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My Regeneration: “Heroes and Villains” and the Salvation of *Brian Wilson Presents Smile*

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Abstract

‘Heroes and Villains’ is often identified as a key to the Smile project on which Beach Boys’ leader Brian Wilson and lyricist Van Dyke Parks collaborated in 1966 and 1967. That role has not been closely analyzed, however. This close reading of the song’s structure, lyrics, themes and social and cultural referents shows that it offers an index to the album. Using its frontier setting and a variety of sacred and secular myths, symbols and icons, ‘Heroes and Villains,’ like Smile as a whole, offers historically-informed visions of national decline, crisis, and regeneration that are at once critical and patriotic.

No song from the recording sessions in which the long-unfinished Beach Boys album *Smile* began to take shape during 1966 is better known than “Good Vibrations.” Indeed of all the songs that would feature on *Brian Wilson Presents Smile*, the work completed and released by the group’s leader in 2004, none can claim anything like its standing.¹ Issued as a single in the autumn of 1966, “Good Vibrations” enjoyed instant critical, popular, and commercial success in the United States and many other countries, and has long been celebrated for its musical ambition, aesthetic sophistication, and formal complexity, as well as for the vocal, instrumental, and technical skills involved in its production. Though the song was written at a time of innovation across the world of popular music, it would be hard to identify an individual release that better exemplified its wedding of creativity,

critical recognition, and mass public appeal. "Good Vibrations" remains a widely-acclaimed pop art work, assured of its long-established place in the cultural canon (Carlin 94-97).

The Beach Boys' follow-up single in the United States, "Heroes and Villains," performed less well in terms of sales, reviews or chart rankings following its release in July 1967, and it has never achieved the elevated status enjoyed by its predecessor (Gaines 225-26; Badman 195). Yet that was not for the want of trying: if "Good Vibrations" is often cited as the most carefully-crafted and expensive pop single ever recorded up to that time, "Heroes and Villains" soon outdid it in terms of production costs and the number of studio sessions and hours of work involved.² Such an effort could be—and sometimes has been—interpreted as a sign of Brian Wilson's perfectionist work-ethic; it is more often read retrospectively, however, as evidence of the deepening in-group conflicts over the group's future direction that would lead to *Smile's* abandonment in the late spring of 1967. Yet while internal disputes do throw light on the latter, whether or not they also influenced the repeated postponements to the new single's release (accounts vary) distracts attention from other explanations (Priore, *Look!* 266, 290).³ The version of "Heroes and Villains" issued in July 1967 was re-recorded quickly in Wilson's home studio after suspension of the *Smile* sessions. Rather than seeing the protracted—ostensibly wasted—labors over the follow-up to "Good Vibrations" as emblematic of the fate of the album as a whole, however, it is more productive to see the months of work that went into the song as a measure of its importance to *Smile*.

The pivotal role played by "Heroes and Villains" on the album for which it was composed has been emphasized by many observers and critics. Among those in close proximity to Brian Wilson's original song-writing collaborations with *Smile* lyricist Van Dyke Parks, for example, David Anderle recalled it as "a critical track on the album" while Paul Williams (59, 121-2) used the term "cornerstone." In more recent years, Peter Doggett (66-67) and Kirk Curnutt (12) have both written of the song as the "centre piece" of *Smile*,

while Peter Ames Carlin (vii) has referred to "Heroes and Villains" as "one of *Smile's* key songs." But while biographies of Wilson, Beach Boys' histories, and accounts of *Smile's* composition often identify the song's main themes and assert its significance for the album, more detailed analysis has been limited. What follows sees the formal placement of "Heroes and Villains" at the beginning of *Smile* (not to mention its status as the first joint Wilson/Parks composition) as indicative of its synoptic function within the recording as a whole: in terms of its structure and substance, vision and trajectory; vis-à-vis some of its musical motifs; and in relation to its readings of American history and folklore, mythology and identity. It is in many ways a song to be read typologically, much as the New England Puritan settlers to whom it alludes were taught to read the Christian Bible. Ironically, while "Good Vibrations" as a pop single outshone its successor, within the context of *Smile* it is in the light of "Heroes and Villains" that its romantic-cum-mystical lyric gains greater meaning. The placement of "Good Vibrations" as the closing song on *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* makes sense, indeed, in large part *because* the recording begins with "Heroes and Villains."

Making such assertions about the latter song, its placement, and the recording to which it belongs assumes some kind of critical authority. This is no small claim, for not only did some members of the Beach Boys question the accessibility of Van Dyke Parks' *Smile* lyrics during the initial recordings: even admirers have characterized them as "elliptical," "impressionistic," "sometimes obscure," or (a widely-used phrase) "Joycean." In light of such reactions, Parks not surprisingly declined the more prosecutorial demands for elucidation: "it wasn't something I wanted to do for a living," he recalled in 2005 (*Beautiful Dreamer*). Yet not only has Parks identified some of *Smile's* lyrical and thematic concerns; he has also commented on aesthetic and practical aspects of his work with Brian Wilson, all of which throws further light on the songs. Emphasizing that his contributions had to "accommodate" the musical materials he was given, for example, Parks has noted that the latter appeared "highly anecdotal," embodied "short spasms of enthusiasm," and

consisted of "sections that weren't connected": these qualities, he felt, lent Wilson's work a certain "cartoon consciousness," prompting the lyricist to conceive of *Smile* as "a musical cartoon." If his acknowledged interest in exploring myths of national experience furnished Parks with a thematic framework, then "cartoon consciousness" and aesthetics—oriented more to the snapshot than the chronicle, more to outlines than details—offered an expressive template for a writer seeking to respond to his partner's palate of vibrant musical brush strokes. The result was a series of low-resolution, high-connotation sketches of archetypal scenarios, processes and subjects (Beard 3, 4).

Both pragmatics and aesthetics had semantic implications. Wilson's propensity to consider multiple alternative combinations and sequences for *Smile*'s instrumental sections (or "modules," to use Philip Lambert's term) would in any event have made the kind of *a priori* narrative design associated with a nineteenth-century novel difficult to realize (Leaf 99-100; Lambert 253-87). But such was hardly the aim or expectation. "I had no preconceptions. I had no great plan," Parks remarked in 2005. Moreover, while he was trying "to capture the ... conquering of the continent" in the songs' lyrics, he did not intend "to tell an audience what to think" so much as to help it "feel that experience." If his claim that "it all came out quite by accident" suggests perhaps too close an affinity to the compositional practices of a John Cage, say, *Smile*'s song texts do owe as much to the cut-up and fold-in techniques explored by William S. Burroughs as to depression-era proletarian realism or the topical, issue-oriented songwriting of the folk music revival; they certainly have less to do with agit-prop than with pop art. As Parks explained, "it was important to put trust in the creative process and let it develop a mind of its own" (Beard 3, 4).

Readings of the results, it follows, can scarcely be said to involve a decoding of authorial intention, as if songs were so many cryptic crossword clues into which meaning has been packed, subject only to correct deciphering. It is more a matter of elucidating the fields of signification—these may be historical or political, social or cultural, institutional

or personal, generic or discursive—within which the composition occurs, and engaging their intersections in ways that respect both writers and their work: of recognizing, in this case, the lyricist's stated interests and motivations, as well as the knowledge and methods drawn into the exercise, while appreciating the nature of creativity and the conditions of composition—and responding accordingly. While *Smile* may have been the product of a creative process in which formal coincidence, discovery and happenstance played a part, its song texts are neither arbitrary nor unintelligible: through them may be described in retrospect a variety of patterns, if not designs. "Heroes and Villains" is not the *sole* means by which some of the latter invite configuration: "Cabin Essence" and "Surf's Up" provide congruent access to the recording's concerns (this very quality is itself one measure of its coherence). Yet the scenario and imagery of the album's opening song do have a quasi-catalytic quality: as Parks explained, "the other images that came beyond ["Heroes and Villains"] simply tried to connect to that scene" (Beard 3). These articulations make it a particularly useful point of entry to the larger work's field of action.

When Peter Doggett (67) suggested that the "saga" of "Heroes and Villains" may be read as "a microcosm of the entire *Smile* tragi-comedy," he had in mind the delays that plagued and ultimately precluded the intended completion of both. But neither song nor album owes its value to the circumstances or travails of its making. Indeed, if associations *are* to be made between the production histories of "Heroes and Villains" and *Smile*, then the role that Brian Wilson's renewed ability to play the song in public later played in enabling him to complete, perform, and record the album also deserves mention, not least because it invites attention to other dimensions of both (Carlin 300-01). In relation to their narrative trajectories, for example, we should recognize that "Heroes and Villains" and *Smile* deal with decline *and* recovery, sin *and* salvation, death *and* rebirth. It is particularly noteworthy that both song and album portray the redemption that may follow a fall from grace as a succession: a rebirth, an offspring, children. Exactly eighteen months after The Who in "My Generation" (1965) had rejected the accumulations of experience in favour of

an eternal youth unfettered by history or society, and eighteen months before the cover of The Band's *Music From Big Pink* (1968) paid homage to inheritance and the wisdom of the ages by portraying many of the group's "next of kin," Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks in "Heroes and Villains" were conceiving a rejuvenation that might have accommodated both: little wonder, then, that the exercise—call it "My Regeneration"—involved, as Wilson himself described it, hard labour and a protracted birth (Badman 178).

Son of a Gun

Smile's interest in reconciling past experience and future prospects, social obligation and personal choice, within a specifically American context is first announced in what Brian Wilson's biographer Peter Ames Carlin characterizes as "a lawless boomtown somewhere out on the fringes of the Old West ... lit up by ambition and riddled with gunfire" (93-4). Kirk Curnutt adds that this setting for "Heroes and Villains" is so heavily impregnated with layers of mass culture-codified mythology that its archetypal figures and scenarios—from the sheriff and the gunslinger to the saloon and the "whores with hearts of gold"—might imply a national imaginary composed almost entirely of dime novels and movie plots, frontier ballads and cartoon strips (61). Van Dyke Parks certainly chose this setting in part because of his relish for such resources, and later spoke explicitly of *Smile's* "cartoon consciousness." But he began with the "wild west" for more reasons than its engagement with a mythology that in truth not only preceded but also extended well beyond the more familiar mass-mediated routines: as Carlin and Curnutt acknowledge, he started there in part because of the west's connection to the nation's historical experience (Priore, *Smile* 73, 102; Beard 3, 4, 7).

A more fertile ground could scarcely be imagined for *Smile's* explorations of the ways that experience has intersected with the complex of faiths, beliefs, and mythologies informing American self-definitions. Even before Hollywood had begun to populate the

territory with its idea of natives and settlers, outlaws and deputies, livery stables and log cabins, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner was in the early 1890s ascribing to an archetypal "meeting point between savagery and civilization" the formation and continuous renewal of a national identity attuned in particular to liberty and equality, republicanism and democracy, individualism and opportunity (32). His influential "frontier thesis," in which the "meeting point" became a place of recovery and second chances (in Turner's words "a gate of escape from the bondage of the past" (59)), was itself informed by yet earlier visions and speculations: as one of the figures alluded to later in "Heroes and Villains," future "rough rider" and President Theodore Roosevelt, wrote to him in 1894, Turner had "put into definite shape a good deal of thought which has been floating around rather loosely" (Roosevelt; Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 29-32). Such thought drew in turn upon traditions of a still-older vintage, including classical, European, Celtic, and Nordic mythologies which conceived of locations said to lie somewhere beyond the continent's western shores as places of rejuvenation and plenty, of immortality and bliss—but also of danger and death (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 27-28; Mumford Jones 4).

The costs as well as the benefits of going west are at play in "Heroes and Villains." For while there is clearly a comedic side to its "gunslinger plot" (Curnutt notes its "veritable parody of cowboy legends" (61)), the song's historical referents lend it a blacker humor than a typical cartoon might afford. Staged in a "Spanish and Indian home," the episode is part of a larger plot involving territorial expansion, military conquest, forced relocations, and the dispossession of native American and other long-established inhabitants.⁴ Insofar as these developments were integral to the "empire of liberty" first anticipated by Thomas Jefferson (237-38) in 1780, however, this is precisely the point: the song addresses relationships between experience and belief, legacy and prospect, individual license and social order along some of their most highly-stressed fault lines. It asks what Van Dyke Parks recalled as *Smile's* fundamental question about mid-nineteenth-century notions of "manifest destiny" (Carlin 98): where exactly had the idea

that the American people had a divine mission to carry the blessings of their civilization—from Republican democracy and material progress to Christianity, equality, and the rule of law—across the continent led? (Stephanson xi-xiv, 3-27; Merk 3-60, 261-65). In jump-cutting from romantic dreams apparently cut short by gunfire to the sudden, seemingly-immaculate, conception of a new generation, "Heroes and Villains" also suggests one answer, later encapsulated by the title of Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence*: a cultural trope—in the author's words "the structuring metaphor of the American experience"(5)—that had symbolically resolved such tensions and contradictions within the national imaginary, from the colonial era through the days of manifest destiny and on into the twentieth century.

That the pursuit of national ambitions might entail or legitimate gunfire, that the violation of some might enable—might even be required for—the survival and recovery of others, are inferences readily drawn from the song's "wild west" setting, given the conditioned action the latter habitually evokes. The cantina signifies card games and gambling, with all the thrills, risks, and opportunities they entail; the sound of margaritas and high spirits tells of intoxicating liquors; and the bullets that soon fly suggest the stakes involved.⁵ It is a familiar scenario—and one designed to resonate, not only historically but also formally insofar as many of its components, from major figures to minor details, also hint at the typological connections that make the song an index to *Smile*. The "rain" that falls as bullets in "Heroes and Villains" will, for example, enable new crops to spring up and life to return elsewhere on the album; later on, too, rejuvenated spirits will for good or ill rekindle old flames first fanned here. Last but not least, from the card game implied by the saloon bar setting will derive the enigmatic "bicycle rider" figure. This "natural extension of an image from the cantina," as Parks later described it, comes to serve as *Smile's* dramatic chorus: for while it is referred to only once by name on the album, the rider's associated musical motif recurs periodically, often accompanying questions or lamentations (Beard 3).

The figure derives from the "bicycle rider" playing cards used in many American social settings (not least saloon bars) from the late nineteenth century onwards, so-called because their reverse sides portrayed an angel seated on a bicycle.⁶ When invoked within the song's frontier setting, with all its promises of rebirth and second chances, of risk, opportunity, and conflict, the image invites associations with a number of archetypal embodiments of national myth: with the "American Adam," one-time sinner restored to new world innocence (though perhaps riding for a fall again), and with Uncle Sam, star-spangled hero or (for those subject to his all-conquering designs) villain (Fischer 232).⁷ As if cycling to and fro between heaven and hell, channeling some divinely-inspired national conscience, the rider appears to pursue God's kingdom on earth—and to lay it waste in the process. (The image also conjures up a variety of popular culture associations: during the opening scene in the 1939 Hollywood film version of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), for example, a wealthy Kansas landowner becomes the wicked witch of the west while riding a bicycle across the skies).⁸ The fact that it is first explicitly named between signs of colonial advance—now physical, now spiritual—and native resistance in "Roll Plymouth Rock" only lends the figure greater import vis-à-vis American historical experiences and national self-definitions.

If the setting and specific elements of "Heroes and Villains" signify in relation to *Smile* as well as American and western myth, history, and culture, the same applies to aspects of the song's formal design. The long, step-wise descending melody lines of its opening verses, for example, describe not only the prevailing narrative trajectory of the song and the album that are to follow but also the nation's implied historical path, suggesting that the cycle may take the form of a downwards spiral. The song's opening line provides a more explicit measure of the latter, mapping in spatial, temporal, moral, and spiritual terms the distance between "this town" (a commonplace shorthand for that imagined twentieth-century embodiment of sinful behavior, Hollywood) and "the city" (the idealized "city upon a hill" of Puritan New England, oldest of the nation's cultural

hearths; the national birthplace and Quaker crucible of brotherly love, Philadelphia). Paved with good intentions, the road to national self-realization may have been sanctioned as manifest destiny but has still been laid across the land of other inhabitants with different ideas. However fertile the territory and however pacific the intent, subsequent verses go on to suggest, pioneer visions of frontier mobility and opportunity have led to conflict, violence, imprisonment, and death, notwithstanding Frederick Jackson Turner's more sympathetic assessment of the influences deriving from the so-called "free land."

This fall is further encoded in the song's major characters. A first-person embodiment of the properties and practices of Uncle Sam and the American Adam whose mythic selves mark the cards on show in "Heroes and Villains," the narrator has long since departed "the city"—whether the latter be the "model of Christian charity" enshrined in Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop's celebrated Puritan sermon or the Pennsylvania capital in which both Declaration of Independence and Federal Constitution were later drafted. Drawn west by a desire for the security and self-reliance that "free land" promised, by the missionary impulse to extend civilization and redeem mankind, or by some other, more or less virtuous, romantic longing, he is now "lost and gone," fallen from grace, his archetypal errand into the wilderness less a quest for salvation than a descent into worldly, material corruption. The narrator (and thus the people he also represents) inhabits a world of temptation and rivalry, of weaponry and insecurity. As the song's later verses suggest, it is a world in which Benjamin Franklin's benevolent precepts—healthy, wealthy, or otherwise—have somehow given birth to Theodore Roosevelt's self-righteous and rough-riding imperialist practices; where heroes and villains, good guys and bad, seem indistinguishable; and where the shots fall where they may.

The individual whose commitment to some higher law sanctions the breaking of other, more codified, laws is a familiar one in American culture and society: in western

fiction and film this "good bad man" has often appeared as the outlaw who saves the damsel (or community) in distress, only to find his good deeds have failed to win him redemption in the eyes of society, even if they have shown him—at least until such rejection—to have abandoned his former evil ways (Griffith et al. 91-93). Just as there is clearly a good bad man in "Heroes and Villains," so there is also a good bad woman. To play alongside the hybrid wilderness-tested Adamic innocent and westward-expanding star-spangled narrator, Parks casts Margarita, an Old Testament Eve turned Hispanic or Native earth goddess whose cocktail character—one part sacred, one part secular—recalls Curnutt's equally spirited and down-to-earth "whore with the heart of gold." Her part in his downfall comes as the interests and passions of those who drink in her dancing body are inflamed, triggering gunfire and the prospect of jailhouse at best and cemetery at worst. Their temptation may be read as enacting what the South Carolina Senator John Calhoun feared might follow American expansionist moves to assuage popular land hunger with the very territories she represents: "Mexico," he warned in 1847 during the war with its neighbor which would make the "Spanish and Indian home" US territory, was the nation's "forbidden fruit. The penalty of eating it would be to subject our institutions to political death" (308).

Yet Margarita is also an "innocent girl": not simply a body of land ripe for the taking but also a spirit made flesh. Read as a distant, new country second cousin to the revolutionary Goddess of Liberty and French republican symbol in Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) and to the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor (1886) which Auguste Bartholdi designed in part on the basis of Delacroix's painting; or, more proximately, as kith and kin to Columbia in Samuel Jennings' *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Science* (1792), to the angelic figure guiding westward expansion in John Gast's *American Progress* (1872), and to the many other versions of Miss Liberty adorning coinage and cupolas, she appears less an agent of temptation than an abiding source of inspiration and object of veneration: a symbol of enlightenment and education, of justice, progress—

and liberty (Fischer 233-42). If *this* is the girl to whom the narrator (quoting African American vocal group The Crows' best-selling 1953 song "Gee") pledges devotion between *Smile's* invocatory "Prayer" and the beginning of "Heroes and Villains," his motives appear less base than noble and his fall becomes at least as self-sacrificial, even as saintly, as it might be sinful.

These contexts raise questions about not only what the fall entails but also where it might lead and how final (perhaps fatal) it is likely to prove. Has Uncle Sam fallen in love with liberty or fallen from grace? Is his a fortunate fall or is he falling to his death? If crossing the geographical fall line—the boundary once imposed by British colonial authorities on American westward expansion—has made him a fall guy, is he a scapegoat or the ringleader? How fallen an angel, in short, is the bicycle rider; how enduring are the beliefs that he peddles and how elevated the causes for which he takes wing?

Such questions are raised throughout the song. No sooner do we learn that Margarita had at last been "brought ... down" by a "rain of bullets" following a fight than the narrator adds that she is "still dancing" in spite of her experience, undeterred by the behaviour of "dude[s]" in the hazardous, embattled world she inhabits. Insofar as a "dude" in this western setting implies an urbanite (often a wealthy eastern tourist) whose appearance belies his essence, her endurance may imply the unblemished appeal and immortal nature of the ideals she embodies in the face of threats to her virtue (Knoll 20-22; Hill 322-24). Yet if Margarita is the instrument of seduction and the city the symbolic ideal, her survival signifies the abiding dangers and many temptations the latter faces on the frontiers of civilization. At the beginning of "Heroes and Villains," meanwhile, the narrator feels "lost and gone and unknown," a gunfight soon to have a hand in that fate; yet by its end he too is "alright": literally or metaphorically back in the saddle, and "fit" enough to "ride in the rough." If he is a "dude" only in Margarita's eyes but in truth an agent of the "city upon a hill" then his status as bearer of the nation's founding ideals—of the right "stuff"—may have secured his survival and liberty.

Yet his escape, whether from jailhouse or early death, is also in keeping with that of the archetypal good bad man. His proclamation of love for Margarita as she dances in the song's so-called "cantina" section (in effect a quasi-cinematic insert) might well imply a devotion to the highest ideals, but it does him no good. Once the shooting begins, an arrest halts the dance, and regardless of the part he may have played in her deliverance he ends the song as he began: beyond the realms of civilized society and fitted for adventures of the kind engaged in by Theodore Roosevelt and the so-called "rough riders" (or US Army volunteer cavalry regiments) that he helped command during what Secretary of State John Hay described in an 1898 letter to the future President as the "splendid little war" with Spain over Cuba and the Philippines. These were pursuits, Roosevelt wrote, in whose context notions such as "liberty" and "consent of the governed" became no more than "cant" deployed by "foolish sentimentalists" wishing to avoid their responsibilities as men with work to do on the nation's behalf. Were such ideas to prevail, Uncle Sam might as well give Arizona back to the Apaches (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 51-54).

Light My Fire

Both the fall of and the fallout from "Heroes and Villains" should be viewed in the light by which the narrator watches or (since cotillions and square dances are social affairs) joins Margarita's dance. Indeed the song's plot lends new meaning to the familiar notion of a "torch song" (as do symbolic word-play associations made throughout *Smile*). Insofar as he fell in love with her "years ago," for example, Margarita is the narrator's old flame; and in the song's "cantina" section she becomes the light of his life as her movements make the flames around her dance. The fire in this "affair" is then paradoxically doused once someone opens fire, a "rain of bullets" appearing to snuff out the dancer before law and order has had time to stop the shoot-out. Heralded by another sign of advancing civilization in the form of a railroad whistle, the voice of authority—"you're under arrest!"—signifies not simply an end to the dancer, however (the gunfire alone has done

that): it implies an end to the dance—indeed, to all unauthorized movement. With a crime scene declared, various lines of enquiry may then be pursued: the question is not merely what becomes of the spirit of freedom the dancer has fanned and of the desire for action it excites, but what of its expression—and what if the sheriff shot first?

Frederick Jackson Turner argued that where frontier conditions fostered what he termed “anti-social” tendencies (“selfishness” or “antipathy to control”), “individual liberty” pressed beyond social constraint, legal obligation, or political limit carried “dangers as well as ... benefits” (53, 55). If only to fend off chaos or lynch law, it followed, the sheriff had to step in. The *deus ex machina* intrusion of authority in “Heroes and Villains” might from this perspective be considered a domestic prologue to President Roosevelt’s 1904 unilateral proclamation, “in flagrant cases of ... wrongdoing,” of the right of the United States to the “exercise of an international police power” across the western hemisphere (LaFeber 232). Such links were implicit in Roosevelt’s association of late-nineteenth-century campaigns to pacify the Apaches and American intervention in Cuba and the Philippines. Insofar as the song shows Uncle Sam civilizing—by policing—himself, it is little wonder that the narrator thereafter regains his powers in the service of an expansionist state. With the cessation of hostilities and mobility at home, a monopolization of violence and a projection of force abroad turn him from free-ranging fireman into state-sanctioned policeman.

Even if only fighting fire with fire, the agents of law and order may themselves claim the song’s moral and ideological high ground, appropriating its choral lament (“just see what you’ve done!”) if not appealing to the Declaration of Independence for the argument that life, liberty, and happiness require security. In a world where ideals are endangered and temptations indulged, who else has the means to bring the “peace in the valley” anticipated in the lyrics? Whatever he makes of the arrests, in citing this title to Thomas A. Dorsey’s well-known and much-covered 1937 gospel standard, the narrator clearly believes that the biblical Fall will be reversed, whether or not he or Margarita

themselves survive. Invoking Isaiah's Old Testament prophecies of a pre-lapsarian garden, the song imagines a world in which nature is both benign and fertile while mankind is unscathed by war and freed from pain, whether physical, spiritual, or emotional.⁹ Visualized by the Quaker minister and painter Edward Hicks in many of his celebrated early-nineteenth-century works on the theme of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, these prophecies take the more specific form of a new world garden where the lion lies down by the lamb—and in some versions native American and settler also find common ground (Vlach 149-58; Cotter). Extending the already rich semantic field of "Heroes and Villains," such allusions invite the belief that, for Margarita and the narrator, the shotgun has not precluded a wedding and their affair may yet bear fruit. Armed force at home and abroad, indeed, may be a precondition to domestic tranquility.

The uncertainty about the fate of the song's "affair" applies not only to its two main figures but also to the relations between settlers and natives and between the nation's founding ideals and the historical experiences that it articulates: all three may "stand or fall." Given the underlying motivation behind *Smile*—the desire to investigate the meaning of manifest destiny—and the agenda-setting placement of "Heroes and Villains" within the album, there is a certain logic to a plot structure that allows for neither clarity nor closure, with its jump-cuts and inserts, close-ups and panoramas, time-lapses and freeze-frames. But if the song's various fires appear at first to cast as much shadow as light, they also kindle what by the end of the recording will have become a chain of beacons—lines of fire—marking out paths to enlightenment across *Smile's* length and breadth.

Follow, for example, the fire's trajectory. The flame that is fanned by Margarita's dance in "Heroes and Villains" suggests an open fire: symbolic of the free, perhaps heavenly, spirits that help inspire its affairs. Yet the bullets that then fly lend "open fire" a rather different meaning, signifying not so much republican or religious liberty as reckless license: to be contained by law in liberty's name. What follows of those fires—how, when

and where their sparks fly—becomes one of *Smile's* more extended plot-lines. Thus the fire that is harnessed by the rural homestead's humble lamp-light in "Cabin Essence" provides for peace, security and community: when dusk falls at the preceding song's close, and the narrator begs for the light to endure, it at least mimics Thomas Dorsey's vision of an age when "the sun ever shines" and "the night is as fair as the day." By contrast, when the torch is passed to the urbanized, class- and status-conscious keeping of "Surf's Up," and the rural lamp-light is supplanted by the more opulent opera-house chandelier, the illumination it affords the narrator proves "dim." Led astray by its elevated appearance, seemingly bereft of faith, hope, and charity, and clearly "beyond belief," this now "broken man" is left blind to the lamp-light that continues to shine away from the city's towering columns: a sign of God's word and guidance, and of the presence of Jesus; in Quaker terms of the "inner light" of God's grace and mercy, and of Christ's presence in the heart.

As the line of *Smile's* fire extends yet further beyond "Heroes and Villains," more light is cast on this implied contrast between a virtuous agrarian utopia—God's *country*—and the city of destruction to which the narrator's pilgrim's progress in reverse seems to have led him. "Surf's Up" may call the latter to mind in its vision of a "town" that is as hollow and fragile as it is high-cultured and socially-elevated; but via its explicit reference to the great Chicago fire of 1871 "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow" then cites a literally grass-rooted urban inferno, the vast blaze having allegedly started when a cow owned by one Mrs. Catherine O'Leary kicked over a kerosene lamp besides her family's south side barn (Cromie 24-31).¹⁰ As historian William Cronon has demonstrated in *Nature's Metropolis*, in the very act of incorporating—that is, of subordinating—its western hinterlands, Chicago's late-nineteenth-century railroad- and agribusiness-driven growth deepened economic, social, and cultural divisions: on *Smile* those divisions gauge the distance between the city of destruction and the city upon a hill (itself conceived of as a garden) for which the heavenly city of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* served as a literary analogue (Slotkin *Regeneration* 39, 147). As if charged by such circumstances, the physical proximity of grass-

roots and towering columns, of country and city, makes for friction, conflagration and collapse.

By the time *Smile* enters its later stages, indeed, tensions between manifest destiny and the historical experience of westward expansion, between the abstract ideals of the city upon a hill and the hard facts of Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), may all be ready to explode.¹¹ "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow" sounds, at least, like some musical scorched earth assault on Edward Hicks's *Peaceable Kingdom*, perhaps the revenge of nature's sublime power on the failed promise of the harmonious pastoral: for where the lion once lay down by the lamb, the cow—itsself no longer free-range but tethered—now provokes an eruption; the lamp-light with which this plot line began, meanwhile, only serves to illuminate the lamb plight of those the inferno has trapped (Slotkin *Regeneration* 203-05). How, the album invites listeners to ask, could the romantic ambitions that had once lit up "Heroes and Villains" lead to torch songs like *this*? The bicycle rider's recurrent challenge echoes more loudly around the ruins.

Destiny's Children

The "rain" of bullets that falls in "Heroes and Villains" may include ricochets and cross-fire—even friendly fire; but rain can douse a fire and even deluges do cease—so either way all may not be lost. The descending melodic intimation of the nation's fall with which the song begins is followed by corresponding musical hints of an ascent: of recovery from the downward spiral. The nature of such a recovery is little clearer than the source of the bullets, however. The historical conflagration invoked by "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow" wrought physical damage, destroying city-dwellers' property with fine disregard for their wealth, status or roots; and if one thereby infers a radical critique of the city and those who run it, then other songs in *Smile's* line of fire may be read in that light: thus after "Cabin Essence" sizes up potential common ground between homesteaders and natives in the face of the

railroad's advance, the title of "Surf's Up" puns on a quasi-feudal uprising against the latter-day lords of the land (Carter 4-5). Yet even as "Workshop" presents the sound of reconstruction ("rebuilding after the fire," in Brian Wilson's words, though sequenced before it on *Smile*), the blaze is not only physical; nor does it necessarily signify an attack on private property, class struggle being no more strongly invoked by the album than the idea that the sheriff shot first in "Heroes and Villains" (Priore, *Smile* 84).

However else the conflagration may be read, it does draw attention to the spirit of peace and the Holy Spirit symbolized by the "dove-nested towers" of "Surf's Up." Indeed, as "In Blue Hawaii" suggests in the immediate wake of "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow," the flames are as much spiritual and mental as they are material, *Smile's* fiery furnace jeopardizing the soul or psyche of the narrator no less than his home or possessions. If this is a test of faith as well as of institutions, however, considered as part of the pilgrim's progress it is also an opportunity: one involving a difficult but also potentially fortunate fall during which the narrator will be tried and his redemptive potential tested. For while a "consuming fire" does often signify God's vengeance in The Bible (the Devil himself is ultimately cast into a lake of fire), the divine presence also manifests itself as Pentecostal tongues of fire which grant pardon while enabling young men to see visions and old men to dream dreams (Heb. 12: 29; Deut. 4: 24; 9: 3; Isa. 30: 27-30; Rev. 20: 10-14; Acts 2: 1-17; Gen. 15: 17-20). Beyond the city of destruction lie the pilgrim's heavenly city, the Puritans' city upon a hill, and the Quakers' city of brotherly love: such are the promises of *Smile's* friendly fire. If the test is passed and the crisis survived, then the "rain of bullets" in "Heroes and Villains" will miraculously fill the font of "In Blue Hawaii"; following his hard labors in the workshop of the soul, its Holy waters will purge the pilgrim of his sins, baptize the reborn American Adam, admit him to the beloved community, and grant him God's grace.

In spite of their complex historical and cultural trajectory, from country via city to island, such visions of spiritual, personal, and social regeneration resonate with aspects of

frontier mythology. In Frederick Jackson Turner's rendering, the frontier also subjects civilization and its agents to challenges. Where "the environment is at first too strong for the man," his established ways are overwhelmed by its "savagery"; "little by little," however, his efforts transform the wilderness, leading to the creation of "a new product that is American" (Turner 31-32). In every Great American Desert, at least metaphorically, can be found a quasi-Jeffersonian pastoral in which the shackles and shadows of the past may be transcended—if only the hero can master the villain. Like the waters that serve to baptize the new man, moreover, this conjunction has its source in *Smile's* opening song. But whereas in Turner's version the western lands provide the "vital forces" that give life to the settler's institutions and ideals, in "Heroes and Villains" a more equitable—more responsible—marriage impends (Turner 33-34). While the narrator carries the sins of man and of his city of destruction, Margarita embodies the risks of the wilderness and the temptations of the Garden; and while the narrator bears the spirits of Christian faith, republican virtue, and brotherly love allied to the settler's hard work, Margarita infuses the land with both the spirit of republican liberty and her native lifeblood. Such a vision places the song in a radical tradition reaching back to the social, political, and cultural practices of Pennsylvania founder and Quaker convert William Penn and the Merrymount colony experiments of New England outcast and rebel Anglican Thomas Morton during the seventeenth century (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 58-65).

That the crises of faith and conduct in "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow" and "In Blue Hawaii" may be survived, that a fall can trigger recovery and a death spark rebirth, is also prefigured in "Heroes and Villains"—and again the path is illuminated. For when the gun fight breaks out as darkness descends, Margarita keeps her faith that a new day will dawn after the perils of the night, believes the promise of a "cock-a-doodle-doo" more than she fears "what a dude'll do," and so picks herself up from the fall. The fruits of such a recovery are also conceived here first. Since the narrator is less dude than Yankee Doodle (not merely handy with the girls, as the revolutionary song's chorus has it, but a true lover

of the nation's ideals), her courage delivers Margarita from more than evil: even as the arrest threatens the narrator's imprisonment and beckons him towards military service, it also signifies her confinement—and motherhood. A historical frontier romance in which land and spirit, native and settler, ideals and experience, faith and labour are first conjoined, "Heroes and Villains" thus moves from its cartoon variation on the shotgun wedding via the cantina's near-miraculous conception to the subsequent raising of children.¹²

Like the intimations of national decline and fall, these new signs of life that first come to light in "Heroes and Villains" then crop up across the landscapes of *Smile*. Appropriately for the offspring of an American Adam and a Native Eve, of Uncle Sam and Lady Liberty, their initial bearings are as much ideological, spiritual, and historical as geographical: they are to be "healthy, wealthy, and wise"—to follow, that is, proverbial advice popularized in Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1735). By invoking one of the nation's best-known founding fathers as their guiding light, the song underlines the recording's broader concerns: to explore what has become of the American people's destiny, their heritage and promise. By way of Franklin's pursuits, it is worth adding, it also offers them some means towards that end: who better than this lightning-rod inventor, fire company chief and stove-maker to lead the people out of the city of destruction or to learn to take the heat it generates; who more qualified than both a native of New England's city upon a hill and a resident of Philadelphia's city of brotherly love—an inventor and moralist, a man of faith and reason, of ideas and applications, of liberty and justice, of equality and tolerance—to help measure the nation's achievements, its shortcomings, and its losses? (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 204, 210, 221-22).

But Franklin appears only at first light; and however suddenly their revolutionary nation gained power, the children of "Heroes and Villains" start to find their way but slowly: by the lights of reason and faith, of nature and experience, as the songs on *Smile* succeed one another—and by trial and error. One errand into the wilderness in "Cabin

Essence" leads from field to factory, from pastoral to industrial, where a truck-driving man finds once-fertile soil turning to barren dust. Estranged from whatever peace he may have found in a valley that was once home to others, he learns that hard work alone provides little more health or security than the native inhabitants had formerly enjoyed, and that only trust in the land and its heritage offer him a chance to overcome his grief and restore his faith (Carter 6-7). Another errand leads via "Wonderful" into the forest and beyond, where a girl discovers that even in an valley untouched by man heavenly guidance is vital, and that on its own the schoolroom's artificial illumination—"the chalk and numbers"—offers no pathway to wisdom. Exposed to but also at home with the mysterious and sublime powers of the wilderness, she acts on Wordsworth's call to "let nature be your teacher" (102), learning that a fall can be fortunate—not always sinful but joyful—and that unfathomable experience may lead to amazing grace, given a belief in liberty indivisible and the love of those who have made her, on earth and in heaven.

Following a highway to health that leads well off the asphalt, and a path towards wisdom that wanders or wonders between revealed and natural theology (as did Franklin himself), a third errand into the wilderness pursues wealth via the city of "Surf's Up." The children do not find it amidst the stately, high-cultured towers, where a swan song goes unnoticed, a curtain is set to fall, and the time that is money is about to run out; they find it, instead, in the city's subcultural cellars and streets. Drawn together by music and spirit, by song and dance in the face of adversity—and in an urban last-chance saloon that also echoes the "Heroes and Villains" cantina—they find the joy of life beneath a latter-day "Cabin Essence" lamp-light: not the fire of a vengeful God that consumes the city of destruction but the burning lamp of Genesis that promises His covenant will be fulfilled, the lantern that will guide these pilgrims' progress "though the Darkness [be] very great," or the "inner light"—"the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"—which prompted early Quakers to refer to themselves as the "children of light" (Bunyan 302; Gen. 15:17; John 1:9).

Healthier, wealthier, and wiser, having searched faithfully in "Song for Children" and been plunged into doubt in "Child is Father of the Man," these disciples by the end of "Surf's Up" believe they "know the way." They thereby realize Edward Hicks's *Peaceable Kingdom* visions and Thomas Dorsey's "Peace in the Valley" faith (the "host from the wild will be led by a child"), as well as Isaiah's Biblical prophecy ("a little child shall lead them") upon which both draw (Isa. 11:6).¹³ Where he was once "lost and gone and unknown" in "Heroes and Villains" and "beyond belief" in "Surf's Up," the narrator is now to be guided back to the fold by his own offspring. Whereas in *Smile's* opening song his estrangement from the city upon a hill had left him fit mainly for imperial service, by the album's close this once-fallen American Adam and long-broken Uncle Sam will seek not "to ride in the rough" but, as John Winthrop's "model of Christian charity" sermon put it, to be "knit together by [a] bond of love": he will again pursue his "affair" with the old flame that a "rain of bullets" had long ago interrupted (Winthrop 44). "Changed from the creature I am," as Dorsey writes in "Peace in the Valley," and with "no frown to defile, just a big endless smile," the narrator's rekindled devotion to Margarita—to Miss Liberty, to the idealist mission within manifest destiny, to long-suppressed Native engagements with the territory, and to the spirit of the land itself—provides the prelude to any number of "Good Vibrations."

Conclusion: Recovering Ground

Looking back on his original collaboration with the Beach Boys' leader at some point after the release of *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* in 2004, Van Dyke Parks told Peter Ames Carlin that their work had investigated "what Manifest Destiny was all about. We'd come as far as we could, as far as Horace Greeley told us to go. And so we looked back and tried to make sense of that great odyssey" (Carlin 98).¹⁴ What did the supposed mission entail; what had it meant for the liberty and justice to which the American people had pledged

allegiance; who had gained and who had lost from the exercise; what benefits had been won as a result, what price paid for it—and who or what had been charged?

As the album's overture or prelude, "Heroes and Villains" identifies not only its musical but also its thematic and lyrical concerns; in the process it rehearses both questions and answers ("just see what you've done!"). Adopting a form that has more to do with the time- and space-cutting properties of film than with the linear premises of the chronicle, its low-resolution cartoon snapshots nonetheless sketch a narrative of decline, crisis, and recovery. The city upon a hill and the city of brotherly love give way to the city of sin, which may yet become the city of destruction; license and gunfire yield imprisonment and death; and the mobility that in frontier mythology was the lifeblood of the nation's freedom is suspended in the name of security. Yet at the same time, and paradoxically, signs of life, liberty, and happiness endure—as if essence might survive the loss of substance—and recovery duly beckons. Margarita is brought down, but in her fall the spirits of liberty and land and all those who share in them are drawn together. The narrator seems captive to forces beyond his control, fit only for release on license to capture others; yet in captivity he plants the seeds of his own recovery. His children—better understood as their spiritual offspring—inherit their forebears' essences, which are the ideals and values, the faiths and beliefs, of their people, cultures, and societies. Guided by the folk wisdom of one of the nation's founding fathers and secular saints, they embody and enact the frontier's promise of a second chance, of an escape from the burdens of the past; and in that very act of transcendence they seek to regenerate the forgotten, the fallen, and the lost: from the native American to Lady Liberty, from the American Adam to Uncle Sam.

What "Heroes and Villains" and *Smile* as a whole tend to cycle *around* is the nature of this transformation: the means whereby the regeneration is to take place and the results it will yield. In the opening song's complex lines of ideological fire some material, institutional, and political tracers may be followed: the very fabric of Uncle Sam's way of

life, not just an abstract ideal, is at risk; his possessions and good name are jeopardized; and when the children in "Surf's Up" announce that they must "come about hard," they imply that John Calhoun's anxieties about Mexico were justified, and that the entire logic of westwards expansion—endorsed by Jefferson and Greeley, by Turner and Roosevelt—should be abandoned. In those lines of fire, however, "Heroes and Villains" also targets individual, spiritual, and psychological changes of the kind that "In Blue Hawaii" will later enact; if liberty can be secured by romantic engagement, meanwhile, then happiness can be found via family reunion, not armed revolution. Ultimately, the bicycle rider whose challenge is first issued in "Heroes and Villains" calls for the people not to circle the wagons but to rediscover their common ideals—both secular and sacred—and to live by them. The more the fires in the city of destruction blaze, the more the lights of the city upon a hill and the city of brotherly love—from Holy Spirit and inner light to light of liberty—should be tended. In the same spirit, the song imagines that frontier mythology may be rejuvenated: no longer as an alibi for land expropriation and ethnic cleansing but, perhaps through its tropes of democracy and equality, as a vehicle of mutual aid and multi-cultural community; as an instrument of regeneration, not through violence but through love.

These are, of course, no minor challenges and no easy objectives. The difficulties involved should be read, however, not only in relation to the American historical experience on which Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks were reflecting; they should also be considered in terms of the creative labors they were themselves undertaking. A close analysis of the ways in which "Heroes and Villains" outlines *Smile's* agenda and serves as a typological guide to its contents throws light on the difficulties involved in both. At a time of intense social, cultural, and political conflict within the United States, as well as of intensifying military conflict on the country's far western maritime frontiers in the Pacific, Wilson and Parks were seeking to reconcile the nation's heritage and its promise; to accommodate the increasingly daunting costs and obvious limitations of manifest destiny

and a set of ideals—ideological and political, social and cultural, religious and secular—that they felt still retained a value and a future. Knowledge of the conflicts that occurred within the Beach Boys and between the group, their record label, and those around them during 1966 and 1967 clearly throws light on both the protracted labors over *Smile* and the delayed delivery of “Heroes and Villains.” But a deeper understanding of the creative work involved in the song and the album also helps explain why—regardless of the law suits and other complications—their births required such a struggle.

There is, at least, some poetic justice (albeit justice delayed) in the fact that both Brian Wilson’s own personal regeneration and the completion and release of *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* in 2004 appear to have been brought closer through a Christmas party performance just over three years earlier—the first of a succession of “little baby steps,” in the words of Wilson’s musical secretary and keyboards player Darian Sahanaja—of the song that serves as its index: “Heroes and Villains” (Carlin 300-01).

Notes

¹In what follows, and for the sake of brevity, all references here to the recording commonly known as *Smile* are to the CD released in 2004 under the title *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* (Warner Nonesuch CD 79846-2 [2004]).

²The first of some 30 recording sessions for “Heroes and Villains” took place in mid-May 1966, and over the next 12 months further sessions were held intermittently (particularly between December 1966 and March 1967) before suspension of work on *Smile*. Overall production costs for the song were around \$40,000: perhaps three to four times as expensive as “Good Vibrations.” See Priore, *Smile* 106; Badman 132, 167, 187.

³Some accounts indicate that at least one member of the Beach Boys questioned the lyrics to “Heroes and Villains” while another member found the work involved in recording the vocals particularly taxing. Other reports suggest that any frictions that resulted were less consequential for delays to the single’s release than the law suit against Capitol Records over financial matters that the group submitted in late February 1967. See Carlin 114-5, 122, 124-5; Priore, *Smile* 106-7, 112; Badman 165-6.

⁴Van Dyke Parks’ lyrics to “Heroes and Villains” can readily be located on-line, for example at the “Cabin Essence” website (<http://www.surfermoon.com>). The complete

album lyrics are also included in the booklet that accompanies the *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* CD (Warner Nonesuch 79846-2 [2004]) as well as in the book that accompanies the five CD box set of original 1966-67 studio recordings, *The Smile Sessions* (Capitol T-27658 [2011]).

⁵Associations between the margarita cocktail and a cantina in the former Mexican lands of the American south-west are consistent with many of the (varied) accounts of its creation. However, the idea of a cantina serving the drink during the frontier era is implausible. Cocktails *were* part of the mid- to late-nineteenth-century western saloon bar world (though unfamiliar faces who ordered them might suffer ridicule or worse from regulars for their habits); however, the margarita itself appears to have been invented during the 1930s or 1940s. See Erdoes 61, 76, 94-5.

⁶More precisely, they portrayed two identical angels on two identical bicycles. The cards were manufactured from 1885 onwards by the United States Playing Card Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁷The figure of the “American Adam” is associated with cultural critic R.W.B. Lewis, who posited an “American myth [that] saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race.... It introduced a new kind of hero, ... an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race, an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling.” See Lewis 5.

⁸There are other ways to read the bicycle rider, not all of them linked to the American west. One approach refers to Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist who in 1943 ingested unknowingly a small dose of the psychedelic drug LSD-25 which he had first synthesized at the Sandoz Pharmaceuticals Company in Berne in 1938. Wondering if the hallucinations he experienced were linked to the chemical, he took a measured dose, noted its initial effects, started home on his bicycle and then experienced the world’s first LSD “trip.” See Stephens 25-8; Hagenbach and Werthmüller 42-6.

⁹The song alludes to Isa. 11: 6-8, and Isa. 65: 17-25.

¹⁰Though the city authorities exonerated Mrs. Catherine O’Leary, owner of the cow, press coverage and folklore ascribed responsibility to her as representative of an alleged ethnic type in language marked by anti-Irish prejudice. See Sawislak 42-46; Bales.

¹¹Steffens’ collection of journalistic articles on corruption in major American cities drew attention to the ways in which some businessmen, elected leaders, and government officials colluded in betraying city inhabitants; it ultimately emphasized, however, that the public were co-conspirators for failing to stem corruption. Ironically, his article on Chicago found it to be an example of reform in action, for which both citizens and their elected representatives deserved credit. By the time Wilson and Parks worked on *Smile*, however,

Chicago was widely-held to be perhaps the last surviving example of the kind of city government that Steffens had earlier condemned. Steffens' conclusion—"there is little doubt that Chicago will be cleaned up"—was to this extent premature at best. See Steffens 233-76.

¹²Aspects of "Heroes and Villains" have a similarity to a celebrated Civil War story concerning an alleged "virgin birth." This immaculate conception supposedly came about after a bullet fired by a Union rifleman on a Virginia or Mississippi battlefield in 1863 struck a Confederate soldier and passed through his scrotum, in the process picking up a trace of his semen before finally burying itself in a young woman bystander's stomach via her ovary and uterus, whereupon one of her eggs was fertilized. After the birth of a baby boy (an almost literal "son of a gun") nine months later, the tale ends with the subsequent introduction of virgin mother and unwitting father, their wedding, and the arrival of two further children by more conventional means. The story was a hoax perpetrated in 1874 by a Confederate Army surgeon with the implausibly coincidental but real name of LeGrand Capers. See Gould and Pyle 44-5n; Breeden 23-26.

¹³"The Child is father of the Man" is a line in William Wordsworth's poem "My Heart Leaps Up" (1802), later part of his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood" (1807).

¹⁴*New York Daily Tribune* editor Horace Greeley in 1871 supposedly replied to someone who had sought his advice that he should "go west, young man." The precise origins of the phrase remain unclear, however. Some have ascribed the phrase to an 1851 *Terre Haute Express* editorial by another nineteenth-century journalist, John Babson Lane Soule. Others argue that Soule was repeating a phrase coined by Greeley over a decade earlier. See Shapiro.

Notes on Contributor

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