on the value of art, music, literature, and theatre. By adding these elements to the association with nature, the club begins to see itself as something more than a group of men coming together to drink, play cards, and give the occasional performance. It is not until the Cremation of Care ceremony, however, that the inception point is actualized. A significant addition to the midsummer activities, the Cremation of Care ceremony turns what was merely an outdoor version of the club's indoor Jinks and gives them a new purpose. Now the Midsummer Encampment took on a significance of its own, as a sanctuary where club members could divest themselves of the burdens associated with city living. Had the performances been attempted in any other setting, they would not have become as successful, nor as important to the club, as they did. Only among the sacred, older-than-time California redwoods, where the trees seemed to reach up to heaven itself, could everything weighing down the shoulders of hundreds of men be vanquished and carried off as smoke into the night sky.

The next stage in the development of the archetype is found in the transitional High Jinks, *The Festival of the Leaves,* or "Buddha Jinks." This production moved the club from mere identification with the natural setting of its encampment to reverence for and worship of nature more generally. Frederick Somers' Buddha Jinks accomplished this quite literally as each of the priests represented a different type of plant or tree and offered speeches extolling the virtues of their associated flora. At this point, the two literary archetypes begin to parallel each other. Both have a sense of identification with a particular region, what might be termed authenticity or indigenousness, and both have a deep regard, or worship even, for the natural world. Where the two diverge, though, is on the issue of violence. While the Cremation of Care ceremony and most, if not all, of the Grove Plays contain an element of violence, it is not the same visceral violence, boiling within all of nature, found at the height of the Western archetype. Instead, the Grove Play offers an allegorical violence: one that occurs within the soul of an individual as opposed to one that is manifested physically, such as the ocean waves that thrash the shoreline or the atrocities that men committed during World War I. As a result, the Grove Plays based upon historical events are less affective, and therefore further from fully realizing the archetype, than those that take a more allegorical approach. Most likely, as Porter Garnett points out, because of club members' high identification with the location, the more the Grove Play can identify with the physical location of the Grove, as opposed to some other specific region of the globe, the more Club members "feel that they are participants in a rite, not spectators at an entertainment" (xvii).

Garnett, also in his introduction, establishes the four basic types of Grove Plays: the romantic-realistic, the romantic-idealistic, the historical, and the mythological. While there may be some overlap in these categories, as a play in one group may contain an element from another, each of the early plays is distinct enough to be placed solidly within a single classification. As previously indicated, Garnett preferred more allegorical and less "realistic" styles of Grove Plays; so with their emphasis on specific real people, places, and events, the historical plays were the least successful of the early Grove Plays. This fact is corroborated by *The Annals of the Bohemian Club*. While the club historiographer is always careful to never speak ill of a club member or event, the description of the first Grove Play to be characterized as historical is less than glowing. The second ever Grove Play is titled *Montezuma*, written by Louis Robertson with music by H. J. Stewart, and is set during the final hours before Cortez conquered the Aztec civilization. Of the play, the *Annals* indicate that

> its subject, lugubrious and tragic in the extreme, is a wide departure from the pleasant legend employed in the building of Field and Redding's "The

> Man in the Forest" of the year before. Its brevity, however, afforded no gaps in which criticism could pause to "knock it" for its gracefully contrived but mournful verse and "creepy" episodes had little or no bearing upon Bohemia or its traditions. On the whole it was well received, on account of its picturesqueness, its rather good acting and its music. (4:175-176)

Even though this account may sound like damning praise, there was an even bigger controversy that doomed the production in the minds of the more nature-loving club members before the show even began. The author of the play asked for a gigantic backdrop to be painted to depict an ancient Aztec city. When the lights came up on the monstrosity at the beginning of the show, blocking out the glorious trees and hillside, there was such an outcry that the backdrop was taken down at the conclusion of the first scene, and the rest of the play was presented without additional interruption.

The primary objection to Grove Plays of the historical style (and to a lesser extent the mythological style) therefore, was that the specificity required to tell the story left little room for the incorporation of elements specific to Bohemian Club mythology. This can be most clearly seen in both 1903's *Montezuma* as well as the second Grove Play to be categorized as historical, 1909's *St. Patrick at Tara*. While both plays feature murders, in neither instance is the murdered character a representation for Care, which is standard for the vast majority of Grove Plays; rather, both were sympathetic characters, who were killed as a result of the ignorance of the others. On their own, in another context, these plays are well-written and dramatic works of art, but they fall short of achieving the fullness of meaning available within the Grove Play archetype.

Posing a similar problem as the historical Grove Plays, those in the mythological style relied upon persons and places from known myths and legends. The first of this type is *The Quest of the Gorgon* from 1905, based on the myth of Perseus and his quest to slay Medusa; however, she is never seen or heard from during the play. Instead of an oppressive force looming over the Grove, the gorgon is merely spoken of as a potential threat, one that is never actualized on the stage. Because of this, the gorgon loses some of her power as the representative of Care. Historical and mythological Grove Plays are confronted with these issues as a result of their limited vocabularies or systems of meaning. These plays are limited to the extent that they rely upon familiar stories and characters. Working within this type of material forces the authors into an established vocabulary and leaves little room for innovation or adoption of a more Bohemian vocabulary. In addition to the examples already given, this can been seen in the settings for the various types of Grove Plays. While all manuscripts of the first Grove Play, *The Man in the Forest*, were lost in the earthquake and fires of 1906, the synopsis provided in the first collection of Grove Plays states that the setting matched the setting of the Grove stage. In contrast, the setting of the second Grove Play, *Montezuma*, is stated as “The top of a great teocalli or pyramid altar in Mexico” (Garnett, *The Grove Plays* 25). After that, *The Hamadryads*, the third Grove Play, and the first written in the romantic-idealistic style, returns to the Grove stage setting of “A glade in the untrodden forest surrounded by giant trees at the foot of a wooded hillside” (49). The author, Will Irwin, even goes so far as to point out that the play takes place during midsummer at night. The following year’s, *The Quest of the Gorgon*, transports the action across the globe to “The sacred grove of Phoebus Apollo at Delphi” (83). While the author is careful to maintain a wilderness setting for the play, the move to Delphi, as with the relocation to Mexico, lessens any connection the play might have to the physical location of the Grove stage. Originally planned for the 1906 Midsummer Encampment, George Sterling's *The Triumph of Bohemia* was postponed due to the earthquake and fires that devastated San Francisco earlier that year. In its place, an expanded Cremation of Care ceremony, titled *The Owl and Care* and written by Charles Field, was performed. Significantly, both of these plays returned the setting to, as Sterling's text states, "a forest glade at the foot of a wooded hillside in moonlight" (145).

As previously indicated, the identification with a particular region/location is a significant element to archetypes of the Grove Play and the American West. By aligning the setting of the Grove Play with the physical location of the Grove stage, the author allows the production to draw on the energy contained within that place. As the historical and mythological Grove Plays are not able to establish this connection, they fall short in achieving the fullness of meaning available to them. Romantic-realistic and romantic-idealistic plays, on the other hand, while able to maintain this connection to place, frequently fall short in the implementation of the Care motif, as will be examined later in this chapter.

One area in which all of the plays generally excel is the reverence or worship afforded to nature. This is an essential element to both archetypes but especially for that of the Grove Play. The archetypal literature of the American West features a profound respect for the natural world, especially of its capacity for violence, but often stops short of what would be considered overt worship. Grove Plays, in comparison, are frequently centered on rites or ceremonies dedicated to nature in one of her many forms. Again, the historical and mythological styles are found to be the weakest in this area, but its presence is still strong in each. For example, *Montezuma* opens with a "Hymn to the Rising Sun," and its characters look to the stars for wisdom. Similarly, *The Quest of the Gorgon* has the Greek god Dionysus and his cohort celebrating the earth, the sun, and, of course, wine. The difference between these instances of nature worship and those found in the romantic (realistic and idealistic) style plays is the fact that in the latter the nature worship is much more integral to the action and vocabulary of the play. In *The Man in the Forest*, the inciting incident is a natural one, as the synopsis states that "the grasses and the vines are dry underfoot, for the season has been unblessed of rain and even the land-fogs of winter have been held from this apparently cursed corner of the earth" (7). The romantic-idealistic plays go even further by personifying the very trees that inhabit the grove. *The Triumph of Bohemia* exhibits this trait most completely in the following passage proclaimed by the personified Spirit of Bohemia:

> For lasting happiness we turn our eyes
> To one alone, and she surrounds you now—
> Great Nature, refuge of the weary heart,
> And only balm to breasts that have been bruised!
> She hath cool hands for every fevered brown,
> And gentlest silence for the troubled soul.
> Her counsels are most wise. She healeth well,
> Having such ministry as calm and sleep.
> She is most faithful. Other friends may fail,
> But seek ye her in any quiet place,
> And smiling, she will rise and give to you
> Her kiss, nor tell you any woeful tale.
> Entreat her, and she will deny you not;
> Abandon her, and she will not pursue. (167-168)

These words, spoken by the personified Spirit of Bohemia in an effort to convince a group of woodsmen to reject the temptations set before them by the evil spirit Mammon, show the high regard in which the club holds the natural world.

Lastly, the third of the essential elements of the Grove Play archetype is the influence and destruction of the Care motif. Where the Western archetype emphasizes and finds its culmination in the inherent violence of nature, the Grove Play, as seen in the passage from *The Triumph of Bohemia* above, emphasizes the restorative and healing qualities of nature. Care, and the extent to which it rules over the world, represents this struggle, as the greater Care's influence, the more elusive nature's freedom and restoration. Unfortunately, as has been previously referenced, the Grove Plays occasionally feature a weak or nonexistent representative for Care. As a result, Care's role as a symbol for the anxiety and weariness of city life is greatly diminished, and its death or defeat brings fewer of nature's restorative qualities. A corollary to the Care motif, and one easily overlooked, is the Bohemian motif. This is the character in the play who represents the beliefs and values of the Bohemian Club and typically deals the final blow, defeating Care. Some Bohemian figures are obvious, such as the Spirit of Bohemia in *The Triumph of Bohemia*, while others are either imperfect symbols, as Perseus in *The Quest of the Gorgon*, or practically nonexistent, as the case for the already much maligned *Montezuma*. Additionally, the Care figure and the Bohemian figure should be of relatively equal strength and importance to the plot. This is one of the few positives of *Montezuma*, and it is displayed perfectly in the evenly matched adversaries of the Spirit of Bohemia and Mammon in *The Triumph of Bohemia*. Lopsided relationships, however, can be seen, as previously mentioned, in *The Quest of the Gorgon*, as Perseus dominates the stage and the gorgon is never seen. Conversely, the Care figure of Meledon, in *The Hamadryad*, is depicted as mercilessly imprisoning the titular hamadryads within their trees and only allowing them limited freedom on a single night each year, whereas the Bohemian figure of Apollo is seen for a moment at the conclusion of the play, only long enough to shoot a single arrow killing Meledon.

The basic elements of the Grove Play archetype now explained, the task of exploring their manifestation and the achievement of the Grove Play archetype in George Sterling's *The Triumph of Bohemia* is simplified. Sterling divides his play into two parts, emphasizing the power of nature and the Grove in the first half, and that of Bohemia in the second. The play opens with the Tree-Spirits awakening to an ominous feeling. Says the First Tree-Spirit, "What power to-night makes heavy all the air, and with my slumber mixes dreadful dreams?" (145). The Tree-Spirits then break into song, proclaiming that they have nothing to fear as neither the elements, nor fire, nor time has any effect on them. As the song ends, the Tree-Spirits begin a dance, during which the Spirit of the North-Wind appears, offended at having been challenged so lightly in the Tree-Spirits' song. Rebuked by the Tree-Spirits, the Spirit of the North-Wind calls upon his brothers, the Spirits of the South-, West-, and East-Winds. Scorned once again by the Tree-Spirits, the North-Wind calls upon the Spirit of Time and the Spirit of Fire. Before entering the fight, a Tree-Spirit calls out a Bohemian rallying cry to his fellow Tree-Spirits, "We still defy all perils and all pow'rs!/Stand, brothers, as of yore, for not alone/shall any life resist the warring world" (153). The two factions then rush each other. In a feature unique to the Grove Play, the text indicates that "the conflict is represented chiefly by the music, augmented by thunder and lightning and the howling of the wind" (154). As the lights come back up, the Tree-Spirits are found singing, victorious over their foes. This first episode of the play is used to emphasize the power and majesty of not just nature in general but the very grove that club members were sitting in, establishing both the play's identity with the Grove and its worship of nature.

Moving into the second episode of the play, the Tree-Spirits discover that a band of lumberjacks, referred to as Woodmen, have entered the grove, each with an axe. They enter singing a song about Care, which ends with the lines, "All in vain I seek a spot/Where his face shall haunt me not,/Till beneath the shielding sod/I shall hide from Care, the god" (156). Immediately, the audience, along with the Tree-Spirits, realize a higher level of evil has enshadowed the Grove. The Woodmen, having found a grove of trees ripe for the harvest, begin to make camp. They are about to chop down a tree to protect them from the howling north wind when they are stopped by the hooting of an owl, recognized by club members as a symbol of Bohemia. The Owl flies toward the Woodmen and, when it lands, turns into the Spirit of Bohemia, who confronts the Woodmen about to harm his sacred Grove. After the Woodmen plead ignorance and a Tree-Spirit sings a song beseeching the Spirit of Bohemia's aid, the Spirit of Bohemia approaches the Woodmen again, this time threatening to do them harm if they refuse to leave his grove. Again the theme of nature worship arises as the Spirit of Bohemia condemns the Woodmen, declaring "The living miracle/That Nature, careful for a thousand years,/Did so contrive with wisdom to perform,/Ye in a day undo" (160). To which the Woodmen, convicted of their sins, respond, “Henceforth this grove is holy ground,/At last we see our sin, and so repent/Our sacrilege, and fain would guard these trees./Permit that we be children too of thine!” (161). In response to these new converts to his temple, the Spirit of Bohemia calls forth the other entities under his command, the Spirit of Fire, of the North-, East-, South-, and West-Winds, and the Spirit of Time. Having conquered the various enemies of the Tree-Spirits of the Grove, the Spirit of Bohemia is about to begin the celebration when the maniacal laughter of Care in the form of Mammon is heard. From his very entrance, Mammon appears to be every bit the equal to the Spirit of Bohemia. Mammon attempts to call back the Woodmen to his influence, laying before them the temptation of untold riches and delights. As a group of gnomes scatter handfuls of gold at the feet of the Woodmen, Mammon promises them that

> The seven Sins shall bare for you their breasts
> And lead you to their chambers. All your toil
> Shall end, and pleasure clothe you as a robe.
> Ye shall go forth as kings, and know all bliss,
> Beholding nations as your servitors. (166)

This is the true threat that Mammon and Care bring to the individual; if the Woodmen are willing to deny their new allegiance to the Spirit of Bohemia, and cut down his grove, they can have whatever they want. The Woodmen are almost swayed and ask for proof that Mammon will keep his promises. To this, Mammon tells the Woodmen to take the gold at their feet and follow him back to the city. Before the Woodmen can respond, however, the Spirit of Bohemia proclaims that there is but one thing Mammon’s gold cannot buy: happiness. The Spirit of Bohemia continues, stating that only “Great Nature” can provide true happiness and rest (167). Convinced by this argument, the Woodmen bow once again to the Spirit of Bohemia. Incensed at their decision, Mammon challenges the Spirit of Bohemia to battle. After an exchange of heated words, the same Owl that appeared earlier in the play returns, flies down the hill and into Mammon, killing him and then disappearing. The Spirit of Bohemia and his followers celebrate the death of Mammon, and the procession marking the start of the Cremation of Care ceremony begins.

With the death of the Care figure, Mammon, the Grove Play archetype is complete. Setting the play within the Grove and emphasizing the spiritual importance of nature leads to the defeat of Care. What is significant about this particular interation with Care is that while other plays portray a physical struggle between the two sides, the confrontation between the Spirit of Bohemia and Mammon in *The Triumph of Bohemia* is a spiritual and philosophical one. Although the two posture as though they are about to engage in a physical altercation, it is the arguments they put forth that deal the strongest blows. The two are waging a war over the hearts and souls of the Woodmen (and, by extension, the club members). Mammon almost succeeds through his promise that he could provide the Woodmen with any pleasure they desire; however, the Spirit of Bohemia reminds them that true rest can only be found in nature. It is this reminder that wins the Woodmen's hearts and, ultimately, allows for Mammon's defeat. And so the supremacy of the Grove and nature is reasserted, and Care is, once again, forced to leave. Even though the Grove Play archetype closely parallels that of Western American literature, the heart of the former rests in the spiritual/philosophical arguments for retreat and recreation through nature as opposed to the power and violence inherent in nature.

The Grove Play sees nature as a refuge, a place to escape the everyday worries associated with city living, something to be worshiped and greatly valued. The Western archetype, on the other hand, portrays nature as not only violent, but as eminently powerful and, more importantly, uncaring and unpredictable. The Westerner's only response, then, can be fear and awe at the incredible power contained within. Because of this distinction, the Grove Play will never be able to communicate all that is contained within the literary archetype of the American West.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF A REDWOOD GROVE

The Grove Play has become an institution within the Bohemian Club. While much is made of the Midsummer Encampment, and the political affiliations of its attendees, it is the Grove Play that is the backbone of the two-week event. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on this single performance every year.

In the summer of 1913, the encampment was expanded from a single weekend to two full weeks. As a result of this opening of the schedule, what had previously been a single night of performances was spread out over the three weekends. The Cremation of Care ceremony was divorced from the Grove Play and placed on the first Saturday night as a way to open the festivities of the coming weeks. The Low Jinks gained some prominence by having a day of its own with a move to the middle Saturday. The Grove Play, now shorn of the Cremation of Care, took the spotlight of the final Saturday, serving as a closure to the yearly retreat. While many of the same themes continued to be addressed, the new schedule allowed the writers of the Grove Plays many more liberties in the ways in which they could tell their stories. The Grove Play no longer proceeded directly into the Cremation of Care ceremony. This meant that the Care figure could play a much less significant role, if present at all, in the events of the play. As can be imagined, this change allowed for the proliferation of the historical and mythological styles, leading to further separation between the three productions and facilitating each to evolve to a point were it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the three to be brought back into a single experience.

Regardless of what the Grove Plays, and the Bohemian Club more generally, have become over the last hundred years, the club's foundation and development are an important piece to the history of the city of San Francisco and to the American West. The Club itself is representative of the instant, incredible growth experienced in many regions of the American West during the second half of the nineteenth century. People arriving from all over the world to create a life for themselves sought out others with similar interests or backgrounds. Without the emphasis on artistic endeavors and natural retreats, though, the Bohemian Club would be just like any other private men's club. Because of this double emphasis, the club stands out, not just as a contributor to the advancement of a burgeoning port city but also as a participant within the literature of the region.

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