

**Pastoral, Satire, and Ecology in the Modern Memorial Park:
Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* and Forest Lawn**

by

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Abstract

This thesis studies pastoral, satire, and ecology in Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (1948) and in the site that it satirizes: Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. Forest Lawn, which Hubert Eaton founded in 1917 and Waugh visited in 1947, self-mythologizes as a pastoral garden. Its foundational myth promises that, "Filled With Towering Trees, Sweeping Lawns, Splashing Fountains, Singing Birds, Beautiful Statuary, [and] Cheerful Flowers," Forest Lawn will be "As Unlike Other Cemeteries As Sunshine Is To Darkness, As Eternal Life Is Unlike Death." This thesis uses insights gained from Waugh's satire of Forest Lawn to show that the myth of the pastoral garden contributes significantly to ecological damage in the Los Angeles region and enables that damage's subsequent forgetting. Through an ironic attention to pastoral representation, *The Loved One* exposes the mechanisms of environmental obfuscation and despoliation in Forest Lawn's doctrine and environmental history. Forest Lawn's relationship to natural resources emerges, in the light of Waugh's satire, as ironic, exploitative, and deeply unstable. Ultimately, this thesis represents a step towards illustrating the usefulness of satire for ecocriticism; despite ecocriticism's resistance to both studying satire and using its methods in environmental discourse, the satiric mode can productively expose and destabilize environmentally-dubious representational traditions.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Carmel Ohman.

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Introduction

Ecology and the Hollywood Novel

“[W]hen its brief history comes to an end,” Evelyn Waugh wrote in 1947, Los Angeles “will fall swiftly and silently[...] ... Nature will reassert herself and the seasons gently obliterate the vast, deserted suburb” (*Essays* 331). Waugh’s essays and novel about Los Angeles display a satirical attention to both ecological realities (landscapes, natural resources) and to American mythologies (infinite industrial expansion, eternal youth). They suggest that Los Angeles is marching towards an end, a point of self-destruction at once ecological and cultural. Curiously, Waugh locates “the great cultural decline of the twentieth century” in the Hollywood graveyard, particularly Forest Lawn Memorial Park, which he visited in 1947 (*Essays* 331). Indeed, Hubert Eaton’s “theme-park necropolis” (Ehrenreich n.p.), which was founded in 1917, becomes, for Waugh, the apotheosis of artifice and impious commercialism. In such a place, Waugh writes, “the body does not decay; it lives on, more chic in death than ever before, in its indestructible class A steel and concrete shell; the soul goes straight from Slumber Room A to Paradise, where it enjoys an endless infancy” (*Essays* 337). Persisting under the sanitized and euphemistic regimes of industrial capitalism, the bodies of Forest Lawn enjoy, in Waugh’s pen, a “cosmetic immortality,” apparently invulnerable to putrefaction and earthquakes (Lynch 32). At the same time, they are representative of both ecological and cultural decline in Los Angeles.

Waugh’s critique of Forest Lawn, particularly his novel *The Loved One* (1948), which represents his most significant engagement with the park, resonates with countless depictions of Hollywood and Los Angeles in the twentieth century, and specifically with

the “Hollywood novel” as a subgenre. Part of an enormously rich history of literature and film about California – gothic (Pynchon, West), noir (Cain, Chandler, Hammett, Ulmer, Wilder), and nonfiction (Didion, Thompson) – the Hollywood novel often excoriates the booming film, real estate, agriculture, transport, and even funeral industries in twentieth-century Hollywood and Los Angeles, sites that both function as microcosms of American culture (Lynch 31). It satirizes longstanding American mythologies that align Western America with progress, exposing the racialized, gendered, and classed dimensions of the American dream and holding Los Angeles accountable for its Promethean sins (Los Angeles aqueduct, concrete river, smog). While Americans, expatriates, and foreigners alike wrote Hollywood novels, the subgenre is typically associated with Nathanael West’s *The Day of the Locust* (1939). Observing that the Hollywood novel is much more informed by British prejudices and perceptions of Los Angeles than critics have previously acknowledged (Ames), this thesis takes British satirist Evelyn Waugh’s *The Loved One* as a case study for the environmental preoccupations and critical potential of the subgenre.

As William Alexander McClung observes, the “root argument” of the Hollywood novel “is ecological” (49); armed with a “rhetoric of disillusion” (51) and, often, a satiric desire to see the city erased or destroyed (63), it implicitly or explicitly posits a ““natural condition”” of Los Angeles that has been tainted or compromised by urbanization. Illustrating “the intensely intimate connection between the human and nonhuman worlds” (Bryson 168), the Hollywood novel allegorizes Los Angeles’s ecology as a dual subject – as both a fragile victim of industrial “progress” (168) and as a wild, untamable force that, “regardless of human [and industrial] hubris,” “will outlast us” (172). While the

Hollywood novel's "rhetoric of disillusion" can itself obfuscate the region's ecology by privileging certain archetypes over others,¹ the subgenre's satiric imaginings of Los Angeles actively interrogate the stability of local industrialized landscapes, thereby registering ecological damage in the region and the forgetting of that damage. This thesis thus performs an ecological reading of Waugh's Hollywood novel in part to expose the mechanisms of environmental obfuscation and despoliation in Los Angeles, and particularly Forest Lawn, the site that *The Loved One* satirizes. In doing so, it elaborates the novel's relationship to a body of literature that thematizes ecological and cultural decline in twentieth-century Los Angeles.

To undertake an ecological reading of Waugh's Hollywood novel and its real-world referent, this thesis uses literary and historical ecocriticism. Ecocriticism maintains that the natural world and its resources play a key role in constructing literary imaginations and that, in turn, the literary imagination can have actual ecological and economic consequences (Garrard, Kerridge, among others). Ecocriticism is a multi-modal field that has strong ties to pastoral (Buell, Gifford), elegy (Morton), tragedy (Coupe, Rueckert), and even comedy (Galleymore, Meeker). And yet, as Chris Coughran observes, there is a "moral high ground within ecocritical discourse" (14) that renders satire antithetical to its pious project. The persistence of this "high ground" is surprising in light of satire's endorsement by Kenneth Burke, the "pioneer of ecocriticism" (Coupe). For Burke, satire can promote environmentally-oriented thought and practice, as it is the only mode capable of capturing the modern tendency to push planetary resources and human innovation to the "end of the line" (73). My project thus also aims to rehabilitate

¹ In destabilizing certain archetypes, the Hollywood novel also perpetuates others; for example, British authors of Hollywood Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley, and Christopher Isherwood perpetuate the "wilderness" archetype in their interrogation of, among others, pastoral representations of the region.

satire for ecocriticism and to demonstrate that, despite ecocriticism's airs and pieties, some of the most powerful imaginings of ecology are satirical.

Pastoral Satire

In *The Loved One*, Waugh specifically uses the mode of pastoral satire to thematize the relationship between humans and the environment, a relationship that has been “the concern of pastoral from ancient times to the present” (Love 66). Indeed, Waugh establishes Whispering Glades Memorial Park, his satirical version of Forest Lawn, as a pastoral “green” world with a cultural mandate of peace, happiness, and eternal repose (34), only to exploit its failures for satiric ends. According to Glen Love, “[l]iterary pastoral traditionally posits a natural world, a green world” imbued with humanistic values which it sets implicitly or explicitly against the urban environment (66). Some characteristic elements of the pastoral “green world” include shepherds, poetry, rural beauty, love, and leisure. But at its heart, perhaps, is

the myth of the pastoral garden, including the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden[. This myth] is one of the most powerful and richly textured visions in human history, from its folkloric beginnings in Persian, Greek, and Roman history, through the Middle Ages, as in “The Romance of the Rose,” and the Renaissance, as in Sidney’s “Arcadia,” to the New World connections described in Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden*, and down to its present conflicted state in the age of ecology. (Love 74)

Waugh’s “bustling hygienic Eden” (46) satirically re-imagines the myth of the pastoral garden, thereby participating in a pervasive and rich mythological tradition that is fundamentally preoccupied with the relationships between people and their environments.

Significantly, pastoral's mythological richness also means that it resists tidy definition. It displays what Lawrence Buell calls an "ideological multivalence" (68) or "double-edged character" (51) that makes it an ally of ideologies ranging from sentimental naturism to positivist industrialism. "[P]oised between nostalgia for a lost 'golden age' and an equally unquenchable longing for futurity," for example, pastoral displays a "divided allegiance" (Coughran 16) that invites satirists to occupy the ideological "rift[s]" in its foundation (Greenberg 9). Pastoral satire can, in turn, exploit the multiple valences of pastoral representation to mocking or humorous effect. An apt mode to register the "two contradictory visions of ideal place and space in Los Angeles" – an Arcadia of the past and a Utopia "inviting development" (McClung xvi) – pastoral satire asks readers to "ge[t] the joke" at many "levels" (Empson 211) because it is organized around "multilayered irony" (Hubble 125). This thesis invites ecocritics to get the multilayered ecological joke of Waugh's pastoral satire, a text that importantly illustrates how the myth of the pastoral garden contributes to ecological destruction and its obfuscation in the Los Angeles region.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One of this thesis examines pastoral satire in Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (1948). It specifically analyzes the main cemetery space in the novel, Whispering Glades, which is inspired by Forest Lawn Memorial Park. It argues that Whispering Glades functions as a pastoral "green world" (Love 66), but one that is deeply unstable. Waugh builds into his pastoral park a number of ironic gaps where regional ecological phenomena should be. These literal and figurative gaps at once reinforce the park's cultural mandate of eternal repose by conforming to pastoral criteria and undermine it by

summoning Los Angeles's "wild" and untamable desert ecology. This chapter interrogates these gaps to show that the promise of wild nature's return disrupts the apparent uniformity and stability of Whispering Glades's "green world," insisting on the ecological precariousness of the myth of the pastoral garden.

In Chapter Two, the ironic pastoral lens provided by *The Loved One* registers and elaborates the ecological precariousness of Forest Lawn, the site that Waugh satirizes. Through a close analysis of the institution's doctrine and, in particular, Hubert Eaton's "Builder's Creed," I show that, by aspiring to the image of a pastoral "green world" and by self-mythologizing as a place of eternal repose, the cultural text that is Forest Lawn professes plenitude but betrays scarcity in the ecological context of Southern California. While I construct no desert eschatology here, I do ultimately stage the (re)emergence of regional ecological features in Forest Lawn's foundational Creed, showing that Hubert Eaton's pastoral garden tends to "unbuild" itself by fostering an obfuscatory relationship to regional flora and water resources. The park's radical valuing of pastoral environmental features – "greenness" in particular – emerges as ironic and unsustainable.

In the epilogue, I reflect briefly on satire's usefulness for ecocriticism. Having examined Waugh's Hollywood novel and the site that it satirizes, I reassert the satiric mode's capacity for exposing the hypocrisies and contradictions of ecological representation. I further outline what I consider to be a primary obstacle in the way of productive ecocritical engagements with satire – namely, an earnestness of critical approach. I propose that this earnestness reflects a persistent conservatism in ecologically-oriented disciplines, and so I call for a praxis that supplants piety with self-criticism and, dare I say it, humor.

Chapter 1 | Pastoral Satire in Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One*

In *The Loved One*, the work of pastoral satire is most evident when Waugh suppresses what I am calling “wild nature” in his radicalization of the industrialized memorial park. Indeed, Waugh constructs ironic gaps in the “green world” of Whispering Glades that, through the self-subverting mode of pastoral satire, summon “wild nature” as an absent presence and thereby thematize the damage and obfuscation of the park’s “wild” or “natural” ecology.² In this chapter, I examine the literal and figurative gaps that Waugh builds into three “topoi” in Whispering Glades: the landscape and signage just within the memorial park entrance gates, the mock Lake Island of Innisfree, and the figures of Sir Francis Hinsley and Aimée Thanatogenos. Taken together, these “topoi” and their ironic gaps increasingly undermine the cultural mandate of Whispering Glades, showing that, in spite of the funeral complex’s apparent success in displacing “wild” phenomena from the park (fire, earthquakes, insects, fruit pits, and even death), the park’s “wild” or “natural” ecology retains the capacity to disrupt Whispering Glades’s pretensions to control over its surroundings.

Topos #1: The Memorial Park Entrance and its Signage

Evelyn Waugh famously dupes the reader at the beginning of *The Loved One* by depicting greater Los Angeles as an outpost of British colonial rule:

² It may seem counterintuitive for me to align the “green world” of pastoral with the industrial funeral complex, and indeed with a memorial park that is filled with “bronze” (65) “steel,” and “concrete” (35). While the green of nature might appear incompatible with the grey of industry, and while it seems a rather natural ally of ecocriticism, much recent scholarship has exposed the profound and varied ideological implications of the term “green” (Nardizzi 147). This chapter therefore participates in a growing body of criticism that, by exploring contradictions and disruptions in the “green world” of pastoral, recognizes what Lawrence Buell calls “the speciousness of reducing ‘ecology’ or ‘ecocriticism’ to ‘green’” (ix).

All day the heat had been barely supportable but at evening a breeze arose in the west, blowing from the heat of the setting sun and from the ocean, which lay unseen, unheard behind the scrubby foothills. It shook the rusty fingers of palm-leaf and swelled the dry sounds of summer, the frog-voices, the grating cicadas, and the ever present pulse of music from the neighbouring native huts.

In that kindly light the stained and blistered paint of the bungalow and the plot of weeds between the veranda and the dry water-hole lost their extreme shabbiness, and the two Englishmen, each in his rocking-chair, each with his whisky and soda and his outdated magazine, the counterparts of numberless fellow-countrymen exiled in the barbarous regions of the world, shared in the brief illusory rehabilitation. (7)

Placing the two “exiled” Englishmen, Dennis Barlow and Sir Francis Hinsley, in a “barbarous regio[n]” that could be India or Africa, Waugh implicitly uses the colder, wetter “norms” of England’s climate to “moraliz[e] the phenomena of Los Angeles” (McClung 63). Using colonial troping, then, Waugh establishes Los Angeles as a hostile region by portraying a dry climate, the associated neglect of the built environment, and the apparently discomfiting proximity of “native[s],” exoticized through their occupation of “huts” and through the primal “pulse” of their music. In this region of “barely supportable” heat and “dry water-hole[s],” the climate is relentless and “[t]urf does not prosper” (29).

When Dennis Barlow, the ex-patriot poet living and working in Los Angeles, arrives at Whispering Glades Memorial Park, then, he emerges as if from a desert wilderness. Passing “through the Golden Gates” for the first time (34), Dennis encounters

“green parkland” (35) and lush, manicured grass. Specifically, upon his arrival, he encounters “an island of mown turf on which st[ands] a singular and massive wall of marble sculptured in the form of an open book” (34). Inviting visitors, in the tradition of pastoral, to withdraw from the city and seek “lessons of simplicity” in a beautiful and poetic natural environment (Love 66), the marble book contains the credo composed by the founder of Whispering Glades, Dr. Wilbur Kenworthy.³ It reads: “Behold I dreamed a dream and I saw a New Earth sacred to HAPPINESS. There amid all that Nature and Art could offer to elevate the Soul of Man I saw the Happy Resting Place of Countless Loved Ones” (34).

While heavy-handed in its self-presentation, Whispering Glades emerges as a humanistic “green world,” a pastoral garden that disrupts the desert ecology (in reality a chaparral ecology) established in the opening scenes of the novel. It is a green gap or “glade” in a barren, desert wilderness. As McClung argues, “wilderness” is one of at least six archetypes that lay claim to the “essential character” of Los Angeles (113). “[E]ntwined with the legendary landscape called the West” (115) and defined against “a tamed and orderly nature” (117), wilderness is the “natural envelope [that] presses inescapably upon awareness” (115), “aggressively mak[ing] itself known in phenomena of landscape and weather” (117). Waugh uses this archetype explicitly in his “preparatory sketch” for *The Loved One* (McClung 49) – the 1947 essay cited at the beginning of this

³ As Glen Love notes, Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* helpfully illustrates the pastoral imperative to seek knowledge in nature, an imperative which is literalized in *The Loved One*’s marble credo:

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.
(2.1.41-43, my emphasis)

thesis – to predict that “[n]ature” in the form of the desert “will reassert herself” in Los Angeles so that

[a] dry landscape will extend from the ocean to the mountains. Bel Air and Beverly Hills will lie naked save for scrub and cactus, all their flimsy multitude of architectural styles turned long ago to dust, while the horned toad and the turkey buzzard leave their faint imprint on the dunes that will drift on Sunset Boulevard.
(331)

Here, Waugh performs a “literary destruction of Los Angeles” (Davis, *Ecology* 275) in the tradition of the Hollywood novel. He suggests that twentieth-century Los Angeles has displaced or upset the region’s “wild” or “natural” desert ecology through industrial growth. As Christopher Isherwood writes in *A Single Man* (1964), “the desert, which is the natural condition of this country, will [consequently] return” (93).

Applied to *The Loved One*, and to the arid “envelope” that encircles the memorial park, such desert eschatologies insist on the ecological precariousness of Whispering Glades, in spite of the park’s self-portrayal as a controlled “New Earth” or “Happy Resting Place.” Waugh presents us with further evidence of this ecological precariousness in the form of a more explicit *gap* inside the park: just after Dennis has entered Whispering Glades and parked his car, he “presently c[omes] in sight of” the Whispering Glades mortuary, “what in England he would have taken for the country seat of an Edwardian financier. It [is] black and white, timbered and gabled, with twisting brick chimneys and wrought-iron wind-vanes.” A notice on the building reads:

*This perfect replica of an old English Manor ... like all the buildings of
Whispering Glades, is constructed throughout of Grade A steel and concrete with*

*foundations extending into solid rock. It is certified proof against fire earthquake
and Their name liveth for evermore who record it in Whispering
Glades. (35)*

“At the blank patch,” Waugh continues, “a signwriter was even then at work and Dennis, pausing to study it, discerned the ghost of the words ‘high explosive’ freshly obliterated and the outlines of ‘nuclear fission’ about to be filled in as substitute” (35). On the one hand, this passage offers an image of sophisticated retreat from the urban environment – a country house displaying the quaint, naturalized trappings of rural English architecture (wood detail, gables, twisting brick chimneys, wrought-iron wind-vanes).⁴ On the other hand, the mortuary’s signage subverts this peaceful image in a number of ways. It invokes the destabilizing or disruptive forces at work in both Los Angeles’s “natural envelope” (fire, earthquake) and in the realm of human industry (high explosive, nuclear fission) by suggesting that casketed residents and short-term visitors of Whispering Glades all require protection from external phenomena in the form of “Grade A steel and concrete” encasements (35).

Furthermore, the presence of the “blank patch” seriously undermines the idea that the funeral complex can *provide* protection to its clients, let alone “immediate eternal salvation at an inclusive charge” (*Essays* 336). Indeed, its proximity to the terms “fire” and “earthquake” in particular implies the vulnerability of the built environment in the face of regional environmental phenomena and the rhetorical emptiness of the park’s self-legitimizing mandate. If Whispering Glades is a lush “green gap” in a desert ecology, then the sign’s “blank patch” is like a dead or dry patch of grass within that gap: in

⁴ The “country seat” or home calls on the seventeenth-century subgenre of pastoral poetry, of which Ben Jonson’s “To Penshurst” (1616) is the representative example, dedicated to praising the rural residences of the English elite.

summoning “wild nature,” it perhaps allows us to recall Bertolt Brecht’s damning statement about Los Angeles from 1941: “scratch the surface a little and the desert shows through” (qtd in Berman 56). Emerging as a heterogeneous and self-subverting space within the park, the “blank patch” suggests that while Whispering Glades may be rhetorically cordoned off as a locus of pastoral repose, but it is deeply embedded in the “disaster-prone” Mediterranean ecology of Los Angeles (Davis, *Ecology* 53).

Given the highly stylized and industrialized character of Whispering Glades, and given that Waugh repeatedly frames Los Angeles as a cultural and spiritual void (*Essays*), it is not surprising that scholarship about *The Loved One* tends to reduce the memorial park to its artificial characteristics. Naomi Milthorpe, for example, locates “the unnatural, the automatic, [and] the mechanical” at the “heart” of Whispering Glades (205), suggesting that the park embodies Waugh’s anxieties about Western industrial secularism and the global market economy. By staving off the processes and signs of putrefaction with chemical injections and face paint, by peddling homogenized, “anesthetized production-line funerals” (205), Whispering Glades, in this sort of analysis, perpetuates an artificial, inauthentic, and dehumanizing “way of death” (Mitford). Similarly, in arguing that the essence of Whispering Glades lies in a mythology of “cosmetic immortality,” James Lynch equates Whispering Glades with meaninglessness:

Whispering Glades is the apotheosis of meaninglessness. Its buildings and statuary, its language, its guarantees of a Happy Resting Place for Countless Loved Ones are all merely copies – unintended plagiaries and unconscious parodies of European civilization. Its immediate effects on [Dennis] Barlow’s poetic activities were, in fact, plagiarist and parody. Whispering Glades inspires

Barlow (and, recursively, Waugh himself) to write a satire about its very emptiness of meaning. (43)

For Lynch, as for Milthorpe, Whispering Glades and its “language” fail to *mean* because they are “mere” reproductions born of global, secular capitalism. To be sure, the buildings, statuary, and mythologies of Whispering Glades, “fortified by the painted word” (35), emerge as simulacra that repeatedly subvert their own claims to indestructibility and authenticity. The novel indeed foregrounds the memorial park’s failure to deliver on its “guarantees” of immortality, and Waugh locates this failure partly in the park’s substitution of “authentic” artefacts and post-death journeys with “simulated” ones.

But if, as both Lynch and Milthorpe suggest, the novel is pre-eminently about the American funeral complex’s failure to deliver on its cultural mandate of authentic eternal repose, then we need a critical methodology that highlights not only the industrial forces in the park, but also the *rival* forces that participate in the funeral complex’s failure. If Whispering Glades has a “heart” or essential meaning, it does not consist primarily of the “artificial” products of industry. I argue instead that its “heart” consists of the ironic *tension* between the bio-ecological forces in the park (from “fire,” to “earthquake,” to pollen and seed propagation, to death) and the funeral complex’s attempts to master them through pastoral. Waugh’s burlesque of the memorial park’s entrance and signage, then, is less about the artificiality of the built environment than it is about Whispering Glades’s active denial of the many “blank patch[es]” in its master plan.

Topos #2: The Lake Island of Innisfree and its Missing Elements

Like the area just within the Whispering Glades entrance gates, the park's Lake Island of Innisfree is a "green world" that repeatedly subverts itself through the mode of pastoral satire. Significantly, a journey to this second "topos" teaches Dennis that Whispering Glades does more than claim mastery over its surroundings ("fortif[ying]" "failing credulity" with "the painted word" [35]) and defend itself against ecological and possibly nuclear phenomena by reinforcing the built environment with "grade A steel and concrete" (35). Indeed, the funeral complex stages offensive *attacks* on its environment. It does so in part by supporting the removal of "undesirable" elements from the park such as pests and fruit pits. The Lake Island thus functions as a site of targeted environmental engineering that contains gaps where ecological phenomena should be. It also provides the site for the novel's most explicit mock pastoral episode, which undermines the industrializing mandate of the funeral complex by highlighting the Lake Island's pastoral and ecological instability.

Charged with the task of composing a graveside ode for his late friend Sir Francis Hinsley, in whose bungalow the novel begins, to complement the church service (which fittingly includes the song "The Wearing of the Green" [63]), Dennis wanders off in search of a "good place" to "write [the] poem" (66). The "languorous, odorous afternoon d[oes] not conduce to work," and so it is with the drowsy reflectiveness of a shepherd figure that he makes his way past "a host of bronze and Carrara statuary" and past graves that are "barely visible, marked out by little bronze plaques, many of them as green as the surrounding turf" (65).⁵ He eventually comes upon "a lake, full of lilies and water-fowl," a "rustic landing-stage," and a sign announcing the spot as "the Lake Island of Innisfree"

⁵ Carrara is a city in Tuscany, Italy that is renowned for its marble quarries.

(66); the location is, of course, a direct reference to William Butler Yeats's 1888 pastoral poem.⁶

The coxswain at the lake, surprised to learn that Dennis wishes to visit the island alone, and to write a poem at that, offers:

I never wrote a poem. But they've certainly got it fixed up poetic. It's named after a very fancy poem. They got beehives. Once they had bees, too, but folks was always getting stung so now it's done mechanical and scientific; no sore fannies and plenty of poetry.

It certainly is a poetic place to be planted in. Costs right about a thousand bucks. The poeticest place in the whole darn park. I was here when they made it It's the water you see keeps out the animals. Animals are a headache in cemeteries. Dr Kenworthy made a crack about that one Annual. Most cemeteries, he says, provide a dog's toilet and a cat's motel. Pretty smart, huh? No trouble with dogs and cats on the island. Dames is our headache, dames and guys in very considerable numbers come here to neck. I reckon they appreciate the privacy, too, same as cats. (66-7)

The coxswain's classed commentary gestures towards the Lake Island's complex and often fraught relationship to labour, economics, and technology; landscape features and natural resources; pleasure, love, and poetry. It thus firmly establishes the island within the rich and persistent myth of the pastoral garden by invoking many of the myth's central themes. This passage also shows how Whispering Glades simultaneously makes

⁶ Note that Yeats's poem is titled "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (not "The Lake Island of Innisfree").

and unmakes Yeats's rural Irish landscape.⁷ It does so by summoning what the Lake Island is missing as a direct result of the "mechanical and scientific" undertakings of Dr. Kenworthy (the "Dreamer" whose words are cut into the marble book): cats, dogs, and, most importantly, for my purposes, bees. Since bees are endemic to both the ecology of Los Angeles and to the pastoral mode, their removal subverts the "green world" of the Lake Island from *without* – by showing that, in recent memory, the "wild nature" of Los Angeles's "natural envelope" [McClung 115] "stung" within the park boundaries – as well as from *within* – by contradicting Yeats's pastoral poem.

Indeed, Waugh foregrounds (the absence of) bees in Dennis's encounter with the Lake Island to exploit the gap between the mock island scene and its literary antecedent, the "bee-loud glade" of Yeats's poem (line 4). In so doing, Waugh establishes Whispering Glades as a "self-contradictory [pastoral] subject" (Coughran 16). While the mock Lake Island fulfills many of the criteria for pastoral repose that Yeats sets out (a "small cabin ... of clay and wattles" [line 2]; "Nine bean-rows ... a hive for the honey-bee" [line 3], a "bee-loud glade" [line 4]), it fails to fulfill all of them, and fails most noticeably in the removal and in the simulation of bees:

the lake Island was cosy. An almost continuous fringe of shrub screened its shores from observation. Paths of mown grass wandered between leafy clumps, opened out into enclosed funerary glades, and converged on a central space, where stood a wattle cabin, nine rows of haricots (which by a system of judicious transplantation were kept in perpetual scarlet flower) and some wicker hives. Here the sound of bees was like a dynamo [an electric generator]

⁷ According to Robert Murray Davis, Waugh thought of Ireland "as a means of escaping the modern world" in times of post-war scarcity (70). Indeed, he considered purchasing "a large prosaic Early Victorian baronial mansion" there (*Letters* 251), which lay in a "twelve-acre park" (Davis 71).

The graves nearest to the apiary were the most costly of all but no more conspicuous than those elsewhere in the park; simple bronze plaques, flush with the turf, bore the most august names in the commercial life of Los Angeles

[Dennis] looked into the hives and saw in the depths of each a tiny red eye which told that the sound-apparatus was working in good order. (67-68)

The mock Lake Island's private "shores," "screened ... from observation," are structurally conducive to solitude (line 4) and "peace" (line 5), but the sounds of "very considerable numbers" of "dames and guys" "neck[ing]" (67) would no doubt rival even the "dynamo"-like buzzing of the sound-apparatus. Here, red haricot flowers set no pods, yield no fruit, and go unpollinated by honey-bees. Wicker hives replace natural ones. Whispering Glades's "bee-loud glade" (line 4) thus speaks to the "divided allegiance" of the pastoral myth, its rural scene exemplifying both "nostalgia for a lost 'golden age'" (Coughran 16) and industrial attempts to control the park environment by focusing "a tiny red eye" (68) on the future.

Invested in the eradication of pests in the form of cats and dogs and of bees, the Lake Island, Waugh suggests, is also invested in an industrial food complex that purges pastoral "fruits" of their unwanted pits. Indeed, the Lake Island is home to the "the family burial plot" of Kaiser, the "great fruiterer" famous for producing Kaiser's Stoneless Peaches. "[N]o other peach now marketed," the ads say, "is perfect and completely stoneless. When you buy a Kaiser's Stoneless Peach you are buying full-weight of succulent peach flesh and nothing else" (112). Kaiser is among the commercial magnates who, having no doubt out-priced the rustics in the market for rustic simplicity, pays "right about a thousand bucks" (66) per grave for a group plot within view of the wattle cabin.

A “Happy Resting Place” (34) of paradisiacal proportions, the Kaiser family plot is where Dennis reclines in the “dense shade” of a “gunnera spread[ing] a wide lowly shelter” to write the graveside ode for Sir Francis (68).

For Kaiser’s kin to be “planted in” the Lake Island has important pastoral and ecological implications, working, I suggest, to situate the park within the imaginative traditions and environmental histories of greater Los Angeles.⁸ Importantly, the presence of the Kaiser plot suggests that the rows upon rows of grave plots in Whispering Glades, with their “little bronze plaques” in irrigated “green” “turf” (65), have a conceptual and material equivalent in the regional icon of the fruit orchard, with its rows upon rows of garden plots (McClung 112; “Fruit”). Indeed, Waugh makes this connection more explicit by referring to Los Angeles as “the musky orchards of the Hesperides” (105). The placement of the Kaiser plot on the island thus perpetuates “the most potent myth of Los Angeles”: the “[m]aster-planned Eden” (McNamara, Introduction 8). The novel exposes the underbelly of paradise’s masterplan, however, on two levels. First, according to Dennis Barlow, the peach that is marketed as “perfect,” as “full-weight of succulent peach flesh” (112) tastes, instead, like “a ball of damp, sweet cotton-wool” (69). Second, the novel implicates Kaiser’s Stoneless Peaches in the failures of regional industrialized farming in early- to mid-twentieth-century California: this period saw not only the loss of orchards due to urbanization (Davis, *Ecology* 77), but also, fittingly, unsuccessful attempts to grow commercially-viable stoneless peaches (“Stoneless”). Kaiser’s plot

⁸ Note that the “great fruiterer” himself has not yet died. As the narrator notes, “[h]ere already lay two Kaisers, wife and aunt. Here in the fullness of time would lie Kaiser himself” (68).

signals an industrial impotence in the “rosy” “cheek[ed]” face of the untameable peach and foretells the burial of a commercial empire.⁹

Like the “blank patch” on the Whispering Glades mortuary sign, then, the Lake Island’s absent honey-bees and peach stones function as “gaps” in the “green world” of the memorial park. From one perspective, these gaps signal the dominating hand of man and its control over the park environment. From another perspective, they signal a profound ecological instability in that they undermine Whispering Glades’s rhetoric of pastoral authenticity and environmental mastery. Through the mode of pastoral satire, these gaps at once represent the memorial park’s displacement and obfuscation of Los Angeles’s “wild” or “natural” ecology and suggest the park’s vulnerability in the face of ecological phenomena.

Topos #3: The Bodies of Whispering Glades

If *The Loved One* invites us to imagine Whispering Glades as a pastoral garden or orchard, then, as I have suggested, its pastoral vision also foregrounds an abundant and unusual kind of fruit: the corpses of the loved ones in the park. In this final section, I therefore focus not on a body of land in Whispering Glades, but on its human bodies, in order to elaborate most fully the complex relationships among the funeral complex, the bio-ecological forces that undermine its industrializing project, and the pastoral realm of the park. The target of radical industrial efforts to erase death as the epitome of an

⁹ Significantly, the name “Kaiser” calls strongly upon the famous industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, whose company, Kaiser Steel, was headquartered in California and supplied steel plate for ships during and after World War II (Avila 187). This association, be it inadvertent or purposeful, erects a bridge between stoneless peaches as literal fruits of industrial manufacture and “class A” or “grade A” steel as a product of industrial manufacture in the novel, a product that Waugh invokes repeatedly in both his preparatory essay for *The Loved One* and the novel itself. Just as the novel interrogates the professed indestructibility of the “grade A steel” that makes up “all the buildings of Whispering Glades” (35), it undermines Kaiser’s apparent mastery over bio-ecological phenomena as represented by his Stoneless Peaches.

untamed and threatening “wild nature” (Fernandez 352) or as “the most natural of all forces” (Sachs 7), the bodies of Whispering Glades may “[w]ea[r]” the “[g]reen” of the pastoral paradise, but they wear it poorly. For this green garment is constantly being “stripped” and “rolled away” (61) by the material realities of death. Representing *The Loved One*’s most sustained and scathing critique of industrial attempts at mastery over ecological phenomena, the novel’s third “topos” consists principally of the corpses of Sir Francis Hinsley and Aimée Thanatogenos, both suicides. As figures in a mock pastoral paradise, Sir Francis and Aimée function as metaphorical gaps that summon, with increasing urgency as the plot progresses, the suppressed ecological forces in the park. They crystalize the novel’s fundamental preoccupation with the industrial displacement and with the forgetting of “wild nature,” strongly suggesting that the funeral complex is doomed to the impotent parody of a death-free paradise because “[n]ature” will always “reassert herself” (*Essays* 331).

When Dennis lay in the “dense shade” of the “gunnera” at the Kaiser family plot (68), trying, and failing, to compose a suitable graveside ode for Sir Francis, he considers:

A peach without a stone. That was the metaphor for Frank Hinsley. Dennis recalled that he had once tried to eat one of Mr Kaiser’s much advertised products and had discovered a ball of damp, sweet cotton-wool. Poor Frank Hinsley, it was very like him. (69)

Here, as Milthorpe would observe, the stoneless peach signals a cultivated automatism on the part of Sir Francis, who, as a long-time Hollywood screenwriter “deep in thrall” to the studios, was kept “going with a pump” until he “got disconnected from [his] bottle” and

committed suicide (15). Impotent in life, and now pitiless in memoriam, Sir Francis follows what Waugh considered to be the typical life-death trajectory of inhabitants of Southern California, all “exiles uprooted, transplanted and doomed to sterility” (qtd in Connolly 76).¹⁰

For the corpse of Sir Francis to be imagined as an industrialized fruit also raises consequential questions of ecological agency and complicates the vision of an industrially-engineered park space. While Sir Francis embodies what Milthorpe describes as a cultural “turn to the unnatural, the automatic, the mechanical” (205), he primarily illustrates the *failures* of this cultural turn as represented by Whispering Glades’s unsuccessful attempts to industrialize immortality. His corpse dons the mechanisms of industrial manipulation as a conspicuous and transparent mask and thereby manifests death as an absent presence. In doing so, it exposes the failures in Whispering Glades’s cultural mandate, which uses pastoral ideals and representation to self-legitimize and, as *Horizon* editor Cyril Connolly puts it, to “euphemize that stark object which is of all the most ill-favoured and unreassuring” (76).

When funeral cosmetician Aimée escorts Dennis to view the casketed Sir Francis, he is uncharacteristically discomfited and “startl[e]d” by the appearance of his late friend’s body, “stripped of the thick pelt of mobility and intelligence.” Sir Francis’s body shocks most, however, because it has been treated by the funeral complex; it has been embalmed and made-up for viewing in the mortuary. Needless to say, in viewing Sir Francis, Dennis gets “more” than he had “hoped” for (62):

¹⁰ Like Forest Lawn policy and practice prior to the 1990s (McNamara, “Cultural” 6), Whispering Glades is racist and exclusionary (it only accepts Caucasian “loved ones”). Contrary to Catholic doctrine, though, it accepts suicides.

the face which inclined its blind eyes towards him – the face was entirely horrible; as ageless as a tortoise and as inhuman; a painted and smirking obscene travesty by comparison with which the devil-mask Dennis had found in the noose was a festive adornment, a thing an uncle might don at a Christmas party. (61-2)

Hardly the picture of pastoral repose, the “inclin[ation]” of Sir Francis’s face indicates chief embalmer Mr Joyboy’s positioning of the hardened corpse, specifically his “tilt[ing]” of the “chin” (59), which is intended to “put [Sir Francis’s] carotid suture in the shadow” (56). The “smir[k]” furthermore signals Mr Joyboy’s implanting of the “Radiant Childhood Smile” (56), and the “pain[t]” represents Aimée’s “art” and “*oeuvre*” (57). While Whispering Glades succeeds in obscuring the “ag[e]” of the body, Dennis’s culturally-informed horror in the (literal) face of Sir Francis, who has just been ostensibly “transfigured with peace and happiness” (43), keeps Whispering Glades from fulfilling its own cultural mandate.¹¹ For Whispering Glades promises not only that Loved Ones will enjoy eternal rest, but that the Waiting Ones too will be “Happy in Beauty, Happy in the certain knowledge that their Loved Ones [are] very near, in Beauty and Happiness” (34). If, as a mortuary hostess says, the role of the “leave-taking” within the death-care industry is to provide a “very, very great source of consolation,” allowing mourners to “photograp[h] a last beautiful memory on the mind” (43), then Whispering Glades’s provision of a profound source of horror disrupts its self-legitimization through the

¹¹ In *Whispering Glades*, as in twentieth-century *Forest Lawn*, corpses are typically prepared for viewing, a process that can involve embalming (the replacement of internal fluids with a chemical solution for temporary preservation), dressing, and the application of cosmetics to the face and body to approximate the appearance of life. In spite of industry claims that such practices are part of longstanding tradition and Christian custom, the widespread modern adoption of such preparation and viewing practices is unique to twentieth- and twenty-first-century America (Fernandez, Mitford, and others). Dennis’s horror thus functions as an illustration of the irreconcilable differences in cultural practice between England as an “earlier civilization” (46) and America as a “strange” new one (70) – differences that constitute, for Waugh, “the Anglo-American impasse – ‘never the twain shall [manuscript: can] meet’” (*Letters* 265-6).

rhetoric of public service. As we have seen, however, Dennis's horror is by no means the only disruptive agent in this scenario: by turning what should be a "beautiful memory" picture into an "obscene travesty," the biological processes and the materiality of the human dead refuse the glossy finish of even an industrial-grade paint job.

When Dennis captures Sir Francis's corpse in the graveside "ode" that he composes on the island, his ode turns Whispering Glades's brand of immortality on its head on both material and poetic levels by revealing the presence of death in the park (by revealing, as Death does in Nicolas Poussin's paintings, that "Et in Arcadia ego" ["Even in Arcadia, there am I"]).¹² In the "ode," Dennis addresses the corpse of Sir Francis: "'tis here you'll lie; / Here pickled in formaldehyde and painted like a whore, / Shrimp-pink incorruptible, not lost nor gone before" (69). This poem rehearses and lampoon's Whispering Glades's construction of what Lynch calls "cosmetic immortality": steeped in the organic and chemical compounds of the mortuary, as well as in its logic, Sir Francis in a sense lives on as if he had never died. He persists, though, in the approximated colour of his former self ("Shrimp-pink"), perched precariously (and stiffly) between putrefaction and decomposition. Implicitly weighing the engineered memorial park ("'tis here you'll lie; / Here") against an "authentic" or unmanipulated environment where corpses would presumably remain unpainted, show their age, and, even in death, retain their humanity, Waugh's burlesque of Sir Francis suggests, more broadly, that the park's veneer of pastoral repose, its "greenness," is a "painted and smirking obscene" mask, the paint of a whore (61).

¹² In *Arcadian America* (2013), Aaron Sachs translates "Et in Arcadia Ego" as "I am present even in Arcadia."

The novel's undermining of Whispering Glades's mandate culminates in its treatment of the mock pastoral figure of Aimée Thanatogenos, "sole Eve in a bustling hygienic Eden" (46). Her pre- and post-death journeys, as well as her absurd memorialization, constitute the novel's ultimate indictment of industrial pretensions to control over bio-ecological forces, since they undermine the rhetoric of the death-care institution by ironically rehearsing and then radically rejecting the homogenized journey "from Slumber Room A to Paradise" (*Essays* 337). In brief, her pre-death journey runs as follows: having broken the "sacred oath" (111) that she made to Dennis by becoming engaged to Mr Joyboy (in fact a "prescribed oath" carved into Whispering Glades's "Lovers' Seat": [*Till a' the seas gang dry my dear / And the rocks melt wi' the sun; / I will love thee still my dear, / While the sands o' life shall run*" {98-99}]) and having received no support or guidance from her new fiancée, Aimée falls into a medicated slumber in her own bedroom before waking up and walking to Whispering Glades one morning. The Golden Gates are locked so she takes the "side-door" into paradise (115), her mind full of a host of mythological figures (the Minotaur, Agamemnon, Alcestis, Antigone) and sites (the "Boeotian water-front") which are "prompt[ing her] to a higher destiny" (116). Before self-injecting with cyanide in Mr Joyboy's workroom (117), she "wait[s] for dawn" in "the terrace of the Kirk o' Auld Lang Syne" (116). She

watche[s] the countless statues glimmer, whiten, and take shape while the lawns chang[e] from silver and grey to green Then suddenly all round her and as far as she could see the slopes became a dancing surface of light, of millions of minute rainbows and spots of fire; in the control house the man on duty had turned the irrigation cock and water was flooding through the network of pierced

and buried pipes. At the same time parties of gardeners with barrows and tools emerged and tramped to their various duties. It was full day. (116)

As a follower of Whispering Glades doctrine, Aimée sees the park at dawn in credulous “exaltation” (116), while the reader experiences the park as a space whose mythologies are debunked (to a greater extent than they already were) by the rising of the sun. For the park’s shifting colours at sunrise (in particular the lawns’ “chang[e] from silver and grey to green”) rehearse and illuminate Whispering Glades’s own literal and imaginative “greening” mechanisms, which range from irrigation and gardening to the naturalization and the mythologization of the park’s built environment. Culminating in the scene at dawn, Aimée’s ironic pre-death rehearsal of the patented Whispering Glades journey from “Slumber Room A to Paradise” (*Essays* 337) thus constructs and deconstructs the memorial park as a mythopoeic “green world.”

Following her suicide, Aimée’s unembalmed corpse travels first from the sanitized space of the worktable, to Mr Joyboy’s “deep refrigerator” for “half-finished work” (119) (a space which calls on Whispering Glades’s Promethean projects of mastery, incomplete at best). Dennis later arrives at Whispering Glades “with the collecting van”:

Mr Joyboy was waiting for Dennis at the side entrance of the mortuary.

Whispering Glades was ideally equipped for the smooth movement of bodies. On a swift and silent trolley they set Dennis’s largest collecting box [for animal carcasses], first empty, later full. They drove to the Happier Hunting Ground where things were more makeshift, but between them without great difficulty they man-handled their load to the crematorium, and stowed it in the oven Dennis

turned on the gas and lit it. Flame shot from all sides of the brickwork. He closed the iron door. (126)

The “smooth movement” of Aimée’s corpse should, according to prescribed trajectory of “Slumber Room A to Paradise” (*Essays* 331), lead her to eternal rest in a well-tended burial plot in Whispering Glades, thereby maintaining the integrity of the “green world” and its boundaries. It leads her, instead, through the “side entrance” of the mortuary (presumably also the way she came in [115]), illustrating a “gap” in the “green world” and marking out a path between the anthropocentric paradise of Whispering Glades and the impious place where Dennis tends the ashes of “little pet[s]” (120). Ejected from Paradise, Aimée is reduced to ash and bone fragments in a fiery iron room, where her remains mingle with those of Siamese cats (20), Alsatian dogs (96), and sheep (124), in an absurd radicalization of “the intensely intimate connection between the human and nonhuman worlds” so central to both the Hollywood novel (Bryson 168) and to pastoral (Love 66). By denying a prepackaged post-death journey to a devotee of Whispering Glades doctrine, the novel undermines the institution’s professed control over death and, by extension, the brand of pastoral repose that it peddles. Furthermore, since Aimée is driven to pursue the alternate death trajectory of suicide by a profound belief in the sanctity and power of Whispering Glades’s pastoral rhetoric, Aimée epitomizes the failures of the industrialized park. The death of this Eden’s “sole Eve” (46) strongly suggests that the pastoral “green world” is unsustainable – that, indeed, it tends toward self-destruction.

Chapter 2 | Ever-Green: Unbuilding Paradise in Forest Lawn Memorial Park

“If there are skeptics who think that Mr. Waugh may have been guilty of exaggeration,” Jessica Mitford writes in *The American Way of Death: Revisited* (1998), “a visit to Forest Lawn [in Glendale, California] should set their minds at rest” (101) (and at rest, no doubt, among the dead bodies of the memorial park). For Mitford, *The Loved One*’s Whispering Glades captures the conceptual and material character of the site that it satirizes. Like Whispering Glades, Forest Lawn Memorial Park is the realization of one man’s vision, the pseudo-sacred result of a marketing strategy of self-mythologization. Just as Whispering Glades’s “Dreamer,” Dr. Wilbur Kenworthy, wrote “The Dream” and built Whispering Glades according to its specifications (34), Forest Lawn’s self-professed “Builder,” Dr. Hubert Lewright Eaton, composed the park’s foundational myth in 1917 and termed it “The Builder’s Creed.” Immortalized in marble and on prominent display in the park (for sorrowers and satirists alike to see), the Creed would function as an unchanging “recipe” or “guide” for the “[c]reation,” preservation, and development of a real-world pastoral paradise (Eaton, “Creation” n.p.). In this chapter we will critically tour Forest Lawn, its Creed and environmental history, to illustrate the ecocritical usefulness of pastoral satire like Waugh’s.

I use insights gained from *The Loved One* to read the Builder’s Creed and the realization of its vision, Forest Lawn, suggesting that Waugh’s satire enables me, as a critic, to register and expose retroactively the humorous and troubling contradictions of Eaton’s Creed and memorial park. Deploying an attention to irony characteristic of an ecological satirist, then, I argue that the Builder’s Creed uses pastoral criteria to

mythologize Forest Lawn as a *place of eternal repose*. In doing so, the Creed purposefully excludes features of Los Angeles's Mediterranean ecology (such as desert flora and an arid climate) from its textual boundaries in an attempt to establish the physical boundaries of Forest Lawn as a mythopoeic "green world." In *The Loved One*, Waugh exploits such exclusions or gaps in Forest Lawn's "green world" for the purposes of pastoral satire; here, I analyze these ironic gaps to show that Forest Lawn's mandate of eternal repose necessarily entails the real-world obfuscation, displacement, and even destruction of regional ecological features that are inconsistent with Eaton's pastoral vision. The Builder's Creed thus functions as a "recipe" or "guide" for radical environmental manipulation, while Forest Lawn emerges as a self-subverting pastoral locale, one that undermines its own ecological integrity in its quest to reproduce, for the purposes of death, a pastoral "green world." "Et in Arcadia ego," indeed.

From Devil Grass to "God's Garden": Mythologizing Forest Lawn

According to Forest Lawn mythology, Eaton composed the Builder's Creed in 1917 when, standing on a hillside in a run-down graveyard in present-day Glendale, he had a vision of what that graveyard could – and would – become (McNamara, "Cultural" 1).¹³ By varying accounts, the graveyard before him consisted of an expanse of "brown

¹³ Forest Lawn legend is slippery and multiform, constructed through numerous promotional publications that offer sometimes contradictory accounts of the park's history. Notable examples of promotional books include *Art Guide and Forest Lawn Interpretations* (1931 and later editions), Ralph Hancock's *The Forest Lawn Story* (1964), and Adela Rogers St. John's *First Step Up Toward Heaven* (1959). Elaborating the slippery nature of Forest Lawn legend, McNamara notes that there exist at least three different versions of the story of Eaton's journey to California ("Cultural" 1). Eaton's trajectory, as I understand it, runs as follows: Eaton, "apparently born under whichever star it is that guides a man to seek his fortune below the earth's surface rather than above" (Mitford 105), worked early on as a chemist in the mining industry. Eventually a failed venture (in which he was a partner) prompted him, in late 1912, to accept a management position in present-day Glendale selling "Before Need" plots at Forest Lawn Cemetery (which was incorporated on January 11, 1906 [Chatila, "Cemetery Celebrates"] and owned by the Tropico Land and Improvement Company [Rubin 11]). By 1916, he had gained an interest in the cemetery and eventually bought out the original owners (Hancock 54). But the self-mythologizing doctrine of Forest Lawn Memorial Park favours the more vivid (and apocryphal) story of Hubert Eaton's vision on the hillside.

chaparral and devil grass” (“Cultural” 4), “an arid, brown tract dotted with tumbleweeds and tombstones” (Rubin 11), or, in the terms of Forest Lawn propagandist Ralph Hancock, a “grotesque forest of stone, endless mounds of raw earth set off with cold blocks of moldy granite amidst a heterogeneous and helter-skelter planting of shrubbery ... [as well as] an unkempt patch of rolling hills covered with sere brown weeds and the ubiquitous wild oat” (Hancock 61). But the pseudo-messianic Eaton, who was destined to, in his own words, “subdu[e] the elements and ma[k]e the desert to bloom as a rose” (qtd in Rubin 62), saw more than just the arid landscape before him, which was, at the time, owned by the Tropico Land and Improvement Company (Rubin 11).¹⁴ What Eaton envisioned from his hillside vantage point, he “put ... into words” (*Art Guide* 3) in its foundational Creed. As I will argue, this self-contradictory document uses the concepts of eternity, place, and repose to mythologize Forest Lawn Memorial Park as a pastoral garden.¹⁵

“I Believe In A Happy Eternal Life,” Eaton’s Creed begins. “I Believe, Most Of All, In A Christ That Smiles And Loves You And Me.” Positing a disconnect between “Unsightly Stoneyards” like that owned by Tropico and his “gladsome” vision of Christianity (Sloane 164), Eaton claims that “The Cemeteries Of Today Are Wrong, Because [“Their Inartistic Symbols and Depressing Customs”] Depict An End, Not A

¹⁴ The Tropico-owned Forest Lawn Cemetery was part of a large Tropico subdivision that would merge with the City of Glendale in 1918 (*Historic* 15).

¹⁵ *Art Guide and Forest Lawn Interpretations* (1931) provides a condensed version of Eaton’s vision, signed by the Forest Lawn Board of Trustees:

On New Year’s Day, 1917, a man stood on a hilltop overlooking the small country cemetery of some fifty-five acres which had just been placed in his charge. He saw no buildings – only a patch of lawn with a few straggling headstones. Beyond the scant dozen acres of developed ground, the hillsides rose, sere and brown.

In that moment, a vision came to the man of what this tiny “God’s Acre” might become; and, standing there, he made a promise to the Infinite. When he reached home he put his promise into words, and called it “The Builder’s Creed.”

Today [in 1931] Forest Lawn’s two hundred acres are eloquent witnesses that The Builder kept faith with his soul. (3)

Beginning.” Affirming his belief that cemeteries should “Do” more for “Humanity” than “A Practical Act,” Eaton carves out a cultural mandate of eternal repose for Forest Lawn and reinforces its aesthetic and ideological “Differ[ence]” from existing cemeteries. He reports:

I Therefore Prayerfully Resolve On This New Year’s Day, 1917, That I Shall Endeavor To Build Forest Lawn As Different, As Unlike Other Cemeteries As Sunshine Is To Darkness, As Eternal Life Is Unlike Death. I Shall Try To Build At Forest Lawn A Great Park, Devoid Of Misshapen Monuments And Other Customary Signs Of Earthly Death, But Filled With Towering Trees, Sweeping Lawns, Splashing Fountains, Singing Birds, Beautiful Statuary, Cheerful Flowers, Noble Memorial Architecture With Interiors Full Of Light And Color, And Redolent Of The World’s Best History And Romances. (*Builder’s Creed*)

Here, Eaton circumscribes a pastoral world that takes immortality as its organizing concept, both a Christian immortality of the soul (Sloane 164), and, more importantly for our purposes, memorialization through art and nature (McNamara, “Cultural” 3).

Ironically overlooking the fact that trees die and lawns dry up, the Creed aligns pastoral landscape features such as lush flora with “Eternal Life.” In the spirit of preserving that “Happy Eternal Life,” the Creed goes on to promise that Forest Lawn “Shall Be Protected By An Immense Endowment Care Fund, The Principal Of Which Can Never Be Expended—Only The Income Therefrom Used To Care For And Perpetuate This Garden of Memory.” Despite having earlier disparaged pragmatism, then, the Creed ends on a distinctly “Practical” note in self-mythologizing as (virtually) financially unassailable.

As its alignment of immortality with art and nature (from “Towering Trees,” to “Sweeping Lawns,” to “Beautiful Statuary”) suggests, the Creed articulates Forest Lawn’s mandate through the physicality and sensuousness of place. Indeed, it invites the dead and the living alike to “Enter Into That Happier Life” in the form of the park’s built environment (while naturally directing its marketing efforts at the latter). Manufacturing a “sense of place” (McClung 170) based on repose and “sacred recreation” (Sloane 167), the Creed promises that

Forest Lawn Shall Become A Place Where Lovers New And Old Shall Love To Stroll And Watch The Sunset’s Glow, Planning For The Future Or Reminiscing Of The Past; A Place Where Artists Study And Sketch; Where School Teachers Bring Happy Children To See Things They Read Of In Books ... A Place Where The Sorrowing Will Be Soothed And Strengthened Because It Will Be God’s Garden.

Privileging pastoral criteria (“Things [Children] Read Of In Books,” for example) over the arid climatological and bio-physical characteristics of the Tropico-owned graveyard, the Creed relies on an act of industrial *displacement* to build its reposeful “sense of place.” It aestheticizes immortality within a commercial industrial framework, in effect functioning as a “Prayerfu[l] Resol[ution]” to transform the local ecology, or to displace it, from the boundaries of “God’s Garden.” But as I ask in the sections to follow, can the environmental costs of manufacturing a place of eternal repose outweigh the self-professed “Educat[ional]” and spiritual benefits of the park? Can reproducing and industrializing Arcadias and Edens “Past” and Paradises Lost compromise the

environmental “Future” of Forest Lawn? These are questions that an ecocriticism attuned to irony and contradiction in Forest Lawn doctrine can address.

“Growing Scarcity”: Arcadia’s Self-Destruction

If the Builder’s Creed replaces elements of Los Angeles’s Mediterranean ecology with generic pastoral features such as “Towering Trees” and “Splashing Fountains” in an attempt to reproduce a pastoral “green world,” then, like Whispering Glades, it contains gaps where regional ecological phenomena should be. As I will argue, these gaps not only expose the Creed’s mythology, but they also open the real cemetery as a text and elaborate Forest Lawn’s practical relationship to natural resources such as land, flora, and water. Since the implementation of the pastoral aesthetic in Los Angeles requires radical displacement, manipulation, and obfuscation of existing environmental features, Forest Lawn’s relationship to local natural resources is often exploitative, illustrating William Alexander McClung’s important claim that “the myth that establishes Arcadia also accounts for its destruction” (94). In the substitution of decontextualized pastoral features for elements of the park’s regional ecology, the Creed’s ironic gaps profess plenitude but betray scarcity and precariousness in the context of Los Angeles’s environmental history.

“The Wearing of the Green”: Pastoral Flora in Forest Lawn

Pastoral flora plays a fundamental role in Forest Lawn’s mandate of eternal repose. But realizing the Creed’s “Towering Trees,” “Cheerful Flowers,” and “Sweeping Lawns” in the park site means fostering scarcity by bulldozing trees and bushes that are inconsistent with its “green” vision as well as laying down green swathes of what Jane Jacobs calls, in a tone of lamentation, “grass, grass, grass” (21-2). Thus, as in the case of Whispering

Glades's "Wearing of the Green" (63),¹⁶ Forest Lawn's attempt to "forever cloth[e] itself in green leaves" (*Art Guide* 33) demands an ironic attention to the regional environmental context of Los Angeles. Displaying what I call an "ever-green imperative," a radical valuing of pastoral "greenness" that manifests itself in the material and ideological stuff of the park, Forest Lawn in effect undercuts its own cultural mandate of eternal repose because it must literally produce, through industry, a "green world." What is more, as the widely-cited progenitor of the Memorial Park cemetery model, Forest Lawn participated in the historical institutionalization of this imperative of radical environmental engineering in cemetery spaces in California, the United States, and beyond (Mitford 101).

Of all the landscape features listed in "The Builder's Creed," Forest Lawn doctrine (which, for our purposes, includes the Creed itself as well as the park's promotional literature) most often credits flora with the capacity to depict "A Happy Eternal Life." In his introduction to the *Art Guide and Forest Lawn Interpretations* (1931), for example, Bruce Barton asserts:

Here [at Forest Lawn] every tree and shrub and flower proclaims that:

"Life is ever lord of death,

And love can never lose its own." (2)¹⁷

Invoking a sense of "place" ("Here") and using pastoral troping to "[f]ind tongues in trees" (Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 2.1.42), Barton's propagandistic statement rehearses

¹⁶ "The Wearing of the Green" is the title of the song title from Sir Francis Hinsley's funeral service that aptly captures the park's pastoral aspirations.

¹⁷ Barton is citing John Greenleaf Whittier's "Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl" (1866). As John Timberman Newcomb notes in *Would Poetry Disappear?: American Verse and the Crisis of Modernity* (2004), Whittier's narrative poem organized itself around the anti-modernist trope of storytelling by the fireplace (39-40).

the assumption that pastoral flora represents immortality. The *Art Guide* later underlines flora's role in communicating Forest Lawn's cultural mandate: "green lawns beneath whispering trees," it says, "are everlasting symbols of memory that live forever" (200).¹⁸

As I have suggested, "green" is fundamental to this vision of eternal repose. In an "endeavor to carry out th[e Builder's] Creed" in the early years of Forest Lawn, Eaton actually *rid the park* of "trees that lose their leaves in the winter time" (Eaton, "Creation" n.p.), claiming that they "Depict An End, Not A Beginning" (*Builder's Creed*). He bulldozed winter-deciduous trees and shrubs and replaced them with evergreens and luxurious yet "easy to maintain" (Sloane 182) green lawns on the basis that the latter "suggest *life*, not death, in their ever green and flowering beauty" (Hancock 113, my emphasis). While Forest Lawn has not, as McNamara seems to suggest ("Cultural" 4), implemented this rule uniformly ("The Old Sycamore," a revered and historic landmark located near the park entrance, is a notable exception [*Art Guide* 30]), the ever-green imperative shows how aspiring to the image of pastoral plenitude necessitates the never-greening of local, native landscape ecologies.

More than selectively imbuing the park's flora with humanist meaning by equating "green" with immortality, the ever-green imperative indicates a philosophy of "control" and "manipulat[ion]" of the park environment (Sloane 182). And indeed, Forest Lawn would usher in an era of aggressive industrialization and (sub)urbanization in

¹⁸ Even as the *Art Guide* aligns pastoral flora with immortality, it also registers regional depletion of land resources. Its section titled "Growing Scarcity of Cemetery Property" reads:

Los Angeles prides itself upon its growth That Los Angeles will some day be a solid mass of homes and buildings from the mountains to the sea is inevitable. Cemeteries that lie within this march of progress will be surrounded so that their expansion will be impossible.

But of this Forest Lawn has no fear. The hills surrounding three-fifths of its boundary line are its protection. (22)

In articulating a modern manifest destiny for Los Angeles, the *Art Guide* thus takes up and articulates anxieties surrounding suburbanization and industrial expansion in the region while nevertheless legitimizing and insisting on the resilience of Forest Lawn's cemetery property.

cemetery spaces by spearheading and popularizing the Memorial Park model. In *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (1991), David Charles Sloane makes the striking observation that “[f]ew trees and shrubs survived bulldozers during the development of memorial parks” (181). He elaborates:

Memorial-park planners did not use nature in the same manner as earlier designers. The natural setting was an integral part of the appearance of both rural and lawn-park cemeteries. Planners expected the memorials to harmonize with the scenery. The natural setting was an important part of the aesthetic philosophy behind the cemetery. In the memorial parks, nature was used exclusively as a backdrop. Even when a focal point was created around a piece of scenery nature had been so manipulated as to lose its naiveté.

The role of nature in the memorial parks replicated twentieth-century American attitudes toward the relationship between nature and civilization. Americans were ever more in control of nature, manipulating rivers for power, turning thousands of unirrigated acres into productive farmland, building communities on cliffs, flood plains, wherever people wished to live. (182)¹⁹

By Sloane’s account, memorial parks did not merely aestheticize, romanticize, and moralize the material landscape in the manner of its predecessors, but they also were responsible for a bold assault on “nature” in order to mould it to the desires of modern industrial civilization. While I would argue that Sloane’s description of nature in the memorial park model as “exclusively a backdrop” fails to register the landscape’s

¹⁹ The rural cemeteries of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America offered, in McNamara’s words, a “sylvan retreat” (4), whereas the lawn-park cemeteries offered a more controlled atmosphere in terms of grave decoration and landscaping (Sorrell et al. 9). Both models are important antecedents to the Modern Memorial Park.

centrality to the marketing strategy, and while I would hesitate to characterize unmanipulated natural features as “naive,” Sloane’s description tells us two things: first, that Forest Lawn’s aestheticization or “ever-greening” of immortality is deeply contradictory because the “Eternal Life” and Arcadian sense of “Place” that it offers stem in part from an ideology that values conquest, not repose. Second, this ideology entails not only the aggressive manipulation of all flora in the park (as Hancock notes of memorial parks in development, trees “must often be moved as the various areas of the cemetery are laid out in sections for interments” [118]), but also the large-scale *death* of flora deemed inconsistent with the memorial park vision. Mandated to make room for new inhabitants and to entice potential purchasers, Forest Lawn paradoxically unbuilds paradise in packaging and selling the Builder’s Creed’s *idea* of paradise. For as memorial park designer George McClure notes, “it is the Park that we sell – it is the most valuable asset we have” (qtd in Sloane 181). Ultimately, Forest Lawn’s displacement and manipulation of regional flora in the park at once reinforces and destabilizes the image of a “green world” of eternal repose.

“Splashing Fountains” Meet “Dry Water-Holes”: Forest Lawn and Water

I have briefly shown that the practical implementation of Forest Lawn’s mandate of eternal repose creates the appearance of “green” plenitude as it fosters the depletion of aesthetically undesirable flora. But fuelling this cult of green is, of course, something blue: water. Indeed, Forest Lawn’s mythological and aesthetic transformation from “arid, brown tract” (Rubin 11) to “vast green sward” (*Essays* 335) depended on this precious and, in Southern California, ever-scarce resource. As Barbara Rubin observes in the

critically-informed, albeit too laudatory, contribution to the *L.A. in Installments* series, *Forest Lawn* (1979):

Two events in 1913 were to profoundly affect the future of Tropicó's cemetery.

The first was the arrival of aqueduct water from the Owens Valley (on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada) into Los Angeles. An abundant, reliable, and inexpensive water supply was essential for the role the Tropicó's cemetery was destined to fill. The second was the arrival of Hubert Eaton[.] (11)

Rubin's observation shows that, contrary to the claims of Eaton's "official" biographer, Adela Rogers St. John, Forest Lawn's "Towering Trees," "Sweeping Lawns," "Cheerful Flowers," and "Splashing Fountains" are no miracle (212); these pastoral features come with a great deal of water. While it would be inaccurate to reduce Forest Lawn to a "desert[,] watered" (McClung 123; 49), the park has nevertheless relied upon an "abundant, reliable, and inexpensive water supply" to "fill" its self-professed "role" as a place of eternal repose (and, of course, to fill its fountains). For our purposes, the Builder's Creed's unacknowledged self-injection with water is an operative omission that both serves to reinforce Forest Lawn's image as a pastoral garden of plenty and reveals the environmental tenuousness of Forest Lawn's pastoralism.

Since the Builder's Creed functions, in Eaton's words, as "not only [Forest Lawn's] aesthetic guide but [also] the practical, every[d]ay rule upon which all [its] development and operation has been based" ("Creation" n.p.),²⁰ it is not surprising that, like the Creed, Forest Lawn has obfuscated its water stores and water transportation

²⁰ Once again, Forest Lawn doctrine proves self-contradictory. The Builder's Creed condemns "The Cemeteries Of Today" for "Do[ing] Nothing For Humanity Save A Practical Act" while proudly proclaiming its own pragmatism. Accounting partly for this contradiction is Forest Lawn's rhetorical investment in aesthetic sophistication on the one hand, and Midwestern anti-elitism on the other (Fernandez 361-3; McNamara, "Cultural" 2; Mitford 107; Rubin 52; Waugh, *The Loved One* 33).

devices – its liquid mechanisms of production. Indeed, if Forest Lawn has “clothed” its flora in “green” (*Art Guide* 33) in accordance with the Creed’s pastoral criteria, then Forest Lawn has also draped its *water* in pastoral garb that illustrates the ambivalence and self-contradictory character of the park’s pastoral project.

Harnessing the obfuscatory powers of nostalgia and “Reminisc[ence]” (*Builder’s Creed*), Forest Lawn for years housed a set of water pumps within a mock rural “home” in the Spanish colonial style. According to the *Art Guide*,

So completely is Forest Lawn dedicated to the ideals of beauty that even utilitarian buildings must harmonize with the great plan of this Park. Here is a building recalling the slow, peaceful days of the Eighteenth Century, when Forest Lawn was a part of the Old Verdugo Rancho. Although it is actually a pump-house, housing the pumps which force water from a reservoir beneath it up to the Tower of Legends, the exterior of the Hacienda with its tiled roof, the heavy green shutters, the little patio and its cactus garden, presents a faithful picture of the California home in the days of the padres and dons. (35)

Engaging in “the pastoral process of putting the complex into the simple” (Empson 23), the Hacienda, as the *Art Guide* describes it, selectively romanticizes eighteenth-century California by naturalizing its Spanish colonial population. In doing so, it reduces a diverse and complex history to an obfuscatory tale of yore. By omitting from its account both indigenous peoples (the Native American population of the Tongva, for example) and time periods (the pre-eighteenth as well as the nineteenth centuries), this tale invites the reader to believe that the present-day park site has a single Spanish cultural origin that eventually yielded itself seamlessly to white capitalist privatization (in particular, the

guide suggests a seamless transition by rhetorically framing Forest Lawn as “a part of the Old Verdugo Ranch”).²¹ Furthermore, since Forest Lawn derives its pastoral self-image in large part from the rural cemetery model of Eastern America made popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (McNamara, “Cultural” 3; Sloane 160), its “slow, peaceful” sense of place functions as a cultural hodge-podge of pastoral imagery – the kind which has frequently attracted satiric attention in the literature of Los Angeles (see Isherwood; O’Flaherty; others), but which nevertheless serves to reinforce Arcadian visions of the region (McNamara, “Cultural” 1; McClung 94). Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, the Hacienda, as the *Art Guide* describes it, indexes the mechanisms of production in the industrialized park; as when a close look at the mock-beehives on Whispering Glades’s Lake Island reveals a “tiny red eye which told that the sound-apparatus was working in good order” (68), the guide’s description shows that beneath the Hacienda’s “tiled roof” and behind its “heavy green shutters” lie the “pumps which force water” from the ground to keep Eaton’s “green world” ever-green.

The Tower of Legends – or, the water tower into which the Hacienda fed prior to the erection of the Forest Lawn Museum on the site in 1957 – is another example of “Noble Memorial Architecture” (*Builder’s Creed*) deployed in the service of obfuscatory pastoralism. Once again, Forest Lawn’s *Art Guide* shines a light – a “flood ligh[t],” even – on this water-filled monument:

The Tower of Legends, crowning Mount Forest Lawn and rising to a height of eighty-seven feet, is another example of Forest Lawn’s ability to clothe the

²¹ In 1784, Spanish soldier and ranchero Jose Maria Verdugo applied for and received an expansive land grant for Rancho San Rafael (also informally referred to as the Verdugo Rancho). The Rancho encompassed, among others, the present-day cities of Flintridge and Glendale (except for the Crescenta Valley portions), parts of Burbank, Los Angeles, and Pasadena, as well as the neighbourhoods of Eagle Rock and Highland Park (“Appendix A” 7; *Do You Know*; Hornbeck 374; “San Rafael”).

utilitarian in the robes of beauty and splendor, for its real purpose is that of a huge reservoir holding 165,000 gallons of water for the Park.

The Tower of Legends is visible for miles around Forest Lawn Memorial-Park. At night it is illumined by a battery of powerful flood lights, and its classic figure outlined against the dark sky transforms it into a beacon of Love and Hope to all who view it. (34)

In keeping with the temporal and ideological ambivalence of pastoral, the Tower displays both positivist and pseudo-historical or -sacred impulses. First, it embodies values of artistic mastery and architectural ingenuity. As Rubin notes, Eaton modelled the Tower of Legends on the Tower of Jewels from San Francisco's 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition (16). Having gained popularity in the nineteenth century, these expositions invited fair-goers to "celebrat[e] the progress of civilization" through art, spectacle, and commercialism (McNamara, "Cultural" 4). Equipped with striking height and size, and "illumined by a battery of powerful flood lights," Eaton's Tower would capture the imagination of park-goers in the tradition of the world's fairs, becoming one of Forest Lawn's key architectural attractions (second only to the Great Mausoleum [McNamara, "Cultural" 4]) and helping to establish Forest Lawn as a "Modern Park Cemetery" ("Creation").

In addition to symbolizing commercial and artistic development, the Tower functions as a kind of "joyful" Christ or shepherd figure (Sloane 66), much like Eaton does in the story of his hillside vision.²² And indeed, the Tower occupies the very "*site* of Eaton's vision" (McNamara, "Cultural" 4, my emphasis). A "classic figure" from the

²² A locus of messiahs, pseudo-messiahs, and pseudo-messianic architecture, the crest of 'Mount Forest Lawn' now fittingly houses an enormous painting of Christ in the Forest Lawn Museum's Hall of the Crucifixion (Davis, *Mischief* 62).

memorialized past and a “beacon of Love and Hope to all who view it” (34), the Tower specifically amasses salvific associations by making 165,000 gallons of water available within this “desert” park site (Eaton qtd in Rubin 62). In a modified rehearsal of Jesus turning water into wine, the Tower helps to “br[ing] the river to the thirsty land” (Mulholland 4).²³

In the case of both the Hacienda and the Tower of Legends, the obfuscation of Forest Lawn’s liquid mechanisms of production serves to bolster and even enhance the park’s pastoral veneer. At the same time, the “real purpose” of both structures (which the *Art Guide* flags in spite of its rhetorical dedication to “cloth[ing] the utilitarian in the robes of beauty and splendor” [34]) summons the arid Mediterranean ecology of the region and, in doing so, destabilizes the park’s mandate of eternal repose. Indeed, the “real purpose” of the Hacienda and the Tower suggests that, were it not for these structures, the “brown chaparral and devil grass” (McNamara, “Cultural” 4) of the park site might just “reassert [it]self” (*Essays* 331).

Rubin’s observation about Forest Lawn’s historical reliance on an “abundant, reliable, and inexpensive water supply” (11) can help us further elaborate Forest Lawn’s exploitative and obfuscatory pastoralism. Aqueduct water from the Owens Valley and, later, from the expanded Los Angeles aqueduct system “profoundly affect[ed] the future” of Forest Lawn by allowing the park to fill its self-prescribed “role” (Rubin 11) of eternal repose. But, by relying, historically, on the Owens Valley aqueduct, Forest Lawn

²³ At the height of the Water Wars conflict surrounding the Owens Valley aqueduct, the University of California, Berkeley provided Los Angeles Department of Water and Power head William Mulholland with an honorary doctorate degree, the inscription on which read: *Percussit saxa et duxit flumina ad terram sitientum* (“He broke the rocks and brought the river to the thirsty land”) (Mulholland 4). Mulholland later resigned, in 1929, due to his widely-condemned role in the fatal St. Francis Dam collapse of 1928 (Mulholland 327). Today, Mulholland rests beneath the lush green lawns of Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale (Hancock 14).

participated in the *draining* of paradise to build paradise, in a striking illustration of McClung's claim that Arcadias tend toward self-destruction (94). Aqueduct water from the Owens Valley proved, in the long run, neither "abundant, reliable, [nor] inexpensive" (Rubin 11), and its diversion into Los Angeles epitomizes the relentless development impulse that constitutes the region's "primal error" (McClung 15). Completed in 1913, the year when Hubert Eaton began working at the Tropico-owned Forest Lawn Cemetery in earnest, the aqueduct funneled water from eastern California to fuel the growing metropolis of Los Angeles. By the 1920s, the aqueduct had desiccated the Owens Valley, having turned a land of agricultural bounty into what syndicated columnist Will Rogers called "a valley of desolation" (qtd in Walton 228). Accompanying the rise of Forest Lawn, then, which had gained 525,000 visitors per year by 1928, was the systematic destruction of a water source.

In the present day, Forest Lawn maintains the exploitative relationship to water resources silently articulated by the Creed and implemented initially through the uptake of Owens Valley aqueduct water. Significantly, while Forest Lawn functioned as a secondary beneficiary rather than a major player in the Owens Valley scandal, the cemetery has, since the first quarter of the twentieth century, distinguished itself for its extraordinarily high water usage. As a 1985 *Los Angeles Times* article puts it,

visitors, like the departed, are probably unaware of how much water it takes to keep alive the cemetery's 125 acres of carefully manicured lawns, 10,000 trees and 100,000 bushes and shrubs. An estimated 195 million gallons of fresh water, purchased from the cities of Glendale and Los Angeles, is used every year to irrigate what once was a dry, weed-choked hillside. (Walker n.p.)

While other estimates place Forest Lawn’s annual water usage closer to 100 million gallons (Sneiderman n.p.; *L.A. vs San Fern, et al.*), the cemetery, which has expanded its landscaped terrain to 211 acres, remains one of the Los Angeles region’s “biggest lawn waterers” (Revkin n.p.).²⁴ Indeed, in 1982, the city of Glendale actually “targeted” Forest Lawn “to become its first reclaimed water customer” (O’Donnell n.p.) in what would ultimately become the Greenbelt Project, a water-saving initiative that would encourage “large [water] users” (Sneiderman n.p.) to use treated waste water, rather than potable tap water, to irrigate their grounds and to operate their fountains.

After facing pushback from Forest Lawn (Revkin n.p.) and enduring delays due to an expansion in scope (Sneiderman n.p.), the Greenbelt Project began operating in 1992 (*Urban Water* 5).²⁵ The Forest Lawn portion of the project specifically involved the construction of a 2.2-mile pipeline to carry recycled water from the Los Angeles-Glendale Water Reclamation Plant to Forest Lawn’s “doorstep” (Sneiderman n.p.). Replacing the park’s well system (a system which the *Art Guide* celebrates in 1931),²⁶ the pipeline has functioned as a “drought-buster” solution (Willman n.p.), assuring Forest Lawn up to 200 million gallons of recycled water per year for 20 years at 75% the cost of tap water (Sneiderman n.p.) and providing “a savings in drinking water to meet the annual needs of 2,200 people” (Willman n.p.). On the one hand, the Forest Lawn pipeline, which has resulted in “significant costs” for the cemetery (almost \$500,000 [Willman n.p.]) and for the cities of Glendale and Los Angeles (upwards of 1 million

²⁴ Phil Sneiderman places the total at just under 100 million gallons per year in 1990 (n.p.), whereas *The City of Los Angeles, Plaintiff, vs City of San Fernando, et al.* (1966) cites Forest Lawn’s annual total as 400 acre feet (or approximately 130 million gallons) per year (*Urban Water*, Appendix F).

²⁵ Forest Lawn filed a lawsuit against Glendale in 1987 over legal culpability surrounding the possible presence of hazardous substances in the recycled water (Revkin n.p.).

²⁶ The *Art Guide* boasts, “The Park receives its water from four deep wells. It is believed that no drought can ever interfere with the proper and permanent care of Forest Lawn, for the great wells in Forest Lawn furnish sufficient water” (18-19).

[Sneiderman n.p.]), represents a move towards the sustainable use of water resources. On the other hand, the much-needed pipeline reveals Forest Lawn's historical exploitation of drinking water in Los Angeles as well as the monetary and environmental costs of this exploitation.

Significantly, the pipeline brought with it the revival of the cemetery's iconic duck pool and fountain. Forest Lawn's signature "Splashing Fountain," which lies at the entrance to the park and figures prominently in the park's promotional material, had been turned off ten months prior to the completion of the pipeline due to drought (Willman n.p.). That Forest Lawn now relies on a "drought-buster" solution to keep its "Fountains" "Splashing" speaks volumes about the environmental tenuousness of maintaining Eaton's pastoral vision in drought-prone Los Angeles. Reminiscent of the "dry water-holes" in Waugh's "barbarous" desert of "barely supportable" heat (7), Forest Lawn's non-functional fountain was, for a time, a dry patch in Eaton's green garden, summoning, much like the "blank patch" on Waugh's mortuary sign at the entrance to Whispering Glades, the realities of a Mediterranean ecology.

And indeed, the dry patch in the history of Forest Lawn's iconic fountain illustrates the importance and ongoing relevance of Waugh's pastoral satire for understanding Forest Lawn's relationship to natural resources. In *The Loved One*, Dennis Barlow's journey "through the Golden Gates" (34) reveals myriad pastoral features – "green parkland" and a "bird-bath and fountain" among them (35) – that reinforce Dr. Wilbur Kenworthy's "Dream" of a "Happy Resting Place of Countless Loved Ones" (34). As I have argued, however, this journey also exposes operative "blank patch[es]" (35) or gaps in Whispering Glades's pastoral "green world," gaps which seriously (or,

satirically) undermine the park's pretensions to control over bio-ecological phenomena (from "fire" to "earthquake" [35] to death). Here, in what has been a critical tour of the Creed and environmental history of Forest Lawn, the ironic pastoral lens provided by *The Loved One* registers and elaborates the gaps between Forest Lawn's radical privileging of pastoral "greenness" and the conditions of scarcity fostered by and within that ideological and practical framework. Through the harsh and revealing light of Waugh's pastoral satire, we can see that Forest Lawn's "green world" betrays the ecologically-precarious mechanisms of industry, and the park's relationship to natural resources emerges as ironic, exploitative, and deeply tenuous.

Epilogue

“Earnest, pious, and quite allergic to irony” (Price, “Thirteen” n.p.) – in a piece about Los Angeles, this is how renowned environmentalist, writer, and scholar Jenny Price characterizes environmental writing in modern America. “I get so frustrated with the slow pace, seriousness, and moral high ground of the environmental movement that I think can be very counterproductive,” Price further explains in a 2014 interview. “Humor is a tool and a window into how to communicate more powerfully” (Waltman n.p.). As Price has noted in a discussion of Raymond Williams’s *The Country and the City* (1973), inherent in environmental discourse is the sentimental alignment of nature – and often pastoral nature – with virtue (Strong and Osborne n.p.; Williams 1, 48, 53, 55, 68). This morally-charged alignment is in many ways hostile to ironic and satiric representation. In both literary and critical material, satire’s darkly humorous assaults can seem in poor taste, and indeed at odds with the solemn goal of “Saving the Planet” (Price, *Stop Saving*). If, in the words of Henri Bergson, laughter requires a “momentary anaesthesia of the heart” (qtd in Greenberg xiii), then it has no place in environmental discourse, which, as a 350.org guide for effective eco-leadership puts it, necessarily appeals to both “the ‘head’ and the ‘heart’ in order to mobilize others to act effectively on behalf of shared values” (“Telling Your Story”).

Price is not alone in lamenting the “counterproductive” and sentimental humorlessness of environmental discourse. Robert Macfarlane questions the capacity of environmental writing to foster ecologically-responsible thought and practice on the basis that it often “preaches to the converted” and that, for skeptics, it can “feel too pious and

gentle in its urgings – the green equivalent of attending Sunday school” (167). In “Sub-Versions of Pastoral: Nature, Satire and the Subject of Ecology” (2010), Chris Coughran, too, argues that mainstream environmental criticism cultivates a “moral high ground” in its discourse, reverently reproducing the conservative ideologies and aesthetic ideals of the American environmental tradition (a tradition which, as Raymond Williams and William Cronon show, is deeply and paradoxically implicated in the ecologically-destructive practices of urban-industrial capitalism). Thus, as Price argues, imagining nature within environmental discourse not only continues to be an “[e]arrest, pious,” and non-ironic project, but also – ironically – a self-subverting one; the discourse’s moralistic impulses can themselves undermine environmental awareness, equity, and sustainability.

Having used *The Loved One* as a window into Forest Lawn, into the ironies and contradictions in its environmental history and pastoral mythology, I propose here that satire is useful for the scholarly field of ecocriticism not only because it provides a literary form conducive to interrogating the moral and ecological valences of pastoral representation, but also because, by promoting *self*-criticism, it holds the *field* accountable for its moralistic impulses. In the words of Jonathan Greenberg, satire “raises still too frequently unasked questions about what might lie behind our good impulses” (xvi).²⁷ That is, it helps us, as environmental critics, to ask, as Price does, “Why do people see environmentalists as humorless and pious?” (qtd in Waltman n.p.) What motivates the earnestness that characterizes environmental discourse, and most importantly, what are the consequences of this critical attitude? By holding environmental discourse accountable for its ideological allegiances, by making it less

²⁷ Here, Greenberg is using Lionel Trilling’s term, “good impulses,” in a discussion of satire’s moral valences.

“allergic to irony” (Price, “Thirteen” n.p.), satire promises, in Coughran’s words, “to make of ecocriticism a more resilient, more fruitful, and ultimately more relevant scholarly discipline” (14).

The narrator in *The Loved One* tells us that, after having overseen the incineration of Aimée Thanatogenos’s corpse at the Happier Hunting Ground, Dennis Barlow casts away “something that had long irked him, his young heart” (127). While I am far from advocating a “heartless” or fully anti-sentimental environmental criticism, I believe that, by casting away its airs and pieties, by “get[ting] the joke” and embracing satire (Empson 211), ecocriticism can more productively interrogate environmentally-dubious representational traditions in a way that implicates critics, authors, and socio-industrial complexes alike.

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