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Recovering Stephen Leacock:
Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town and the Cultural Production of Value.

© Jonathan M. Meakin

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Abstract

The central aim of Recovering Stephen Leacock: Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town and the Cultural Production of Value is simultaneously to rupture Leacock's canonized cultural signature and to recover the complexity of his cultural work. To this end, the present study maps Leacock's complexity as an antimodernist discourse of "accommodation and protest" in response to the cultural tensions of the late nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Moreover, through the conceptual model of Pierre Bourdieu's field of cultural production, this study explores how Leacock's antimodernist complexity is encoded in the production of his antimodernist discourse, career, texts -- his cultural work -- and the cultural authority and value invested in that work. The Introduction provides a critical survey of Leacock's production and reception, and outlines the relevance of T.J. Jackson Lears' notion of antimodernism, and Pierre Bourdieu's field of cultural production, to Leacock studies. Chapter One, "Discourse: Visionary and Reactionary -- Leacock as an Antimodernist" discusses Leacock's work as an interdisciplinary antimodernist discourse of cultural authority and value. Chapter Two, "Career: The Perfect Salesman and A Cultural Authority," explores Leacock's careers as a professional writer and academic in terms of his antimodernist negotiation of authority and value. Chapter Three, "Text: Antimodernist Sketches of a Little Town," provides a test-case reading of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town as an antimodernist text that reflects a number of Leacock's concerns towards the realization of social justice. Finally, the Conclusion intimates how this present study as a whole underscores the need, and highlights the possibility, of reading Leacock in terms of broader, international literary-historical periods.

Dedication

To Gerald, for your patience, enthusiasm, and wise intuition

To Katherine and Benjamin, for your love, faith, and endless support

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I: Introduction

In a recent review in Canada's self-proclaimed national newspaper, The Globe and Mail,¹ André Alexis lists a number of authors Samuel Beckett enjoyed reading: "He was an avid reader of Keats, Shakespeare and Milton as well as Conan Doyle and, surprise surprise, Stephen Leacock" (106). What stands out, or ought to, is that Alexis apparently considers Beckett's interest in Leacock surprising but does not comment on the other authors of Beckett's eclectic tastes. Are we to assume that Leacock is simply not of the same calibre as those others listed? Or is it another instance of Canadian self-denigration? Alexis' unquestioned de-valuation of Leacock in this context seems to be symptomatic of a lasting cultural and critical insecurity that offers "either a non-evaluative celebration of the Canadian literary object or an evaluative debunking of that object in light of supposedly international standards" (Staines, Beyond the Provinces 72). Curiously, Leacock's reception drifts between these opposing and equally unhelpful positions identified by Staines, and, in so doing, raises important questions regarding issues of cultural authority and cultural value as they are determined in Leacock's context, career, and texts.

Stephen Leacock lived and wrote during a period of rapid social and cultural change in Canada -- from the year of his birth in 1869, "which is exactly the middle year of Queen Victoria's reign" (Leacock, Boy 17), to his death in 1944 during a war that "revealed the appalling extremity of barbaric cruelty to which human nature can be distorted" (Leacock, Last Leaves 88). Implicit in this shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth century depicted, respectively, in an ironic light and with dismay, lies a challenge to Leacock's sense of value which he traced in his reading of history and his commitment to imperialism, and to the principles upon which he consistently argued the real possibility for social justice. From the outset of his prolific and wide-ranging career, Leacock's vision of social justice sought to reconcile individual wants and social needs, to grapple with the implications of modernity. He argued that the simplistic recourse either to unadulterated individualism with its amoral capitalistic ethic or to the stringent state

¹André Alexis, "Samuel Beckett: Artist of Darkness," rev. of Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett, by James Knowlson, Globe and Mail 7th Dec. 1996: D19. I thank Gerald Lynch for drawing this review to my attention.

interference of socialism were anathema to this vision simply because either ideology failed to take into account the fallibility of human nature and its actuating principle of self-interest. Nevertheless, Leacock insisted on the necessity of a social vision founded on a balance of individual-social obligations as a way of resolving the competing interests of political, socioeconomic, and cultural tensions -- a "middle way" towards defining value in a radically changing world.² Leacock did not petrify into a set of inflexible cultural values that became outmoded and outdated after the First World War; instead, he constantly struggled to adapt and to educate even while he dug in his heels and protested.

There have been several intriguing and worthwhile labels attached to Leacock's work and career -- imperialist, radical tory, tory-humanist -- and I would like to add another: "antimodernist."

Antimodernism, as defined by T.J. Jackson Lears, describes the cultural moment of the shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century as a "complex blend of accommodation and protest" (Lears, No Place of Grace xiii), a "crisis of cultural authority, which had both public and private dimensions" (Lears, No Place of Grace 5). The idea of antimodernism is interesting in its application to Leacock as it accommodates those cultural paradoxes that formed his on-going discourse on value while permitting Leacock to emerge as an individual replete with his "particular world view, . . . class and power position" (Lears, No Place of Grace xiv) that the negative connotations surrounding "imperialist" or a compound form of "tory" often obscure. As Donald A. Wright asserts, "when seen in part as an expression of antimodernism, English-Canadian imperialism offers a critique -- often implied -- of the limits of liberalism and of the insistence that we, as individuals, are not mere universes of one. We are also always members of communities to which we have an obligation" (146). However, I am not suggesting that antimodernism eschews socio-political or cultural contexts, as this study will demonstrate; in fact, I wish to

²As with much else in this study I must express my indebtedness to Gerald Lynch's invaluable study, Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity. As Lynch suggests, Leacock's "views on many subjects, particularly social justice and liberty, represent an attempt to balance the rights of the individual and the needs of the social organism, to temper the extremes of liberalism and socialism" (4-5) -- that is, an attempt to construct a "middle way."

contest Lears' and Wright's assumption that antimodernism "is not enough for a meaningful politics of dissent . . . [and] . . . is an insufficient base from which to launch a challenge to the hegemonic liberal order" (Wright 146). In fact, Leacock's pursuit of social justice takes place within legitimate discourses of cultural authority, and is a mode of political dissent characterized by a conservative sense of progress. Rather than reading Leacock and his views as contradictory or paradoxical, I wish to trace the idea of an antimodernist figure at the centre of Leacock's thought, career and texts as the epitome of the tensions inherent in his interdisciplinary discourse on value and authority.

Yet the case has too often and too easily been made that Leacock's thought is riddled with contradiction. Carl Berger, for instance, suggests that Leacock's social thought merely reflects a "perception of opposites" ("The Other Mr. Leacock" 38):

The promise of a Greater Canada and the squabbling of politicians, potential plenty and the facts of waste and poverty, the admiration for the "economic man" and the existence of the "idle rich," the desire for social justice through progressive control and the suspicion of control and regulation, the disdain for mere bigness and his own worshipful attitude to population figures. (Berger, "The Other Mr. Leacock" 38-9)

Berger argues that Leacock never fully resolves these tensions, either in his work or in his career, an assertion I find to be symptomatic of the disciplinary and specialized approach to reading Leacock. Recontextualizing Leacock through an interdisciplinary perspective enables a tracking of his shifting response to the changing conditions of the field of cultural production. Moreover, the seeming dualism of Leacock's career, between Leacock™, the literary marketplace commodity, and Stephen Leacock, that core of sustained critical inquiry, can be reconciled through recovering his antimodernist discourse on cultural value and authority³. In short, it is imperative that we no longer resort to the stale dodge of two Leacocks, the humorist or the social scientist, the producer of a commercial product or the author of timeless idealism

³ I use Leacock™ as shorthand to depict how Leacock's work and name have become commodified, synonymous with one cultural product: humour. That is, in the cultural marketplace the name, the cult of celebrity, the "quasi-magical potency of the signature" (Bourdieu, Field 81) generates a particular configuration of symbolic and economic capital.

-- instead, we must recover how Leacockian conceptions of value deflate the disruptive polemics that have risen over the mediating perspective in Leacock's neglected social thought and in his humour.

Furthermore, the use of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, a text that I believe bridges the disruptive generic distinctions in Leacock's work, as a lens for the beginnings of a broader, holistic and interdisciplinary examination of Leacock and the various discourses operating in and through his life and work, will bring sharply into focus the need to reappraise still further Leacock's stature in Canadian intellectual and cultural history.

This said, however, I must acknowledge that I do not hold exclusive rights to calling for a re-evaluation of Leacock's work and career; there is a tradition of a few dissenting voices that have struggled to accord to Leacock a core of value more complex than his popular reception will allow. As early as 1923, Peter McArthur expressed his concern that the many admirers of Leacock had little or no understanding of the values, concerns and issues that underscore both Leacock's humour and his serious work. One text in particular earned McArthur's admiration, The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice (1920), which he described as "one of the most serious and purposeful books published since the war" (146), a text in which Leacock "revealed himself as a man keenly alive to human needs" (146). McArthur's book appeared when Leacock's humorous persona was in its ascendancy, if not at its peak, and even then McArthur recognized the difficulty in recovering the value in Leacock's serious work:

[I]f, after laughing with him, the world goes back to its cares and thinks of him only as a frivolous entertainer, who deserves attention only in idle hours, it is only making the same mistake it has always made in dealing with those who bring good gifts and enrich life. He has equipped himself as a scholar and thinker to deal gravely with the gravest problems -- but all that his ever-increasing following sees is the sparkle of his wit and the antic nimbleness with which he turns life's hypocrisies and stupidities to laughter. (McArthur 134-5)

McArthur's commentary is startling for its perceptive and prophetic nature at a time when Leacock still had remaining over twenty years of a prolific career, and before academia and the literary marketplace categorized, labelled and ultimately dissected a culturally marketed Leacock™. Moreover, McArthur's

insistence on the neglected and misunderstood “spirit” of Leacock’s serious work embodies a credo for this present study, since I wish to underscore that Leacock’s social vision is best conceived as an adaptive response to a constantly changing context, as cultural process rather than as a programmatic and fixed criteria.

In 1945, G.G. Sedgewick wrote tellingly of Leacock as a “Man of Letters,” a term that suits Leacock’s broad interests and the social role of his cultural authority. Sedgewick resembles McArthur in insisting that “no schism existed . . . between Leacock the serious critic of affairs and Leacock the humorist” (19); yet, recovering Leacock as a twentieth-century “man of letters” must circumvent not only issues of cultural authority as constituted in the twentieth century, but also issues regarding the production of cultural value. What McArthur identified in 1923 as the need for “the publishers and the public . . . [to] . . . get over their hysterical demand for comedy and read Stephen Leacock’s writings with discernment” (McArthur 161), still holds true today. Moreover, the very nature of the literary marketplace militates against such a recovery, as Leacock knew full well in his own attempts at validating authors with a propensity towards writing humour:

The fact is that, when all is said and done, Charles Dickens has still not been measured up to the real height of his genius. Starting as a humorist, one might almost say, as a comic writer, and writing of the ordinary people, he was handicapped at the start, as far as academic rank goes. It is difficult to be funny and great at the same time. Aristophanes and Moliere and Mark Twain must sit below Aristotle and Boussuet and Emerson. (Leacock, Charles Dickens 306)

And yet more current literary critics such as Robertson Davies, Donald Cameron, and many others appear reluctant, if not incapable, of crediting Leacock’s humour with socially perceptive insights, or of understanding the inherent value of his serious work. These literary critics helped construct and continue to perpetuate, for the most part, Leacock™, the trademark humorist whose laughter is whimsical, sentimental and nostalgic, whose humour conforms to the restrictions of academia’s canon and the economic needs of the literary marketplace for a culturally marketable commodity. That said, there have

been two recent appraisals of Leacock that are more interdisciplinary in their approach. Stephen Leacock: A Reappraisal (1986), edited by David Staines, approaches Leacock from multiple, individually-authored disciplinary angles, and although the essays are brought together within the binding of one book, the volume, by its very nature, echoes the academic segregation of Leacock's work. By contrast, Gerald Lynch's book-length study, Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity (1988), integrates Leacock's context, his humour and political and social thought. Lynch not only situates Leacock as the product and embodiment of a particular tradition, he reads Leacock's humour, most notably Sunshine Sketches and Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich (1914), as an expression of Leacock's cultural mind set. His discussion demonstrates how Leacock's writings on history, social issues, imperialism, biography, his theory of humour, even his "seemingly inconsequential humorous pieces move in relation to . . . [Leacock's] . . . tory-humanist centre" (Humour and Humanity IX).

But McArthur, Sedgewick, the Reappraisal volume and Lynch are exceptions to the usual dismissal of Leacock's serious work or, less commonly, to the uncertainty about how to relate the serious to the humorous. Harold Innis' 1938 lecture on Leacock as a founder of social studies in Canada (also reprinted as part of an obituary in The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science⁴), viewed Leacock not only through the lens of an academic discipline but also through the specific cultural context of Innis' political beliefs. As a result, he finds Leacock academically undisciplined because he "had served too long as a master of modern languages and a writer of humorous sketches to be interrupted for long with the exacting demands of social sciences" (221). And although Leacock did do "much to save the soul of both [humour and political economy] in a period in which they were in grave danger" (226), Innis stresses repeatedly that Leacock's engagement with the social sciences was marred by the "imperialistic blight"

⁴ Innis' piece is a curiously stilted commentary, both in form and content. There is a sense of Innis dealing with the unfamiliar in attempting to write about something that lay beyond the scope of his specific disciplinary parameters. For instance, he gives considerable focus to questionable parallels between Leacock and Lewis Carroll on the grounds that both were professionals who also wrote nonsense.

(226; also 219 and 221). Even his humour, Innis' contests, "is destined not to endure . . . [as it] . . . reflects too accurately the atmosphere of its period to interest later readers" (226). In short, Innis washes his hands of Leacock's disciplinary transgression through a broad devaluation of Leacock's cultural significance.

Other social historians, however, appear to take their cue more from the likes of McArthur and Sedgewick than from their disciplinary forefather Harold Innis. In fact, it has been social historians such as Carl Berger, Alan Bowker, and Ramsay Cook who have expressed the need for earnest reclamations of Leacock's social thought and who have, albeit tentatively, highlighted connections between Leacock's serious work and his humour. For instance, in 1970 Ramsay Cook reiterated the need for, and value in, a holistic reading of Leacock:

[Leacock's] very fame as a humorist has meant that his role as a social critic has been ignored or misunderstood. But without some consideration of his political attitudes, his career loses a whole dimension. Indeed that missing dimension provides an important element in an understanding of Leacock the humorist. (Cook 167)

Cook struggles with what every Leacock critic must inevitably address: the seeming fracture of and apparent distinctions in Leacock's career. For Cook, Leacock's "fame as a humorist" is at fault, which sounds like curiously passive and grab-bag reasoning; he does not offer an investigation of how this fame was produced and reproduced, nor how this fame might have affected the reception of Leacock's career and work. But this is to approach Cook from an unfair perspective, when the emphasis should rightly fall on his culturally powerful sanction of critical dissent from prevalent popular appraisals of Leacock's value. Carl Berger addresses the problem of Leacock's "fame as a humorist" through a thorough discussion of Leacock's writings on economics, imperialism and political science, and yet he seems uneasy in melding the serious and the humorous. In The Sense of Power (1970), Berger notes the public's perception of Leacock before Literary Lapses (1910) "as the author of some articles on government and politics, a widely used text, Elements of Political Science (1906), and a book on Canadian history, and also as a spokesman for imperialism" (43). But, like many other critics, Berger insists on a distinction between Stephen

Leacock the social scientist, and Leacock™, the highly marketable humorist:

Those who have tried to establish Leacock's place in Canadian thought have generally concluded that he was a kindly humorist and that his imperialism was a flirtation There is, however, too much of a coincidence between the underlying values in Leacock's serious social commentary, his satire, and the ideas of Canadian imperialism in the prewar period to allow such judgements to remain unqualified. While the sheer joy of entertainment and the delight in making money entered into his motives, many of his favourite notions originated in that phase of his career which has been lightly treated. (Berger, Sense of Power 43)

Berger's distinction between pre- and post-World War One Leacocks, especially in light of his subsequent hints of Leacock's post-war commercialism, are signal indicators of Leacock's much-maligned and misunderstood reception. Although Berger does provide sound analysis and, above all, contextualization of Leacock's integral cultural values as shaped in those early years, he does not extrapolate, nor does he invite extrapolation, as to how these values might have shaped Leacock's subsequent career and work. Instead, Berger seems content to "becom[e] acquainted with two Mr. Leacock's," although he disingenuously admits to there being, "of course, only one Mr. Leacock" ("The Other Mr. Leacock" 23). Ultimately, Berger succinctly highlights prevailing and widely held popular and academic opinions centred on the two (fictional) Leacocks:

The one a kindly and humane commentator on the foibles and fads of humanity, a genius apparently beyond both history and analysis; and the other an imperialist, critic of the Canadian plutocracy, middle-class reformer and an intellectual deeply engaged in the debates of his day. ("The Other Mr. Leacock" 23)

This apparent solution of the humorous-serious paradox has been replicated many times over. For instance, Leacock's most recent biographer, James Doyle, marks yet a further dimension to Leacock's devaluation, since, in addition to McArthur's concern over the public "hysterical demand for comedy" (McArthur 161), Doyle contributes the startlingly presumptuous and de-contextualizing criteria of the clear "light of values that have evolved since . . . [Leacock's] . . . death" (Sage 75) in order to efface Leacock's

apparently “outmoded and offensive opinions” (Doyle, “Deepes and Shallows” 160):

If Leacock’s dream of success was selfish and materialistic, and based on a conservative, imperialistic view of society, it included -- at least in the literary version -- a humoristic ideal of geniality, tolerance, and “kindly amusement.” (Doyle, Sage 76)

Here the rupture into two Leacocks is complete: the egregious distinction between a conservative-imperialist materialist that sullies our “literary version” of the benign and harmless humorist.

Clearly there are problems and unconscious motives in making artificial distinctions in Leacock’s body of work which only propagate our misunderstanding of Leacock, a misunderstanding which literary critics have done little to resolve. For instance, in 1960 F.W. Watt outlined a version of Leacock as an unredeemable materialist. Leacock’s “basic attitudes,” Watt wrote, led him “to squander his talents in a mass of books turned out for the Christmas book-trade, to use his humour sparingly as a weapon or a tool of criticism, and by and large to accept the social status quo despite his criticism of it, rather than try to alter it” (39). Such inferences constitute a fundamental ignorance of Leacock’s cultural work, and they position him as nothing short of a jester at the court of the Mausoleum Club⁵, pandering to material benefactors. Perhaps needless to say already at this point, this is an imperceptive and reductionist summary of the complexity of Leacock’s cultural struggle. At the other extreme, there lies the school of the Canadian literary criticism industry that avoids Watt’s conclusion by equally specious analysis. These critics, in an effort to “salvage” Leacock from that “time in Canadian history that subsequent generations prefer to denounce or forget” (Doyle, Sage 75), opt not to pursue Doyle’s denouncement. Instead, they efface not only Leacock’s tremendous material successes but also his social thought, thereby avoiding any detrimental effect to Leacock™’s carefully managed and marketed symbolic and economic capital. In this way Leacock is safely canonized as a lightweight humorist, a failed would-be novelist who fits nicely into a Canadian tradition of disallowing greatness in its influential figures, and, moreover, helps ensure

⁵The Mausoleum Club being the sterile and materialistic club of urban counterparts to the Leacockian community of Mariposa in Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.

Leacock's long and lucrative shelf-life in the literary marketplace. For instance, Robertson Davies, himself a perceived icon of Canadian literary culture, frequently endorsed Leacock as a benign humorist beyond history and analysis. In a 1957 introduction to the New Canadian Library's edition of Literary Lapses, Davies asserts that "the fact that Leacock's humour sets time at nought is one of the most telling proofs that it is humour of genius" ("Introduction" ix). Indeed Davies leaves little doubt of his de-contextualizing agenda, as in the piece entitled "On Stephen Leacock," where he marshals the opinions of "professionals" in order to efface the non-humorous elements of Leacock from the canon: "I have," Davies wrote, "given a good deal of emphasis to this point, because I want to make it clear that Leacock's importance to Canada rests solely upon the body of his work as a humorist" ("On Stephen Leacock" 97). Similarly, in his contribution to the New Canadian Library's Canadian Writers series, Davies collapses back on the comfortably reassuring and divisive nature of academic disciplines to justify his limited thesis, claiming he is not the "proper person to write of either . . . [Leacock's] . . . historical books or the works on economics and political theory" (Stephen Leacock 40). Of course, the irony here is that Leacock would scorn such academic distinctions. More importantly for my thesis, Davies' comments epitomize the lack of discernment that accompanies Leacock studies when they fail to recognize the spirit of the man wrestling with the spirit of his times.

Leacock's cultural consecration by the likes of Robertson Davies has only made the task of recovery more difficult. Peter McArthur in his prescient study of Leacock found that even in 1923 "a careful reading of Mr. Leacock's works with a view to discovering the man back of them is an exhilarating, but somewhat bewildering task" (133), a problem that has been further exasperated by the cultural detritus and misguided (and selective) cultural canonization surrounding LeacockTM as outlined above. The need, then, for further integrated reappraisal of Leacock's cultural value is acute. To this end, the present study will examine Leacock's role in the field of cultural production, tracing how his social and political context, how notions of cultural authority and literary markets, and how the production and

reading of Sunshine Sketches, have determined configurations of value ascribed to Leacock and his cultural work.

In effect, to understand Leacock's discourse on value and authority in Sunshine Sketches, let alone in his writings as a whole, demands a recovery of and re-engagement with Leacock's cultural context -- its precepts, privileges and ideological undercurrents -- and a reconfiguration of Leacock's cultural work⁶ as a product of this context. To do otherwise, to read Leacock as a timeless author of charming nonsense robs him of the meaning and value anchored in the particular moment of Leacock's historicity. Yet he has been and continues to be read as such, and as a result his work and thought have been de-valued, have become extracted from the conditions of the cultural struggle in which Leacock's work was produced. This thesis seeks, then, to recover the nature of Leacock's cultural struggle and to map his anti-modernist frame of thought within Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual model of the cultural field. Rather than resorting to the un-enlightening reduction that Leacock's work constitutes paradox and contradiction, I wish to recover the context for this perceived paradox as evidence of cultural struggle. In this regard, Bourdieu's concept of the field as a site of competition for control, of culture as process rather than as a series of static moments, provides a lens through which a cultural material perspective can attempt a recovery of the production of value and authority in Leacock's cultural work. Moreover, if we accept Richard Terdiman's assertion that, for Bourdieu, text "encompasses not only the written record, . . . but also the structured behaviours and customary procedures characteristic of the field, which have much the same regularity, and are subjects of much the same interpretive competitions, as the written texts themselves" (809), then can we not also view Leacock's cultural work -- his thought, his education, his teaching, his professional career, his public image, the broad range of texts he published, and so on -- as text in this sense, as sites of cultural struggle over value and authority? This broadening of "text," then, enables the recovery of Leacock's strategies for

⁶By "cultural work" I wish to underscore the interrelatedness of Leacock's work as a whole -- his developing thought, his texts, and both his academic and non-academic careers.

procuring legitimacy and authority within an anti-modernist cultural field throughout his cultural work as a producer of "text." Not only does situating Leacock's work within the field of cultural production necessitate interdisciplinary study, it also overcomes the apparent irreconcilability of certain issues and opinions that commentators seem generally unable to discuss and allows the re-historicizing of Leacock's "middle way" in all of his cultural work.

Although understanding Bourdieu's theory alone requires a study in itself, I am "appropriating Bourdieu"⁷ in a particular manner for a specific purpose. Bourdieu identifies that his "main idea is that, to understand any human work (religion, law, literature, science, etc), you must relate the field of strategic possibilities to the system of positions in the field of cultural production" ("Questions of Method" 24-25); that is, we must recover the specific stakes of a particular cultural context in its broadest sense. Bourdieu enables a recovery of the process of cultural production, wherein the competitive struggle between agents in the field for capital or legitimacy is contingent on a whole host of cultural signatures and the configuration of value specific to a given historical moment. Bourdieu underscores this specificity through emphasising the need to "gather information on the social origins, gender, educational level, titles, etc. of cultural producers, on any indicator of his or her position in the objective structure of the field . . . [which] . . . is the structure of the distribution of the specific capital which is at stake in the field" ("Questions of Method" 28, emphasis mine). As such, contextualizing Leacock in an anti-modernist field moves beyond simplistic and simplifying dichotomies central to unhelpful disciplinary distinctions, since, according to Bourdieu, value and authority are always relational:

I am included in a space, located in a space but, at the same time, I have a point of view on the space, I am able actively to construe and construct it. But I construct this space on the basis of interests, dispositions, and

⁷Toril Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture." New Literary History 22:4 (Autumn 1991): 1017-1049. Moi suggests that "neither 'appropriation' or 'critique' rely on the idea of a transcendental vantage point from which to scrutinize the theory formation in question . . . [since] . . . the concept of 'critique' . . . is immanent and dialectical" (1017). What I find of value in Bourdieu is the way his model provides a critical space in which the specific contextual details of the study at hand provide the substance.

cognitive structures which are related to the position I occupy in that space. (Bourdieu, "Questions of Method" 23)

In light of the complex interdisciplinary nature of Bourdieu's concept of culture, Leacock's cultural work not only constructs, but is also constructed by, a position in the field socially and historically determined by both personal and social dispositions.⁸ It is my contention that Leacock's complex mix of social visionary and conservative reactionary do not amount to the expression of contradictory or opportunistic values -- rather, read in context and holistically, Leacock's cultural work embodies clear notions of cultural value and a sense of cultural authority engaged in the still contentious dialectic between individual freedom and social obligation. In effect, Leacock's cultural work ranges between reactionary and visionary, between orthodox and heterodox position-takings, negotiating the currency of capital necessary for consecration and production in the cultural field in order to "put forward a critical definition of the social world" (Bourdieu, Field 44).

Mapping the matrix of individual and social rights occupied Leacock's attention throughout much of his cultural work -- in his writing, both humorous and serious (although such distinctions are, at best, often tenuous), in his life, and in his career. Nevertheless, critics, editors, publishers and the like have generally dismembered the whole and effaced many of its constituent parts in an effort to compartmentalize the Leacock "problem"; a problem made more complex by Leacock's own authorial games and his extremely conscious awareness of the nature of the cultural field. For instance, in the preface to Sunshine Sketches Leacock appears to celebrate "honest manual toil" (xv) and to undermine his

⁸Although I wish to keep Leacock as an agent functioning in an anti-modernist cultural field in the foreground of this study, I should include an abbreviated summary of some of Bourdieu's key concepts since I will have occasion to use them. The personal and social dispositions that structure the field amount to what Bourdieu describes as the "habitus," "which effects an active, inventive structuring of the world but one that proceeds according to structures which result from the internalization of the objective structures of the social world and of the field" ("Questions of Method" 29-30). The habitus appears consistent but changes over time and in so doing reflects the change in legitimated subjective position-takings which are internalized as objective, as "doxa." Orthodoxy, in the Bourdieuan lexicon, amounts to the defence of doxa in the face of heterodox challenges to what constitutes legitimate cultural work, value, authority, and so on. Although in all of his work Bourdieu expounds on the concepts central to his theory, for a straightforward and succinct overview, Bourdieu's "Questions of Method" is indispensable.

academic credentials and their attendant seriousness, depicting himself as an “intellectually bankrupt” (xv), distinguished graduate, and as a “completely full” Doctor of Philosophy to whom “no new ideas can be imparted” (xvi). Moreover, he claims that he “would sooner have written ‘Alice in Wonderland’ than the whole Encyclopaedia Britannica” (xvii). Such tongue-in-cheek comments would become a favourite narratorial strategy of Leacock’s, particularly in his personal essays, and raise a number of questions concerning Leacock’s motives for doing so. Moreover, Leacock’s commercial success has, as discussed above, led to the consecration of Leacock™, a trademark cultural signature, when, in fact, he did not subscribe to materialistic motives in everything he did. As Bourdieu’s re-contextualizing model foregrounds, Leacock, like any other agent in the cultural field, needs to “play the game,” since to remove oneself from the field is to remove oneself from modes of cultural (re)production (discourses, publishers, institutions, and so on) and hence from the opportunity for social change. Yet the telling fact remains that large claims regarding Leacock’s cultural value immediately require detailed substantiation, since Leacock has been systematically undervalued and misunderstood, unread, and selectively canonized by the institutions of Canadian literary and intellectual history. If Leacock is known today he is cherished as a humorist rendered safely sentimental by a-historical evaluations, or disparaged as a racist, a male chauvinist, an imperialist. As a result, the formulators of the Canadian canon (academics, publishers, writers, etc.) would have us believe that Leacock should be either smiled upon as a charming child or lambasted as another distasteful “Victorian.” Such responses can only be to our own myopic discredit. Therefore, the present attempt to recover Stephen Leacock and the various configurations of value and authority surrounding his name, must explore some of the central tenets of Leacock’s context and his discourse with that context, outline the relationship between Leacock’s cultural authority and the literary marketplace, and present a test-case reading of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912) as a text central to Leacock’s antimodernist context and frame of mind, that “complex blend of accommodation and protest” (Lears, No Place of Grace xiii).

II. Discourse: Visionary and Reactionary -- Leacock as an Antimodernist.

The symbolic capital Stephen Leacock currently wields in the Canadian cultural field is either that of an amiable and sentimental humorist or of a staid and uncompromising "Victorian" who shamelessly sought commercial approbation. Such summaries are misleading, a product of both critics' and publishers' apparent need to consecrate a reductive and simplified ledger of Leacock's significance. This chapter focuses on the need to recover and politicize the complex and problematic nature of Leacock's thought; too often generic and academic distinctions are unsatisfactory, confining Leacock within uncritical and de-contextualizing parameters. For instance, the label "Victorian" has become a grab-bag term, brandished about as though it distilled and neatly labelled individuals who happened to live during two thirds of the nineteenth century⁹. Recovering the significance of Leacock's work requires a clearer indication of what it meant to be a "Victorian" in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ontario, and a recognition of what a later biography identifies as "Leacock's lifelong feeling that English and Victorian values had to be revised to save their true meaning and make this available to all" (Moritz 35). Leacock never simply reproduced his Victorian heritage -- its imperialism, its vision of progress, the cultural authority of prominent individuals, and so on -- but instead sought to adapt such values to the early twentieth-century cultural field. In short, Leacock's mediating sense of value, the antimodernist discourse that shaped his cultural work, sought to navigate the process of cultural change by seeking legitimacy and authority in the cultural field.

In his study of Victorian intellectual history in Canada, A.B. McKillop captures the defining characteristics of an English-Canadian cultural perspective like Leacock's:

⁹ For instance, David Legate blithely asserts that "Stephen Leacock's Victorian background shaped him for life" (247). Gerald Lynch gives a number of instances of the uncritical use of the term in his work Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity (8-9).

Caught historically between a British heritage, which many of them perceived to contain the best elements of Western civilization, and an American neighbour, which advanced ineluctably towards modernity in its modes of thought and action, Anglo-Canadians in the Victorian era sought to establish and to preserve in Canada a broad moral code that would constitute the core of a way of life reconciling belief and inquiry, tradition and innovation, concern and freedom. (A Disciplined Intelligence ix)

Although here discussing a moral code specifically, McKillop traces how this mediating tradition of thought shapes notions of cultural value in both "a God-centred British province or in a state-centred North American nation" (A Disciplined Intelligence 231), a tradition espoused by Leacock and his contemporary, Andrew Macphail, in "attempt[ing] to give voice to a social ethic that reconciled traditional religious and humanistic values with science, material improvement, and social change" (A Discipline Intelligence 231). Gerald Lynch identifies this mode of thought as a tory-humanist middle way, a pragmatic inquiry into conflicting forces of freedom and authority, progress and order -- "the tory humanism that values continuity in human affairs, responsibility, tolerance and organicism; that emphasizes balance and equipoise in all matters and insists upon the priority of the community over the individual" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 60). In short, Leacock's cultural work arose from a concern with the spirit of culture that transgresses the niceties of specialized and disciplinary assessments; it espouses "a concern for social justice, and a non-ideological approach to the problems of political and economic organization" (Taylor 213). As such, Leacock's mode of thought appears riddled with contradiction and paradox due to perspectives that fail to appreciate the complexity and historicity of cultural process both produced and reflected by Leacock's cultural work. Recovering Leacock, then, requires a simultaneous critical awareness of the historical moment and of the cultural continuity, the sense of tradition, in his work:

For the pattern of English Canadian complexity derives not only from local, regional, ethnic and other variations, but also from the continued workings of a liberal-conservative dialectic The English Canadian style and character is not to be understood in terms of the consensus of triumphant liberalism, but, out of its contradictory heritage, in terms of muted conservatism and ambivalent liberalism, of contradiction, paradox and complexity. (Wise 211)

As discussed in the Introduction, I term this complexity "antimodernist," a label that allows for a broad range of interpretive strategies, as Donald A. Wright suggests: "a transatlantic phenomenon with decidedly local manifestations in Germany, England, the United States and Canada, antimodernism was neither monolithic or static but varied over time and space" (135). In short, an antimodernist discourse mirrors the broader competitive struggle within the field of cultural production for the capital, the power and authority, to define and (re)produce cultural value within such discourses as education, history, economics, imperialism, etc. and in so doing allows a recovery of Leacock's "middle way" towards the legitimization of his vision of social justice.

During the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, such conservatives as Leacock "were caught in a tremendous social upheaval involving the creation of a new industrial order and a basic shift in the balance between town and country" (Robertson 46). For much of his professional life, Leacock spent his winters in Montreal and his summers at his country home near Orillia -- an annual migration between an urban cultural centre and Old Brewery Bay, his rural home where he practiced farming, fishing, sailing, etc. with varying degrees of success:

Leacock enjoyed his status as Canada's best-known literary figure. Always an inveterate actor, he presented a public image that was partly a satirical portrait of the typical academic as described in his "Apology of a Professor," partly a picture of the eccentric and indefatigable author, and partly a sketch of the country farmer of Orillia. (Doyle, *Sage* 52)

Critics often fail to recognize the importance of both rural and urban contexts in much of Leacock's thought, and prefer to portray Leacock as either an urban professional who "behaved like a country squire" (Berger, *Sense* 44) in Orillia, or the nostalgic chronicler of a rural past trapped in the city's Mausoleum Club. While it has been well-documented by biographers that Leacock sometimes resented his early years on a struggling farm in rural Ontario, for the most part he appeared to value the experience, particularly the sound work ethic the "old farm" fostered: "getting up at dawn, putting in several hours of hard labour, then setting aside time for amusement -- instilled in Leacock the habits of disciplined living, a phenomenal

capacity for work and leisure that he retained for the rest of his life" (Doyle, Sage 22). Moreover, the value Leacock attached to such a work ethic is important to his idea of human dignity and social justice, in both rural and urban contexts. In 1920 he identified the need for "an altered public opinion on the subject of work in relation to human character and development" (Unsolved Riddle 143); similarly, in 1937 he stressed how a sound work ethic was also important to intellectual work: "Care, study and conscious purpose must be worth while: else is our faith in vain" (Humour and Humanity 188). Leacock's prolific and interdisciplinary career as a writer, an educator, a social scientist and political economist, certainly testify to that faith, that value, in work. After an early home education, Leacock's pursuit of further learning at Upper Canada College in Toronto and then at the University of Toronto involved moving to a large urban centre. Leacock lived in Toronto for some seventeen and a half years (after completing his degree in modern languages, Leacock taught at Upper Canada College), which, according to a prevalent biographical interpretation, engendered in Leacock a lasting "division of his loyalties between the country and the town" (Doyle, Sage 25). Such expedient summaries efface the complexity of Leacock's attitude towards both rural and urban contexts. For instance, the farm not only demanded hard work but was also a place where Leacock could escape the hectic life of the city crowd, a rural attraction which he clearly celebrates in his discussion of Vancouver Island in 1937:

This is no place for work. This is a place where not to work; a place for happy people, for tired people, for frozen people from the prairies, for happy lovers on honeymoon to find the shady valleys and crooked paths in the woods and the solitary beaches that murmur as softly as the voice of love itself; a place for harassed people over worn with work and needing to be re-made; and above all the last abiding place on earth for people whose work is done to sit out their hour in the sunset. (My Discovery of the West 195)

The idea of a rural place, then, does not constitute a necessary antithesis to the city, but rather a symbiotic relationship between town and country wherein a rural place is fundamentally regenerative; a point Leacock makes abundantly clear during his 1907-1908 tour of the British Empire for the Rhodes Trust when he bought thirty-three acres of land along the southwest side of lake Couchiching, near Orillia, and

there built the first of several summer homes he named Old Brewery Bay. Coupled with his rapid academic promotion (he eventually became chair of the Political Economy department at McGill) and his best-selling university text, Elements of Political Science (1906), the Rhodes Trust Empire tour realized Leacock's ambitions for professional recognition, and the symbolic and economic capital that accompanied such recognition. And yet, while on the tour, Leacock longed for a concrete connection with his agrarian roots. In 1908 he wrote to his sister:

When I build my house, I shall make it very plain but at the same time very large. I mean to plant a good avenue of trees leading up to it. In a few years with hard work it will begin to look fine. After it has been up two or three years, I shall brick it with white brick and put in lattice windows in place of the original ones and tile instead of shingles on the roof. Then, by adding a sun dial, a nook and three wall-flowers, it will become a charming English place -- I'm tired of cities and people -- it's a case of Good-bye proud world, I'm going home. (Legate 46)

The idea of home and the value of work pervade this account as much as Leacock's desire to re-connect with, or at least reproduce, his English heritage.

Similarly, in a letter to his mother during the same trip Leacock stresses the importance of a rural place as a kind of anchor for national, cultural and, doubtless, personal roots:

Tell Charlie to get a place: if the little point is not too wet I'd like it. If it is not available then the Hughes point. On either of those, he may, subject to ratification by me, make an offer. And I'd like him to do something about it this summer so that I can take up the place next spring. The more I see of foreign parts, the less I think of them compared to Canada. And I want a place of my own. (Moritz 122)

Gerald Lynch argues that "home and family are central to Leacock's vision of society and to his fiction" (Humour and Humanity 17), and Leacock's annual return to his rural roots, his fishing, farming, and his literary work there, expresses something of the misunderstood or effaced sense of cultural value at the core of Sunshine Sketches which "provides the opportunity for an imaginative return to 'Mariposa' -- to the past, to home, to origins" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 114). However, this desire to establish personal and cultural continuity through connections with the past is not a futile exercise in nostalgia and idealism; in

his self-proclaimed autobiography, The Boy I Left Behind Me (1946), Leacock suggests that "it is better not to go back to the place you came from. Leave your memory as it is. No reality will ever equal it" (30). Nevertheless, the past still held value to be translated into guiding principles of heritage and community in the present -- the "old farm," for instance, is the "acknowledged path towards future greatness, the only way to begin" (Boy 37). Although this is but one comment among many that are regularly distrusted for their ironical colouring, there is more to such off-hand comments than is usually credited. As Carl Berger asserts, "one of the most fundamental features of Canadian imperialist social thought was an idealized conception of agriculture and a tendency to regard it as the most healthy foundation of national life" (Sense 177). Leacock certainly insisted on the value of rural origins throughout his life and yet circumvented idealism through seeking to revalue such origins within a volatile antimodernist cultural field. As a result, in one of the last things he wrote, Leacock contests that raising "men of eminence . . . in a sickly sort of way in the cities" (Boy 37-8) embodies a threat to the social fabric and development of nations since "the biographies of virtually all . . . great men for three or four generations show them as coming from the farm" (Boy 37). This point pervades Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, from Pupkin ironically becoming a hero while guarding the harvest money, to the fact that "practically everyone of . . . [the men in the Mausoleum Club in the city] . . . came from Mariposa once upon a time, and that there isn't one of them that doesn't sometimes dream in the dull quiet of the long evening here in the club, that some day he will go back and see the place" (142). Yet the men in the Mausoleum Club fail to return to the potentially regenerative strength of their rural origins. They have changed, have become, perhaps, irrevocably corrupted during their material pursuits in the city, as the sombre and wistful narrator in "L'Envoi: The Train to Mariposa" conveys:

No, don't bother to look at the reflection of your face in the window-pane shadowed by the night outside. Nobody could tell you now after all these years. Your face has changed in these long years of money-getting in the city. Perhaps if you had come back now and again, just at odd times, it wouldn't have been so. (Sunshine Sketches 145)

Leacock's house at Old Brewery Bay was certainly not the farm he struggled on as a boy, and he was aware of this, the impossibility of recreating the past. Furthermore, Leacock's rural-urban dialectic effectively refutes those critics who portray him as a writer of sentimentalist fiction, a complex unsentimentalism which he reiterates late in life resisting the autobiographer's temptation towards indulgent nostalgia:

You had your choice! Stay there and turn into a hick, get out and be a great man. But the strange thing is that they all come back. They leave the old farm as boys so gladly, so happy to get away from its dull routine, its meaningless sunrise and sunset, its empty fresh winds over its fields, the silence of the bush -- to get away into the clatter and effort of life, into the crowd. Then as the years go by they come to realize that at a city desk and in a city apartment they never see the sunrise and the sunset; have forgotten what the sky looks like at night and where the Great Dipper is, and find nothing in the angry gusts of wind or the stifling heat of the city streets that corresponds to the wind over the empty fields . . . so they go back, or they think they do, back to the old farm. Only they rebuild it, but not with an axe but with an architect. They make it a great country mansion with flagstoned piazzas, and festooned pergolas -- and it isn't the old farm any more. You can't have it both ways. (Boy 38)

Nevertheless, although Leacock recognized the impossibility of reclaiming and returning to a rural past, he sought to reproduce the currency of the idea that the "great man" would succeed in the competitive field of the urban centre because of the value, the "spirit," "the essence and idea" (Boy 37), of his rural beginnings. And for Leacock, this "great man" embodies legitimated cultural authority, a sense of cultural continuity born of both reactionary and visionary impulses in order to re-define value within an antimodernist field of cultural production.

As an influential cultural authority -- that is, as both an autonomous leader and reflection of cultural value -- the great man has roots in the Canada First movement, which promoted "great men" of Canada because it was believed that they were "representative of the national character" (Berger, Sense 50):

They embodied and typified the spirit of the people which had produced them. Their personalities and achievements had to be rescued from oblivion for it was through understanding them that Canadians would come to know what Canada itself represented. (Sense 50)

In effect, Leacock believed that great men were (or should be) adventurers, pioneers, politicians, literary men, and so on -- even an educator not unlike himself who, as he conveyed in a farewell speech at McGill upon his retirement, "carr[ied] somewhere within him that higher idealism lifted above life, that in the end endears him" (qtd. in Doyle, Sage 70). Moreover, like many of his generation, Leacock believed that inspired men made history, as opposed to a deterministic view of society that perceived the individual as shaped by material circumstances. Such prominent individuals realize the authority of Carlyle's great men of the past (Berger, Sense 220) -- poets, priests, prophets, politicians, men of letters, kings:

The history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these. (Carlyle, On Heroes 3)

Rhetoric aside, the Carlylean great man pervades Leacock's thought, life and career -- not through direct application, but as the "essence and the idea" (Leacock, Boy 37) of cultural value and authority. History held many examples of great men for Leacock, and he actively strove to recover and celebrate them as blueprints for the growth of a Canadian nation founded by individuals of indomitable will who expressed a vision of social justice legitimated by the continuity of heritage and tradition. Leacock's first work of history, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks: Responsible Government, published in 1907 as part of the Makers of Canada Series, suggests the currency of the idea that "it was people who made and were history" (Curry 313 and Robertson 34). Such men, Leacock asserts, are marked for their broadness of mind which sees beyond specialized, individualistic concerns towards a greater social good, qualities Leacock detects in

such important political figures as Baldwin, Lafontaine and Hincks:

To men of moderate views . . . there is an especial fascination in the idea of a political coalition. To subordinate the petty differences of party animosity to the broader considerations of national welfare, is a task so congenial to their own temperament that they do not realize how difficult it is for others. (Leacock, Baldwin 117-18)

These men did not dominate history; rather they were a focus for the ideals and aspirations of their cultural moment, as was (Leacock's reading of) Charles II whose "amiable common sense and . . . native good humour seemed to mark him out from the fussy, self-important egotistic monarchs who sprawl wide upon the pages of history and obliterate from view everything except their trivial personalities" (Leacock, Essays and Literary Studies 269). Even Leacock's physical descriptions of his historical heroes reflect their roles in the history of Canadian culture. Baldwin, we are told, "stood rather above the average" and, although he was of a serious disposition, "the extreme kindness of his heart and the truthfulness of his whole being, coupled with a manner that was unassuming and free from conceit, lent to his address a suggestion of rugged honesty and force and extreme gentleness, that won him the unfailing affection of those about him" (Baldwin 148-9). Consider also Leacock's description of a portrait of Jacques Cartier:

The picture is that of a bearded man in the prime of his life, standing on the deck of a ship, his bent elbow resting upon the gunwale, his chin supported by his hand, while his eyes gaze outward upon the western ocean as if seeking to penetrate its mysteries. The face is firm and strong, with tight-set jaw, prominent brow, and the full, inquiring eye of the man accustomed both to think and to act. (Mariner 1)¹⁰

Leacock's Cartier certainly seems to be "the soul of the whole world's history" (Carlyle, On Heroes 3), as he "embodied in himself what was highest in the spirit of his age" (Leacock, Mariner 112) -- that is, in Leacock's reproduction, Cartier embodies a specific configuration of cultural value and authority, a bedrock for both cultural nationalism and a template for a reactionary and visionary antimodernist figure.

¹⁰ Tellingly, after speculating upon whether the portrait is in fact authentic, Leacock posits that "at least it shows us Cartier as he might well have been, with precisely the face and bearing which the hero-worshipper would read into the character of such a discoverer" (Mariner 4-5).

Although as historiographical practice Leacock's work would today invite disfavour, the significance of the cultural moment that legitimates and produces the value accorded to great men and their role in realizing progress towards greater social justice cannot be overlooked. As Berger observes, Darwinian evolution greatly influenced the study of history to the extent that "a direct analogy was drawn between processes of organic evolution and historical development, and history came to be regarded as the revelation of patterns and uniformities, not merely the record of countless unconnected episodes" (The Writing of Canadian History 6). As a result, Leacock's historical narratives chart a telic trajectory of progress. In The Dawn of Canadian History (1914) and My Discovery of the West (1937) Leacock depicts the physical evolution of the earth (although in the latter he curiously conflates evolution with Genesis) as the foundation of his overall vision of progress, envisaging that "with each stage in the evolution of the land the forms of life appear to have reached a higher development" (Dawn of Canadian History 5). The history of civilization, Leacock envisioned, reflects the evolutionary process, a broad teleological framework ingrained into an unwritten, pre-contact Canada:

The mysterious sense of a great history still to come for this new land . . . a sense of many voices caught as the undertone of the rustling of the forest leaves, but rising at last to the mighty sound of the vast civilization that in the centuries to come should pour into the silent wildernesses of America. (Dawn of Canadian History 104-5)

Yet Leacock's historical sense took this notion of history and progress and sought its realization within human society as part of an antimodernist reading which emphasised continuity in human affairs, institutions and practices, rather than social determinism, as necessary for sustainable social and individual progress. With "great men," argued Leacock, "it is the broad-minded tolerance of easy-going indolence that keeps the friction of opinion from clogging the machinery of progress" (Essays 273). In short, Leacock "adheres to a humanistic, organic view of man's and society's development" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 34), a view invested with cultural value because of its emphasis on culture as an "organic" process rather than something forged from radical upheavals or preserved from a lost golden age.

Leacock's conception of progress informs his cultural work, and holds that the guiding values of the past should provide the authority for the present in the competitive stakes of cultural change. Yet this vision of progress requires a sense of balance which Leacock felt was not present at the turn of the century. He consistently warned against the idolization of progress which worked against the common good owing to an undue emphasis on "individualism (or the right of the individual to be an independent and autonomous economic unit), materialism (the defining of things and people by their economic utility), and mastery of nature" (Bowker xxiv). Unadulterated individualism, Leacock argued, was unconscionable, "an obvious breach of public morality in a policy of complete abstention" (Elements (1906) 362).

Individualism, as Leacock understood it, was an aberration of social justice, since such a system of ethics founded on the application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to social interactions de-valued the cultural continuity Leacock espoused in his historical narratives. "Evolution," Leacock wrote in 1910, "is a plain and straightforward matter, not so much a theory as a view of a succession of facts taken in organic relation. It assumes no purposes whatever. It is not . . . in any degree teleological" (Social Criticism 47). But the application of evolutionary theory as an unmediated impulse of progress threatens any sense of value in human society:

Everything -- any phase or movement or religion -- which succeeds, is right. Anything which does not is wrong. Everything which is, is right. All we have to do is to sit still and watch it come. This is moral evolution. (Leacock, Social Criticism 49)

The maxim "survival of the fittest" is "only a statement of what is, not of what ought to be" (Leacock, Social Criticism 138), and does nothing to address the "extraordinary discrepancy between human power and resulting human happiness" (Leacock, Social Criticism 81). Yet the pervasiveness of the individualistic ethic within cultural institutions, from education to economics, generated a current of relativism that Leacock challenged in all his cultural work.

When Leacock pursued his Ph.D at the University of Chicago, the social sciences in general and political economy in particular, represented a new mode of thought, which, with their empirical and

statistical methods of inquiry, ran counter to Canada's "Anglo-Scottish intellectual traditions [which] remained firmly centred in the humanities" (Doyle Sage 33). Yet Leacock's "allegiance to the new discipline was partial and incomplete" (Berger, "The Other Mr. Leacock" 24), his sense of social justice hinging not only on socioeconomic and political interactions, but also on the moral and ethical implications of human nature. Instead, Leacock firmly believed that the broader canvas of a humanistic education would complement the failings of the new social sciences with their focus on statistical minutiae and the compartmentalization of knowledge. He argued that purely empirical education "turn[ed] out in its graduates a 'standardized' article similar to steel rails or structural beams, with interchangeable parts in their brains and all of them purchasable in the market at the standard price" (Leacock, Social Criticism 18). It diminishes intellectual value to the extent that "education is synonymous with ability to understand the stock-exchange page of the morning paper, and culture means a silk hat and the habit of sleeping in pyjamas" (Leacock, Social Criticism 17). It fosters the specialization of academics "each in his own department of learning, with his tags, and label, and his pigeon-hole category of proper names, precluding all discussion by ordinary people" (Leacock, Social Criticism 43). In fact, both specialization and pecuniary markers of legitimation in education occlude human needs since "all less tangible and provable forms of human merit, and less tangible aspirations of the human mind are rudely shouldered aside by business ability and commercial success" (Leacock, Social Criticism 25).

However, Leacock did not reject out of hand empirical and statistical modes of inquiry, but argued that such learning should comprise the tools, not the meaning of our cultural endeavour. Individualistic self-interest as evinced by the cultural work of the specialist who reaches "his own little pinnacle of refined knowledge staring at his feet and ignorant of the work about him, the past behind him, and the future before him" (Leacock, Social Criticism 19) de-valued cultural continuity, whereas humanistic education holds a broader, more encompassing view of human activity and of cultural value founded on social responsibility, stability and continuity in human affairs:

The older view of education, which is rapidly passing away in America, but which is still dominant in the great universities of England, aimed at a wide and humane culture of the intellect. It regarded the various departments of learning as forming essentially a unity, some pursuit of each being necessary to the intelligent comprehension of the whole, and a reasonable grasp of the whole being necessary to the appreciation of each. (Leacock, Social Criticism 18)

This humanistic "spirit," this hermeneutic circle, "which means not a mechanical acquirement from without but something done from within" (Leacock, Social Criticism 32), is a central tenet not only of Leacock's social vision, but also of his role as an educator. The implicit shift in the value accorded to education amounted to a cultural struggle for the power to legitimate a particular discourse of education (and hence the power for its reproduction), a struggle that was perhaps most evident in the university:

The English-Canadian university of the first quarter of the twentieth century, like the society itself, was one in a state of precarious balance between the weight of tradition and the currents of change. Hence, the academic could no longer be certain whether his role was to safeguard social stability or to facilitate social improvement. (McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence 229)

In Leacock's mediation between these different roles lies an antimodernist frame of mind of "accommodation and protest," of the reactionary and the visionary, of an educator who sought to share his vision with a wide audience in order to communicate in concrete proposals the laurelled ideas of academics. As Doyle suggests, despite "his rising popular and financial success, . . . [Leacock] . . . did not lose sight of his conviction that political and economic studies should be devoted to communicating important problems, and possible solutions, to the common reader" (Doyle, Sage 52).

Just as the "great man" embodied cultural authority and value in Leacock's historical narratives, the "economic man" of classical economists like Adam Smith constituted Leacock's figure of agency in his discussion of socioeconomic activity. Yet the economic man was a figure, again like the "great man," whose value needed to be reconfigured for shifting cultural conditions. Like the "great man," the economic man reflected Leacock's antimodernist discourse, in part forming and in part formed by the antimodernist cultural field, a discourse that sought a configuration of value somewhere between

individual volition and social obligation. Classical economy initially liberated the individual from the inertia of a rigid social structure: "it opened a road never before trodden from social slavery towards social freedom, from the medieval autocratic régime of fixed caste and hereditary status towards a régime of equal social justice" (Leacock, Social Criticism 91). And it is this historical conception of economic agency that Leacock sought to re-cast as the actuating principle adapted to present-day socioeconomic interactions, as he suggests in a 1933 essay, "The Economic Analysis of Industrial Depression":

[T]o my thinking the economic man is the soundest part of the old system -- the only part of it absolutely unchanged and utterly valid. All the present talk of "service," all the present "brother-brother" stuff, the "let-us-help-you" tone of the advertiser is mere trash and dishonesty, a new kind of economic man, not only economic but a hypocrite along with it.
(11)

Leacock insisted that the economic man would have to be the basis of socioeconomic activity owing to the individual's inherent self-interest, activity which Leacock believed could be shaped by the self-sufficiency and work ethic that he learnt on the "old farm". Not only did Leacock critique the misappropriation of the economic man, he also pointed out that classical economists' theories on the possibility of social justice were outdated if not inefficacious, and wielded no currency in the twentieth century:

In other words the classical equation of social justice was always as hollow as a soap bubble. It lasted, not for its essential truth, but for its extraordinary social comfort. If everybody got what he deserved then the rich might sleep in peace. (Leacock, "The Economic Analysis of Industrial Depression" 12)

For classical economists "individual liberty . . . meant not mere political liberty, but economic liberty -- the right to buy and sell, to manufacture, to trade, and to invest, to migrate or move, work or refuse to, according to the dictates of one's own interest" (Our Heritage of Liberty 43). But in the twentieth century, argued Leacock, the notion that "this world of industrial liberty under free competition, with equal opportunity for all, seemed like the opening of a millennium of human happiness" (Our Heritage of Liberty 43), was plainly idealistic. The acquisition of wealth as enshrined in an individualistic ethic meant the devaluation of traditional institutions and the legitimation of pecuniary self-interest, not to mention the

collapse of social justice as a possible or even desired outcome.

Leacock insisted on the dangers of individualistic excess throughout his life, but particularly during the crisis of the 1930s:

Everybody who has even tried to study the political economy of our times knows, -- everybody with a brain not ossified by wealth or deliberated [sic] by high birth, -- that we live in an unjust world: that wages and salaries correspond neither to moral worth nor economic contribution: that free, utterly free, competition far from leading to social justice, favours the strong, oppresses the weak, creates the slums, submerges the labour class. (Leacock, My Discovery of the West 147)

The Depression and the two World Wars mark two key moments in Leacock's career when he felt particularly empowered to put forward his vision of social justice.¹¹ For Leacock, a true measure of progress involved the realization of social justice, that essential harmony between the individual and society -- and the sheer failure of social progress in this regard, particularly during moments of cultural crisis, frequently constituted the focus of Leacock's social critique. The millionaire who made his millions from widows and orphans (Literary Lapses 21), the injustices of Plutoria wherein "if you were to mount to the roof of the Mausoleum Club itself on Plutoria Avenue you could almost see the slums from there" (Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich 8) -- such fictions reflect Leacock's reformist impulse as well as does his serious work:

Inequality begins from the very cradle. Some are born into an easy and sheltered affluence. Others are the children of mean and sordid want. For some the long toil of life begins in the very bloom time of childhood and ends only when the broken and exhausted body sinks into a penurious old age. For others life is but a foolish leisure with mock activities and

¹¹ In addition to reading Leacock's discussion of social policy and the like as presented textually, we must also consider the cultural production of those texts. In short, the symbolic capital invested in Leacock's academic cultural signature granted him access to numerous influential journals and newspapers that effectively legitimated the authority of his antimodernist discourse in the cultural field. As Bourdieu suggests, "cultural producers are able to use the power conferred on them, especially in periods of crisis, by their capacity to put forward a critical definition of the social world, to mobilize the potential strength of the dominated classes and subvert the order prevailing in the field of power" (Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production 44). While Leacock was not interested in subverting the prevailing order, he still wielded considerable cultural power (or capital) to authorize his plans for social reform.

mimic avocations to mask its uselessness . . . Thus all about us is the moving and shifting spectacle of riches and poverty, side by side, inextricable. (Unsolved Riddle 76)

Instead of increased production and the satisfaction of human needs, Leacock detected only a widening gulf between the rich and poor. Moreover, in a manner similar to his identification of the intellectually bankrupt specialist who undermines the cultural value and authority of education, Leacock insisted that technological specialization weakens the economic system, makes the masses dependent on abstract economic structures that are preoccupied with efficiency and money-making rather than social harmony.

Leacock maintained that individual economic agency must be the basis, the actuating principle, for socioeconomic activity. Yet in his assessment of the Depression, he exposed the extent to which the economic man had become dis-empowered and de-valued in the drive for increased technological efficiency and by its abstract economic system. For Leacock, the kind of self-sufficiency of individuals and small communities that had settled Canada possessed a particular resiliency threatened by technological standardization:

In older Canada, the pioneer lived on his own: he settled depression with an axe, was his own butcher and baker and what he hadn't got he went without. His diversion was whiskey at 50 cents a gallon, and fighting in a tavern. As a motor car he had a buck-board and for a radio he talked to himself in the barnyard. Economically, you might hit him hard, but you couldn't knock him out. But in the new West all was different. Farming had run overwhelmingly to one specialized industry, raising wheat on vast plains where machinery came into its own. The farmer no longer fed himself, never saw a hen and had for his barnyard a corrugated iron grain elevator. (My Discovery of the West 116-117)

The Depression proved for Leacock that the vulnerability of the modern, standardized economic system lay in the economic man's loss of self-sufficiency, validating his assertion that "reliance can only be placed on individual self-interest and individual gain as the motive power of economic action" (Economic Prosperity in the British Empire 187). In short, Leacock felt that despite the enduring discourse of individual economic liberty, increased efficiency and the application of technological progress in the production of

goods dis-empowered the individual. This he described as the industrial paradox:

The essential contrast lies between the vastly increased power of production and its apparent inability to satisfy for all humanity the most elementary human wants; between the immeasurable saving of labour effected by machinery and the brute fact of the continuance of hard-driven, unceasing toil. (Social Criticism 80)

"A strange paradox," he wrote in the 1930s, in which "we cannot use the means we have. Abundance brings poverty. A blessed harvest spells ruin. And labour saving leaves labour to starve. Economics is not the name of a science but a problem. And no one has solved it" (Leacock, Economic Prosperity in the British Empire 200).

The key to this (unsolved) riddle, though, lies in a humanistic socioeconomics, as it were, that would act as a check to the excesses of economic individualism. In his first published book, Elements of Political Science (1906), Leacock clearly states that the need for social justice is contingent on social responsibility: "That a government should leave children to starve, and content itself with 'not interfering' with the destitute poor, is a point of view that meets with almost universal condemnation" (362). The nature and extent of this "interference," Leacock argued, lay somewhere between "a tolerance of human fallibility and an acceptance of social responsibility" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity ix), a position-taking that avoids the false dichotomies within the cultural field which merely (re)produce the "unending conflict between business and politics, between the private gain and the public good, [which] has been for two generations the despair of modern democracy" (Social Criticism 128). For instance, while Leacock appreciated the spirit of socialism, he opposed radical social intervention and the fact that political socialism did not take into account the natural fallibility of human nature. Socialism, Leacock argued, demanded the cooperation of angels rather than men; and yet, despite its idealization of human nature, Leacock insisted that socialism contained "so much that is of use and inspiration, as to merit special treatment" (Elements (1913) 371). But to assume that under socialism the individual would work willingly and altruistically was too idealistic for Leacock, containing "the most monstrous assumptions of a sudden

and mechanical renovation of human nature, so sweeping as to beg the whole question of social reform” (Elements (1913) 377). Although Leacock’s understanding of socialism appears to centre on Edward Bellamy’s work of fiction, Looking Backward (1888), with but casual references to the likes of Marx and Engels, it was the spirit of the thing, the serious attempt to envisage a practical realization of social justice that appealed to Leacock. “Modern socialism,” he wrote, “is the direct outcome of the age of machine production. It takes its first inspiration from glaring contrasts between riches and poverty in the modern era, from the strange paradox . . . between human power and its failure to satisfy human want” (Social Criticism 116). Leacock did not dismiss socialism without discernment, as those commentators who market Leacock as either a-political or as an entrenched reactionary insist. Although Leacock concluded that “it won’t work” (Social Criticism 118), he encouraged people to examine socialism for its critique of the orthodoxy of individualism in the cultural field, since, as he admits, “the notion of all people working together in cheerful comradeship sounds vastly better, after all, than the stingy maxim, ‘every man for himself’” (Our Heritage of Liberty 56). Leacock felt that unfettered economic individualism must be addressed “at every turn by intrusive social legislation” (Leacock, Social Criticism 142), while at the same time insisting that individual agency “can still animate society” (My Discovery of the West 147, and Our Heritage of Liberty 65). Tellingly, Leacock believed that both extremes of individualism and socialism constituted the threat of standardization in socioeconomic activity. Both individualism’s unadulterated capitalism and self-interest, and socialism’s state system, preclude respect for individuation, for inefficiency, for the quirkiness of human character because of the need, in both systems, to determine value and worth in terms of materialist criteria. Leacock’s solution -- his cultural work -- seeks to legitimate an antimodernist middle way, a continuous negotiation of both visionary and reactionary discourses in order to temper the drive for progress with cultural value recovered from history.

Leacock’s concern, then, was that the levelling effect of standardized culture would efface individuation through reduction to materialist relativity or submission to the will of the collective; that

"great men" and "economic men" would lose their currency in the cultural field. In short, Leacock's prescient analysis foretold what has become the late capitalism or neo-conservatism of today and the disempowered individual within it:

The future is yet to come. The standardizing, levelling tendencies that smooth us out and make us all the same may end in eliminating if not "character" at least the appearance of it and the dress. Modern life, in raising the level of the mass, lowers individual eminence. Mass production brings with it mass thinking. Mass economic life compels a new kind of cohesion in which the individual is forced and fitted into a pattern. He can't have any liberty because there is nothing to choose: unless everybody chooses the same, nobody gets anything. (Leacock, Humour and Humanity 118)

As Gerald Lynch contests, Leacock believed that "the true progress of mankind is endangered by such false notions of progress as technological advancement and self-development to the exclusion of a communal consciousness, as well as by liberation movements . . . that threaten the value of human labour, the pre-eminence of the social organism, and such institutions as the home and family" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 12). Similarly, modes of cultural production and their increasingly materialist and technological criteria can only result in "the world . . . being unified into one, and the human race being standardized into a type" (Leacock, Humour: Its Theory and Technique 198). For instance, the motive behind making moving pictures is "overwhelmingly that of business -- how to make money -- not art, not patriotism" (Economic Prosperity 234), and is a medium consisting of "millions upon millions of dollars of invested capital . . . against . . . [which] . . . the individual is lost and hopeless" (Economic Prosperity 232). In short, all "the muse Cinematographia . . . wants to know is, not what the public wants or needs, but what the public will pay for" (Humour and Humanity 99), an ethic that constitutes a fundamental de-valuation of cultural difference and individual agency, and of the possibility of social justice. "Already," writes Leacock of 1930s cinema, "there is practically only one kind of moving picture" (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 202) -- namely, "American pictures, carrying with them the American message, American ideas, American goods, American advertising, that go all over the world" (Economic Prosperity 236).

Leacock was by no means anti-American, just as he was not wholly pro-British; his was the antimodernist frame of mind that protested the idolization of materialistic and technological progress rather than the growth of vibrant and diversified culture. Indeed, "[t]he suppression of the individual under urban industrialism" (Leacock, Humour and Humanity 119), the "economic man" deprived of the continuity of cultural value, raised in Leacock a somewhat (and uncharacteristic) nihilistic vision of the future:

He grasps any remark before you end it, and sees a joke the minute you start it. But he can't hold anything - no sustained attention. You've got to keep on surprising him or his brain flags and won't work. His newspapers are made of headings only, and mostly he gets his news through his ear flaps. He doesn't read much, because he can fix in little radio books to talk to his ear-plugs. He can look at books only if they have pictures, queer pictures all distorted out of actual. But he never reads alone; he can't bear to be alone. It frightens him. He has to turn on something to relieve him. (Leacock, Humour: Its Theory and Technique 240)

In such a future, culture becomes rootless, ephemeral and artificial, demanding a standardized mass of unblinking consumers subject to the dominant few whose competitive pursuit of individualism in the cultural field effectively de-values social justice as a goal for the entire community.

Nevertheless Leacock doggedly pursued the realization of social justice through the means of cultural production available to him. As discussed, he sought social change through playing by the rules of the cultural field, engaging already legitimate discourses that wielded the capital necessary for consecration and objectification of Leacock's subjectivity, and of his authority as a cultural producer. In effect, Leacock's conservatism envisioned change by insisting on "the need . . . not [for] a new game but a new set of rules" (My Discovery of the West 147). As Toril Moi suggests, "[w]ithin the field every discourse is euphemistic in the sense that it has to observe the correct forms, or risk exclusion as nonsense (in the case of the intellectual field, excluded discourses would tend to be cast as stupid or naive)" (1022). However, the discursive range and complexity of Leacock's antimodernist cultural work transgresses the recognized disciplinary parameters of, for example, political science or economics. In The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice Leacock disarmingly confesses to being "not one of those who are able to see a short and single

remedy" (Social Criticism 83), an admission that also positions Leacock's particular discursive strategy within a conservative and humanistic tradition wherein cultural process is perceived and understood as an interdisciplinary and holistic process; or, as an antimodernist discourse seeking value during the tectonic shifts in culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Leacock argued, then, that "there is no great hope for universal betterment of society by the mere advance of technical industrial progress and by the unaided play of the motive of every man for himself" (Social Criticism 112), just as he found "all forms of socialism impossible because they do not start from economic men, but from economic slaves" ("Economic Analysis of Industrial Depression" 13). Leacock's antimodernist vision of social change was necessarily problematic and complex: "In any social movement . . . change and alteration in a new direction must be balanced against the demands of social stability" (Social Criticism 112):

Here, therefore, stands humanity, in the middle of its narrow path in sheer perplexity, not knowing which way to turn. On either side is the brink of an abyss. One hand is the yawning gulf of social catastrophe represented by socialism. On the other, the slower, but no less inevitable disaster that would attend the continuation in its present form of the system under which we have lived. Either way lies destruction, . . . [yet] . . . somewhere between the two lies such narrow safety as may be found. (Social Criticism 134)

Leacock sought to map this "narrow safety" through cultural work that was reformist and yet, at the same time, cautious and conservative, valuing "a society free but orderly, prosperous but stable; in short, controlled change" (Wise 194).

In The Sense of Power, Carl Berger touches on this mediating prescription for social change as characteristic of Canadian imperialist discourse:

Imperialists adhered, sometimes in an articulate way, to the traditional conservative conceptions which envisaged society as composed of functionally and organically related parts knit together by the impalpable filaments of mutual obligation and history. In this idea lay the source of affinity between their toryism and the impulse to reform. It is neither incongruous nor paradoxical that some of the strongest attacks upon business domination should come from tory imperialists, for

conservatives in Canada have frequently led the way in using state power to enforce a conception of the national interest which was more than the sum of special interests and assuredly not the result of the pressure of a single interest.¹² (197)

The need at the heart of Canadian imperialism simultaneously to reform and to preserve echoes the "accommodation and protest" of antimodernism, that sense of mediation, of balance, that Leacock perceived as fundamental to the realization of social justice, human happiness, and the common good. "Imperialism," argues Carl Berger "was a sentiment and an outlook before it became a policy" (Sense of Power 12), a discourse that weaved a matrix of value involving agrarian roots, interpretations of history, progress towards social justice, the influential roles of great men, and so on. For Leacock imperialism was more of a discourse that negotiated value between past and present, individualism and social obligation -- in short, Leacock's imperialism extolled his vision of social justice and "was as much an inspiring spirit as a political programme" (Berger, "The Other Mr. Leacock" 28). Indeed, if, as Berger suggests, Canadian imperialism can "only be understood in relation to the characters who espoused it and who came to personify it" (Sense of Power 12), then in 1907 Leacock clearly and uncompromisingly voiced the value imperialism held for him:

I, that write these lines, am an Imperialist because I will not be a Colonial. This Colonial status is a worn-out, by-gone thing. The sense and feeling of it has become harmful to us. It limits the ideas, and circumscribes the patriotism of our people. It impairs the mental vigour and narrows the outlook of those that are reared and educated in our midst. (Social Criticism 4)

While Leacock repeatedly detailed the material potential of a Greater Canada and its importance to the Empire, comparing the "little puffing steam-fed industry of England, to the industry of Coming Canada" ("Greater Canada" 7), material concerns were to be merely a framework, a sound socioeconomic basis for

¹² Berger's suggestion that "conservatives in Canada have frequently led the way in using state power to enforce a conception of the national interest" (Sense 197) describes how such conservatives make use of their hereditary symbolic capital in terms of engaging already legitimate discourses within the cultural field. Cultural struggle ensues when conservatives must shift ground in order to engage newly legitimized discourses that arise from, for instance, the growth of the scientific establishment or the rise of middle class capitalists.

the realization of social justice. For Leacock, it was the vision or spirit of imperialism, "the pure fire of an Imperial patriotism" (Social Criticism 7), that was important: "This is our need, our supreme need of the Empire -- not for its ships and guns, but for the greatness of it, the soul of it, aye for the very danger of it" (Social Criticism 8). Yet the cultural value invested in and the authority of imperialist discourse was never fixed and intractable; rather Leacock sought to reconfigure that value in accordance with the shifting priorities of the antimodernist cultural field.

Leacock's early writing on the empire sought closer imperial ties with a view to initiating change from within the already existing framework, appropriating the authority of imperialist discourse for his own re-envisioning of imperialism. For Leacock a significant test for the need of imperialism in Canada was manifest in the defeat of Laurier's Liberal Government in the 1911 federal election which hinged on one issue: free trade. Yet the outcome of the election, although a positive indicator of the legitimacy of imperialism, still left questions unresolved concerning the development of the Empire. As Leacock wrote in the wake of the election results, "the great problem of our common future is to find an organic basis of lasting union" ("Great Victory" 392). The First World War, however, appeared to put this idea of union out of reach, since, despite the promising signs of international co-operation, "the early enthusiasm for participation in the war changed to disenchantment and disillusionment, . . . [and] . . . gave an enormous impetus to North American isolation . . . [while] . . . strengthen[ing] the suspicions of the old world and of all empires" (Berger, Sense of Power 264). In effect, after the War Leacock made an implicit distinction between Empire and imperialism:

The events of the war have entirely changed the outlook. All proposals for formal federation and for a supreme parliament and for pan-imperial taxes are drifting into the background of academic discussion. The argument that formal union is necessary for defence is now met by the fact that defence was carried on without union. (Elements of Political Science (1921) 280)

Although the currency of imperialism's material and political structures had certainly become de-valued, imperialism remained an important component of Leacock's antimodernist vision of a vibrant nationalist

culture that would mediate between past and present, individualism and social obligation, in order to realize social justice. Moreover, this antimodernist discourse is central to Leacock's cultural work as a whole -- not only his "serious" treatises on economics, history, political science and the like, but also his "humorous" commentaries on, and ironic reflections of, human fallibility and community.

Just as Leacock's reading of history, his theory of education, his "spirit" of imperialism, and so forth, constituted a legitimate discourse on social justice, so his humour also addressed the complex cultural pressures upon individual agency and social obligation, but with a different configuration of legitimating capital in the cultural field. However, his humour has been and continues to be read and produced in accordance with the demands and expectations of the literary marketplace and academic disciplines, rather than as an important facet of Leacock's synthesizing frame of mind, his antimodernist interdisciplinary perspective. As Gerald Lynch theorizes:

Humour is for Leacock the literary manifestation of humanism. It is the literary vehicle of the middle way. Humour exists midway between caustic satire and sentimentality, softening satire with pathos. Humour can be of service in the moral melioration of mankind, though it should not be satirically reformist, and it can offer a reprieve from disillusioning reality. (Humour and Humanity 6-7)

Leacock was cognizant of this relation between his humour and his serious work, that humour, in theory and practice, can address cultural concerns regarding the realization of social justice. Consider his preface to Humour and Humanity (1937):

The author has given to this book the title Humour and Humanity, rather than the obvious and simple title Humour, in order to emphasize his opinion that the essence of humour is human kindness. It is this element in humour which has grown from primitive beginnings to higher forms: which lends to humour the character of a leading factor in human progress, and which is destined still further to enhance its utility to mankind. (9)

This, then, is the central premise of Leacock's historical conception of humour as organic development anchored in cultural history, but providing the continuity of a link with the demands of the present. For Leacock, "[h]umour and human kindness are one" (Leacock, Humour and Humanity 124) -- that is,

"kindliness" intimates bonds of social obligation.

Kindliness, in the Leacockian lexicon, is not a vague sentiment, but rather an insistence on community, and mutual respect, and the sought for harmony between individualism and social obligation. Humour, Leacock argued, "finds its basis in the incongruity of life itself," and embodies the "contemplation and interpretation of our life" (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 15), of the "perplexity . . . [and] . . . unsolvable riddle of existence" (Humour and Humanity 232). As Gerald Lynch suggests, "kindly humour" should be understood as an attempt "to encourage a perspective and response above and beyond those particularized faults shared by all mankind" (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 27), as a sympathetic confirmation of kinship, "and of the wide charity of mind that has come with the shattering of narrower ideals, not yet replaced" (Leacock, Humour and Humanity 205-6). More precisely, Lynch recovers the value Leacock accorded to the work for which today he is most well-known:

Leacock understood "kindly humour" to contain the spirit of good will which he untiringly recommended as the proper approach to social-political riddles. Humour, the literary vehicle of the middle way, mediates between satire and sentimentality, which are, in Leacock's thought, roughly the literary equivalents of extreme liberalism and socialism. (Lynch, Humour and Humanity 22-3)

Such a holistic understanding of Leacock's thought is essential to recovering the antimodernist vein in his cultural work, and what was to Leacock a clear "relation of the great humorists of the world to social progress" (qtd. in Moritz 216). Furthermore, the humorist was also to Leacock a Carlylean great man, an embodiment of cultural authority navigating the crises and paradoxes of the antimodernist cultural field:

There can be no doubt of the effectiveness and the wonder of Dickens' work . . . He did as much as, or more than, all the Benthams and the Romillys and the Shaftesburys to sweep away the removable hardships, the cruelties and injustices of the England of his day. He led where legislation followed. The pen was mightier than the parliament . . . But he did it with the laughter and the smiles that mingled even with anger as April sunshine glimmers through the rain. (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 111-112)

Leacock also emphasizes, for instance, the striking physical presence of Mark Twain imbued with the

energy of his purpose and his role in culture, a Twain who can stand quite easily beside "great men" like Jacques Cartier and Robert Baldwin:

[Clemens] was a robust-looking young man with a mop of sandy hair turning to auburn and a blue eye filled with life and intelligence. In his infancy he had been a puny child, but the outdoor life of farm and bush and river had done its work and had presently endowed him with that deep-seated energy and vital power which is the birthright of the frontiersman. (Leacock, Mark Twain 38)

Note also the pre-eminence of the rural connection, the strength Twain draws from such a background wherein "many of his most vital impressions" (Leacock, Mark Twain 15) were formed.

Leacock clearly admired and valued the integrity and cultural authority of such humorists, of such great men. In his early work, such as "Greater Canada: An Appeal," Leacock's earnestly adopted the mantle of a man of letters, of a cultural authority who would embody, reflect and foster a social vision. As his fame grew as a humorist, Leacock maintained the same seriousness of purpose, but became disarmingly direct (albeit often ironically so) about his self-conception as a prominent and influential figure, as evident in the opening of My Discovery of the West:

It has seemed to me that the East and the West in Canada know all too little of each other, and are drifting further and further apart. It occurred to me that if I went out and lectured to the West, very likely the West would move closer to the East. (1)

The casual tone of "seemed" and "occurred," coupled with the unabashed confidence of purpose, are at once both serious in terms of the spirit of Leacock's cultural authority, and disarmingly ironic. Like Twain, Leacock's best work embodies cultural authority not in a didactic sense, but in terms of "the play of an interesting mind that illuminates everything that it touches" (Leacock, Mark Twain 84), an ironic touch that represents "a form of thought, a way of looking at things, and hence a mode or kind of literature" (Leacock, Mark Twain 9) that eludes divisive disciplinary distinctions. Moreover, humour as a discourse on what constitutes cultural value is interdisciplinary and antimodernist in its engagement with the social world, and as such eludes and challenges academic specialization and the standardization of culture by

resurrecting individual agency and social awareness. Leacock describes this aspect of humour as a way of seeing and comprehending the diversity and complexity of a community of individuals and all their inefficiencies in character:

The truth is that the queer people are all around you, plenty of them, if you have the eyes to see them. If you are lacking in [a] sense of humour, or in that angle of it, you won't know that they are there. If you have a commonplace mind absorbed in things rather than people, and in money rather than imagination, people will look all pretty much alike. If you have a serious mind, full of some particular content of purpose, you will classify them on different lines . . . The divisions, which are really infinite, correspond to what you want or need to see. It is a patterned grating that you yourself lay on the surface. (Humour and Humanity 114-115)

The constant emphasis is on the way of seeing, the need for a broad perspective that avoids the blinkers of specialization and standardization, often through the recognition of individuation, of human failings and foibles, that comprises human community. And the humanism, the antimodernism, of Leacock's way of seeing is perhaps best realized in his humorous protagonist, the little man.

Leacock's little man is essentially an ironic echo of the great man of cultural authority and the economic man of individual agency. Indeed, the little man is bewildered by the culture he finds himself in -- bewildered by his struggle to divine value and by his distinct lack of cultural authority. Nevertheless, as R.E. Watters suggests, Leacock's little man "wants to continue living in this complex world, preferably by making changes in it to suit himself, but if this is impossible -- as it usually is -- then to live in this world somehow without sacrificing his self-respect, his principles, or his continuing identity" ("A Special Tang" 31). These very qualities of protest and accommodation, Watters argues, are distinctly Canadian -- they are also distinctly antimodernist. Again and again, whether a fictional little man or his own self-ironized persona, Leacock conveys the individual awash in an often impersonal society at turns materialist, standardized, and technological:

[F]orward drove the World, divorced from one Control,
Each Man might grasp a little Part, no man could view the Whole.
The Giants drove it like the wind

And Little Man clung on behind,
 Picture of Terror and Despair
 His Coat Tails flying in the Air.
 Faster and faster, on they sped,
 Machine and Power went mad, saw red,
 On Little Man fell their Attack
 And smashed his World to Bric-a-brac,—
 Broke it with War and at its Crease,
 They turned and broke it worse with Peace,
 Broke it with overwork, and then, with myriads of Workless Men;
 Starved it with Want, then changed their Clutch and choked the World
 with Overmuch.
 And when their Rage had spent its Shocks,
 Left Little Man upon the Rocks
 Of Economic Paradox.
 (Leacock, Hellements of Hickonomics 48-9)

Here is the dis-empowered economic man caught up in a materialist and relativist culture, robbed of both individual agency and a social network. Just as Leacock outlined the need for a social policy that would satisfy basic socioeconomic needs and guide the self-interest of the individual towards the realization of social justice, so with the little man Leacock presents the weakened economic man as defeated by too much or too little social policy. David Legate suggests that Leacock "was all for the little man . . . because it was overwhelmingly good business for a humorist" (Legate 66), but he fails to appreciate the value of Leacock's little man as an antimodernist figure of accommodation and protest, cast in an ironic light:

[Leacock] saw man so systematized that he could no longer fix his own shoes, shave his own face, keep his own money, or catch his own fish; but Leacock made fun of the system and not the man who struggled against it. He found something noble about the little man who refused to become a cog in a social machine, who insisted on being an individual. (Curry 84)

One of Leacock's earliest funny pieces, "My Financial Career," depicts the little man belittled by increasingly impersonal social institutions, robbed of his economic independence, and devalued in terms of intrinsic self-worth:

When I go into a bank I get rattled. The clerks rattle me; the wickets rattle me; the sight of money rattles me; everything rattles me.
 The moment I cross the threshold of a bank and attempt to transact business there I become an irresponsible idiot. (Literary Lapses 1)

The humour and irony of this piece should not detract from the social commentary implicit, and yet we too easily subscribe to the specious disciplinary coding of such work as "nonsense" or "harmless fun."

Leacock's cultural work was a composite and organic whole that necessarily transgressed such artificial boundaries of knowledge and genre. In Leacock's vision, the little man largely epitomizes twentieth-century engagement with the world: notably, alienation from increasingly mechanized activities, and the "authority" of superficial indicators of value (the bank manager believes the narrator "was a son of Baron Rothchild or a young Gould" [Literary Lapses 2], and "the people in the bank had the impression that . . . [he] . . . was an invalid millionaire" [Literary Lapses 3]). The little man can be subject to pretensions and ignorance, and yet this individualized fallibility is also a marker of his humanity. "The Life of John Smith," for instance, is unremarkable, uneventful, and presented in a somewhat pessimistic vein tempered by both the humour and the implicit commentary on the limited scope of Mr. Smith's de-valued cultural work in a clothing store:

When . . . [Mr. Smith] . . . grew quite old they dismissed him and got a boy with a four-inch mouth and sandy-coloured hair, who did all Smith could do for half the money. That was John Smith's mercantile career: it won't stand comparison with Mr. Gladstone's, but it's not unlike your own. (Literary Lapses 83)

Leacock's social critique is unmistakable: the little man robbed of his economic self-sufficiency is no pioneer let alone a great man who shapes history. Instead, the common or garden variety Mr. Smith, the little man, leads a life that is "not unlike . . . [our] . . . own" (Literary Lapses 83). The little man as a lens for social critique is central to Leacock's humour, often underlaid with a pragmatic hope for regeneration and renewal. For instance, Mr. Tomlinson, the Wizard of Finance in Arcadian Adventures, is fundamentally dis-empowered of his own agency and human community in the city, and yet he initiates a return to economic self-sufficiency, to home and family, and his rural origins -- a trajectory that, at least symbolically, Leacock also traced in his annual migration from Montreal to Orillia. The interplay between urban and rural, individual agency and social obligation, then, are central to Leacock's antimodernist

discourse as expressed in both his "serious" and "humorous" work, and convey the reactionary and visionary outlook of his consideration of nationalism and a welfare state as the foundations for social justice.

As discussed, antimodernist discourse "attacked the maldistribution of wealth, not the fundamental beneficence of economic growth" (Lears 9), and stressed the necessity of both autonomous economic man and social responsibility. Leacock insisted that individualism must operate within a framework of social policy that protected the basic welfare of all, as "it is the restriction of individualism by the force of organization and by legislation that has brought to the world whatever social advance has been achieved by the great mass of people" (Social Criticism 112). In this quest for social justice Leacock laid out a number of guidelines that envisaged something very like a welfare state. In The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice, he identifies how the First World War heightened social injustice: "if every citizen owes it to society that he must fight for it in the case of need, then society owes to every citizen the opportunity of a livelihood" (Social Criticism 135). The Depression compounded this assault on individual and economic liberty:

The war saved the working class from unemployment, hard times, starvation, distress; it gave them instead danger, pain, anxiety, death, bereavement, and it kept in store for them economic disaster even greater still. The war postponed and magnified the economic collapse. It made it so great that it must be the last. ("The Economic Analysis of Industrial Depression" 19-20)

During the Second World War, in the last years of his life, Leacock reiterated the need for mutual obligations between the individual and society. The sacrifice of "individual rights for the common good" during war, Leacock argued, "is needed in the life of peace as well" (Our Heritage of Liberty 24):

The more we base our thoughts and stake our future on individual liberty the more must it be enlarged and enabled by individual sacrifice. What we give thus, we do not lose, or, if it is lost for ourselves, it is given to humanity. (Our Heritage of Liberty 24)

In response to a deepening state of social injustice, Leacock advocated a number of practical proposals for reform. In The Unsolved Riddle, he outlined the ground plan for a welfare state which, "put into the

plainest of prose," calls on "the government of every country . . . to supply work and pay for the unemployed, maintenance for the infirm and aged, and education and opportunity for the children" (Social Criticism 140). He proposed regulations that ensured the economic liberty of the individual under "a new set of rules": "short hours, high wages, . . . regulation of the production of basic commodities and under it and through it all the fundamental idea of every man for himself" ("Economic Analysis" 24). In Our Heritage of Liberty Leacock provides detailed proposals for state education, state housing, public libraries, parks and playgrounds, public health, and public concert halls (66-73), proposals he further embellished and described as "social security" in his posthumously published While There Is Time: The Case Against Social Catastrophe (1945) (6-9). Although commentators such as James Doyle fail to discern the nature of Leacock's cultural work, preferring instead to dismiss Leacock's cultural authority as the "egocentricity of success" (Doyle, Sage 62), it is important to recognize and re-contextualize Leacock's antimodernism; to do otherwise is to fall prey to the lure of cosmetic value judgements that convey nothing but the inadequacies of the critic.

The type of social policy that Leacock discussed throughout his life is integral to his vision of Canada as a nation of cultural strength and social justice. He advocated nationalism as a form of progress that embraced both a conservative sense of heritage (cultural authority) and material, political and social development as the tools for social justice (cultural value). Yet numerous commentators overlook the complexity of Leacock's vision, his antimodernism, and confuse his nationalism with a confused understanding of imperialism to arrive at the reductive and wholly inaccurate reasoning that Leacock was merely a champion of materialism. Such commentators as David Legate are unable to recognize the "spirit" of imperialism as synonymous with Leacock's nationalism -- indeed, Legate describes Leacock's monograph, What Nickel Means to the World (1937), as "an outright promotion job" (216), suggesting that Leacock wrote the piece for a Toronto investment firm for his own economic benefit. Albert and Theresa Moritz provide a more accurate reading of this aspect of Leacock's cultural work when they

suggest that "the monograph on nickel was in tune with the many articles he was producing about the need to develop Canadian resources. Leacock regarded such commissions as legitimate opportunities to exercise influence as a practical economist" (283). Indeed, the monograph on nickel is a testament to the authority of Leacock's cultural signature.

Similarly, Leacock's cultural authority legitimates the cultural value espoused at the heart of My Discovery of the West (1937), an important text that was awarded the Governor General's award in 1937, and which was the product of a lecture tour Leacock undertook in his late sixties, not for personal economic benefits alone, but in order to exert his influence in the broader cultural field:

I want to state a case, -- as my friends among the clergy like to put it, -- "fearless of denial." That means, to overstate it in such strong language that no one dares contradict it. I want to show that Canada is in danger of breaking up: that the provinces have utterly outgrown, or overpassed, the place intended for them: that they are planets threatening to leave their orbits. In other words, it is to me visible and obvious that Canada has already changed from a federation to a confederacy. It is now threatening to turn into a sort of confederate league, a union of commonwealths, a "heptarchy." (My Discovery of the West 207)

Leacock depicts a disturbing rift between Ottawa and the provinces, in which the federal parliament has become redundant: "it controls immigration, but without land for immigrants" (My Discovery of the West 217); it controls a military for which there is no purpose since America is "a continent still happy in peace" (My Discovery of the West 217). In short, "the economic life of the country has passed beyond . . . [the] . . . control" (My Discovery of the West 218) of the federal government, a crisis of cultural authority, of nationalism, that Leacock had already identified in 1907:

Our politics, our public life and thought, rise not to the level of our opportunity. The mud-bespattered politicians of the trade, the party men and party managers, give us in place of patriotic statecraft the sordid traffic of a tolerated jobbery. For bread, a stone. Harsh is the cackle of the little turkey-cocks of Ottawa, fighting the while as they feather their mean nests of sticks and mud, high on their river bluff. Loud sings the little Man of the Province, crying his petty gospel of Provincial Rights, grudging the gift of power, till the cry spreads and town hates town and every hamlet of the country side shouts for its share of plunder and of pelf. (Social Criticism 7-8)

The balance between the needs of the state and the individual are essential to Leacock's vision of Canada, and although he proposed practical and attainable goals, he remained fully aware of the complexity of the issues at stake. "[W]ith every stage of social advance life gets more complicated, more intertwined," he wrote, "more things have to be done by associated effort . . . [as] . . . each man's rights against his fellow become more and more limited by the demands of the general welfare" (Our Heritage of Liberty 40-41). Yet despite such difficulties, the crises of war and economic depression, which exposed the vulnerability and devalued nature of both individual agency and social community, impressed on Leacock the need for a welfare system that would guarantee essential needs:

It is clear now that our fortunes are not in our individual keeping. We stand or fall as a nation. And the nation which neglects the aged and the infirm, or which leaves a family to be shipwrecked as the result of a single accident to a breadwinner, cannot survive as against a nation in which the welfare of each is regarded as contributory to the safety of all. (Social Criticism 136)

The individual and the nation are indissolubly linked and mutually dependent on each other, but the legitimation of an antimodernist discourse on value requires, at least, "the willingness to unite" (Our Heritage of Liberty 58). Leacock's vision of Canada, then, represents the possibility of an antimodernist nation founded and shaped by great men, fuelled by the work of economic men under a social umbrella, as it were, of progressive welfare policy that would provide continuity with the past through reconfiguring value for the present.

Understanding Leacock's thought, then, as a frame of mind seeking cultural value and authority in a cultural field that is by definition a constantly evolving process and not a static and inappropriate telic design, debunks a-historical sentiment and disciplinary arrogance that perpetuate the poor condition of Leacock studies. Leacock never lost faith that "somewhere yet, in liberty and in justice, . . . [our means of salvation] . . . will be found" (Our Heritage of Liberty 46-7), a comment that in itself expresses the need to balance "liberty," the individual, with "justice," the social. Even in his last writings in Last Leaves, written while the world was engaged in a dire struggle for fundamental democratic principles, Leacock held on to

his antimodernist vision of progress, taking as a positive sign the co-operation forged by war -- "the same union of hearts, the same purpose for all . . . [which must be achieved by] . . . the work of the Spirit of the common man" (106). This "spirit" epitomizes Leacock's antimodernism, the guiding principle of legitimized value and authority that he expressed throughout his cultural work; its interdisciplinary and humanist nature refuting disciplinary attempts to pin it down and quantify and qualify its wide-ranging complexity. As Leacock wrote late in life, "in thirty-five years of college and public lecturing I always refused to discuss details. It's too late to start now. Let the idea stand for itself" (My Discovery of the West 206). Indeed. And this idea, this "spirit" informs his proposals for social justice, his view of democracy's need for inspiration since without this spirit "democracy is just a form, an empty and deserted house for thieves to meet in" (Our Heritage of Liberty 57). Curiously, the image of the house has always been of importance to Leacock. I began this chapter by discussing Leacock's search for a home before discussing his search for cultural value and authority in the antimodernist cultural field which both shaped, and was shaped by, Leacock. In Our Heritage of Liberty, Leacock stresses the importance of an individual's home within a community: "build a house," Leacock asserts, "and here steps in humanitarianism, that warm human quality that dissolves the cold impossibilities of the economist" (70). Leacock built his house, and in its very structure lies Leacock's complex antimodernist cultural signature:

It's a rambling, two-storied house with a lot of white stucco and graceful porches and balconies. Mainly it's an old Ontario summer home in the grand Edwardian manner, but there is something more . . . an echo of an English country manor (a squire's house) and a French feeling to the exterior, something in the pitch of the high roof which suggests a seigneurie from Normandy or Quebec. Inside, the fireplaces, the wicker furniture and the dark oak panelling add a further touch of simple elegance and substance.

The house was designed by an architect, but to Leacock's careful sketches and specifications. Instinctively he created a home which reflected what he had become: the Ontario farm boy who made good, the yeoman sire with the inclinations of an English gent and a touch of gallic flair. His Ontario roots, and the English and French strains which were part of his Canadian heritage: all are present in that elegant home. (Taylor 16)

Here then can be seen the physical embodiment of Stephen Leacock, the "great man" whose cultural work reproduces strains of cultural value from the past as an anchor for progress, for the shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Rural tory and urban visionary, educator and entertainer, humorist and social scientist, reactionary and visionary, in short, antimodernist -- at the close of not only another century but also a millennium, perhaps such an interdisciplinary discourse needs to be recovered to address our own continuing cultural anxieties.

III. Career: The Perfect Salesman and A Cultural Authority.

"I am very commercial and like money," wrote Stephen Leacock in October 1924, "but at the same time I have the petty vanity of a writer not to care to see things too much altered" (Chopra 118). This seemingly off-hand comment raises a number of issues regarding Leacock's vocation as a writer, particularly his admission to commercial self-interest when, according to Pierre Bourdieu, the functioning of the field of cultural production relies on "a collective disavowal of commercial interests and profits" (Bourdieu, Field 75). For those writers and critics whose economies of exchange within the cultural field are shaped by "pretending not to be doing what they are doing" (Bourdieu, Field 74) -- that is, by their disavowal of economism -- Leacock's admission problematizes the cultural value of Leacock's work and the cultural authority of his public persona, his signature as a "great man." Yet, as Bourdieu suggests, reducing our understanding of economies within the cultural field to either disinterestedness or self-interest, to symbolic or economic, is mis-leading. Rather, this chapter seeks to examine Leacock's engagement with these economies, particularly the "distinction" between Leacock™, the well-marketed humorist, and Stephen Leacock, the composite cultural figure, as an antimodernist discourse over value and authority, both during his prolific career and after his death.

Any attempt to recover Leacock's career as a writer demands at least a peripheral awareness of how a writer's profession underwent a significant cultural re-evaluation during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Owing to the increased pace of commercialization and industrialization during the nineteenth century, the Carlylean "great man," particularly the writer who embodied authority and value as an educator, as the legitimate voice of an age, came under increasing pressure from the economics of the literary marketplace, the democratization of the printing press, and the rise of new reading audiences. With cultural production increasingly reflecting a capitalist system of commodity exchange, Carlyle, for instance, became caught up in the cultural anxiety towards this modern

"man-of-letters" and his engagement in the literary marketplace. "Since," argues Carlyle, "it is the spiritual always that determines the material, this same Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern persona" (On Heroes 134):

He, such as he may be, is the soul of all. What he teaches, the whole world will do and make. The world's manner of dealing with him is the most significant feature of the world's general position. Looking well at his life, we may get a glance as deep as is readily possible for us into the life of those singular centuries which have produced him, in which we ourselves live and work. (Carlyle, On Heroes 134)

Yet, despite his apparent enthusiasm for the man-of-letters as a modern repository for cultural authority and value, Carlyle calls for an "Organization of the Literary Guild" (On Heroes 143) to preserve such writers' economic interests due to the competitive nature of the cultural field, and expresses concern that such authority is prone to abuse when "it is of the last importance that he do his work right, whoever do it wrong" (On Heroes 137). In short, access to the press through economic capital rather than the symbolic capital of social prestige generates Carlyle's quandary:

Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing . . . is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal every-day extempore Printing, as we see at present. Whoever can speak, speaking now the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is, that he have a tongue others will listen to: this and nothing more is requisite. (On Heroes 141)

Leacock, I wish to argue, responded to this crisis that persisted throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he recognized that the once autonomous cultural agent was increasingly caught up in the "web of the market" (Lears, No Place of Grace 34). Yet, as an antimodernist figure of both "accommodation and protest" (Lears, No Place of Grace xiii) operating within the field of cultural production, Leacock is "commercial" and possesses the "petty vanity of a writer not to care to see thing too much altered" (Chopra 118). In short, Leacock's antimodernist complexity reflects his attempt to navigate contentious discourses of disinterestedness and self-interest through mapping value and authority within

the economies of exchange of his professional career.

Bourdieu's field of cultural production conceptualizes the relations between authors, editors, bookstores, critics, readers, and so on, who invest a given work with a specific configuration of economic and symbolic capital, wherein the accumulation of the latter acts as a "'credit' which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees 'economic' profits" (Bourdieu, Field 75). Because the field functions on the basis of a certain currency of capital, the author, the "great man's" signature, becomes in and of itself a critical site of commodification of cultural goods:

For the author, the critic, the art dealer, the publisher or the theatre manager, the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation. (Bourdieu, Field 75)

This sense of "value" is always relative while the authority to legitimate such value is construed as objective owing to the field's production of a masquerade of normalcy, of "universal value." As Bourdieu attests, "the field of production [is] understood as the system of objective relations between . . . agents or institutions and as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated" (Field 78). Central to this thesis as a whole is the idea that Stephen Leacock navigated the cultural field with a degree of astuteness that, in part, has led to the rupture between the benign humorist and the outmoded social scientist, between the timeless sentimentalist and rampant materialist -- a rupture of Leacock's cultural signature and value perpetuated by the plethora of critical reassessments that have, effectively, canonized and produced Leacock™. In the previous chapter, I discussed Leacock's work in terms of the discursive production of its intellectual value and its engagement with a number of cultural discourses; further to the recovery of Leacock's cultural work, in this chapter I will discuss Leacock's value as a professional writer and the authority of that signature in the competition for economic and symbolic capital, and hence the cultural power to legitimate certain discourses or values within the cultural field.

Leacock's first published pieces were humorous and consisted of brief, topical ephemera which appeared in college and university magazines Leacock edited or co-edited, venues that had a limited circulation and wielded little symbolic capital. In fact, Leacock's first foray into a broader cultural field consisted of a lone humorous piece, "That Ridiculous War in the East," in the Toronto magazine Grip, followed by a cluster of pieces in two New York publications: one of his frequently anthologized pieces, "My Financial Career," in Life, and over twenty others in Truth. A link exists between the two latter magazines in the name of Peter McArthur, a fellow student of Leacock's at Upper Canada College and the University of Toronto who had moved to New York to try his hand at free-lance work. McArthur worked for Life when "My Financial Career" was published there and was subsequently an editor of Truth. Whether McArthur had a role to play in these early successes remains to be proven, yet the fact that McArthur went on to celebrate Leacock's achievement in his anthology and appreciation, Stephen Leacock (1923), suggests that McArthur was willing to publicly endorse Leacock's work. Leacock published twenty-two pieces with Truth from 1895-7, a run which suddenly ended during 1897, the same year that McArthur left Truth, after which Leacock published only two humorous pieces before 1910, one in 1901 and one in 1904, once again in university magazines of limited circulation at McGill where Leacock had become a professor (Moritz 77). The sporadic nature of these early publications and the link with McArthur suggest Leacock's vocation as a humorist did not arise from disinterested genius, or from the sustained application of his gifts in that area. In contrast, his first book, Elements of Political Science (1906), clearly demonstrates a concerted effort on Leacock's part versus the early haphazard development in his career as a humorist.¹³

Elements of Political Science resulted from years of self-motivated study and a Ph.D. at the

¹³Robertson Davies asserts that "Literary Lapses was Stephen Leacock's first book" (Introduction vii), a comment symptomatic of the literary marketplace's need to re-write Leacock, or at least a general carelessness in Leacock studies. The extent to which Davies de-valued Leacock's cultural work and selectively canonized fragments is astounding.

University of Chicago in political science and economics, and became Leacock's most profitable "bestseller" during his lifetime.¹⁴ Moreover, Elements was well received critically and praised as a "treatise by one who appreciates the necessity of clear definitions, fine distinctions, precision of statement, and fairness of view-point; . . . [a book] . . . clear-cut, well written, logically arranged and convincing" ("Comment" 765), and as valuable for both the academic and general reader because of its "breadth of interest" ("Civics" 257). The success of Elements in part launched Leacock's academic career: an assistant professorship, an increasing number of public lectures on political economy, the Rhodes Trust tour of the British Empire, and appointment as William Dow Professor of Political Economy at McGill -- all in the span of five years. Not surprisingly, Leacock's "extra-curricular" activities in humour were all but abandoned; in fact, from 1906 until 1910 one article entitled "The Psychology of American Humour," published in University Magazine in 1907, appears to be the only public suggestion during this period of Leacock's interest in humour. In the previous chapter I argued that the construction of "two Mr. Leacocks" (Berger, "The Other Mr. Leacock" 23) results from a disciplinary unwillingness to read Leacock's cultural work holistically. Yet, despite his evident success as a political economist and social scientist on an international scale, if Leacock is known today it is as a humorist, his professional career virtually effaced by the marketing and (re)production of Leacock™ that effectively authorizes a specific type of cultural product robbed of the complexity of its antimodernist context. Albert and Theresa Moritz, for example, warn that "for readers hoping to find either wit or impassioned social criticism in its pages, Elements . . . may be something of a disappointment" (102), a terse summary that hardly contextualizes the moment of the text's production. Moreover, David Legate, pursuing his own extremely limited definition of Leacock, dismisses this work as "deadly dull" (Preface, n.pag):

¹⁴Although all of Leacock's biographers unquestioningly reproduce this fact as well as the notion that Elements was translated into eighteen languages (nineteen in Curry's account), Carl Spadoni's recent work on a comprehensive Leacock bibliography has failed to unearth such a number of editions. It would seem, then, that Elements' success could well be another anecdotal and unsubstantiated account whose origins have been lost.

I questioned then . . . [after having accidentally taken Elements from a library shelf] . . . that the same man could be two such distinct men. . . . Somehow it bothered me [and] it bothered me later. It transpires that others have been similarly bothered. (Legate, Preface n.pag)

The selective canonization is wide-ranging: from Robertson Davies' assertion that "Leacock's humour set time at nought" (Introduction ix) (that is, his humour is a-historical and a-political), through David Legate's sustained attempt to de-value the currency not only of Leacock's capital as an intellectual and social critic, but also of his humour which "was strictly commercial" (Legate 72), to James Doyle's startling presumption of objective value in labelling Leacock's cultural moment as one "in Canadian history that subsequent generations prefer to denounce or forget" (Sage 75). Such commentators seek to produce their own version of Leacock as a man and as a public persona, rather than as an intellectual figure subject to the complex "antimodern impulse [which] was rooted in what can aptly be called a crisis of cultural authority, which had both public and private dimensions" (Lears, No Place of Grace 5). And yet, although by 1910 Leacock's cultural signature consisted of his role as a professor, author and public speaker on imperial politics and socioeconomics, the publication of Literary Lapses marked the production of Leacock's persona and work as a humorist, which arose more from a fortuitous meeting of genius and circumstances than from any concerted effort.

Literary Lapses came together in an almost casual fashion late in 1909 when Leacock felt that he might, with little extra effort, be able to use his early humorous pieces published in the 1890s to supplement his income. While Leacock put his manuscript together, a close friend, B.K. Sandwell, attempted to dissuade Leacock from publishing his humour, feeling that Leacock's "position as a scholar was not secure enough to stand such a display of frivolity" (Curry 79) -- which, considering Leacock's rapid rise in academic and intellectual circles, seems perhaps overly cautious. Leacock sent the original manuscript of Literary Lapses to Houghton Mifflin, publishers of Elements of Political Science, who quickly returned it believing humour to be "too uncertain" (Curry 79, Legate 49), a response perhaps not unexpected from a publishing house renowned for its "conservative reputation which made the young

writers of the decade seek other publishers" (Shackleford 216). In fact, Leacock's submission of Literary Lapses to Houghton Mifflin seems so uncharacteristically ill-considered on Leacock's behalf, that the manuscript may well have been "compiled and submitted as an exuberant gesture or a prank as much as anything else" (Curry 79). Moreover, by all accounts, it was Leacock's brother, George, who advocated further action and suggested self-publication through a local printing company in Montreal. The result was an inexpensive paper bound edition of 3000 copies, with no indication of the author's occupation or credentials, the kind of symbolic capital critical to the authorization of Elements of Political Science. Despite such modest or even half-serious beginnings, once the Gazette Publishing Company edition of Literary Lapses was published, Leacock oversaw the little book's distribution and advertising in earnest, even if only to recoup his initial investment. Indeed, the first edition of Literary Lapses was not "indifferently distributed" (Doyle 45), as James Doyle argues in order to validate his own interpretation of Leacock's unmediated and naturally occurring affinity for humour. In a letter to the book's distributors, the Montreal News Company, Leacock established terms over royalties, future rights and distribution, and also proposed to supply "200 paper placards and 100 placards in cardboard to be used as advertisements in stores and book stands" (qtd. in Curry 81-82). Exuberant prank or not, with the publication of his first humorous book, Leacock clearly expresses his awareness of the functioning of the field of cultural production; namely, the field's economies of exchange.¹⁵ Yet Leacock's economism has either empowered criticism of Leacock's commercial self-interest, or has produced the canonization of Leacock as an a-historical and disinterested genius -- interpretations that fail to consider Leacock's antimodernism, his

¹⁵By "economies of exchange," I mean both economic and symbolic capital. As Bourdieu attests, "the collective disavowal of commercial interests and profits, the most 'anti-economic' and most visibly 'disinterested' behaviours, which in an 'economic' universe would be those most ruthlessly condemned, contain a form of economic rationality (even in the restricted sense)" (Field 75). Consequently, the art trader, editor publisher and so on, not only pursue commercial self-interest, but can also act as "symbolic bankers" (Field 77) whose "very functioning is defined by a 'refusal' of the 'commercial'" (Field 75). In this regard, Leacock's negotiations over the cultural production of Elements of Political Science, which would involve a different configuration of value and strategies for legitimation, would be useful for the present study. However, such documentation either does not exist or has not yet been made public.

"accommodation and protest" towards the shifting sense of value of cultural field.

The first edition of Literary Lapses sold out quickly during the summer of 1910, and yet no evidence exists to suggest that Leacock intended publishing further humorous texts at that time. The remainder of his cultural work during 1910 suggests that he sought to consolidate his capital, the authority as an academic and political economist that B.K. Sandwell believed to be tenuous. In fact, Leacock's "serious" work that year included an essay in Trade and Commerce, two essays in University Magazine, an essay on monopolies in Plaindealer, an essay on politics in South America published in the American Political Science Review, and a series of twenty-five articles on "Practical Political Economy" for Saturday Night that continued into 1911. All of this work, however, has been over-shadowed by the chance purchase of a copy of Literary Lapses by John Lane that fortuitous summer.

As with much else in Leacock's life, the oft-reproduced anecdote of John Lane buying a copy of the original edition of Literary Lapses at a train station in Montreal has acquired an almost legendary status and is often cited as though evidence of Leacock's destined success as a humorist. What is on record, however, is that John Lane sent Leacock a telegram from England with an offer to publish a British trade edition of Literary Lapses with the Bodley Head, to which Leacock readily agreed. Later that summer Leacock made a brief trip to England and Lane made use of the visit to market not only Literary Lapses but also Leacock as the "Canadian Mark Twain" for a British public who had received him as a serious lecturer on imperial politics and economics only three years before. In effect, Leacock was "launched as a humorist in the international marketplace without having to risk another cent" (Moritz 129), and without having to move to a major literary centre such as London or New York, which many Canadian writers felt compelled to do in order to benefit most directly from the concentration of capital in such cultural centres. John Lane was the consummate cultural businessman who understood the stakes involved with both the symbolic and economic nature of the field of cultural production to the extent that he made the Bodley Head "one of the most successful publishing houses in the world" (Nelson 42). Lane's marketing of Leacock as the

"Canadian Mark Twain," for instance, was not accidental but reflects Lane's commercial need to fill the void left by Twain's death in April 1910, and indicates a strategy for the investment of symbolic capital through appropriating the cultural signature of an established author in order to legitimate one who is unknown. But Lane's publication of Literary Lapses did not simply derive from a shrewd commercial instinct either; the material of these early sketches, which Leacock would go on to develop throughout his writing career, struck a resonant chord of the antimodernist cultural mind set. Leacock's currency was not only the cultural immediacy of urban situations, but also his complex sympathy for the individual human being's struggle for value. Curiously, while reviewers responded favourably to the accessibility and immediacy of Leacock's sketches and stories, they also construed them as de-contextualized ephemera. For instance, the Dial's reviewer described Literary Lapses as "amusing trifles written with rapid pen and well adapted to even more rapid reading; . . . [a book] . . . full of smiles to those who approach it in a suitable frame of mind and not with too severe a determination to preserve their centre of gravity" ("Amusing" 132). Similarly, the Independent found "the form of these . . . [sketches and stories to be] . . . excellent [and] many of the little tales most diverting in themselves" ("Literary Notes" 670). In effect, while Leacock inadvertently discovered a lucrative niche in the marketplace for his culturally specific, ironic critiques of then current discourses concerning the value and role of education, politics, socioeconomics and the like, and while these short skits reflected a number of key Leacockian concerns as discussed in the previous chapter, they were produced and received as amusing and diverting by a literary marketplace that relied on the classification of cultural products as particular, hegemonic cultural commodities -- either humorous or serious in Leacock's case -- which neither Houghton Mifflin nor John Lane seemed prepared to conflate¹⁶.

¹⁶Although John Lane and Dodd Mead in New York did publish a number of Leacock's non-humorous work, it was Leacock's signature as a humorist on which they focused their efforts since this promised greater economic returns.

The publication of a second book of humour, Nonsense Novels¹⁷ (1911), secured for Leacock not only a willing publisher (John Lane) but also caught the attention of large circulation magazines, such as Toronto's Saturday Night and Harper's Magazine, who actively solicited new pieces. With Nonsense Novels Leacock included a brief preface in which he intimates an awareness of the different configurations of value attached to his role as academic and as humorist:

[The reviewers of Literary Lapses] were good enough to express the thought that when the author grew up and became educated there might be hope for his intellect. This expectation is of no avail. All that education could do in this case has been tried and has failed. As a Professor of Political Economy in a great university, the author admits he ought to know better. But he will feel amply repaid for his humiliation if there are any to whom this little book may bring some passing amusement in hours of idleness, or some brief respite when the sadness of the heart or the sufferings of the body forbid the perusal of worthier things.

Stephen Leacock
McGill University
Montreal

(Nonsense Novels n.pag)

Although this preface is, in itself, humorous and self-deprecating, it also reflects a subdued anxiety towards the growing tension between his production and reception as an academic and as a humorist. He draws attention to his role as "a Professor of Political Economy in a great university," which in a way legitimates his humour as something warranting serious consideration; yet he also admits that "he ought to know better" than to produce a text which "may bring some passing amusement" as opposed to something academic in nature. In this way, Leacock deliberately blurs and complicates the distinctions between his work that the literary marketplace sought to impose, and problematizes conventional definitions of both the academic and the humorist. Yet Leacock's attempt at simultaneously developing the "humorous" and the "serious" has proved to be problematic for such critics as David Legate, who believes that Leacock was

¹⁷Although much has been written on Leacock's humour, a great deal of work remains to be done to discuss the cultural significance and contexts of his different forms of humour. For instance, Nonsense Novels consists of literary parodies or burlesques, a form different from Literary Lapses in that it acts, perhaps, as a form of literary criticism and demands a degree of intellectual or educational capital not required for the more overtly popular culture aspects of Literary Lapses.

"foolhardy to try and combine" (52) his different interests. As "a man of sides," Legate continues, Leacock "had now to choose sides" (53), which is specious reasoning on behalf of Legate and, through him, the prevalent attitude of the literary marketplace and the academy, and overlooks Leacock's antimodernist complexity. As a result, Leacock's resistance to hegemonic disciplinary distinctions has been quietly effaced and has resulted in dismissing Leacock's cultural work as commercial (Legate) or preserving it as timeless and de-contextualized (Davies). And yet, as Bourdieu suggests, both dismissal and de-contextualization lead to a sort of unconscious longing for pre-capitalist modes of production and forms of value and "lend themselves to two opposed readings, both equally false, which each undo their essential duality and duplicity by reducing them either to the disavowal or to what is disavowed -- to disinterestedness or self-interest" (Field 74). Understanding disinterestedness and self-interest as falsely dichotomous position-takings enables the re-contextualization of Leacock's antimodernist discourse, his "accommodation and protest" at the heart of his strategies for negotiation in the antimodernist field of cultural production.

Leacock was often strong-willed in his dealings with publishers, editors, and the like, which is evident even in his forthright negotiation of terms for the first edition of Literary Lapses discussed above. Rather than delegating his own agency to a literary agent, Leacock generally preferred to deal with his publishers directly. And even when he did employ an agent, such as Paul Reynolds who acted as his representative for many years, Leacock still insisted on having direct contact with publishers, much to Reynold's chagrin (Moritz 190). Perhaps like the "great men" he admired, Leacock sought to retain his own agency within the de-personalizing economies of the cultural field, particularly the antimodernist literary marketplace wherein the literary agent seeks to preserve an author's symbolic capital of disinterestedness:

No one is better placed than art dealers¹⁸ to know the interests of the makers of works and the strategies they use to defend their interests or to conceal their strategies. Although dealers form a protective screen between the artist and the market, they are also what link them to the market and so provoke, by their very existence, cruel unmaskings of the truth of artistic practice. (Bourdieu, Field 79)

Yet for Leacock, such unmaskings were never cruel but simply the acknowledgement of the economics inherent in cultural production. For some contemporary critics, Leacock's direct negotiations over the particulars of his book contracts, the sully of his hands through economic self-interest, essentially upsets the duplicitous game for authority and value. Such critics insist on maintaining distinctions between Leacock's humorous and serious work, between Leacock as a salesman or cultural authority, rather than positing the existence of a composite and complex antimodernist figure.

Leacock challenged the romantic fallacy of disinterestedness in the production of many of his texts, as he did with the first edition of Literary Lapses. In 1920, for instance, after Harper's Magazine published a second series of "nonsense novels," Leacock sent the manuscript of Winsome Winnie to the John Lane Company¹⁹ office in New York, in accordance with his well-established procedure of serial publication followed by Lane's trade edition. However, the manuscript was returned with one of Leacock's few rejection slips, citing as reason that its publication would be a financial liability. Leacock's response to the managing editor, Jefferson Jones, serves to illustrate his commercial self-interest, as well as his sophisticated awareness of how the literary marketplace operates:

My dear Jefferson,

I was sorry indeed to learn from your telegram that you had refused my offer. Your publishing at a loss will, of course, be a disastrous thing for me as your interest and mine will be exactly opposed, and you will have no incentive to advertise or push the book. In other words, it bids fair to be strangled in its cradle, whereas I am quite

¹⁸Bourdieu conflates art dealers, publishers, literary agents into the composite "cultural businessman" whose investment of symbolic capital in an author or artist leads to legitimation and the returns of economic capital (Field 75-81).

¹⁹Both Curry and Legate state that the publisher was Dodd, Mead (107), which is incorrect since the John Lane Co. in New York was not bought by Dodd, Mead until 1922.

convinced that it is the best book I have done since Nonsense Novels, and that with energetic and enterprising handling it could have been a great success. (Curry 137)

Although Leacock subtly chastised his publisher for not recognizing the capital invested in his cultural signature, John Lane defended Jefferson's position. In so doing Lane highlights Leacock's apparent transgression in taking an active commercial interest in his work rather than playing the game and letting an agent such as Lane "form a protective screen between the artist and the market" (Bourdieu, Field 79):

Your recent books have not been so well received in England, as your four or five earlier ones, either by the critics or the public. You are doing too much, and there is a general feeling, even in Canada, that you are now writing snippets for high prices, and these are too short for book form, which is a sure way of losing your hold on book buyers. (Moritz 187)

However, in order to have Winsome Winnie published, Leacock did concede to take reduced royalties of 15% instead of his customary 20% on all copies after the first lot of 5000, and indeed was vindicated as the book proved to be both a critical and commercial success, eliciting positive reviews from the likes of the New York Times, which suggested that "despite his delicious drolleries, Mr. Leacock's book of verbal cartoons contains an amazing amount of truthful criticism" ("Nonsense Novels" 11) and sold out print runs through 1920 and 1921.

There is no denying, then, nor is there any reason to do so, that Leacock made money. At times he did sound overly commercial as when, for example, in a letter to Dodd, Mead regarding Here Are My Lectures (1937) whose length, Leacock declared, "would be about 60,000 words but easily lengthened or shortened to any extent" (Chopra 201). Yet even a "serious" book like My Discovery of the West (1937) could still be a commercial success, as indeed it was since Leacock received \$40 for each serial instalment in the Toronto Globe and Mail, a record amount for a series sold to a Canadian newspaper (Moritz 281). Leacock's work ethic, his aspiration to be a "great man," and his sense of cultural value were not compromised by his economic disinterestedness. Rather, Leacock's commercial sense, his familiarity with the literary marketplace as a system of capitalist exchange, left him with little doubt as to how to produce

and distribute his vision of social justice, his sense of cultural value, to a wide audience. For instance, in a letter to Dodd, Mead on 9th March 1943, Leacock outlines how much of Happy Stories (1943) he had already written, when it could be expected, and then adds: "I enclose a suggestion for publicity work similar to what I did with Doubleday Doran on my book Montreal. . . . It is not an essential part of the contract except that without it I should hardly care to keep the clause about the next two books" (Chopra 270). Although late in career at this point, and consequently widely read and respected, Leacock's proposal for "publicity work" still reflects his antimodernist frame of mind. In the proposal, Leacock reflects that "crisis of cultural authority, which had both public and private dimensions" (Lears, No Place of Grace 5), a crisis concerned with the duality and duplicity of the rules of cultural production in which authors, artists, and the like must navigate the economic universe in which they struggle for capital, for legitimation, by "pretending not to be doing what they are doing" (Bourdieu, Field 74):

Prof. Leacock's proposal for Promotion work on Canadian Edition in Montreal, Ottawa & Toronto: can be accepted or not.

I propose either directly or through Mrs. H.T. Shaw, my research secretary of some years past who has worked on this kind of publicity --

1. To compose and print at my expense and circulate at my expense an announcement circular of extracts from Happy Stories, with comment, -- not less than 2000 words, 4000 copies.
2. To take special steps to send the circular to prepared personal lists.
3. To take steps to obtain special quotations from the list in certain journals.
4. To interest certain departmental and large book stores personally in the sale.

It would be difficult for me as an author to do this "boosting" entirely in my own person but Mrs. Shaw will act under my advice.

I shall expect for this a special payment over and above any other royalty of ten cents (10 cents Canadian) on each copy sold in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. (Chopra 271, emphasis added)

In this instance, Leacock is careful to play the game, as it were, of the cultural field publicly, just as he is in his publicity campaign for Montreal: Seaport and City (1942) when he suggests that "one could start a sale of this book like a gush of water from a stricken rock. But I can't strike it myself" (Chopra 271). He even considers writing ad copy for the likes of Gladstone Murray and then simply having him sign it -- "but

that's not the kind of thing I would say in a letter, so I won't mention it" (Chopra 272). Leacock, then, is aware of the dual nature of the cultural field in that it sanctifies the disinterestedness of authorship while it necessarily demands engagement with the field's competitive struggle for production and legitimation.

In Stephen Leacock (1923), Peter McArthur attributes Leacock's commercialism to the literary marketplace. McArthur's disquiet is towards Leacock's apparent willingness to meet the requests of the "modern enterprising publisher" (McArthur 158) when "it is the publishers, syndicate managers and directors of lecture bureaus" (McArthur 158) who, in McArthur's view, have done Leacock the most harm:

As a single book "Nonsense Novels" does not deserve a word of censure, but as a turning point in the development of Mr. Leacock's art it raises a doubt. Since its appearance the public has demanded more nonsense novels, and the publishers have tried to make it appear that all his later work has been of the same class. This is not true. He has allowed himself a wide range, which embraces pathos as well as nonsense, but publishers, critics and readers have seemingly conspired to make believe that all his productions are nonsense sketches. (McArthur 140-1)

In fact, McArthur argues, "[t]he curse of modern literature is the enterprising publisher" (159) who will "take . . . whatever book . . . [an author] . . . writes and puts a jacket on it that will fool the public into thinking that is the prosperous bestseller of the hour" (160). Value, and, by extension, the author's cultural authority, are therefore subject to an on-going commercial evaluation -- an economism that pervades the objective relations between agents and institutions who comprise the field of cultural production. In an early humorous piece, "The Reading Public: A Book-Store Study," Leacock insists on a bookseller's, Mr. Sellyer's, complicity in the production of value and authority as something relative to the superficial signatures of each consumer's appearance -- an incisive cultural commentary once again provided by a narrator who often embodies an antimodernist frame of mind:

I noticed that though the store was filled with books -- ten thousand of them, at a guess -- Mr. Sellyer was apparently only selling two. Every woman who entered went away with Golden Dreams; every man was given a copy of the Monkeys of New Guinea. To one lady Golden Dreams was sold as exactly the reading for a holiday, to another as the very book to read after a holiday; another bought it as a book for a rainy day, and fourth the right sort of reading for a fine day. The Monkeys was

sold as a sea story, a land story, a story of the jungle, and a story of the mountains, and it was put at a price corresponding to Mr. Sellyer's estimate of the purchaser. (Leacock, Moonbeams 29-30)

Mr. Sellyer's role as bookseller surviving in an economic universe, untroubled by distinctions between economic self-interest and disinterest, or by cultural value beyond the economic, epitomizes Leacock's antimodernist concern over the crisis regarding cultural authority:

Please the public! That's the trouble today not only with the moving picture but with everything that is written to be printed or acted, everything drawn, sung, or depicted. Nothing can appear unless there's money in it. Poetry and drawing and painting could keep alive, but such things as moving pictures, radio programmes and syndicated newspaper stuff can live only if people will pay for them. And not only some people but practically all the people. It is the ten-cent crowd that are needed, not the plutocrats. Hence has been set up in our time the unconscious tyranny of the lower class. (Leacock, Humour: Its Theory and Technique 245)

The overtly commercial aspect of cultural production, then, posits a challenge to the authority and value Leacock attributed to an influential figure, an educator, a "great man," and the role that such a figure should play in nation-building, in realizing social justice. Leacock writes with an antimodernist awareness of the conditions of cultural production; although art "is contaminated the moment it is connected with a money return, with an ulterior purpose" (Humour and Humanity 207), he realizes "that is only a part of the imperfection of the world in which we live [in that] art cannot be entirely free and self-prompted and self-inspired" (Humour and Humanity 207-8). In short, Leacock's response to the artist's seeming inevitable economic self-interest epitomizes the antimodernist discourse of accommodation and protest, the recognition that the "commercialization of art [is] a thing necessary but deplorable" (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 216). By art, Leacock also appears to include various media and modes of cultural production -- books, periodicals, film, radio, newspapers, and so on. In his 1909 essay, "Literature and Education in America," he testified to the inherent threat that this commercialization presented to authority and value. "American newspapers and journals," wrote Leacock (and by American he referred to publication in both the United States and Canada), "are not written 'upwards' (so to speak) as if seeking to

attain the ideal of an elevated literary excellence, but 'downward', so as to catch the ear and capture the money of the crowd" (Social Criticism 23).

The ideal of an elevated 'great man', then, becomes besieged by the economism of the cultural field and, as a result, the need to provide a standardised product, a stable signature in the cultural field. The need to meet the economic bottom line, the need to generate economic capital, compromises cultural value and authority still further not only through the "tyranny of the lower class" (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 246), but also "the tyranny of the moralist and the tyranny of the advertiser" (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 246), all of which ultimately produce a saleable, commodified and standardized cultural product:

[Writers can only be published] by sticking to a range of childish and innocuous topics. They may, for example, make huge fun of Mr. Boob, who can't get his furnace to work; Mr. Nutt, half drowned by his own garden hose; and Mr. and Mrs. Snarl, who never stop fighting. From this stuff and similar stuff in the "movies" one gets an impression as if the whole of us were being flattened back into childishness. (Humour: Its Theory and Technique 247-8)

Clearly, this constituted a threat to cultural authority and value since "when writers write with both eyes on money instead of only one, some of their work is bound to turn foolish" (Humour and Humanity 195).

Similar to Carlyle's sense of cultural crisis in respect to the authority of the "man-of-letters," Leacock was well aware of the commercial nature of the literary marketplace of the nineteenth century, which his own cultural heroes experienced. Leacock suggested that Dickens' poorer work resulted from "commercial reasons [which] will force publication when art would demand delay" (Charles Dickens 238). In effect, Leacock's discourse over authority and value, as discussed in the previous chapter, is also central to the cultural production of his career; his cultural work that sought to negotiate a middle way between individual self-interest and a social justice:

[A]s with thought, so lives and careers were also seen to be meaningful only when regarded from a universal perspective. Society, it must be argued, must be conceived as an organism. The individual must subordinate private interests to serve the greater whole . . . One could

perform one's social duties in ascending forms of service to an ever-greater good, whether at the level of the church, the civil service, or the empire. (McKillop 206)

While Leacock did not actively disavow commercial success, academic specialists who were his contemporaries often de-valued Leacock's academic work because of his refusal to confine his cultural work to the sanctioned and elitist discourse of economics, or political science, or related academic fields. As discussed in the previous chapter, Leacock espoused a humanistic concept of education as interdisciplinary and holistic, enshrined in cultural productions that would reach as wide an audience as possible in order to educate and to inform. "We are moved and stimulated to understanding far more by our imagination than by our own intellect," Leacock wrote in an appendix to Hellements of Hickonomics, "more even than by our self-interest" (79) -- hence Leacock's often familiar, sometimes impassioned tone of voice that engages the general reader much more readily than would, say, a statistical treatise. And it is this desire to communicate, to convey a particular vision of social justice, that shapes Leacock's cultural work -- his humorous and serious writing, his influence as a prominent public figure, and the currency of his cultural signature. For instance, as a professor at McGill University, Leacock initiated a number of important academic and non-academic policies, and was particularly active, for instance, in the fight against cancer, for which he utilized various modes of cultural production to raise awareness:

In 1928 . . . [Leacock] . . . invited Dr. John C.A. Gerhester of the American Society for the Control of Cancer to speak at McGill. His correspondence, as preserved in his files, was heavy that year with the letters of appeal to influential members of his own as well as other faculties. He ran an advertisement in the Star at his own expense on "The Problem of Cancer." He distributed posters and spoke before civic groups. He even wrote, printed, and distributed "A Proposal for a Montreal Association for Cancer Control and Cancer Research," a single sheet which he sent out by the hundreds. He waged a fight to set up a cancer research program at McGill. But it was before the days of applying advertising methods to national welfare problems in Canada, and the university authorities turned him down. (Curry 183-4, emphasis added)

Once again, Leacock's awareness of the functioning of the antimodernist cultural field, of the implicit

recognition of the field's economism, invited resistance from those wholly reactionary forces (here, university administration) who, in seeking to preserve cultural practices, seek to preserve their own configuration of authority. As Bourdieu suggests, "[t]hose in dominant positions operate essentially defensive strategies, designed to perpetuate the status quo by maintaining themselves and the principles on which their dominance is based" (Field 83). Yet Leacock does not simply assume an antagonistic position-taking as a "dominant figure . . . who want[s] continuity, identity, reproduction" or as a "newcomer . . . who seek[s] discontinuity, rupture, difference, revolution" (Bourdieu, Field 106) -- rather, Leacock's pragmatism as a cultural producer, like his realistic social thought, reflects the complex negotiations for authority and value of his antimodernist frame of mind. These kinds of negotiations -- between past and present, commercial and non-commercial, humorous and serious, and the like -- inform Leacock's "accommodation and protest" in his cultural work as an academic, an influential social persona, and as a writer. For instance, during a reading tour of Great Britain, Leacock "kept peppering his publishers with reminders of where and when his next lecture would be given, and agitating for proper window displays of his books in the town where he was billed to speak" (Legate 121). Leacock understood that the field of cultural production wielded the cultural power to legitimate his authority which would in turn legitimate his idea of value, his vision of social justice. Thus, Leacock sought to produce and distribute both his "humorous" and his "serious" work in a manner that would not only maximize his economic returns, but would also convey his message to the widest possible audience.

In the autumn of 1919 Leacock wrote a series of articles for The New York Times, which he published in 1920 as The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice. In this text he offers a prognosis of problems common to all industrial societies by avoiding references to specific places or incidents, as though to appeal to an international audience. In addition, Leacock exploited his capital as a humorist by designing The Unsolved Riddle's format so that it resembled one of his humorous books, both in its signature and the nature of its cultural production. Yet, throughout the 1920s Leacock produced mostly humour for an

insatiable market; his serious work consisted of several articles on social justice, diatribes against prohibition, an article on the gold standard, and prefaces to books on issues of Canadian trade, transportation and tariffs -- but this latter type of work was few and far between. However, much like his response to World War One in The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice, the social crisis of the New York stock market crash on 29th October 1929 appeared to provoke a flurry of "serious" work that sought to convey his vision for social justice. As a result, during the first half of the 1930s, Leacock published Economic Prosperity in the British Empire (1930), Back to Prosperity: The Great Opportunity of the Empire Conference (1932), and The Gathering Financial Crisis in Canada (1936), as well as pamphlets and a stream of related articles -- all of which appeared well-received. Economic Prosperity in the British Empire, for example, which appeared just before the imperial conference of 1930, was widely read by politicians and economists and had considerable influence on public opinion. The board of trade in Orillia, Leacock's home town away from Montreal, purchased one thousand copies of Economic Prosperity and mailed individual copies to British MPs and influential newspaper editors. Albert and Theresa Moritz summarize the general media reception of Leacock's publications on imperialism and economics at the time:

[They] were reviewed, in the main, favourably or were summarized by the press respectfully and without counter-argument. Newspapers and writers who entered quibbles or disagreements generally did so with regard to individual points with a discussion that was basically well-disposed to Leacock's views. (236-237)

In addition, at the turn of the following decade and yet another period of international crisis, Leacock's work earned him further international attention:

On 26th August 1940, the John Lane Co., publishers of Leacock's Our British Empire, informed Leacock that the British Ministry of Information had decided to use this book in their propaganda in the United States. The Ministry wished for Leacock to address short personal notes to a select list of American professors of colonial relations and history to accompany a complimentary copy of this book. (Chopra 246)

Clearly, judging from his international influence, Leacock's cultural signature was not solely as a humorist

but also as a respected intellectual authority, a composite cultural authority that, since his death in 1944 especially, the literary marketplace and disciplinary parameters of academia struggle to confine. And it is the literary marketplace and the academy -- powerful wielders of capital in the field of cultural production - - that have fractured the composite Leacock into either the commercial or disinterested humorist, the outdated or the laurelled academic:

The opposition between the "commercial" and the "non-commercial" reappears everywhere. It is the generative principle of most of the judgements which, in the theatre, cinema, painting or literature, claim to establish the frontier between what is and what is not art. (Bourdieu, Field 82)

The value and authority Leacock extolled, and the value and the authority Leacock embodied, were complex and interdisciplinary, reflecting an antimodernist discourse of mediation, of "accommodation and protest." In this light, the extant but unpublished correspondence surrounding the production of Our Heritage of Liberty (1942) provides a compelling illustration of Leacock as an antimodernist figure negotiating the complex and shifting evaluating criteria of the field of cultural production.

The American educator and editor, R.W. Bardwell approached Leacock early in 1940 with the invitation to write a monograph on "something related to the common ties of people living in a democracy and what we need to preserve it -- (with special reference to Canada and the U.S.) . . . [which] could do a great deal to increase mutual sympathy and understanding between the youth of these countries" (qtd. in Chopra 225). Our Heritage of Liberty emerged from the crisis of world war, the need to construct or reaffirm a particular social vision, and as such was "written expressly for the education of North American youth . . . [in the belief] . . . that it could be useful to a war-torn world" (Chopra 50), one of a series of books to be used for educational purposes in American schools, colleges, and the military. Leacock responded enthusiastically to Bardwell's proposal; not only did the proposal confirm Leacock's belief in education and appeal to his sense of cultural value derived from mediating discourse between past and present, it also afforded considerable economic returns. On the 15th February 1940 Leacock wrote to

Bardwell:

To make it a proper text for the young it should be made more of inspiration than of precept and dogma. The aim should be rather to present a vexed problem in proper attitude of approach, than to offer solutions and panaceas to remove it.

I'd like to try it. As to the financial terms I presume you would offer such and such a royalty with a certain guarantee. No doubt there would be no trouble about that.

But I am afraid I should wish you to go a little further. This kind of monograph written at this length and in this way would be of little use for any other kind of publication than what you suggest. If you found that you could not use my manuscript, a thing that might happen for a variety of reasons, I could make no use of it except to submit it to other publishers for the same kind of purpose, which I should not want to.

I would suggest that if I undertake to prepare a MS of 15,000 words on Liberty, you in turn would undertake either to use it as stated, or if compelled to return it as unsuitable to give me such and such a sum (no great matter) as a sort of consolation cake. (Chopra 224)

At this point, Leacock perhaps appears to be more interested in the logistics of the project's economic remuneration than in its symbolic value. "I'll write as many [words] as ever you'll print," he wrote to Bardwell on 26th February 1940, "but I can cut it like a tailor's coat to just what's wanted if I know beforehand" (Chopra 229), a boast couched in language intimating a made-to-order product. Moreover, Leacock insisted on several emendations to the contract for Our Heritage of Liberty, in particular a clause determining "that a \$250.00²⁰ advance be paid . . . on receipt of the manuscript" (Chopra 232). However, once satisfied with contractual details pertaining to his undisguised economic interest, Leacock made rapid progress in writing the manuscript.

By the 23rd June 1941, however, relations were beginning to sour somewhat. The manuscript was returned with numerous suggested alterations which Leacock found difficult to accept as he felt that he was "a very eminent and successful writer of long experience and wide reputation" (qtd. in Chopra 236) -- clearly an appeal to the symbolic capital, the authority, of his position in the cultural field. Fearing

²⁰Later in the Bardwell-Leacock correspondence as compiled by Vishnu Chopra, the value of the advance becomes \$275 -- presumably owing to a further contractual emendation.

Bardwell would find it unsuitable and therefore "burn the MS forbidding any other publication" (Chopra 236), Leacock repeatedly proposed buying back the rights for the work. The wrangling back and forth first over contractual details and then, more extensively, over content lasted over a year and a half. Bardwell continually urged Leacock to reorganize and simplify the manuscript, feeling "certain that it will meet a wide demand, and the sale both in schools and in trade will be a huge one" (Chopra 241); he even proposed making the alterations himself in order "to meet the requirements as . . . [he knew] . . . them among young American readers" (Chopra 241). In response, Leacock became increasingly curt and resentful of Bardwell's editors' detailed comments on various manuscript drafts. For instance, on the 4th October 1941, Leacock wrote:

I am afraid I cannot consent to sign my name to whole paragraphs which I did not write and do not approve. I enclose for example page 2. I never wrote a word of this: don't like it: and can't sign it: it is not my style and not my thought. So I suggest that you send me the first typescript and I will make as much use of your revision in eliminating and in altering as I can consent to do within the individual province of authorship. If you can use this please do so. If not kindly share the loss of time and effort with me by letting me pay you \$100 & publish the MS elsewhere. (Chopra 242)

Finally, in December 1941, Bardwell and Leacock agreed to abandon the project, and Leacock published the book with John Lane in 1942. What emerges from this important exchange is the clear indication that Leacock believed in and developed the commercial potential of serious works like Our Heritage of Liberty as much as that of his humorous productions, yet not to the extent that he would sacrifice the "individual province of authorship," his cultural authority as an educator, as a "great man." Clearly, then, Leacock's career as a professional writer can be seen to reflect an antimodernist frame of mind, a site of struggle, of "accommodation and protest" over definitions of cultural value somewhere between the individualism of Carlyle's great man and the social and historical determinants of Bourdieu's field of cultural production.

But such complexity in Leacock's cultural signature has largely been effaced in favour of the production of a de-contextualized and often sentimentalized humorist, of a marketable product, of

Leacock™. As J.E Murpurgo unabashedly demonstrates in his evaluation of Leacock's significance:

Fortunately for the reputation of Canadian letters, fortunately for readers of English, and most importantly for the Bodley Head, . . . [John] . . . Lane kept the head of the Department of Political Science and Economics at McGill University from wasting much time on economics and political science. (42)

Nevertheless, Leacock understood the functioning of the cultural production of a specific cultural signature that inevitably simplifies and codifies its subject. With Mark Twain, for instance, Leacock recognized that "[t]he composite picture, filled in line by line, would leave a new person to be called Samuel L. Clemens. The 'Mark Twain' of the legend would crumble into dust" (Mark Twain 11). The capital, the authority, of the cultural signature in this sense is integral to Bourdieu's conception of the field of cultural production as an economic system:

For the author, the critic, the art dealer, the publisher or the theatre manager, the only legitimate accumulation [of capital] consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value,²¹ and to appropriate the profits from this operation. (Bourdieu, Field 74)

However, Leacock believed that he could (re)produce his antimodernist cultural signature in all aspects of his cultural work, without losing its interdisciplinary and complex discourse on value. At some point early in his career, quite possibly during the planning and writing of Sunshine Sketches, Leacock grew increasingly aware of two things humour did particularly well: namely, it did not automatically discount or negate a "serious" message, and it sold well to a wide audience. As he observed, when Nathaniel Hawthorne was concerned with the idea that "mechanical civilization was threatening to undermine the moral worth of humanity . . . [h]e could have written all this out as an essay, and conveyed it to a few hundred readers, . . . [but] [h]e wrote it as a humorous 'parody' and reached thousands" (Humour and

²¹By "value," Bourdieu here refers to not only economic or material value, but symbolic value, "the production of belief" concerning a particular legitimated discourse.

Humanity 85). Leacock, then, combined humour with intellectual inquiry into socioeconomics, politics, etc., and coupled his commercial interest with a desire to educate throughout his diverse cultural work. And Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town remains perhaps the finest example of Leacock at his best in combining the serious and the humorous to provide a social critique²².

Through B.K. Sandwell, Edward Beck, the Montreal Star's managing editor in 1912 approached Leacock with the support of the owner and publisher of the Star, Hugh Graham (made Lord Atholstan in 1917), to provide the newspaper with a series of articles that would have a Canadian setting and which would take the form of a connected series (Moritz 145). For Leacock, this was a new experience, as he had not previously sold his work before having written it:

The result of the negotiations [between Beck and Leacock] was the only really large-scale commission that Leacock ever received for a fictional job for a purely Canadian audience. I do not know what the figure was, but it was probably not large enough to have interested him a few years later, when he was swamped with commissions from American magazines and syndicates; but in 1912 it was adequate and he had a wealth of material which was not too suitable for his American buyers and which he was delighted to have a chance using. (Sandwell 163-4)

Although Sandwell privileges Leacock's interest in Sunshine Sketches as avowedly commercial, Leacock's interests were never simply materialistic, as the extensive correspondence with Bardwell discussed above indicates, but rather reflected an awareness of the economism of cultural production, particularly through venues like the Montreal Star. As he would suggest much later in Humour and Humanity:

In a sense, and within limits, it is of course true that all art should . . . [freely develop]. It is contaminated the moment it is connected with a money return, with an ulterior purpose, with limitations imposed by "adaptability" to a particular periodical and even perhaps the minute it is connected with paid teaching and studied effects. But all that is only a part of the imperfection of the world in which we live. Art cannot be entirely free and self-prompted and self-inspired. . . . In any case it is

²²Leacock wrote many texts that are successful in their melding of humour and social critique -- My Discovery of England (1922), Hellements of Hickonomics (1936), and My Discovery of the West (1937), to name but a few. Yet the focus here is on Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, a text central to the Canadian canon and, therefore, an ideal test case for re-reading Leacock through an antimodernist lens.

probable that human talent, like human character, needs the sharp stimulus of compulsion. (207-8)

Leacock's resistance to and yet acceptance of the "artist" caught in the collision of symbolic and economic capital in the antimodernist cultural field are here fully realized in terms of the "accommodation and protest" towards serial publication. Indeed, Sunshine Sketches first appeared as a series of twelve sketches from 17th February to 22nd June 1912, in Hugh Graham's Montreal Star, the largest selling mass-circulation daily in Canada at that time. As a result, Sunshine Sketches bears the impress of its historical mode of production wherein the specific interests at the moment and site of its production become embedded in the text itself.

In From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920,

Minko Sotiron suggests that current concerns over the freedom of the press in the face of increasing monopolization of newspapers has roots in the cultural shifts from the nineteenth to the twentieth century:

The answers [to today's monopolization of the press] lie in the period from 1890 to 1920, when among other things, a rapidly expanding urban population, increased literacy, the economic boom of the Laurier era, and a growing national market for consumer goods contributed to the profitability of new newspaper ventures. This period in Canadian history marked the transition from the politically oriented newspaper of the nineteenth century to the corporate entity of the twentieth. (4)

While accurate enough in understanding cultural change as process, Sotiron's comments still seek to trace, perhaps unconsciously, a telic design in the shift from politics to profit. As Lears would no doubt contest, reading such a period demands the recognition of antimodernist ambiguity, a sense of the "crisis in cultural authority" (Lears 5), the accommodation and protest of the antimodernist impulse. Moreover, for the current focus, the moment of serialization of Sunshine Sketches in the Montreal Star occurs during this transition and, as a result, embodies much of that antimodernist tension.

At the end of the nineteenth century "newspaper circulations rose dramatically, the leader in this regard being the Montreal Star, the first Canadian mass circulation penny daily, with 52,600 readers in 1899" (Sotiron 5). Nor was this circulation limited to Montreal and its environs, as by 1913, a year after

the serialization of Sunshine Sketches, the Star was distributing forty percent of its newspapers outside Montreal, even as far away as the Maritimes (Sotiron 25). To illustrate, the Star's daily circulation figures in Kingston in 1914 were 580 while its closest competitor, the Toronto Mail & Empire sold only 250 copies. Indeed, the Montreal Star was Canada's, not just Montreal's, "most financially successful newspaper, . . . having made Hugh Graham one of the nation's wealthiest men" (Sotiron 34):

From the beginning Graham ran the Star primarily to make money. He was a pioneer in the use of such tactics as massive coverage of local events, numerous features, special correspondents, and the latest and fastest print technology so that he could outdo his opponents.²³

Graham's strategies sought to win readers and advertisers, with the prime motive to make money through pleasing both camps rather than providing an educative function. However, "[t]he public held on to the nineteenth century reality of the press as a political advocate and champion of a better society, while the newspapers believed in the twentieth-century reality of newspapers as enterprises driven by business considerations" (Sotiron 10). As a result, it would seem likely that the Montreal Star would have stamped on Sunshine Sketches a commercial signature, as the Star's avowedly and unabashedly commercial nature was clearly not a literary venue for new fiction. Yet this is evidently not the case today. Leacock was surely attracted to the economic capital that the Star provided; but, just as with the Bardwell correspondence, he also sought a wide audience for crucial issues concerning social justice, the 1911 (Free Trade) Federal Election, Canadian imperialism, (all of which are part of the "serious" discourse in Sunshine Sketches) -- an audience that, as opposed to newspaper publishers, still held on to the lingering

²³Among the many tactics employed to make the Star a huge financial success, Graham advertised circulation figures on the front page, sought self-aggrandizement through paying for small pox inoculations, building a statue to John A. Macdonald in Montreal's Dominion Square, and paying for life insurance policies for Canadian volunteers in the South African war (Sotiron 29). He purchased an ornate office building for the Star, a conspicuous display of capital; held a controlling share in the Montreal Herald and allowed "the paper to espouse a mild Liberal party line . . . [as] . . . part of a strategy to deny market share and thus make it difficult for new competitors such as the Mail and the News to become established" (Sotiron 81). There were also some highly critical accusations against Graham, particularly his use of his veto vote in the sanctioning institution of the Canadian Press, and accusations that he "controlled Montreal's newsprint supply . . . [and so] . . . starved his rivals of necessary supplies" (Sotiron 82).

belief that newspapers performed an educative function.²⁴

Following the pattern of his previous two works of humour, John Lane's Bodley Head published the English edition and American first issue of Sunshine Sketches, while Bell and Cockburn would sell the first Canadian issue²⁵ of Lane's edition (Spadoni 2-4).²⁶ While sales in England and Canada seemed strong, the American issue²⁷ sold considerably less. In 1912, the number of copies sold included 3,209 in England, of which 563 were for the colonial and 500 for the Australasian markets, 4,095 in Canada, and 1,226 in the United States (Spadoni 2-4). Perhaps owing as much to its original publication in the Star as to its Canadian affiliations within the text, Sunshine Sketches was a popular text in Canada -- indeed, David Staines suggests that Bell and Cockburn sold 10,000 copies of the first Canadian issue within ten months (Beyond The Provinces 12). Moreover, in its colourful print history, Sunshine Sketches has wielded a complex mix of economic and symbolic value as both a commercial bestseller as well as a seminal Canadian text. The first Canadian issue of the first U.S. edition (1931) already began to canonize Sunshine Sketches, citing excerpts from Highways of Canadian Literature on the front flap (Spadoni 7); the third Canadian issue of the first U.S. edition, published by McClelland & Stewart in 1953, becomes a commodity, "A Beautiful Gift Edition" (Spadoni 8); the fifth Canadian issue of the first U.S. edition in 1958 was an "educational edition" with a set of notes and questions; the second English edition of 1941 featured advertisements for cigarettes and chocolate; the third English edition of 1942 was marketed as a

²⁴However, I am of course faced with the issue as to whether readers of the Montreal Star in 1912 did in fact recognize the educative function I attribute to Sunshine Sketches. In the following chapter, I hope to demonstrate that Leacock's Mariposa is indeed a microcosm of a number of concerns -- free trade, imperialism, cultural value, etc. -- that were widely discussed at the time.

²⁵The second Canadian issue of 1915 was distributed by S.B. Grundy of Toronto when Bell and Cockburn went bankrupt.

²⁶I am indebted to Carl Spadoni for all bibliographic information concerning Sunshine Sketches' book publication discussed in this chapter. The information comes from the manuscript of his forthcoming exhaustive Leacock bibliography. Pagination is mine.

²⁷The first American edition did not appear until 1922 when Dodd, Mead and Company bought John Lane Company in New York.

"Collins Popular Novel": a New Canadian Library Classic Edition in 1982 was described by the "Canadian Classics Committee" as "[i]ndispensable for the appreciation of Canadian literature" (Spadoni 15). But remarkably, given its subsequent status, there is no clear indication that Sunshine Sketches was a text favoured by Leacock or his publishers.

In 1923, Peter McArthur believed Sunshine Sketches to be "Mr. Leacock's most ambitious book" (McArthur 136), but conceded that "whether the book ranks as a classic time alone can tell, but for the present it is very satisfying" (McArthur 138-9). The anonymous reviewer in The Canadian Magazine in 1912, after celebrating Sunshine Sketches' Canadianness, goes on to assert that "Mr. Leacock has made to the literature of Canada a contribution of permanent value" ("The Library Table" 90). M.G. Parks in a review in The Dalhousie Review in 1961 asserts that "Sunshine Sketches is unquestionably a Canadian classic of international stature" (583), while Edward McCourt in Queen's Quarterly in 1961 makes the case still further:

Of the five most recent additions to McClelland & Stewart's admirably produced and edited New Canadian Library, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town seems most likely to achieve the status of classic. Already it has been kept alive for a half a century, not by the "enthusiastic few" but the much maligned Ordinary Reader. (178)

In yet a further development in the shifting cultural signature of Sunshine Sketches, Gerald Lynch speculates in a recent "critical edition" (1996) on just what has made this text a "classic" compared to all the texts that emerged from Leacock's pen:

There are few (though sufficient, and growing) works of Canadian fiction that have been kept going ad infinitum, and relevant longevity is, surely, one reliable measure of a literary classic. What else might qualify a text as indispensable to its culture and therefore continuously deserving of new editions? It is still read widely for the sheer pleasure of it; it is studied; it serves as a national touchstone. Sunshine Sketches is all of these, and (as the advertisers say) much much more. ("Editor's Preface" ix)

It is, as Lynch astutely identifies, precisely those advertisers, along with the editors, publishers, critics, booksellers -- the whole complex field of cultural production -- that have produced Leacock™, a name

associated with humour and limited to a handful of humorous texts. Yet, despite Lynch's work to demonstrate that Sunshine Sketches is "indispensable to its culture" and "a national touchstone" because of its holistic cultural engagement, Leacock is still mainly produced as a sentimental and lightweight humorist. Because this situation persists (with some notable exceptions as discussed in the Introduction), I wish to make a larger claim for Sunshine Sketches' indispensability both in terms of its rootedness in its context and its continued pertinence and importance today. Sunshine Sketches is undeniably funny, but it is also an earnest antimodernist examination of the possibility of social justice, of resolving socio-economic riddles. As such, Sunshine Sketches represents a crucial point in Leacock's life and career, a moment when he blended the serious and the humorous, the local and the "universal," in a complex vein of antimodernist protest and accommodation – a configuration of value and a strategy for the legitimation of authority that I will explore in the next chapter.

IV. Text: Antimodernist Sketches of a Little Town.

In a review of an economic history text, the noted social historian Harold Innis claims that "[t]he standards which are important to the study of economic history are accuracy and atmosphere, and the most successful work from this standpoint is Professor Leacock's Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town ("The Historical Background" 284). Innis' comment stands out not only for its acumen, but also for the contrast it provides with the majority of criticism that has produced and canonized Sunshine Sketches,²⁸ an evaluation that provides a suitable beginning for my own reading. In this chapter I will examine Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town as an antimodernist text that articulates a critical marrying of Leacock's "humorous" and "serious" cultural work. I will argue that this seminal Canadian text is both grounded in the historical moment of its production and offers a still valid commentary on the dialectic of individual liberty and social obligation, an implicit discussion of the theories of Adam Smith and Thorstein Veblen (both of whom were important figures in Leacock's formal education as a political economist) within a Canadian frontier context. Furthermore, I believe that Josh Smith acts as a lens, condoning, undermining and problematizing fundamental tenets of these contending socioeconomic theories, a lens through which Leacock formulates a mediating position between the Mariposan community and the economic individualism of an encroaching city. Josh Smith's interactions with Mariposan society, then, raise genuine questions concerning cultural value and authority -- questions that reflect both visionary and reactionary impulses thematically and structurally, constituting what preceding chapters have described (after Lears) as

²⁸ Much more common are the summaries made by critics like Douglas Bush. Bush describes Sunshine Sketches as "the uniquely beloved work in the Leacock canon because its account of people and their ways is a very funny, very warm-hearted Canadian or Ontario version of humanity as it was in almost any small town in the Western world" ("Stephen Leacock" 143). All too often this unquestioned cultural signature has been reproduced. If nothing else, this chapter will demonstrate the need to satisfy Peter McArthur's call in 1923 to read Leacock with some discernment, and to test the efficacy of Ian Ross Robertson's tentative suggestion that a "complete understanding of . . . [Leacock's] . . . humorous work was impossible without taking into account his writings as a political economist and controversialist" ("The Historical Leacock" 40).

an antimodernist complexity of both "accommodation and protest" in response to the satiric projection of modern, Plutonian²⁹ excess.

It was while Leacock lived in the major urban centre of Chicago that he appeared to have become more consciously aware of the cultural crisis towards value and authority that he would address throughout his diverse and prolific career. From 1899 to 1903 Leacock studied for his Ph.D in political economy at the University of Chicago under the direction of Thorstein Veblen (Moritz 94) who taught there from 1896 to 1904. Veblen's first full-length book, The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), attracted an international reputation and perhaps drew Leacock to the novel academic approaches Veblen extolled for the study of the evolving social science of political economy. Although a handful of critics and biographers have traced elements of Veblen's influence in Leacock's work, it is usually limited to a peripheral discussion in relation to Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich (1914) and The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice (1920) with little in the way of illustration and analysis. Several critics have suggested that Veblen influenced the course of Leacock's cultural work, "especially. . . [the] . . . use of humour and literary powers to reach the general public, rather than only the specialist, with social criticism and iconoclastic economic views" (Moritz 91) -- comments which, although pertinent, cry out for elucidation and discussion. While Veblen's criticism of laissez-faire economics certainly became an integral aspect of Leacock's own thought, Leacock eschewed Veblen's suggestions for social reconstruction in favour of an antimodernist negotiation over value and authority, as discussed in chapter one. In effect, Leacock sought "to encourage change only by setting the values he found in tradition against current abuses," while he remained "deeply suspicious of the radical criticisms and remedies found in work such as Veblen's" (Moritz 98). In My Discovery of the West (1937), Leacock credits Veblen with "a beautiful and thoughtful mind, free from anger and dispute, and heedless of all money motive" (137), but then suggests that "[h]is

²⁹By Plutonian, I simply mean the social injustice of the City's rampant economic individualism as depicted in Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich (1914).

writings, brilliant though they are, are too abstruse for popular reading" (137) and discredits Veblen's response to the state of social injustice: "What did Veblen propose to do about it? Nothing, so far as I remember" (137). While such comments do border on being flippant, as Theresa and Albert Moritz suggest (95), they also intimate key differences between Leacock and Veblen that demand further inquiry.

Leacock's 1903 doctoral thesis, "The Doctrine of Laissez-Faire," which focused on a reading of Adam Smith's classical economic theory, appears to have echoed Veblen's critique of the belief in unfettered economic individualism at the heart of Adam Smith's work. Later in his career, Leacock argued that "the classical Political Economy, whatever it had to offer the world of a century ago, has nothing for us now" ("What is Left of Adam Smith?" 42), that "economists were all wrong in thinking that the pursuit of the individual's own interest made for the welfare of mankind -- Adam Smith's 'invisible hand'" ("What is Left of Adam Smith?" 43). However, as discussed in chapter one, Leacock did value the actuating principle of the "economic man" because of the reality of individual self-interest. "In short," argued Leacock, although "the classical economists said that the only rule of the game needed was to let things alone, . . . we find now [that] we need a whole new set of rules" ("What is Left of Adam Smith?" 44). Leacock developed his own mediating perspective and would go on to map out the strengths and weaknesses of both individualism and socialism, of both Adam Smith and Thorstein Veblen, and in so doing reconfigure what he valued in each in terms of the historical and social determinants of his own context. Unfortunately, even those more perceptive critics who recognize the need to read Leacock holistically often still fail to read Leacock in terms of his complex negotiation of the cultural value and authority of such socioeconomic theorists as Smith and Veblen. Ramsay Cook, for instance, believed that "it was not so much the theories of Smith or Veblen that influenced Leacock as their iconoclastic approach, their effective writing style, and their concern with 'the effects of machine industry and the industrial revolution'" (169).

However, throughout his diverse cultural work, Leacock insisted on the need to address context --

cultural, socioeconomic, political, or geographical. In Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, Leacock insists on the presence of a Canadian frontier that has shaped and continues to shape Canadian cultural experience: "Mariposa is not a real town . . . [but] . . . about seventy or eighty of them . . . [which] . . . you may find . . . all the way from Lake Superior to the sea" (Sunshine Sketches xvii-xviii). Leacock's point in the preface and the opening pages of Sunshine Sketches is that the values and the experiences of the Mariposan community are also typical of Canada, as he perceived it, at that time -- a strategy which not only avoids depicting Mariposa as a universal or an archetypal Any Town, but also insists on a distinction between American and Canadian cultural experience of the frontier. In 1909, for instance, Leacock wrote that "[t]he attraction of the great unknown hinterland that called to it the voyageurs and the coureurs des bois still holds the soul of the Canadian people" ("Sir Wilfred Laurier's Victory" 833), which underscores the close connection between Canadian society -- indeed, Canadian socioeconomic activity -- and the frontier. A similar perspective pervades the backdrop for Mariposa in Sunshine Sketches:

Outside of Mariposa there are farms that begin well but get thinner and meaner as you go on, and end sooner or later in bush and swamp and the rock of the north country. And beyond that again, as the background of it all, though it's far away, you are somehow aware of the great pine woods of the lumber country reaching endlessly north. (4)

Frederick Jackson Turner first theorized the influence of the frontier on American cultural experience in 1893 before a meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago. As this was just a few years prior to Leacock's arrival in Chicago, it seems unlikely that such a widely read individual as Leacock would not have read and studied Turner's treatise as an important social document that gained considerable attention in intellectual circles at that time. If nothing else, Leacock became aware of Turner's frontier thesis, as he refers to it in Our Heritage of Liberty (19). And yet, Leacock's discussion of the frontier throughout his career was in terms of an implicit Canadian cultural experience. Turner's thesis, then, much like the socioeconomic theories of Adam Smith and Thorstein Veblen, represents a site for Leacock's antimodernist discourse over cultural authority and value as well as a point of departure within a

Canadian socioeconomic and cultural context, wherein the discourse over individual rights and social obligation are played out in a Canadian frontier whose "heroes have been not rugged individualist gunmen like Wyatt Earp or Jesse James, but rather a collective, law-enforcement agency, the Mounties" (Cross 3). Yet, it is an individual, the piratical Josh Smith, who undermines the possibility for social justice in this context, and it is the town, the human community, with its resistance to closure, that reflects the "accommodation and protest" of Leacock's antimodernism.

Arguably the most prominent character in Sunshine Sketches, Josh Smith has attracted a great deal of critical attention in respect to his relationship with the Mariposan community. Robertson Davies believes Smith is an integral and vital part of the Mariposan community, the only one who gets things done, "a creature for whom Leacock never lost his admiration -- the Man of Horse Sense, the leader who will always rise above the commonalty, whatever his want of education or principle" (Davies, Stephen Leacock 25). Conversely, Gerald Lynch suggests that "[Josh] Smith acts in every instance for patently self-serving reasons. Smith is a masterfully deceptive interloper: he moves into Mariposa, exploits its deluded residents, and by the end of the eleventh sketch is on his way out" (Lynch, Stephen Leacock 61-2). Indeed, the first mention of Smith by the "author" of the preface appears admiring and yet it is implicitly critical:

As for Mr Smith, with his two hundred and eighty pounds, his hoarse voice, his loud check suit, his diamonds, the roughness of his address and the goodness of his heart, -- all of this is known by everybody to be a necessary and universal adjunct of the hotel business. (Sunshine Sketches xviii)

The detail of Smith's appearance is deliberately jarring and satirically rendered when "the goodness of . . . [Smith's] . . . heart" is juxtaposed with the exaggerated value accorded to Smith as "the heaven-born hotel keeper"(5), "the natural king of the hotel business" (6). Furthermore, Smith learns "the blessedness of giving" (12) and the "uses of philanthropy" (12) for economic self-interest rather than the ostensible acts of generosity towards Mariposan society. Immediately, in these opening pages of Sunshine Sketches,

Leacock renders Smith in a satiric light, "the goodness of his heart" as mis-leading. Moreover, Leacock challenges the discerning reader to question the purpose and net result of Josh Smith's self-interest: namely, increased profits at Smith's hotel and his purchase of legitimation within the community through "put[ting] the new font in Dean Drone's church" or "hand[ing] over a hundred dollars to Judge Pepperleigh for the unrestrained use of the Conservative Party" (13). However, this perception of Smith's actions do not conform to the functioning of cultural work as theorized by the other Smith in the Leacockian lexicon, Adam:

[The wealthy economic man is] led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of society, and afford means to the multiplication of the species. (Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments 217)

The measure, then, is whether Josh Smith's economic self-interest works towards the realization of social justice, as Adam Smith theorized it would. The fact that Josh Smith's actions result in his pecuniary benefit alone and not the socioeconomic needs of the community, such as fulfilling work, social welfare, and so on, suggests that Leacock's main "josh,"³⁰ as it were, is on what he considered Adam Smith's unrealistic theoretical assumptions towards human nature and socioeconomic activity.

The challenge, then, for the discerning reader of Sunshine Sketches is to recognize the extent to which cultural authority and value are shaped by the pecuniary nature of Josh Smith's "generosity of giving," and to realize the need to discern the parameters of Leacock's antimodernist discourse within the Mariposan community. The ironic narrator who, at times, appears omniscient and, at others, caught up in the foibles and pretensions of the town folk, gives an added element of complexity to the recovery of authority and value in Sunshine Sketches:

³⁰The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "josh" as: 1. Good-natured joke, leg-pull; 2. Hoax, banter; 3. Indulge in ridicule. The fact that Josh Smith is the humorous reflection of Adam Smith does not detract from social critique (a concept discussed in chapter 1), since, as Leacock argued, humour arises from incongruities in character and society.

Mr. Smith could never bring his mind to . . . [closing the bar] . . . -- not as a matter of profit, but as a point of honour. It was too much for him to feel that Judge Pepperleigh might be out on the sidewalk thirsty at midnight, that the night hands at the Times-Herald on Wednesday might be compelled to go home dry. On this point Mr. Smith's moral code was simplicity itself, -- do what is right and take the consequences. So the bar stayed open. (13)

Here, the crisis in authority and value is acute owing to the slippage in language that conflates pecuniary value, the disavowed profits, with both an honourific and a moral code. The satirical bent of this slippage further underscores Leacock's critique of the assumptions of Adam Smith regarding economic individualism and social justice. In a well-known passage from The Wealth of Nations (1776), Adam Smith outlines economic self-interest as the prime motivating force in socioeconomic activity:

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of advantages. Nobody but a beggar chuses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens. (Smith, Wealth of Nations 26-27)

In his first published book, Elements of Political Science (1906; rev. 1913 and 1921), Leacock respectfully summarized Smith's economic individualism, and indeed agreed with the fundamental principle that "[e]very man is actuated in his economic relations mainly by the pursuit of his own interest" (Elements (1913) 364). However, he rejected outright the assumption that economic self-interest could constitute social policy or form the basis of cultural value since it "runs counter to the most instinctive impulses of humanity and would neglect governmental duties of the most evident character" (Elements (1913) 369). Leacock repeatedly repudiated Adam Smith's theory in this way throughout his life. In Hellements of Hickonomics (1936), for example, Leacock lambasts Smith's contention "[t]hat selfishness was bound to pay" (Hellements 75):

And didn't you say, -- don't think it funny,
That the greatest thing in the world was money,
And didn't you say, -- now please don't shirk,
That the basis of value was human work,
And the Worker must be content with his lot

Being worth precisely just what he got.
 Come don't evade it
 Long-winded Scot,
 Just, whether you said it
 Or whether not?
 And if you said it, you must confess
 You have brought the World to a terrible Mess,
 For a hundred Years since your Grave was made
 We've been making Pins and Machines and Trade,
 All selfish as Hogs³¹, whether rich as Sin
 Or as poor as Rats, -- Ah! why begin
 To teach us about that fatal Pin!

(Hellements 75-76)

In a 1941 essay, "Has Economics Gone to Seed?" Leacock reiterates the point in an impassioned voice of social conscience: "And competition, asked a thousand complaining voices, as the complexity of our machine grew, why is competition fair, if the strong can crush the weak and vested interest take its toll of necessity?" (Too Much College 113).

Nevertheless, Leacock maintained that there was still something of value to be found in Adam Smith's thought. In Our Heritage of Liberty, for example, Leacock's historical overview of the development of individual liberty accords Smith an important place in the evolution of economic and libertarian thought, and suggests that his theories were inevitably rendered obsolete by catastrophic social crises he could not have foreseen (19). Similarly, in a 1935 article, "What Is Left of Adam Smith?" published in The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Leacock insisted that "the principle of human selfishness" (43) must always be recognized as the basis of human society:

Buried under the wreckage [of World War I and the Depression] is the system of Adam Smith -- his production, his machinery, his natural price and natural wage, his social justice arising out of identity of individual and social interest, his "invisible hand" now more invisible than ever. Of it all there only survives the principle that each man must work for himself, under proper rules of the game. I lay continual and repeated stress on this; without this qualification the wreck of Adam Smith means the triumph of socialism - a system even more impracticable than free competition. ("What Is Left" 47)

³¹Interestingly, Josh Smith calls the Mariposans "hogs" (16) in the opening sketch.

Leacock divined quite clearly the central value recoverable from Smith's response to his context, the value which could be reconfigured in terms of the demands of the twentieth-century struggle for social justice: namely, the recognition of human nature as essentially one of self-interest.

And yet, Leacock also recognized the need for social intervention. As T.J. Jackson Lears suggests, the autonomous individual undermined past conceptions of order, authority and value -- as a result, "each masterless man needed a moral gyroscope to keep him on course or else market society might dissolve into a chaos of self-seeking individuals" (12). Adam Smith believed that social order would be maintained by the internalization of an objective, universal value wherein "our natural egoism is partially restrained by our awareness of an external standard, the standard which we would use to judge our actions if we were a spectator who was biased neither towards ourselves nor towards those affected by our actions" (Muller 103-3). This social check, however, required a presumption of natural law in human nature, an altruistic "impartial spectator" wherein the individual becomes self-reflexive to the extent that the "desire to merit the approval of others" (Muller 104) leads to value judgements in accordance with perceived standards of others. Adam Smith's notion of cultural authority, then, relies on the construction of a perceived objective value system wherein a group of individuals follow a process of appeal from "the tribunal of their own consciences, to that of the supposed impartial and well-informed spectator, to that of the man within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of their conduct" (Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments 128-129). This recourse to the autonomous, economic man as the source of authority and hence value is what Lears describes as the self-deception (18) of classical liberalism:

Nineteenth-century liberal economists consistently side-stepped the social implications of their theories, which sanctioned an atomized society composed of autonomous members, each engaged in the untrammelled pursuit of his own material welfare. (Lears 18)

Leacock recognized this quality of self-deception in Adam Smith's theories, since even if the Mariposan community and the narrator fail to see beyond this deception (after all, Leacock insists, they are human and hence fallible), the onus is on the discerning reader to divine the authority and value of that (flawed)

community in terms of the antimodernist struggle for social justice rather than a somewhat idealistic "impartial spectator" guided by an "invisible hand." Leacock's critique of the Smiths is, as I shall illustrate, Veblenesque, but only to the extent that Veblen's discourse is reconfigured in a Canadian cultural context.

The complexity of perception that subtly discloses the deceiving nature of Josh Smith's individualism is underscored in the opening pages of Sunshine Sketches. Although Mariposa appears to slumber in "deep and unbroken peace" (2), the narrator quickly undermines this impression through the suggestion that this "quiet is mere appearance" (2). Leacock's narrative manoeuvres the reader into a position that exposes the ease with which superficial evaluations are formulated, much like a city visitor, unfamiliar with this quintessential Canadian town:

Of course if you come to the place fresh from New York, you are deceived. Your standard of vision is all astray. You do think the place is quiet. You do imagine that Mr. Smith is asleep merely because he closes his eyes as he stands. But live in Mariposa for six months or a year and then you will begin to understand it better. (Sketches 3)

From the outset, then, Sunshine Sketches impresses on the reader the need to engage the narrator's commentary rather than accepting the Mariposan community at face value. Neither the author nor the narrator occupies an omniscient, authorial perspective -- Leacock certainly does not take "a determinedly god-like view of his community" (Davies, Stephen Leacock 24). Instead, the narrator embodies an ironic, Maripocentric perspective (to appropriate Gerald Lynch's term) of the town which claims to have been "laid out . . . [with] . . . none of that shortsightedness which is seen in the cramped dimensions of Wall Street and Piccadilly" (Sketches 1), and whose "perfect jostle of public institutions [is] comparable only to Threadneedle Street or Lower Broadway" (Sketches 2). Even if, on occasion, the narrator does appear "god-like," his pretensions are undermined by the reader's sense of his often ridiculous pride. The narrator, much like the other inhabitants of Mariposa (apart from Josh Smith), is part of the integrated community rather than a sharply defined component of a commune of individuals; and the pride and the naivete, the warm humanity and the crass materialism of the narrator's antimodernist discourse become

synonymous with the town itself, both its failings and its appeal, its accommodation and protest.

Early on in the text, Josh Smith becomes the focus of the town, the narrator and, by implication, the reader:

You will feel as you draw near that it is no ordinary man that you approach. It is not alone the huge bulk of Mr. Smith (two hundred and eighty pounds as tested on Netley's scales). It is not merely his costume, though the chequered waistcoat of dark blue with a flowered pattern forms, with his shepherd's plaid trousers, his grey spats and patent leather boots, a colour scheme of no mean order. Nor is it merely Mr. Smith's finely mottled face. The face, no doubt, is a notable one, -- solemn, inexpressible, unreadable, the face of the heaven-born hotel keeper. It is more than that. It is the strange dominating personality of the man that somehow holds you captive. (5-6)

Josh Smith's pervasive presence certainly appears to gain the admiration of the narrator, yet the fact that one who cannot read, who dupes the whole town in order to preserve his economic self-interest, should wield such cultural authority in the community becomes problematic. Although Josh Smith's "colour scheme of no mean order" is humorous in its human quality, the narrator's naivete also raises concerns about Smith as a socioeconomic symbol of pecuniary excess embedded in codes of dress. Smith's attire repeatedly captures the narrator's attention, whereas the remainder of the Mariposan town folk appear comparatively dull; and as Veblen attests, sartorial splendour signifies a marker of character, in particular a conspicuous display of wealth that intimates the deception of excessive economic self-interest:

The code of reputability in matters of dress decides what shapes, colors, materials and general effects in human apparel are for the time to be accepted as suitable; and departures from the code are offensive to our taste, supposedly as being departures from aesthetic truth. (Veblen, Leisure 97)

In addition, apparel "affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance" (Veblen, Leisure 119), a clear indicator of conspicuous consumption which is nothing short of a method of advertisement of an individual's pecuniary standing:

To get the high class trade, Mr. Smith set himself to dress the part. He wore wide cut coats of filmy serge, light as gossamer; chequered waistcoats with a pattern for every day in the week; fedora hats light as

autumn leaves; four-in-hand ties of saffron and myrtle green with a diamond pin the size of a hazel nut. On his fingers there were as many gems as would grace a native prince of India; across his waistcoat lay a gold watch-chain in huge square links and in his pocket a gold watch that weighed a pound and a half and marked minutes, seconds and quarter seconds. (11)

Josh Smith's detailed apparel can be seen to highlight the economic and self-interested nature of his authority and value in the community; at no point does he wield the symbolic capital of an individual concerned with the welfare of others. Indeed, Josh Smith does not have access to traditional forms of authority or value traditionally associated with education, a position in the church, or in politics, yet in this antimodernist context in which such positions of authority are de-valued, the economic man's unfettered self-interest becomes enabling in the struggle for cultural power. Josh Smith, then, even at this fundamental level of dress, becomes a disruptive figure within the Mariposan community, the Mariposan socioeconomic and cultural field, in an effort to produce and legitimate the authority and hence value of his cultural power.

However, it is important to underscore the antimodernist nature of the Mariposan community since to do otherwise, to paint Josh Smith as the sole villain of the piece, runs the risk of de-contextualizing the Mariposan community, casting it in sentimental and idealistic light. In fact, as Gerald Lynch attests, the Mariposans reflect that aspect of Adam Smith's thought that Leacock did value, namely that individual self-interest was the actuating principle in socioeconomic activity. As a result, Mariposans exhibit the fallibility and foibles of human nature in a manner similar to Josh Smith, but with significant differences:

[Mariposa's] ambitions are [Josh] Smith's writ small, and its reflective faults are heightened by Mariposan ineffectuality. Put simply, if Mariposans did not possess serious shortcomings reflective of Smith's glaring faults, he would not be able to manipulate and exploit them as he does. What Mariposans do possess in opposition to Smith is a concern for their community, a concern which is second nature to them. It might also be said that Smith brings out the worst in the Mariposans, the shadows. (Lynch 72)

Although the Mariposans' concern for community is "second nature to them," and that, presumably, their

"first nature," as it were, would be Adam Smith's and Josh Smith's self-interest, that second nature is the significant and important distinction. Josh Smith's lack of concern for the community, I wish to suggest, is reflected in his disruptive, rather than communally cohesive, socioeconomic activity. His mode of dress, for instance, smacks of conspicuous, not to mention exotic, consumption:

Mr. Smith came in [to Jeff Thorpe's barber shop] every morning and there was a tremendous outpouring of Florida water and rums, essences and revivers and renovators, regardless of expense. What with Jeff's white coat and Mr. Smith's flowered waistcoat and the red geranium in the window, the little shop seemed multi-coloured and luxurious enough for the annex of a Sultan's harem. (21)

If Jefferson Thorpe is understated and natural, wearing a "white coat" and enjoying a "red geranium in the window," Josh Smith, in comparison, is excess and artifice, a consumer of non-essential, exotic goods, who can only depict representations of flowers on his waistcoat. In transforming Jeff's barber shop from an important focal point for the community into something alien to Mariposa, Josh Smith threatens the very economy and identity of Mariposa through his conspicuous display and importation of modes of urban consumption and unsustainable markets.

In fact, compared to Josh Smith, Jefferson Thorpe confirms the importance and validity of Mariposan values. For instance, although he "never occupied a position of real prominence in Mariposa" (21) until the mining boom, "[e]verybody knew Jeff and liked him" (21). His work offered little in the way of pecuniary reward since it was "hard to see how he could make money, even when he had both chairs going and shaved first in one and then in the other (22-3). Nevertheless, Jeff's barber shop acts as an important social focus where representatives of Mariposan society congregate and communicate, "the conversation . . . [being] . . . the real charm of the place" (Sketches 23):

You see, in Mariposa, shaving isn't the hurried, perfunctory thing that it is in the city. A shave is looked upon as a form of physical pleasure and lasts anywhere from twenty-five minutes to three-quarters of an hour. (Sketches 23)

The distinction between the city and Mariposa is an important aspect of Leacock's antimodernist discourse

over value. The shave in Mariposa possesses a symbolic value for both Jefferson Thorpe, whose economic self-interest does not determine the nature of the exchange, and for the Mariposan, who learns of community gossip. In effect, the regular socioeconomic transaction between Jefferson Thorpe and the community at large constitutes a social glue, no matter how banal it may appear to an outsider such as the reader, and as such represents the human inefficiencies Leacock greatly valued in comparison with the specialized, mechanical efficiency of the "perfunctory" shave in the city. In light of Jefferson Thorpe's ill-advised stock market speculations, the narrator emphasizes the symbolic value of Thorpe's barber shop and his socioeconomic role in Mariposa in comparison with "that unseen nefarious crowd in the city" (27):

There was something even dreamier about . . . [the way Jeff shaved] . . . now, and a sort of new element in the way Jeff fell out of his monotone into lapses of thought that I, for one, misunderstood. I thought that perhaps getting so much money, -- well you know the way it acts on people in the larger cities. It seemed to spoil one's idea of Jeff that copper and asbestos and banana lands should form the goal of his thought when, if he knew it, the little shop and the sunlight of Mariposa was so much better. (31)

The narrator's protest here is implicit. In addition to celebrating the symbolic value of "the little shop and the sunlight of Mariposa," the narrator expresses an initial disillusionment with what "he" at first believed to be Jefferson Thorpe's desire to emulate wealthy urban capitalists. However, much to the narrator's satisfaction, Thorpe's interest in such capitalists underscores his social conscience rather than the economic self-interest of Josh Smith:

Though Jefferson never spoke of his intentions directly, he said a number of things that seemed to bear on them. He asked me, for instance, one day, how many blind people it would take to fill one of these blind homes and how a feller could get a hold of them. And at another time he asked whether if a feller advertised for some of these incurables a feller could get enough of them to make a showing. (33)

Rather than making donations to "professors and to this research and that" (33) (which play no role in the socioeconomic activity of Mariposa), Jefferson Thorpe proposes to "give it straight to the poor" (33), an affirmation of his concern for community, the "second nature" Adam Smith ignored in his conception of

the economic man.

While Jefferson Thorpe's wealth remains illusory and, as a result, his philanthropy unrealized, Josh Smith's economism consists of his attempts to thrust Plutonian, consumer-capitalist values and markets into a rural society that still skirts the periphery of the frontier, as is evident when he first becomes proprietor of "Smith's Hotel":

An army of char-women, turned into the hotel, scrubbed it from top to bottom. A vacuum cleaner, the first seen in Mariposa, hissed and screamed in the corridors. Forty brass beds were imported from the city, not, of course, for the guests to sleep in, but to keep them out. A bartender with a starched coat and wicker sleeves was put behind the bar. (11)

As a result, the "loafers were put out of business" (11), the poor whom the narrator momentarily loses sight of in Josh Smith's conspicuous pecuniary display. Smith's illusory business practices have the sole aim of personal gain, and as a result, wantonly disrupt and distort Mariposan socioeconomic activity and effectively undermine still further Adam Smith's assumption that social welfare would be achieved through the realization of self-interest. As the narrator admits, "[n]o one in Mariposa had ever seen anything like the caff" (16), a concept Josh Smith imports from the city and markets accordingly:

[The hotel] . . . was now Smith's Summer Pavilion. It was advertised in the city as Smith's Tourists' Emporium, and Smith's Northern Health Resort. Mr. Smith got the editor of the Times-Herald to write up a circular all about ozone and the Mariposa pine woods, with illustrations of the maskinonge (*piscis mariposis*) of Lake Wissanotti. (15)

The "Rats' Cooler," the French chef in the café, the exotic yet ridiculously inexpensive menu with which Smith "buys" public favour -- all these city innovations are not only alien to Mariposa, but unsustainable within the Mariposan economy. Moreover, they are illusory, and are abandoned despite Josh Smith's declaration that "it ain't right" (19) to close them once he regains his liquor licence. Nevertheless, the Mariposans, caught up in the pecuniary display, credit Smith with having "done more to boom Mariposa than any ten men in town" (*Sketches* 19), and fail to see that Smith's "booming" of Mariposa sounds hollow. Smith's economic activities in Mariposa involve the legitimization of his price tag on Mariposan

social opinion, in effect de-valuing traditional conceptions of cultural authority and value as epitomized in Judge Pepperleigh and Dean Drone. Critically, it is at the moment of triumph in the liquor licence campaign that Smith perceives the route to the cultural power of another de-valued position of cultural authority; that is, wearing the "new halo of the Conservative candidacy, . . . Mr. Smith first realized that the hotel business formed the natural and proper threshold of the national legislature" (Sketches 19).

Josh Smith, then, highlights Leacock's antimodernist anxiety over the de-valuation of conventional forms of authority. Although this de-valuation is blatant in urban centres like the city in Arcadian Adventures, the context of the frontier also threatens the heritage of institutional authority and value Leacock continuously sought to reconfigure for the twentieth century. As Leacock suggests in Our Heritage of Liberty (1942), "[i]n our American world, in the United States and Canada, the rough and tumble of pioneer life, the rush and clatter of rising settlements, kept tending to shake all the people together like beans in a bag" (19), thereby democratizing cultural authority. For Veblen, "[t]he evolution of social structure has been a process of natural selection of institutions" (Leisure 131), which for Leacock amounts to a statement of how things are rather than how they ought to be. Yet Veblen writes from the context of an American Republic, in which his new clique of experts, his industrial technocrats, would assume cultural authority through their adaptive ability, their fundamental utility. Leacock, on the other hand, espouses hope in government, in empire, in the institutional bodies that dispense education, social welfare, and so forth. For Leacock, for the Canadian conservative tradition, the frontier provided a dangerous arena for the likes of Adam and Josh Smith to run rampant, since the democratization of cultural authority gave free reign to unchecked self-interest, rather than obligation to cultural heritage.

Early in Sunshine Sketches, the narrator informs us that one of our first impressions of Josh Smith is that he "looks like an over-dressed pirate" (6), a pirate who also assumes captaincy of the *Mariposa Belle*, the Mariposan steam boat. This is a significant moment because the excursion on Lake Wissanotti is an expression of kinship and community in Mariposa involving almost everyone: "That's the great thing

about the town and that's what makes it so different from the city. Everybody is in everything" (36).

When Josh Smith takes the helm and steers the communal vessel to safety, it is in the knowledge that there was never any real threat, although he is still celebrated as a saviour. Indeed, much to Leacock's antimodernist chagrin, it is mercenary pirates like Josh Smith who frequently adopt the role of captain -- of industry, of the Mariposa Belle, of State -- rather than the "great man," the Captain of Industry that Thomas Carlyle extolled in Past and Present. As has been discussed in previous chapters, Leacock's concerns seem prefigured by Carlyle who, like Leacock, constantly sought to reconfigure the currency of cultural authority and value for the present: "The Leaders of Industry, if Industry is ever to be led, are virtually Captains of the World; if there be no nobleness in them, there will never be an aristocracy more" (268). Moreover, it is these Captains of Industry, the individuals who wield cultural power in a socioeconomic context, who must espouse authority in the democratized mayhem of both growing urban centres and of frontier towns:

Hero-worship, done differently in every different epoch of the world, is the soul of all social business among men; that the doing of it well, or the doing of it ill, measures accurately what degree of well-being or ill-being there is in the world's affairs. (Carlyle, Past and Present 39)

Josh Smith, then, posits a fundamental threat to Mariposa, since, in nominating Smith as the new Conservative candidate Mariposa elects as a focus of its hero-worship a captain of illusory industry who also captains the Mariposa Belle, the ironic symbol of the Mariposan community, in order to save it from illusory danger. Although the illusory nature of his actions are humorous, Smith exploits the town's approbation of his role in Mariposa's economic boom and in preventing the Mariposa Belle from sinking and the town from burning for self-interested reasons that are also socioeconomically disruptive. In this light, Smith's deception of cultural authority and value constitutes a threat to the Mariposan community.

Yet the antimodernist complexity of the Mariposan community constitutes a form of resistance to the Smiths' economic relativism of authority and value. For instance, the revelation surrounding the death of Judge Pepperleigh's son, Neil, deflates the Judge's earlier human failings since his loss immediately makes him more human and less of a political caricature. In fact, the treatment of the Judge in respect to

his personal loss confirms the value of human relationships in the town, as the town's sensitive "cover-up" of Neil's drunken character speaks of human vulnerability, tenderness and the loyalty of connections between people:

But the judge never knew [the truth about Neil], and now he never will. For if you could find it in the meanness of your soul to tell him, it would serve no purpose now except to break his heart, and there would rise up to rebuke you the pictured vision of an untended grave somewhere in the great silences of South Africa. (86)

Moreover, that appeal directly to the reader also seeks to validate belief in human community beyond the text. Similarly, although the Mariposan version of a Whirlwind Campaign fails to raise money for the debt-ridden church, it reaffirms vital social connections in the town, the "sympathy and a brotherhood in these things when men work shoulder to shoulder" (71-72). The campaign, although ineffective in its material designs, confirms immaterial relationships: "a lot of men got to know one another better than ever they had before" (Sketches 72). The apparent failure of the campaign compels Mullins personally to rekindle his own links within the community through his stoic acceptance of responsibility -- and Mullins' selfless action at this critical juncture goes some way to recovering the integrity and the appeal from the materialism and piracy of the city:

I saw Mullins, as I say, go up the street on his way to Dean Drone's. It was middle April and there was ragged snow on the streets, and the nights were dark still, and cold. I saw Mullins grit his teeth as he walked, and I know that he held in his coat pocket his own cheque for the hundred, with the condition taken off it, and he said that there were so many skunks in Mariposa that a man might as well be in the Head Office in the city.

The Dean came out to the little gate in the dark, -- you could see the lamplight behind from the open door of the rectory, -- and he shook hands with Mullins and they went in together. (73)

Despite their potential threat to the continuity of small-town community life, the Judge's and Mullins' cultural authority is preserved owing to their pointed affirmation of community and responsibility within

Mariposa.³² This recourse to human relations constitutes an important facet of Leacock's antimodernist discourse, a form of protest against Smith invested in the non-material interdependence among community members. Although Leacock is careful not to idealize such bonds, it is clearly this "second nature," as Gerald Lynch terms it, this sense of social obligation, that enables an implicit sense of resistance to the city, and, more significantly, to Josh Smith.

The inspiration for the election in which Josh Smith runs was one of great significance for Leacock and the readers of the Montreal Star (where Sunshine Sketches first appeared in serial form). The federal election of 1911 hinged on one issue, trade reciprocity with the United States, a proposal which Leacock believed threatened Canada's role within the Empire and the heritage of authority and value at the heart of imperialist discourse and institutions:

The proposals of the Reciprocity Compact, now gone its long way home, originated not out of any need or desire of the Canadian people, not from any decline of our commerce or disturbance of our markets, but simply and solely out of the revolving issues of American politics. (Leacock, "The Great Victory in Canada" 384)

Indeed, Leacock perceived American interest in free trade in terms of an economic piracy that threatened the homogeneity of Canadian culture, asserting that "[t]he increasing exploitation of the resources of the Republic led its leaders to look longingly towards the treasure-house of natural wealth beyond the frontier" (Leacock, "The Great Victory in Canada" 385). For Leacock, the stakes in the 1911 election were between the Republic's capitalist interests and the need for Canada to protect its own cultural and socioeconomic heritage.

Leacock took an active role in the Conservative campaign against the Liberal party's platform of

³²In this sense of an affirmation of Mariposan cultural interconnectedness, the love relationship between Zena Pepperleigh and Peter Pupkin can be seen as an affirmation of the value and "redemptive" power of love (see Gerald Lynch's Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity for an extensive and detailed discussion of this thesis). While the narrator's ironical comments on the pretensions and situations of those involved in the love story are humorous, the essential value accorded love stands in contrast to the "failure" of religion, business, and politics. Indeed, the humour arises from Leacock's "antimodernist" sense of human nature and attests to his understanding of "humour" as an expression of "human kindness," of kinship, as opposed to the socially corrective element of satire directed towards Josh Smith.

free trade. He gave public speeches throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, he helped defeat an incumbent cabinet minister in his local riding, and he composed full-page advertisements for the national press attacking the Liberals and their commitment to free trade (Zezulka 84). The result, the resounding defeat of Laurier and the Liberal party on 21st September 1911, was for Leacock a defining moment of Canada's cultural and socioeconomic identity:

The solidarity of the Dominion of Canada, the economic integrity which it is acquiring after years of sacrifice, would have been rent asunder [with a Liberal victory]. With it would have broken the tie which binds this country to the Mother Country and the other Dominions under the British Crown. This, undoubtedly, was the great underlying thought in the mind of the people of Canada, which cast the silent vote of the masses, in defiance of party allegiance, and in many cases in disregard of personal gain or loss, against the Reciprocity Compact. (Leacock, "The Great Victory" 388)

Rhetoric aside, Leacock underscores here that second nature which Lynch identified in the Mariposan townfolk, where self-interest is set aside in favour of a broader social vision of authority and value, promoting a Canadian society in which the heritage of Empire is reconfigured for the needs of a Canadian frontier and not wholly rejected or reproduced. For Leacock, the 1911 defeat of free trade was an affirmation of his vision of an antimodernist Empire, an antimodernist nation, and an antimodernist region of synonymous values characterized as Canadian. As J.M. Zezulka asserts, "the attitudes and values presented in . . . [Sunshine Sketches] . . . are not unique to a specific locale, but are in some way typical of all Canadians, whom Leacock sees as essentially small-town people" (83); like Sara Jeannette Duncan, Leacock "recognized the importance of the regional, without identifying the regional with the necessarily parochial" (Zezulka 83). Yet, despite the significance of this election victory, and of the Conservatives role in that victory, Leacock's portrayal of the 1911 election in Sunshine Sketches is humorous and ironic, even satirical, particularly when we consider that the piratical Josh Smith is the successful Conservative candidate, and that he is installed as Captain of the Ship of State owing to an illusory election victory.

Similarly, in the preface to Sunshine Sketches, Leacock makes plain his political conservatism

even as he ironically criticises Canadian politics:

In Canada I belong to the Conservative party, but as yet I have failed entirely in Canadian politics, never having received a contract to build a bridge, or make a wharf, nor to construct even the smallest section of the Transcontinental Railway. This, however, is a form of national ingratitude to which one becomes accustomed in this Dominion. (xvii)

Here, Leacock juxtaposes corrupt politics with the parliamentary symbol of his own political inclinations which were made public in his work for the 1911 election and his close association with the Montreal Star:

"The most important journal in Canada, the Montreal Star, threw the whole force of its power and the prestige of its reputation against the Compact. It sent its special correspondents into the United States; it disseminated articles, editorials, and even anti-Reciprocity advertisements broadcast over Canada. It virtually staked its name and its reputation on the cause it had espoused" ("The Great Victory" 389).

However, such implicitly self-recriminating accusations against the nature of politics are explicitly stated in

Leacock's criticism of Wilfred Laurier's Liberal regime:

In Canadian politics, indeed, to those who have, is given. Office brings with it the control of expending departments whose pecuniary favours, even apart from corruption, fall upon the constituencies in a fructifying shower. In a new country such as ours, public works, railways, and canals become words to conjure with. A wharf is built here, a railway branch there, a river dredged, a new post office building is erected, all on a lavish and handsome scale calculated to stir the gratitude of local contractors with a lively sense of favours still to come. ("Sir Wilfred Laurier's Victory" 831)

And yet, Leacock is equally critical of the apathy, the self-interest and lack of vision of the voting public who, he freely admits, are not an "ideal public" ("Sir Wilfred Laurier's Victory" 831). "The average Canadian citizen," argues Leacock, "has the idea that the politicians, conspicuous exceptions apart, are a sorry lot of scoundrels. He deplores their wickedness, but wishes that he had their chance. That is the plain truth of it" ("Sir Wilfred Laurier's Victory" 831). In short, this "plain truth" reflects Leacock's insistence that human self-interest is the actuating principle of socioeconomic activity; that the root cause of a corrupt political system "lies as much with the voters as with the politicians" ("Sir Wilfred Laurier's

Victory" 831). Just as Carlyle argued that "[i]n the long-run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom" (Past and Present 267), so Leacock believed that "[s]ocial betterment must depend at every stage on the force of public spirit and the public morality that inspires it" (Social Criticism 136).

Josh Smith's political platform is one of political expediency, of the realization of self-interest, and, as a result, is diametrically opposed to the affirmation of community implicit in Mariposan socioeconomic and political life. Indeed, during previous elections Smith's actions in effect de-value political discourse in making the election more marketable:

[R]ound election time, the Mariposa House was the Liberal Hotel, and the Continental Conservative, though Mr. Smith's place, where they always put on a couple of extra bar tenders, was what you might call Independent-Liberal-Conservative, with a dash of Imperialism thrown in. (122)

As with everything else, Josh Smith exploits public spirit for personal self-interest; yet in his own candidacy, and the narrator's interpretation of the events leading up to it, Leacock articulates his concerns regarding the currency of authority and value, and, by extension, the nature of social justice legitimated through that currency:

You remember Smith. You've seen him there on the steps of his hotel, -- two hundred and eighty pounds in his stockinged feet. You've seen him selling liquor after hours through sheer public spirit, and you recall how he saved the lives of hundreds of people on the day when the steamer sank, and how he saved the town from being destroyed the night when the Church of England Church burnt down. You know that hotel of his, too, half way down the street, Smith's Northern Health Resort, though already they were beginning to call it Smith's British Arms. (127)

The authority and the value accorded Smith is, as has been discussed, illusory, and his engagement with the election campaign is in terms of glib marketing, a political campaign purchased on economic capital alone: the "British Beer at all Hours" sign rather than "American Drinks"; the display of flags and portraits of King George, King Albert and Queen "Victorina"(128). Just as he bought public opinion regarding the

renewal of his liquor licence, Josh Smith seeks to purchase political favour in the town. Smith is, in fact, ridiculously ignorant of the issues, as he advocates both a protective tariff and free trade (130). Yet, not only is his engagement with the election issue illusory, Josh Smith's actual election "victory" is illusory, brought about by his manipulation. As the narrator disarmingly and ironically suggests, the two victories -- Smith's and Canada's -- are two quite distinct events: "[B]y the time the poll was declared closed at five o'clock there was no shadow of doubt that the country was saved and that Josh Smith was elected for Missinaba" (138). Nevertheless, Smith's is not a solitary case; as Leacock insists throughout his cultural work, the principle of self-interest will always form the basis of political and socioeconomic activity. In the Unsoved Riddle, Leacock discusses how the war produced the "profiteer," whom the "law-makers" now pursue as if he were a new form of human being:

But he was there all the time. Inordinate and fortuitous gain, resting on such things as monopoly, or trickery, or the mere hazards of abundance and scarcity, complying with the letter of the law but violating its spirit, are fit objects for appropriate taxation. The ways and means are difficult, but the social principle involved is clear. (145)

As discussed throughout this study, Leacock believed that social obligation was an important step towards the realization of social justice. In this regard, the educative impulse behind much of Leacock's cultural work underscored the antimodernist complexity of his recognition of the reality of individual self-interest and the importance of social responsibility. In Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, Edward Drone's political platform of "simple honesty and public morality" (Sketches 125) seems ineffectual and redundant in comparison to that of the incumbent Liberal, John Henry Bagshaw:

In his political ideas Edward Drone was and, as everybody in Mariposa knew, always had been crazy. He used to come up to the autumn exercises at the high school and make speeches about the ancient Romans and Titus Manlius and Quintus Curtius at the same time when John Henry Bagshaw used to make a speech about the Maple Leaf and ask for an extra half holiday. Drone used to tell the boys about the lessons to be learned from the lives of the truly great, and Bagshaw used to talk to them about the lessons learned from the lives of the extremely rich. Drone used

to say that his heart filled whenever he thought of the splendid patriotism of the ancient Romans, and Bagshaw said that whenever he looked out over this wide Dominion his heart overflowed. (Sketches 126)

While Edward Drone's classical education appears "intellectually bankrupt" (xv) and, like Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, "meaningless and trivial" (Sketches 109), Bagshaw's patriotic rhetoric and his call for "an extra half holiday" veer into crass pandering to material self-interest. In fact, Bagshaw would rather conduct his political campaign dodging accusations of corruption, "[fighting] the thing out on whether . . . [he] . . . spent too much money on the town wharf or the post office" (125), than he would addressing such a momentous issue as free trade. Nevertheless, there is an implied value in Edward Drone's impractical knowledge, particularly his wish to reproduce the authority and value of "great men" who provide cultural continuity as opposed to the "driving power and efficiency . . . [of] . . . business men" (69) in the city.

Somewhat disarmingly, the attitude of Mariposan voters towards politics is only different from Josh Smith's and the city's in terms of degree. For instance, the narrator unabashedly tells us that the majority of the Mariposan electorate "vote Liberal or Conservative according to their judgment of the question of the day," so "[i]f their judgment of these questions tells them that there is something for them in voting Liberal, then they do so" (119). Such self-interested judgments underscore the self-deception in any pretence that Adam Smith's "impartial spectator" acts as a check on either Josh Smith or on the Mariposan community. On the contrary:

Any man who would offer to take a bribe or sell his convictions for money, would be an object of scorn. I don't say they wouldn't take money, -- they would, of course, why not? -- but if they did they would take it in a straight fearless way and say nothing about it. They might, -- it's only human, -- accept a job or a contract from the government, but if they did, rest assured it would be in a broad national spirit and not for the sake of the work itself. No, sir. Not for a minute. (121)

And yet, in his own Maripocentric manner, the narrator does attribute a real importance to the political campaign (and by extension the real federal election). In response to the threat of Mariposa becoming "part of the United States" (118), he proclaims that "[w]e can see, -- it's plain enough now, -- that in the

great election Canada saved the British Empire, and that Missinaba saved Canada and that the vote of the Third Concession of Tecumseh Township saved Missinaba County" (118), and so on, until it becomes absurdly clear that Mariposa did, in fact, save the Empire. Of course this attitude is humorous (and free of the satirical edge directed towards Josh Smith), but as with much else in Leacock's wide range of cultural work, it also conveys a serious comment on cultural authority and value. Rather than the limitations and insularity of self-interest and parochialism, Leacock suggests that the 1911 election, for all its inevitable self-serving of vested interests, nonetheless engendered the promise and expansiveness of nationalism: "I suppose there was no place in the whole Dominion where the trade question, -- the Reciprocity question, -- was threshed out quite so thoroughly and in quite such a national patriotic spirit as in Mariposa" (131). The Mariposan community, then, is clearly not Veblen's clique of industrial technocrats who will constitute new sites of cultural authority and value in the new Republic. Leacock insisted that the "fallibility" of human nature, the basic principle of self-interest, was an irrefutable and ineluctable fact of socioeconomic activity. In accommodation of this "fact," Leacock held that the realization of a worthwhile Canadian nationalism and real progress towards social justice required the adaptation of the imperial heritage to a Canadian frontier: only such a re-visioning of imperialism could provide a check to the threat of unfettered individualism.

In Sunshine Sketches, Leacock's interdisciplinary, antimodernist discourse explores from numerous perspectives the issue of regulating Adam Smith's economic man in a frontier context when Smith's "impartial spectator" and "invisible hand" result in self-deceiving actions, rather than demonstrations of social responsibility. In Sunshine Sketches, Leacock continually asks, in light of the failure of traditional repositories of authority and value, such as education, religion, jurisprudence, and politics, how can social justice hope to be realized? Although Leacock does not provide concrete answers, he provides hints, clues, signposts -- all of which come under his encompassing discourse of antimodernism. After the First World War, Leacock advocated a detailed welfare state policy; during the

Depression he envisioned a vast imperial organization to address socioeconomic and cultural crises. But in 1912, in the thick of what T.J. Jackson Lears identifies as the antimodernist period, Leacock glimpsed a sense of value in a vision of community. The auditor of "L'Envoi. The Train to Mariposa," as well as the reader of "such a book as the present one" (Sunshine Sketches 141), those who cannot regain what was, are invited by Leacock's narrator to ratify that sense of cultural authority and value integral to Mariposan socioeconomic and cultural life:

[The Mariposa local is] . . . the most comfortable, the most reliable, the most luxurious and the speediest train that ever turned a wheel.

And the most genial, the most sociable too. See how the passengers all turn and talk to one another now, as they get nearer and nearer to the little town. That dull reserve that seemed to hold the passengers in the electric suburban has clean vanished and gone. They are talking, -- listen, -- of the harvest, and the late election, and of how the local member is mentioned for the cabinet and all the old familiar topics of the sort. Already the conductor has changed his glazed hat for an ordinary round Christie and you can hear the passengers calling him and the brakeman "Bill" and "Sam" as if they were all one family. (Sunshine Sketches 144-45)

Leacock's antimodernism, then, is a holistic and evolving discourse, one that transgresses disciplinary distinctions. His method, not only in Sunshine Sketches, but throughout his cultural work, involves an exploration of human culture in a manner contrary to the specialized analysis and fixed systems of classical economists who, as Veblen said, "have given a narrative survey of phenomena, not a genetic account of an unfolding process" ("Why?" 51). Even at the level of form, Leacock's antimodernism is apparent. J Kushner and R.D. MacDonald find that "Sunshine Sketches like Arcadian Adventures is strangely devoid of real progressive action . . . [as] . . . the stories, or better, the sketches move to resolutions which are really a return only to the starting point or a return to inactivity" (505). Gerald Lynch, however, argues convincingly that the form of Sunshine Sketches, the short story cycle, "manages to balance the needs of the one and the many" ("The One and the Many" 94), and in so doing resists "Leacock's unifying vision" ("The One and the Many" 97). Short story cycles "tempt with hints of comfortable closure, [but] they also destabilize, resisting closure" (Lynch, "The One and the Many" 102) --

as a result, they are, perhaps, an ideal antimodernist form.

V: Conclusion

According to David Staines, when E.K. Brown began examining Canadian critical attitudes to Canadian literature, "[h]e was struck by the two competing and unsatisfactory positions occupied by Canadian critics and reviewers: on the one hand, thoughtless and unqualified praise and, on the other hand, disdainful debunking -- he found no middle ground" (*Beyond the Provinces* 70). This "middle ground," which Staines describes as "dispassionate witnessing" (89), provides a balance between interpretation and evaluation. The need to work towards a middle ground in our understanding of Stephen Leacock remains acute and demands further mapping beyond the necessarily provisional conclusion to a study such as the present one.

Perhaps more so than any other Canadian cultural figure, Leacock's pre-eminence during the first quarter of this century (at least) demands reconfiguring. Apart from the few critics noted in the introduction who have sought to rupture the limited and limiting strategies of Leacock's consecration, Leacock is still codified as inately funny, nostalgic and a-historical, or as rampantly commercial, or as a figure of monstrous Victorian attitudes that more enlightened "generations prefer to denounce or forget" (Doyle, *Sage* 75) -- position-takings that are inherently simplistic. Yet rather than engaging in games of critical refute whereby I am obliged to demarcate an antithetical position, I have outlined an approach that is holistic on two counts: it provides an integrated "recovery" of Leacock's cultural work and the value of that work,³³ and an understanding of the critical position-takings as part of a composite field of cultural production.

Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual model underscores the complexity of cultural production so extensively that a study such as mine must inevitably work within restrictive parameters. As a result, in

³³"Recovery" is in many ways a problematic word as it implies that a finite quality, or value, is recoverable. However, this study has sought consistently to foreground that the act of recovery involves both interpretation and evaluation, a sense of value as an on-going process to the extent that an understanding of Leacock's cultural work is contingent on the competitive negotiations that constitute the cultural field.

each chapter I have been compelled for the sake of length and manageability to exclude much more than I have included. As Edward Said realizes in his seminal interdisciplinary study, Orientalism, "there is no such thing as a merely given, or simply available starting point: beginnings have to be made for each project in such a way as to enable what follows from them" (16). In addition to enabling a recovery of the holistic, interdisciplinary nature of Leacock's cultural work, Bourdieu's model also foregrounds the "beginning" of the contextualization and politicization (in the broadest sense of the word) of the production and reception of Leacock's cultural signature. In short:

[T]he field of cultural production is the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to limit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer. (Bourdieu, Field 42)

Sadly, as David Staines highlights throughout Beyond the Provinces, the nature of the stakes involved in the definition of Leacock and many other Canadian writers continues to be influenced, either explicitly or implicitly, by a sense of cultural inferiority in relation to Great Britain and the United States. As a result, Canadian writers such as Leacock are continually excluded from consecrated international literary-historical periods such as modernism.

Ramsay Cook suggests that as "Leacock was both analyzing and reflecting a period of profound transition, . . . [i]t is impossible . . . to categorize his views with an easy 'ism'" (180). Cook's comment, while accurate, results from certain stakes in the cultural field: namely, the exclusion of Leacock from "isms" -- particularly modernism -- owing to the nature of his production and reception. Canada's indigenous and internalized cultural inferiority (for want of a better term) has effectively consecrated Leacock as divorced from international literary movements, when, as I have discussed, the significance of a seminal Canadian text such as Sunshine Sketches conveys value much further afield. As John Moss suggests, Sunshine Sketches "is an affectionate illusion of our common past, as specifically Canadian in detail, as universal in assumptions of value and in exposure of human nature, as any work could be" (167). However, those academics and critics who wield the currency of capital, the degree of cultural power, to

canonize such movements as modernism have done so, as Bourdieu suggests, in accordance with their own subjective position-takings, their own vested interests. It seems to me, then, that in addition to recovering and reconfiguring the value of Leacock's cultural work within the field of cultural production, we need to reconfigure the parameters of cultural fields denoted as modernist or antimodernist, thereby underscoring the complex interrelatedness of any mode of cultural production. As Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B.

Simpson suggest in their introduction to Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature:

[We must] interrogate the critical tendency to designate literary periods under constricting aesthetic rubrics and to define them by discrete thematic preoccupations, as if these pursuits lead to "truths" about literary history. We see, rather, that acts of appropriation are performed by successive generations of readers, with far-ranging and often unforeseen results. (vii)

This kind of project, however, is not an exercise in deconstruction, but an attempt to rupture cultural constructs with a view to understanding those constructs and what they efface, exclude and de-value.

The very fact that the stakes of Leacock's engagement with the cultural field that I have termed antimodernist are encoded in Leacock's cultural work -- discourses, career, text³⁴ -- demonstrates the need to read Leacock holistically and interdisciplinarily. And yet, understanding Leacock in terms of antimodernism immediately raises problems of better defining a pervading discourse that, by its very nature, eludes definition. This, then, is not a conclusion in the strict sense of the word, but an opening out, an intimation of the work to be done. Lears' notion of an antimodernist discourse needs to be mapped more thoroughly within a Canadian context if we are more fully to recover Leacock's antimodernist discourse throughout his cultural work as well as to describe the matrix of interrelationships that produce value in the antimodernist cultural field.

³⁴Kaplan and Simpson also note that in rupturing canonized periods, "we call attention to issues that it is only recently possible to discuss -- issues that earlier critics either could not notice or felt obligated to deny, especially as these are embedded in the toxic discourses of sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, class snobbery, and xenophobia in otherwise compelling works by early twentieth-century writers" (xvi). Such a contextualization of Leacock's chauvinism and racialism, for instance, would also be important work.

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