remains a fascinating figure, worthy of serious attention by all who would understand the development of modern liberal society. Those intimately familiar with his corpus, however, may well feel that Capaldi has not captured the fullness of Mill’s project. And the general reader seeking an introduction to Mill may come away with an incomplete if not questionable understanding of Mill’s significance within the liberal tradition.

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How can we place Cousineau’s treatment of the subject of modern fiction? At mid-century, Northrop Frye declared that modern literature’s heroes were usually ironic antiheroes, subjects more powerless and isolated than their audience. Frye’s scheme for classifying the subjects of literature in relation to myth and ritual was the most remarkably successful model of literary study for his generation, but the complex dynamic implied in this greater power of the modern audience ominously gathered around the “scapegoat” received less attention. Cousineau invokes both Kenneth Burke and René Girard to caution us about what often happens when the modern audience sees a scapegoat “ritual” in action: it turns the tables, tendentiously defending the scapegoat by accusing his accusers of scapegoating, by scapegoating the scapegoater.

Cousineau sees that modern fiction almost invariably shows a mythic substratum beneath ordinary reality as it defends an isolated individual against society. He reveals the preeminent subject of modern fiction, persecution of the individual by his society, as the atavistic persistence of scapegoat rituals, now seen from the point of view of society’s victims. Cousineau’s special subject, or “distinctive subgroup,” becomes those fictions that plot the potentially aggressive and perhaps intolerable unbinding of modern ritual: the narrator’s initial unbinding of victims from their (false) accusers by unleashing, in the name of his sympathetic readers, his accusation of false accusing onto these accusers. The narrator’s accusations are further revealed by the reader’s evolving understanding of events independent of an unreliable narrator to be (you guessed it) his own arbitrary, unjustifiable scapegoating.

Cousineau sets his work in relation to two fine books that depend on Girard’s mimetic hypothesis for reading fiction: Michiel Heyn’s Expulsion and the Nineteenth Century Novel (1994) and Andrew Mozina’s Joseph Conrad and the Art of Sacrifice: The Evolution of the Scapegoat Theme in Joseph Conrad’s Fiction (2001). For Heyn and Mozina, the revelation of scapegoat-
ing invariably leads to a disabling and demystifying of scapegoating. Cousineau finds Henry James and Joseph Conrad more aware of the difficulties of cleansing the community altogether of this immemorial practice. Namely, their narrators see the scapegoating of others, but not their own role as a perpetrator of a new round of persecuting the persecutors. Their novels offer more complicated, but limited, demystifications of scapegoating, embedded in the formal events of the novel falsely interpreted by the narrator. As Cousineau says, the “pattern created by these events—which constitutes a form of order not dependent on the expulsion of a sacrificial victim—serves throughout the novels themselves as a silent challenge to the scapegoating discourse of the narrator” (18).

Cousineau does not see modernist fiction depicting an inevitable progression from blind scapegoating to its revelation and renunciation, from blindness to insight, but a delaying or hijacking of its revelation for another round of all against one. Here, Cousineau follows the most recent developments of Girard’s thinking, which have advanced beyond the declaration of the modern period as the time where “victims have rights,” to focus more somberly on the deceptive ease with which we see the scapegoats of others, which makes more difficult, and more necessary, the task of recognizing one’s own scapegoat victims. Can “objective” (29) novelistic patterns themselves propose, as Cousineau argues, the imaginary nonsacrificial order of the community, or is the deposed narrator our new victim? If we have learned to mistrust narrators, can we trust their authors? Can we trust the audience to recognize its own complicity, to break the chain of collective violence?

Ritual Unbound offers fine, balanced readings of five fictional texts of high modernism that, according to Cousineau, attempt to demystify the atavistic persistence of the human practice, since Abraham, of ritually displacing violence onto victims we could care less about. Perhaps Cousineau as author suggests what one form a nonsacrificial social order might look like, in the careful and considerate way that he treats the dangerously large group of commentators already gathered around his subjects: James’s The Turn of the Screw, Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Ford Madox Ford’s The Good Soldier, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, and Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse. Cousineau never proposes himself as the only reader left standing, worth reading. He peacefully establishes good working relations even with critics opposed to his position.

Cousineau reveals “occulted rivalry” in the various narrators of James’s The Turn of the Screw. If, in the frame tale, we can see the mild competitiveness in Douglas’s proffering of his own story as superior to Griffin, his predecessor in ghost-story telling, we are better able to recognize the governance blaming young Miles’s persecution on Miss Jessel and Peter Quint, the servants who preceded her. Against all the previously published interpretations of spiritual and psychological deviancy in The Turn of the Screw, James’s true subject is now seen as the complex moral relation between
narrator and listeners, "the complicitous relationship between rhetorically effective demagogues and their audiences" (37).

For Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Cousineau is especially careful of rival psychologies and critical methodologies in the secondary literature surrounding the story, as he employs the minimal term "outsider" to designate the victim of the social practice that Conrad demystifies. Marlow defends the outsider Kurtz when the company accuses him. In fact, Marlow glorifies Kurtz. Cousineau shrewdly argues that Kurtz is thus twice mystified, for the sake of the accusing and admiring communities surrounding him. But the three consecutive retellings of Kurtz's story (Marlow in Brussels, Marlow on the *Nellie*, and the narrator in the lap of the reader) ultimately demystify the role of the outsider in society and clarify Conrad's purpose of presenting "the activity of the storyteller as a sublimated alternative to the violent, atavistic methods for achieving solidarity to which human communities are otherwise likely to resort" (62–63). As an alternative to the violent solidarities depicted in Conrad's fictions that depend on expelling outsiders, Conrad's creation of Marlow furthers the remarkable goal of an all-inclusive solidarity without exceptions promised in the well-known preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, written a year earlier than *Heart of Darkness*.

The narrator of Ford's *The Good Soldier* gives more incentive to the reader to pass on to the objective truth conveyed by the formal elements of the novel he narrates by admitting that he does not understand what has happened. The narrator would see his hero's death as persecution for breaking the interdictions of society, but he alternately recognizes the declining of those interdictions and the self-destructiveness of desire. Chapter 3, "Borrowed Desire in *The Good Soldier*," gets along nicely with one of Girard's homelier adjectives for mimetic desire as the demystification of the "romantic myth of spontaneous desire" (105) without recourse to Girard's full demonstration in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*. There, Girard argues that because characters wish to be more like someone else they admire, they borrow their desire. Those desirable objects that cannot be shared produce rivalry, but increasingly desire will be fixed to what it cannot have (indicated by rivalry and interdiction), as the only thing worth having.

"Romance or Holocaust," the subtitle of Cousineau's chapter on *The Great Gatsby*, marks the deepest resonance of *Ritual Unbound*, at least for American readers. Bearing on the choice of accepting or rejecting the narrator's version of the "great" Gatsby as victim/hero is the service he has rendered to the romancing of the American literary tradition itself. Cousineau fully gathers the critical controversy over Gatsby to settle it: Nick Carroway lives vicariously through Gatsby, sharing with him a desire for Daisy and a rivalry with Tom. By accusing all of Gatsby's other friends as exploiters, Carroway exonerates himself from exploitation. Gatsby is "great" in Carroway's eyes. Carroway's seemingly inflated or misused
term "holocaust" is appropriate to his interpretation of the sacrifice of Gatsby, but inappropriate to the novelistic truth. The novel demystifies borrowed desire, as well as the relationship, whether celebratory or expiatory, between "a community and a designated individual who has become the privileged object of its attention" (128).

Cousineau ends with Woolf's To the Lighthouse, where the language of sacrifice is offhand yet relevant to modern life. He sees a conflict in Woolf between a recognition that there must be sacrifices to keep distinctions and to keep the peace (Mrs. Ramsay deferring to Mr. Lily chatting up Tansley), but also a resentment against the sacrificial exclusion of women. Cousineau concludes his most difficult assignment by proposing a double ending to the novel. In the boat, Mr. Ramsay passes the control of the tiller blade to his son, an action that perhaps excludes Cam; back on shore, Lily finishes her painting in the approving presence of Mr. Carmichael, gathered into an artistic tradition formerly exclusive of women.

Unlike the earlier novels discussed, Woolf presents no character as narrator whom the reader could demystify by superior interpretations of the formal events of the novel. As readers, we do not demystify others. No character is a stranger, no scapegoating is offered to the audience.

To keep the peace between the children of theory and fiction is difficult as well. When Cousineau terms the presence of ritual in modern life as "atavistic," he is splitting the difference between D. H. Lawrence and Girard, between a return to blood consciousness (164, n.11) and the concept of a mechanism unattached to any idea of tribal migration or collective (un)consciousness, to explain the "return" of ritual and myth in modern life. Similarly, Cousineau begins Ritual Unbound in gratitude to a long-ago fiction seminar, and is clearly affectionate toward each of his authors. The chronological sequence in which he discusses them does not martial up his novels so strictly that we are clearly enjoined to declare that Woolf is further along than Conrad, but neither are we certain if awareness of collective violence is advancing in history, or (at best) running in place.

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NOTE

1. An earlier version of the Conrad chapter appeared in Conradiana, achieving nearly all of the goals of Ritual Unbound without mentioning Girard, relying solely on a common understanding of the misfortunes that outsiders suffer at the hands of the group, and never using the provocative but indispensable term for this book: "scapegoat." The earlier essay prudently recognizes that in a crowd of Conradians, to utter "scapegoat" is to be identified with the repudiated myth-ritual school that has "ruined the district," and to risk being scapegoated for even mentioning scapegoats.