The title of Ashley C. Barnes's new study both evokes and revises the long history of literary scholarship in the United States as well as on literature from the United States. *Love and Depth in the American Novel* differs by just one letter from Leslie Fiedler's 1960 study *Love and Death in the American Novel*, but Barnes's work on reading, sentiment, and communion in the American novel is much more sweeping in its revision of earlier models than the change of a single vowel to a consonant would suggest. Since the 1980s, reading American literature for its affective impact has become a crucial part of the recovery of non-canonical texts and the reinvention of canonical texts (much as it was for Fiedler in the 1950s and 1960s), but Barnes pursues a profound inquiry into the underlying patterns of affect in a wide range of American writers. In its ambition to revisit foundational concepts in American literary studies, and indeed in the theory and practice of reading itself, this inquiry has few peers over the past thirty years.

Central to this inquiry is the connection between affect and the development of religious cultures in the United States. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Barnes argues, American fiction oscillated between two religious poles: the dominant Protestant culture of Bible reading as the interpretation of revelation, and a stigmatized Catholic model of public communion. Respectively and roughly, the Catholic and Protestant poles that Barnes finds shaping US literary history correspond to the two key terms in her Fiedleresque title: love and depth.

For purposes of the polarity she describes, Barnes's definition of Protestantism is both Calvinist and orthodox. Drawing heavily on the connection between neo-Orthodox theology and New Critical literary methodologies, she finds that reading practices among nineteenth-century elites in the United States were driven by a mainstream and broadly conservative Calvinism. In Barnes's reading of US Protestantism, love is inextricably connected to depth: she describes a "Protestant ethic of deep love as unmediated textual encounter" (48). As Barnes points out, this devotion to the text of the Bible can provide a model for the devotion that is imagined for good readers of literary texts. Since the treasures of truly important literature will not be universally accessible, the reading of such literature can seem an act of both religious and interpersonal devotion.

Barnes's version of Catholicism in the study is a bit more slippery. Rather than foregrounding either Catholic immigrants or Catholic converts in the nineteenth-century United States, she highlights what nineteenth-century US Protestants imagined Catholicism to be. As a result, she considers Catholic theology and practice largely in terms of how they operate in the nineteenth-century Protestant mind: as loci for both demonization and desire. Broadly, popular religion, shared contemplation of aesthetic objects, and visual culture all function as a supplement to Protestant modes of reading: a supplement that Protestants regarded with both fear (associated with idolatry and priestcraft) and a wistful sort of desire.

According to Barnes, the key to the connection between conservative Protestant Bible reading and literary criticism, or Calvinist-inflected reading practices, is "withheld revelation." Conventionally, Melville, Hawthorne, and James have been seen as difficult authors who offer greater depths of meaning to readers capable of higher than normal devotion to a text. Melville himself suggested that Hawthorne's work evades interpretation by expressing "the blackness of darkness" (qtd. 88). At the same time, writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Elizabeth Stoddard have more often been thought to represent broad cultural currents: respectively sentimental antislavery, spiritualism, and marriage in a time of transition. But in a sophisticated version of a move that has become common since Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* (1986), Barnes undoes these conventional oppositions between accessible / sentimental and difficult/ romantic writing in the chapters that constitute the core of her book.

In her reading of *Billy Budd* in the introduction, Barnes uses Ann Douglas and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to show that the US literary canon was shaped by parallel revulsions against Catholicism and sentimentalism. Elegantly re-shaping links that have been previously forged between theology and literary practice, Barnes suggests that the privileging of solitary readings over the sentimentality of communal reading originates from anti-Catholic polemic. If Douglas exemplifies the anti-sentimental thrust of American literary studies, Sedgwick reminds us that sentiment is crucial to Melville's hypercanonical novella, particularly if we take it seriously as a story about homophobia at a time when modern understandings of sexuality were taking shape.
While sensitively showing how the act of reading itself plays out between Eva and Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Barnes finds a link between Stowe's sympathy for the visual arts and her sympathy for Catholicism. The latter would be equally evident in Stowe's later novel, *The Minister's Wooing* (1867), which Barnes finds epitomized by its Catholic character Virginie, with her rosary and accompanying devotions. Some reference to *The Minister's Wooing* could also have enhanced Barnes's reading of Phelps's *The Gates Ajar* (1868), the spiritualist classic Barnes pairs with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Just as Barnes emphasizes the interpersonal aspects of Bible reading in *The Gates Ajar*, Stowe's obsession with affect furnishes a necessary revision to theoohy in *The Minister's Wooing*, which can reasonably be considered a book-length brief for communion in response to the strenuousness of Stowe's Calvinist forebears.

Having treated the most canonical novels of Stowe and Phelps, Barnes examines lesser-known fiction by Hawthorne and Melville. Melville is an especially interesting case study. Though considered an anti-sentimentalist as well as a profoundly religious writer who vehemently criticized religious belief, he has also been judged a sentimentalist, especially following Sedgwick and the efflorescence of interest in his interactions with women's writing in studies by critics such as Wyn Kelley and Elizabeth Schultz.

According to Barnes, Melville alternately espoused two kinds of reading. While "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850), his essay on *Mosses from the Old Manse* (1846), exemplifies Protestant depth, his most famous letter to Hawthorne deploys a simile based on the loving communion of the Eucharist: "I feel," he writes, "that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces" (qtd. 121). So even though Melville serves as a defining figure for conservative Protestant models of depth in reading, Barnes recognizes that he also articulates an eloquent impulse toward more communal modes of interpretation.

Likewise, Barnes argues, *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *Pierre* (also 1852) both recognize the possibilities of sentiment and communion, of "the possibility of the reader and the author looking together at the spectacle of the novel itself" (90). In reading *Pierre* as in reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Barnes stresses the role of the visual arts and Protestant discomfort with Catholic visuality. A similar conflict drives *The Blithedale Romance*, where Hawthorne is said to create a tension between Miles Coverdale as the avatar of literary depth and Zenobia as a female artist of the visual. According to Barnes, Coverdale's "depth drive" (110)--his impulse toward Protestant modes of reading--leads him to miss out on the benefits of interpersonal communion.

Turning to Melville's critique of depth in *Pierre*, one of his stranger novels, Barnes accentuates the role played by the communal viewing of objects from the visual arts. To shed light on Pierre and Isabel's shared experience of looking at the elder Glendenning's portrait, she examines Gilbert Stuart's portraits of George Washington and explains how they defined US nationalism in the early years of the republic. Barnes does not argue that either Hawthorne or Melville made an unqualified case for communion over depth in the reading of literature. But according to Barnes, both of them criticized the "overvaluing of revelation" while endorsing "a parallel looking-at that maintains real intimacy because it does not stop at final revelation" (122).

In scrutinizing Elizabeth Stoddard's *The Morgesons* (1862) and Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* (1904), Barnes finds that both of them capture the relationship between communion and commercialized material objects. One of the most fascinating portions of the study is Barnes's comparison of consumer culture in the novels of James and Stoddard to the widespread interest in paper doll houses in late nineteenth-century US culture. Like paper doll houses, she shows, both *The Morgesons* and *The Golden Bowl* enabled communal acts of viewing comparable to those suggested by Melville and Hawthorne. In making this point, Barnes insightfully examines the visual and material presence of the doll houses themselves in relation to the novels she considers here.

By organizing her study around the poles of reading and communion, love and depth, Barnes juxtaposes her chosen texts in ways that differ from usual methods of categorization and cut across conventional literary periods. Also, by reframing her argument in the last chapter as an independent intervention into theoretical debates between literary ethicists and New Historists, she shows how the historicist and ethicist impulses can inform each other rather than clashing. At times, the division of nineteenth-century American literature between Catholic communion and Protestant revelation seems overly schematic, for insider and outsider status in the literary cultures of the United States do not always map onto the contrast she defines between the Protestant depth of Bible reading and the Catholic love of communion and visuality. Barnes herself, however, carefully explains that Catholic communalism and sentimental sympathy do not always overlap. Wisely declining to posit an absolute dichotomy between depth and communion, she builds her argument around careful readings of the textual, the visual, and the material that serve in each case to deepen our understanding (perhaps even our love) of the texts about which she writes.

In boldly adopting a title that plainly echoes that of a foundational study of American literature, Barnes took a risk. But the risk feels justified. Impressively revising nineteenth and early twentieth century US literary history, Barnes illuminates a mode of reading that allows us to encounter both love (figured as interpersonal communion) and depth (figured as solitary and enraptured attention to a challenging text) in the works we contemplate with her.

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