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OPENING THE WINDOW TO EDWARD WHITTEMORE:

SYSTEMS THAT GOVERN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

by

JOSEPH L. WINLAND

Under the Direction of Thomas McHaney

ABSTRACT

Edward Whittemore (1933-1995) is a now almost unknown American writer. This project seeks to bring Edward Whittemore to light. Though he has a simple voice and a subtle but vast knowledge of history, he writes with a fantastic imagination and dramatizes a timely but tragic message. In "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry*, Whittemore explores the complex relationship between Chaos and Order through the extravagant lives of his major characters, Plantagenet Strongbow and Skanderbeg Wallenstein. Through a biography of Whittemore's life and a close analysis of Strongbow's and Wallenstein's relationship, I will highlight Whittemore's depth as an author and thinker, make evident his availability to literary analysis and critical theory, and argue the presence of Whittemore's own ideology regarding the systems that govern human experience.

INDEX WORDS: Edward Whittemore, *Sinai Tapestry*, Philosophy, American novel

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INTRODUCTION: WHY WHITTEMORE?

Three components comprise this research initiative: critical, biographical, and analytical. The first component, which I intend to complete partially within this introduction, will serve two purposes. First, I will highlight the highs and lows of critical commentary on the novels of Edward Whittemore (1933-1955); he published five[1] between 1974 and 1987. Second, I will evaluate the critical reaction to the first volume of his Jerusalem Quartet, *Sinai Tapestry* from the time of its original publication in 1974 until the present. The biographical component of this essay will follow, and even though secrecy shrouds much of Whittemore's life, I will nevertheless establish moments from Whittemore's undergraduate tenure at Yale, especially his role with the *Yale Daily News*, as precursors to the ideas he would more subtly and figuratively express in his novels. Finally, I will piece together Whittemore's nomadic thirty-five years after his graduation as they seem to be reflected in his fictions. These biographical elements suggest some connections between Whittemore's life, both of his major characters, and the ideology he embeds in *Sinai Tapestry*. The major portion of my discussion will be a thorough exploration of the achievement of the first installment of his Jerusalem Quartet, *Sinai Tapestry*, a philosophical allegory that portrays a chaotic world where social, political, and religious systems trump in treachery even those modern theorists—Darwin, Marx, Freud—who breathe into them meaning and necessity. In this process, I hope that I consequently highlight Whittemore's extensive historical, theoretical, intertextual, and literary prowess.

Scholarship says very little about Edward Whittemore. Neither his name nor his works appear frequently or purposefully in scholarly publications. *New York Times Book Review* (April) and *Time* Magazine (June) reviewed Whittemore's first book, *Quin's Shanghai Circus*, in

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[1] In order of publication: *Quin's Shanghai Circus* (1974), *Sinai Tapestry* (1977), *Jerusalem Poker* (1978), *Nile Shadows* (1983), *Jericho Mosaic* (1987).

1974. The clear contrast in commentary between the two reviews seems to set the pattern for the subsequent reception of Whittemore's novels. Jerome Charyn, of *New York Times Book Review*, writes, "the chief virtue of the book is its genuine ability to mythologize our recent past, to turn history into a mode of fiction and reveal to us, as the Shanghai circus reveals to Quin, the outlines of a murderous world—but with action rather than diatribe, and with a pure love of detail" (401). On the other hand, J.S., in *Time*, uses phrases like "elephantine farce" and "without…touching ground or making the slightest sense" and regards the author as an "engaging long-distance liar": "his scheme for persuading literature to lurch forward is simply to introduce another freakish impossibility whenever reason's vague outline is sighted through the fog...What he caricatures with much admiration is the stupefying energy with which men pursue their baffling manias" (J.S.). While one critic lauds Whittemore's ability to blur the line between reality and non-reality—to speak allegorically with grand characters, illusory histories, and profound events in a world suffering from violence and decay—the other reduces the author to a storyteller and liar. A recap of other commentaries and reviews of the author's later work reveals a similarly sharp division among those who visit Whittemore's world.

Whittemore's second effort, *Sinai Tapestry*, appeared in 1977 to similarly mixed reviews. Anthony Heilbut of *The Nation* calls Whittemore a "deceptively lucid stylist" and celebrates "his ambition…to combine history and story…that…achieves the solidity of history itself" (216). In perhaps the most used tidbit on Whittemore, Heilbut places him among his now more celebrated contemporaries:

> Were his syntax as cluttered as Pynchon's or as conspicuously grand as Nabokov's or Fuentes's, his virtually ignored recent novel might have received the attention it deserves, for his imagination of present and alternative worlds is

> comparable to theirs...And to signal his attempt, if not his achievement, Whittemore's last paragraphs display the synoptic distance of a critic or historian. (216).

Heilbut, like Charyn of *New York Times* on the first novel, esteems Whittemore's construction of an imaginary world and recognizes that his ideology is similar to that of earlier fabulists. Whittemore, he comprehends, relies on events, or series of events, conveyed plainly but in magnificent detail to reveal his ideology, rather than employing lofty or confused rhetoric for the reader to 'unpack.' Erik Korn, of England's *Times Literary Supplement*, however, dryly quips, "it should be possible to come up with more interesting conclusions than that the world is a rum old place" (337). Korn's piece touts his own literary prowess as much as it tackles any tangible aspects of Whittemore's novel. Using vague notions such as "ubiquitous conspiracies," "theological speculation," "physical eccentricities," and "figs and fico" (337), Korn likens Whittemore to authors such as Pynchon, Borges, Durrell, and even the author of the popular sea-faring novels, Patrick O'Brien, but his tone throughout characterizes Whittemore as a copy cat who fails at being a comparable member of the above elite.

On the heels of mixed reviews for *Sinai Tapestry* came equally mixed reviews for the second installment of the Jerusalem Quartet: *Jerusalem Poker*. Jim Hougan, in a 1978 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, praises *Jerusalem Poker* not only as a literary success on its own, but also because the novel "amplifies its predecessor" (68). He goes on to write, "*Sinai Tapestry*, then, was an overture…[The novel] is redeemed and made whole by [*Jerusalem Poker*]" (68). Finally, like two of the critics before him, Hougan notes that Whittemore "does something more difficult than intellectual vaudeville. He assassinates the banal, revealing the authentic current of madness that courses through human affairs" (69). Contrarily, science fiction author Thomas Disch in his

1978 *Times Literary Supplement* review of *Jerusalem Poker* composes the most scathing piece on Whittemore to date. After an introduction of rhetorical questions testing the reader's literary acumen, Disch paints Whittemore as a wart on Pynchon's sole. He writes disparagingly that "Whittemore's model is Pynchon, but in a Reader's Digest Condensed Book version with the hard words pruned away, the syntax simplified, and the prevailing ache of misanthropy magically transformed to woozy, bromidic bonhomie as of an ancient stand-up comic making a charity appeal" (965). Disch even spends time quoting and countering Hougan's positive *Harper's Magazine* review.

Commentary on Whittemore's first three novels defines the atmosphere in which critics review the final two novels of the Jerusalem Quartet. *Nile Shadows* and *Jericho Mosaic* receive contradictory criticism, too. In a 1987 issue of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, author Jay Neugeboren, in another notable attempt to capture Whittemore's appeal, proclaims:

> In abundant detail and with the most unerring eye, and while he describes the complexities of geopolitical events, Whittemore calls our attention again and again, to the mysterious workings of chance and fate as they are evidenced in the strange and often beautifully surprising motions of individual souls and lives…Whittemore has his own idiosyncratic vision, one that enables us to see to the human center of history in a thoroughly original way. (A Spy Saga)

While Neugeboren captures the intellectual depth of Whittemore's fiction, Alan Krauss, in a 1987 review of *Jericho Mosaic* for *UPI Arts and Entertainment*, praises the depth of Whittemore's historical and religious awareness; he commends Whittemore's familiarity with the religious and political history of his setting. He writes, "Whittemore speaks with authority not only of the [Middle East's] changing geography, both spiritual and physical, but of its many

religions as well" (Book Reviews). However, Keith McCoy, in a 1982 issue of *Library Journal*, suggests that *Nile Shadows* "sinks deeper into the haze that tainted the first two installments" and complains that the novel is "too philosophical and wordy" (2270). *Jericho Mosaic*, too, earned an unfavorable review from *Library Journal*. In a 1987 review, Rochelle Ratnor bemoans "too many characters even if they are well drawn" (95). She goes on to charge that "at times their intertwined relationships seem too pat even for espionage novels." This might apply only if Whittemore was an espionage writer.

After these initial, uneven reviews, the last in 1987 after the publication of *Jericho Mosaic*, Whittemore's five novels slipped into obscurity until 1995, the year of the author's death, when a small group of not well-known authors and inspired critics banded together to kindle enough interest to warrant a second publication in 2002 of all five novels. In Chapter One, then, I will analyze criticisms and reviews regarding Whittemore's novels, particularly *Sinai Tapestry*, since Whittemore's death, comment on his current status in the contemporary American canon, and join those critics who defend Whittemore's authorship and the depth of Whittemore's work.

In Chapter Two, I will synthesize and present the limited information currently published on Whittemore's veiled life, primarily using Tom Wallace's[2] "Foreword" to the Old Earth Books publication of *Sinai Tapestry*. Furthermore, I will present hitherto unpublished information regarding Whittemore's New England ancestry, details of his tenure at Yale and his itinerant life thereafter, and draw connections between his own experiences and those of the characters in his novels.

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[2] Tom Wallace served as editor for the Old Earth Books publication of *Quin's Shanghai Circus*, *Sinai Tapestry*, and *Jerusalem Poker*. He is also a fellow Yale alumnus and classmate of Whittemore.

In Chapter Three and Chapter Four, I will present a close literary analysis of *Sinai Tapestry* in which I attempt to deconstruct Whittemore's creation of a world where order rules despite chaos' rule over it. I will dissect the lives of two heroes, Plantagenet Strongbow and Skanderbeg Wallenstein, featured in Whittemore's second novel, one a symbol of order and the other a symbol of chaos.

In Chapter Five, I will present my conclusions regarding the significance of *Sinai Tapestry* as the introductory text of the Jerusalem Quartet, argue that the ideology at the heart of *Sinai Tapestry* indeed parallels Whittemore's own ideology with regard to human experience, and highlight those nuances of *Sinai Tapestry* that further reflect the artfulness of Whittemore's craft.

CHAPTER ONE: RECENT CRITICISM AND *SINAI TAPESTRY*

Between April, 2002 and June, 2003, online sources, magazines, journals, and newspapers published eleven articles dealing with Whittemore's novels; four appear as an introduction, foreword, or afterword to the Old Earth Books publications, one reviews only the first novel, *Quin's Shanghai Circus*, and six not only echo the praises bestowed by Whittemore's original critics from the late 1970s through the mid 1980s but also draw conclusions, albeit only with a wave of the hand, regarding the overall depth, scope, and purpose of the author's vision. Two distinct changes and one significant parallel mark this critical return to Whittemore's oeuvre occasioned by his death in 1995. Reviews are almost entirely positive, but the publications in which they appear are marginal and the attempt to revive interest in him had little effect, despite the fact that Gary Wolfe in a 2003 *Locus Magazine* review calls the re-publication by Old Earth Books "by far their most significant rediscovery and their most important publishing achievement to date" (Review). Prior to and after the re-publication of Whittemore's novels, however, some articles popped up that not only laud Whittemore as an author but, for the first time, introduce literary topics suitable for further research and analysis. Before I examine this cluster of articles, I want to first explore three articles that were apparently occasioned by his death in 1995.

Two articles published in 1995, Mitch Pilcer's "Obscure Character" and Jeff VanderMeer's "In Pursuit of Imagination—An Overview of Nine Elusive Books,"[3] unanimously shower Whittemore with accolades. Pilcer, in his *The Jerusalem Post* review, celebrates Whittemore's "complex rewriting of local myths, combined with obscure facts and historical figures" (Obscure Character). "The stories," Pilcer remarks, "are convenient vehicles for

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[3] Besides Whittemore's Jerusalem Quartet, VanderMeer discusses *The City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room*, which comprise Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, *The Passion of New Eve* by Angela Carter, and *And the Ass Saw the Angel* by Nick Cave.

Whittemore's vision": "nothing is what it seems to be and the truth lies somewhere between the fantasy and the hard facts" (Obscure Character). Though complimentary, this brief overview is a vague, albeit concise statement which merely asserts the complexity of the author's craft and content. VanderMeer's article is equally celebratory; he asserts, "the four books which make up The Jerusalem Quartet are among the richest and most profound in imaginative literature" (In Pursuit). He also draws on the popular Pynchon comparison, yet his assessment favors Whittemore. The Jerusalem Quartet, according to VanderMeer, "weav[es] together different times and places for a thematic resonance that far exceeds anything Thomas Pynchon did in his excellent book *V*" (In Pursuit). Finally, VanderMeer expresses hope that Whittemore's literary brilliance will bring him the prestige he deserves; VanderMeer concludes, "such a superlative body of work cannot be overlooked forever" (In Pursuit). VanderMeer was, in a sense, right. Seven years later the re-publication of Whittemore's novels brought Whittemore's name, albeit briefly, back into the literary spotlight. Between 1995 and 2002, however, apparently only New York's *Village Voice Literary Supplement* published another positive review of Whittemore's novels.

Eric Davis, in his 2000 article "The Vagabonds," applauds two aspects of the Jerusalem Quartet: that the novels are "rich with homegrown theology" and that they represent "serious meditations on history" (Vagabonds). He also decries that they are riddled with seemingly "madcap tales about outlandish characters" (Vagabonds). Davis comments passively on "archetypal patterns" in the novels and the "dream of a genuinely multicultural Palestine," but also writes about "invariably crippled" characters who "wrestle fitfully with meaninglessness, time, and the grim realities of war" (Vagabonds). He offers no assessment of how these concepts function in the novels. Instead, he turns his attention to Whittemore's style; Davis focuses on

"synchronicities and motifs" (Vagabonds), as well as comparisons to other notable authors. For example, in Whittemore's and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novels, according to Davis, "characters return in name and shape through their progeny, while people, events, and certain phrases are regularly [re]introduced" (Vagabonds). This authorial technique, says Davis, "lend[s] the text the exotic, narrative voice of *The Arabian Nights*" (Vagabonds). Finally, Davis draws on several other familiar names: "as heady as Pynchon, as droll as Vonnegut, and as entertaining as Lawrence of Arabia" (Vagabonds). This would seem to represent high praise, yet Davis only skims the surface of Whittemore's world and his brief piece seems to have had little impact on Whittemore's stature. While the three articles above show Whittemore creeping slowly back into literary respectability, in 2002 and 2003 a flurry of somewhat more substantial articles—as far as Whittemore coverage goes—attempt finally to plant Whittemore's name in the front yard of the contemporary American canon.

Two critics, Rick Kleffel in an April 2002 "The Agony Column" at Bookotron.com and Jeff VanderMeer in a November 2002 review of the Jerusalem Quartet for *Locus Online*, laud Whittemore's literary achievement using the same formula. Both reiterate past approvals but also introduce a topic for further investigation, specifically how one should classify Whittemore's work as a contemporary genre. Kleffel and VanderMeer highlight Whittemore's craft, while echoing the passive overall sentiments of prior critics. For instance, Kleffel notes, as critics have done before, the similarities between Whittemore and Kurt Vonnegut, namely their sense of humor within apocalyptic fiction. "Both writers," Kleffel writes, "use a similar linguistic structure to tickle the reader just often enough, ensuring that no one waits too long before hoisting another drink" (Midday in Jerusalem). Kleffel celebrates Whittemore's creation of "an intricate web of myths within myths" and the presentation of "evocative locations and

memorable details that pin down specific events on a vast Middle Eastern canvas" (Midday in Jerusalem). Meanwhile, like critics before, VanderMeer recognizes Whittemore's ambition, which is "to do nothing less than map a secret history of the world" (Edward Whittemore's). He notes potential parallels between the experiences of the fictional characters and Whittemore's own exotic experiences as an agent of the CIA in the Middle East and an expatriate in Jerusalem; he also sees the archetypal nature of those characters. VanderMeer writes, "the character Stern Strongbow, a visionary and sometimes spy, who inhabits all of the Jerusalem Quartet in some guise, displays complexities to his character that only someone with Whittemore's background could have rendered properly" (Edward Whittemore's). While some critics unfairly situate Whittemore's writing in the fields of science fiction or fantasy, both Kleffel and VanderMeer, like those early reviewers who mentioned Borges or Nabokov, even more directly connect Whittemore's novels to a contemporary genre. Kleffel claims that Whittemore's novels "[work] more the 'magic realism' side of fantasy"; he notes that Whittemore "never elaborat[es] a strict set of rules for supernatural elements, instead [he greets] them as if they're just part of the everyday lives of some rather eccentric people" (Midday in Jerusalem), a quality placing him alongside Gabriel Garcia Marquez. VanderMeer, on the other hand, admits that the author's imaginative but lucid style is almost unclassifiable, so he places Whittemore into a literary genre all his own: "I have begun to feel that the idea of cross-genre fiction—unclassifiable and yet with a clearly fabulist, nonrealistic bent—has become a concrete entity, expressed in physical form in a number of truly wonderful works" (Edward Whittemore's). He goes on to argue that Whittemore was writing in this cross-genre "a generation or two earlier" than authors generally placed in such a category, and judges that Whittemore "remains one of the best" among them (Edward Whittemore's).

After the re-publication of all five of Whittemore's novels by Old Earth Books in November, 2002, three significant articles appear in the next seven months that transcend the seemingly customary, and also vague, celebrations of Whittemore's bizarre archetypal characters, his historical but mythological plots, and his acute but hallucinogenic imagination. Perhaps Jeff Topham, in a 2003 review of *Quin's Shanghai Circus*, best captures such an assessment of Edward Whittemore's profundity as author:

> His novels are intricate, sprawling and eccentric, elaborately imagined and finely crafted. They are funny, moving and profound, by turns comical and anguished. They are prolonged meditations on history and the demands the past makes upon the present, but they are also marvelous entertainments sprung from a generous and singular imagination. There are echoes, here and there, of writers as diverse as Thomas Pynchon or Tom Robbins, but Whittemore's voice and themes are fiercely, exuberantly, his own. (Topham)

Three other reviewers, Paul Di Filippo, Anne Sydenham, and David Cozy, go much farther to introduce topics worthy of further literary research and scholarly exploration, including discussions of authorial intent and original thinking.

In a December, 2002 article for *Washington Post Book World*, Paul Di Filippo surpasses the usual praise regarding Whittemore's "tangled lineages," "intricate plots," and the logic "humans employ to make sense of creation," and instead he cites the thematic aspects of Whittemore's novels that "inspire strong frissons and catharsis" (A Secret History). Di Filippo isolates several of the "grand themes" that Whittemore either purposefully or subconsciously embeds in the frame of his Jerusalem Quartet. These themes include, according to Di Filippo, "the mutability of identity, the tragicomic nature of life, the way pretense becomes reality, the

war between faith and materialism, the nature of failure and redemption, [and] the struggle either to fulfill or overcome one's heritage" (A Secret History). Yet despite taking the next giant step suggesting serious analysis of Whittemore's novels by identifying topics for further investigation, Di Filippo does not open the investigation himself in what is, after all, only a brief review.

Anne Sydenham, in a January, 2003 review for *New York Review of Science Fiction* republished on the *Fantastic Metropolis* website, cites the literary nuances that increase the depth of Whittemore's novels. While much of her article focuses on general plot summary and such afore-mentioned qualities of Whittemore's writing as "complex relationships," "astonishing and extremely improbable happenings," and "extraordinary, almost mythic" characters (Dreaming), Sydenham also identifies a number of symbols worthy of investigation in *Sinai Tapestry* alone but that also deserve critical attention in conjunction with the entire Quartet. Besides the Sinai Bible—easily the most important symbol in the novels—she also notes such resonant recurring objects as Strongbow's magnifying glass, his portable bronze sundial, and Haj Harun's giant stone scarab (Dreaming). "These objects," Sydenham writes, "resonate with a profound, haunting significance, giving an impression of the continuance of time" (Dreaming) and the recurrence of similar events. Like Di Filippo's piece, however, Sydenham's brief survey of symbols in *Sinai Tapestry* lacks critical elaboration. Each writer simply dangles these themes and symbols before readers without development. Di Filippo's introduction of themes and Sydenham's brief survey of symbols tease readers concerning the literary depth of Whittemore's novels, laying out bait that subsequent readers—if any critics were among them—did not take up in print. The third commentator, David Cozy, taunts, perhaps even tortures the readers of his piece on Whittemore in a prestigious literary monthly.

In his June, 2003 *Harper's Magazine* article "The Maximalist: Rediscovering Edward Whittemore's Epic Invention," author and critic David Cozy touches on several intriguing concepts, introducing a few of the most profound and valuable observations yet made in print concerning Whittemore's novels. As is the case with Filippo and Sydenham, however, Cozy's essay never ventures beyond observations. In fact, Cozy's captivating title, identifying Whittemore as "The Maximalist," intrigues, but disappoints. After conveying his own frustration concerning Whittemore's lack of popular or critical recognition, Cozy dives into the substance of his piece by stating, "[Whittemore] is the antithesis of minimalist" (81), yet his hypothesis is one-sided, and thus incomplete. Indeed Whittemore's characters, plots, and settings are grandiose, larger-than-life creations, but the prosaic style with which the author of the Sinai Quartet conveys these imposing elements is strategically simple. A number of critics cited earlier, in fact, have even used the simplicity of Whittemore's style[4] as a marker against the quality of his authorship. That Whittemore induces his reader to believe in what Cozy calls his maximalist characters, plots, and landscapes depends entirely on the simplicity of the prose with which he creates them. Using maximalist prose to hatch maximalist people, stories, and places would rob Whittemore's novels of their crucial historical resonance. Within his incomplete evaluation of Whittemore as maximalist, thus, Cozy passively, perhaps accidentally, nonetheless establishes a few additional points of interest, highlighting Whittemore's anti-Victorian characters and ideology, the significance of World War I as catalyst for the decay of values and heroism in the modern world, the impossibility and futility of utopian dreams; and the

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[4] Stanley Trachtenberg, in a 2004 article for *Times Literary Supplement* called "Defenders of Jerusalem," celebrates Whittemore's minimalist prosaic style. He asserts, "though the often farcical stories threaten to fragment the narrative, Whittemore holds it all together…using techniques associated with oral tradition—rehearsed incident, linked genealogies, totemic objects…and characters who reappear from book to book" (21).

importance of Strongbowism, the ideology presented in the fictional thirty-three volume *Levantine Sex* attributed to Whittemore's greatest literary hero, Plantagenet Strongbow.

Strongbowism is the system through which Plantagenet Strongbow defines and understands human experience, but, as I intend to argue in Chapters Three, Four, and Five of this discourse, Strongbowism is also the system through which Edward Whittemore himself defines and employs to understand human experience. But calling Strongbowism an ideology is unfair; one might argue that Strongbowism is an anti-ideology—since chaos is at its core. Others, however, might argue in fact that Strongbowism is indeed a system: yet it is a system that claims that the world lacks a system that is an intellectual construct through which we can justify, predict, or control human affairs. But before presenting my argument for chaos functioning as the all-pervading force in human experience in Whittemore's world, I will first discuss what we can know about the author in order to paint a clearer picture of the evolution of Whittemore's literary vision.

CHAPTER TWO: A SPY'S SECRETS

Born on May 26, 1933, in Manchester, New Hampshire, Edward Payson Whittemore bore a lineage entrenched deeply in New England history. His first and middle name honors his great-great-grandfather, the congregational minister, Edward Payson[5] (1783-1827), and his choice to become an author mirrors the career of his great-grandmother, American author Elizabeth Payson Prentiss (1818-1878), who published over ten children's books during a twenty-five year span. Prentiss "did not gain literary acclaim" during or after her career, but her works nevertheless "were a significant contribution to the 'higher life' movement of [her] day" (novelguide.com). The Prentiss ancestry also ties Whittemore to two significant locations in Whittemore's life. First, Prentiss was born in Portland, Me., which is where Whittemore spent much of his childhood, adolescence, and teenage years (novelguide.com); in fact, Whittemore's high school, Deering High School, is located there. Second, Prentiss retired and passed away at a home that she and her husband, Reverend George Lewis Prentiss,[6] established in Dorset, Vt. This rural retreat became something of a landmark for the Prentiss-Whittemore clan, and Edward Whittemore would one day retire there himself in order to work on his final, unpublished novel. Whittemore's parents, John Cambridge Whittemore and Elizabeth Payson Prentiss Whittemore, had five children: Laurence, John, Arianna, Charlotte, and Edward (Saxon). While little information can be found regarding John, Arianna, and Charlotte, a closer examination of the life of his older sibling, Laurence, highlights the expectations that those close to Whittemore most likely had for him and helps establish Whittemore's defiance of those expectations.

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[5] Payson graduated from Harvard in 1803 (Death List). Thus, Payson, given his dedication to religious matters, would undoubtedly and vehemently disapprove of Whittemore's novels, and given his alma mater, might disapprove of his choice to attend Yale University.

[6] George Lewis Prentiss graduated from Bowdoin College in 1835 (Death List of a Day), a school that graduated American authors Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the location at which Harriet Beecher Stowe began writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Macul). While these tidbits seem quite insignificant, they are nevertheless facts that Whittemore himself might appreciate, given his interest in the inexplicable coincidences of our lives.

Laurence F. Whittemore succeeded in the way that one expects a privileged ivy leaguer from an affluent New England family to succeed. His *New York Times* obituary captures his accomplishments.[7] He graduated from Yale in the spring of 1951, and following graduation, Laurence enrolled in Harvard Business School, finishing his M.B.A. in 1953. Then, following the completion of his advanced degree, Laurence enlisted in the U.S. Navy only a couple of months before the Korean War would end, serving from 1953-1956 as an Intelligence Officer, a member of the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command in the Western Pacific, and finally as a Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve. However, at the end of his naval stint, Laurence re-assimilated smoothly and successfully into New England culture, finding immediate employment in 1956 with Brown Brothers Harriman & Co (BBH), an investment position that would maximize the skills he acquired from Yale and Harvard. During a fifty-one year career with BBH, Laurence served as a supervisor for a number of the firm's national offices, as well as the Institutional Investment and Equity Trading Departments. He became a General Partner in 1974. In addition to his success as an investment banker, Laurence was an active member on a number of other committees and boards, including a Life Member of the Art Institute of Chicago, a member of AI of C's Committee on Oriental Art, a member of the National Committee on U.S.–China Relations, and a member of the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations, a board member of Manhattan Life Insurance and Albany Insurance Company. Finally, he was a Trustee of Sarah Lawrence College in New York and the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies. Despite his many involvements, Laurence also succeeded as a family man. He remained married

[7] All information regarding Laurence Whittemore's background is paraphrased from his *New York Times* obituary.

to Sarah Arnold Whittemore for forty-nine years, leaving behind four daughters[8] and four grandchildren. So, when Edward Whittemore, Laurence's younger brother by four years, joined Yale's prestigious student body in 1951, just a couple of months after Laurence's departure, he undoubtedly did so expecting to flourish, and in some ways, Edward followed the trail that his brother blazed for him.

Whittemore was indeed successful at Yale; his entry in the 1955 *Yale Banner* verifies his accolades. Whittemore's yearbook reveals his membership in Jonathan Edwards College, his role as Chairman in 1954 and 1955, his association with Pundits, Zeta Psi, Aurelian, Charities Drive, and the Scroll and Key secret society. Furthermore, the yearbook reveals that he was an English Major (*Yale Banner*).[9] However, most importantly, the *Yale Banner* introduces Whittemore's role with *Yale Daily News*.

By all accounts, Whittemore's time with *Yale Daily News* was priceless to him. At a time when, according to fellow 1955 *News*man and Holt, Rinehart, and Winston editor Tom Wallace, "*News* chairmen and managing editors were as popular as football team captains" (*Poker* xv), Whittemore seemed a standout Yale student "on the journalistic fast-track somewhere in the *Time-Life* empire founded by an earlier *News* worthy, Henry Luce" (*Poker* xvi). Whittemore's career with the *News* began during the second semester of his freshman year, spring of 1952, and in an issue in which Whittemore wrote a cover-page story titled, "Fun, Frolic Planned by

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[8] Arianna Miceli, the oldest of Laurence's four daughters, contributed a photo of Edward Whittemore to the 2002 Old Earth Books publication of *Jericho Mosaic*. Also, in the 1987 publication of *Jericho Mosaic*, Whittemore dedicates the novel to "Larry and Sarah Whittemore" (*Mosaic* viii).

[9] This is curious, since, according to all of the published material concerning Edward Whittemore, including obituaries, memoirs, reviews, introductions, and editorial relationships, Whittemore graduated from Yale with a degree in History. Yet, his writeup in the *Yale Banner* lists Whittemore as "English major" (Yearbook 427). This inconsistency seems insignificant. After all, Whittemore's characters are so deeply entrenched in their histories, especially their lineages, that only a keen, shaped historical mind could conjure such carefully crafted settings. Whittemore's History degree makes sense. Perhaps the two—History and English—are too subtly intertwined to establish the advantage of a degree in one over a degree in the other. Perhaps, too, nobody knew Whittemore close enough to speak certainly of his major; after all, Whittemore's appearances and disappearances from the lives of those who believed themselves close to him were, it seems, often decided on a whim.

Colleges," his name appears as Assistant Editor. In this piece, Whittemore satirizes what he vaguely calls "College Weekend festivities," or the "outings, plays and dances" (Fun, Frolic 1) of the weekend. Whittemore's passive ridicule reaches it's most playful when discussing a much-anticipated drinking competition for the "Tang Trophy" (Fun Frolic 1); Whittemore writes, "[Silliman] did, however, admit that 'Five-quart' hadn't been speaking too distinctly lately, 'for one reason or another'" (Fun Frolic 6). Throughout his sophomore year, Whittemore contributed articles, some serious, some not, almost weekly to the *News*, and as a result, his title improved. During the fall semester of his sophomore year, Whittemore climbed the *News* ladder. An October 3, 1952 edition recognizes Whittemore as Night Editor, and an October 20 edition shows Whittemore as Copy Editor. Finally, in February of 1953 the *News* board named Whittemore Managing Editor, a role he would not officially assume until January, 1954, and in April of 1953 the *News* board named Whittemore Vice Chairman. If his success with the *News* was a sign of his journalistic prowess and a signification of his status with Yale's social elite, then Whittemore, as Wallace recalls, was indeed poised for a bright, successful future: one that would indeed fill the sizeable shoes of his older brother. Upon graduating from Yale in 1955, Whittemore, again like Laurence, enlisted in the Armed Forces.

Whittemore decided to join the Marine Corps before graduating from Yale in the Spring of 1955, and after his time with the Marines, Whittemore would step quietly from his brother's shadow. As a Marine, Whittemore served as an officer in Japan, and while he was serving in Japan sometime between 1955 and 1958, the CIA approached and recruited Whittemore, gave him a "crash course in Japanese" (*Poker* xvi), and as a result, Whittemore's and Laurence's lives diverged, a diversion that took Whittemore through a ten-year career with the CIA. According to Jim Hougan in his introduction to the 2002 publication of *Jericho Mosaic*, Whittemore "became

a spy in the truest sense: not an espionage bureaucrat on the 9-to-5 shift in suburban Langley, but a NOC—a field agent under Non-Official Cover working against unforgiving adversaries. It is the spook's equivalent of a trapeze-artist working without a net. Slip, and the embassy won't save you" (*Mosaic* xxviii). Perhaps only Whittemore himself knew the harsh reality of his experiences, however brutal, lonely, sorrowful, or chaotic they might have been, and few details illuminate the ten-year period in which Whittemore was active in the CIA. Nevertheless, one must conclude that Whittemore's decision to work, if he had a choice, for the CIA and the experiences he had while an operative were the most profound of Whittemore's life, for Whittemore did not return to New England to become a journalist, a banker, an investment broker, a businessman, or a family man, as I suspect those close to him expected. Instead, he became a nomad, a wanderer, a loner, and a writer, who succeeds through imagination and allegory in creating his prophetic, yet tragic vision of a violent, intolerant world.

Yet, the seeds of the belief system and interests evident in Whittemore's novels were planted some time before his stint with the CIA, and a closer evaluation of Whittemore's tenure with the *News* verifies this; Whittemore's CIA experiences do not alone define the man and author Whittemore becomes. His time with the *News*, while confirming a campus life that places Whittemore among the social elite and alluding to a potentially illustrious journalism career, also suggests that a more profound social intellect lurked behind the "good-look[s]…herringbone tweed jacket…rep tie, chinos and scruffy white buck shoes" (*Poker* xv), and a closer look at several of Whittemore's journalistic contributions to the *News* and a speculative analysis of two articles hint at the man he would one day become.

Whittemore's political piece, "Douglas Denounces Republican Blasts," published in an October 10, 1952 edition, is a sociopolitical examination of "Governor Thomas E. Dewey's

[charges] against Democratic vice-presidential candidate John Sparkman" (Douglas 1). In Whittemore's assessment of the exchange, he suggests, perhaps controversially, that the popular view on civil rights among American citizens has shifted irreversibly to pro-civil rights. After all, Whittemore argues, Republican Governor Dewey's effort to paint Democratic vice-presidential candidate Sparkman as a "white [supremacist]" (Douglas 1) must indicate that the majority of the American population does not want a white supremacist in office. Since, in large part, Whittemore's message in the Jerusalem Quartet is one of tolerance, understanding, and embracing the multitude of belief systems in a multi-cultural world, readers see the progressive nature of his social beliefs manifest during his Yale years. While "Douglas Denounces" reveals Whittemore's ability to tackle serious social issues, he, in his October 23, 1952 article, "Fraternities Subject of Radio Panel," shows his willingness to play with form. In the opening sentence, Whittemore suggests that he's telling a joke; he begins, "Last a night a dean, two fraternity men, and an independent observer discussed it on WYBC" (Fraternities 1). We learn then, after two rounds explaining how each of the four participants wanted to handle "it," that "it—the abusive, drunken dolt—was not to be tolerated" (Fraternities 1). A final article published in a March 27, 1953 edition addresses a topic that would permeate Strongbow's experience in *Sinai Tapestry*. In "Tap Day: After 80 Years, Abolition, But No Solution," Whittemore traces the roots of the "Tap Day" tradition and analyzes Yale's decision to enforce that the 'tapping' of Juniors for secret societies must take place in the Junior's room.[10] The tone of this piece is interestingly condescending, as Whittemore himself was a member of the Scroll and Key secret society.

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[10] Remember, the Secret Seven, in their attempt to ensnare Strongbow, tap him in his room. Whittemore employs a modern form of 'tapping' probably unused in the early 19th century.

After achieving the role of Managing Editor, Whittemore's contributions to *The News*, at least contributions that bear his name, declined. However, several anonymous articles published during his senior year bear the stamp of Edward Whittemore. While there can be no way of knowing certainly that Whittemore wrote these articles, the vision and voice in each one in many ways reads like Whittemore. Two particular articles connect explicitly to the voice of the fully-matured Edward Whittemore.

Whittemore's interest in Japanese culture grew roots before Holt, Rinehart, and Winston published *Quin's Shanghai Circus*[11] in 1974, well before Whittemore authored two unpublished novels that involve Japanese culture,[12] and even before he published a scholarly article on the power of the Japanese Press.[13] Although these four works reflect the impact of his American-journalist-living-in-Japan cover while a CIA operative and his interest in Japanese culture, Whittemore's passion for Japanese culture budded even before he "spent…a decade working for the [CIA] in the Far East" and his "tour of duty as an officer in the Marines" (*Poker* xvi). Perhaps his interest in Japanese culture budded in the hallowed halls of Yale. In "Japan—Break from the West?", the anonymous author of this December 1954 *News* article disseminates four explanations for what he describes as "the factors which seem to be driving Japan closer to the Communist mold" (Japan). The article demonstrates an intimate knowledge of Japan's social climate, the United States' post-war relationship with Japan, and the steps the U.S must take to stop Japan from forming a partnership with China. Perhaps, then, Whittemore's passion for

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[11] *Quin's Shanghai Circus* is a novel in which the Orient, specifically Shanghai and Japan, of the 1920s and 1930s is the landscape through which the lives of Whittemore's at-times mythic characters intertwine.

[12] Tom Wallace, Whittemore's editor at Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, confesses in a 2000 memoir he wrote for the second publication of *Jerusalem Poker* that Whittemore, "in Japan in the 1960s," "had written two unpublished novels, one about the Japanese game of Go, the other about a young American expatriate living in Tokyo" (*Jerusalem Poker* xviii).

[13] Three years into his career with the CIA, a career that reportedly took Whittemore, pretending to be someone he was not, deep into the Orient, Whittemore nevertheless finds time to publish an analysis of Japanese culture; the article is a 1961 publication in the South Carolina Press's *Studies in International Affairs*, titled "The Press in Japan Today: a Case Study" and specifically is a lengthy exposé on the persuasive power of the Japanese Press.

Japanese culture[14] dates back at least to his junior year at Yale. At least, if indeed this exposé on the Japan-U.S. relationship is by Whittemore, he quietly reveals an interest in international travel and culture.

A second anonymous article captures in a more derogatory way a plea to tear down the social walls that stand between the different social cliques on Yale's campus, a sentiment, in its very rawest form, that penetrates all four novels of the Jerusalem Quartet.[15] Perhaps Whittemore's interest in the social divisions of the Levant sprouted first during his time at Yale, where as a fledgling journalist he examined the social divisions of the campus. The January 21, 1955 article, "Or, Confessions of a Dying Scribe," is a poetic adventure into Yale life. In rhyming couplets of iambic pentameter, the author longs for a simpler, less complex Yale life by wishing gone the stereotypes that divide the campus. He writes:

> That mother Yale will in time become / A place of study, and of living some: / That gone will be the faculty despair, / Of those who tread on academic air: / that gone at last will be the wistful dreams, / Of those who long for undefeated teams: / Of those who somehow think they have to crow, / Of life existing on Fraternal

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[14] An interesting connection between Laurence and Edward emerges here. Both individuals develop a passion for Asian culture, but while Laurence's is rooted in art and culture, Edward's appropriately seem rooted in the social climate of the region.

[15] In each of the four novels of the Jerusalem Quartet, Whittemore's tragic yearning for a Holy Land that is a peaceful haven for Muslims, Christians, and Jews is evident. In *Sinai Tapestry*, Whittemore introduces us to Strongbow's son, Stern, whose life ambition is to create peace in the Levant for all religious denominations. In *Jerusalem Poker*, the three men who sit down to play a twelve-year game of poker in which the stakes are clandestine control of the Holy City are Cairo Martyr, a Muslim, O'Sullivan Beare (Joe), a Christian, and Munk Szondi, a Jew. Over the course of those twelve years, readers escape into vignettes that define the histories of the three players and through which each of the players gain an appreciation for others' plights. The result being two of the players sacrificing their share of the Holy Land for the one they collectively believe deserves it. In *Nile Shadows*, Whittemore returns to Stern's tragic vision and through an investigation into the life of Stern, led by none other than Joe, Whittemore reminds us at the same time of mankind's capacity for tolerance despite their strict adherence to intolerance. Finally, in *Jericho Mosaic*, Whittemore escapes from time to time into meditations on life and history through the conversations of Abu Musa, a Muslim, Moses the Ethiopian, a Jew, and Bell, a Christian, over a forty year-old game of backgammon.

> Row: / And finally, of those who wrongly think / They're wasted here unless they raise a stink" ("Or" 1)

The author calls for a removal from the Yale campus of those groups who represent the social stereotypes of that campus. Within this social critique, on the other hand, the author affirms his indebtedness to the *News*; he concludes comedically, "For all the things I've said, I must confess / There's nothing I can do but fully bless / The NEWS, and Yale, and everything it's meant. / To those who like our journalistic bent / And yet to those who think from Hell we're sent" ("Or" 1). Though the possibility that Whittemore's interests, especially those concerning the social order and social interaction, budded during his four-year tenure at Yale, there can be no doubt that his experiences and those with whom he interacts while a CIA operative shape his own understanding of the world, morph, and become the social and philosophical narratives that comprise the Jerusalem Quartet.

Whittemore's CIA experiences—experiences that Whittemore undoubtedly shared with very few—are virtually unknown, and little still is written about his life thereafter. Tom Wallace, however, shares what is known in his Foreword to the 2002 edition of *Sinai Tapestry*. Although Wallace confesses that Whittemore, since college, did not resurface in his life until 1972 or 1973 (*ST* xvi), he manages to uncover, albeit without much detail, the life of Edward Whittemore, though the information he shares blurs the line between hearsay and fact. Perhaps that is the case; perhaps Whittemore shares with Wallace his whereabouts during the late 1960s while the two worked together on one of his first three novels. Perhaps, too, Wallace's information is disappointingly vague because Wallace promised that he would not divulge what one must assume to be the classified secrets of a CIA operative. Nevertheless, Wallace notes that Whittemore was "in Japan in the 1960s," "[ran] a newspaper in Greece," worked for a "shoe

company in Italy," and organized a "think-tank in Jerusalem" (*ST* xvi, xviii). Whittemore's time in Italy can be further validated by the 1965 *Yale 1955 Class Directory*,[16] which notes his address as "Roma Centro C.P. 128, Rome Italy." Wallace also passively notes that Whittemore "married and divorced twice," "had two daughters," and "under the terms of the divorce…was not permitted to see [his children]" (*ST* xvi). Wallace highlights Whittemore's shrouded life of the late 1960s, yet he is unable to provide any details concerning Whittemore's time with the CIA. Almost as murky as what is known about Whittemore during the 1960s is what is known about him from the early 1970s until his death in 1995.

After re-surfacing in the early 1970s, Whittemore seemed to drift back and forth between New York City and international locations throughout Europe and the Middle East; he also seemed to drift with immunity in and out of the lives of those who cared most about him. For a few, including Judy Karasik, the editor of *Nile Shadows*, *Jericho Mosaic*, and *Sister Sally and Billy the Kid*[17], Whittemore's comings and goings were proof that his involvement with the CIA never ended, but no one could be certain. What is evident, however, is that he was always welcomed back when he left and reappeared, and this, I believe, is a testament to Whittemore's charm, suavity, and affability. In "An Editorial Relationship," for example, Karasik ridicules Whittemore for abandoning without a word Helen Bar-Lev, a painter and poet with whom Whittemore lived in Jerusalem in the early 1980s, yet she confesses that upon his return to the states, she was "glad to hear Ted's voice" (*ST* 318), that she visited him twice at the family home in Dorset, Vt., and that she slept with him once. Whittemore's two wives, Karasik, Bar-Lev, the

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[16] I can loosely piece together Whittemore's whereabouts using class directories. In the *Yale 1955 Class Directory*, Whittemore has no address available, even though the 1955 *Yale Banner* lists his address as "32 Fellows Street, Portland 5, Maine" (427). In the 1977 and 1980 *Yale 1955 Class Directory*, Whittemore's address is "255 W. 88th St., Apt. 7C, New York, NY 10024." In the 1986 *Directory*, Whittemore's address is "8 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem, Israel," and in the 1989 *Directory*, his address is "c/o Hogan, Lithinon, 40, 73100 Hania, Crete, Greece." In 2000, Yale University published *'55 Then and Now*, in which Whittemore's entry reads "Died Aug. 3, 1995."

[17] *Sister Sally and Billy the Kid* is the novel Whittemore was working on at the time of his death; the novel remains unpublished.

mysterious Jane to whom Whittemore dedicates *Nile Shadows*, and Ann Pasanella, who was his companion at the time of his death, according to his *New York Times* obituary, could all testify to Whittemore's charm and flightiness, yet to elaborate on his character flaws will not necessarily enhance one's understanding of the factors that influence his literature; they will only reinforce the troubled side of a ghost who spent a decade in a foreign world risking his life every day while pretending to be someone he was not.

Edward Whittemore died of prostate cancer on August 3, 1995. His Dorset, Vt. memorial service was in a way very quiet and insignificant, but in another way momentous. Wallace writes:

> the disparate parts of Ted's world came together, perhaps, for the first time; there was his family, his two sisters and two brothers and their spouses, nieces, and nephews with their own families (but not Ted's wives or the two daughters who had flown to New York to say 'good-bye' to the father they hardly knew); there were neighbors, Yale friends, and a couple of colleagues from the Lindsay years…there were eight 'spooks'…from Yale, members of the 1955 Scroll and Key delegation. Ann and Carol, who had become allies while watching over Ted during those last, bitter days, were, of course, there. (*ST* xxiii)

The first half of his life might be defined by great promise. After all, he was one of five children in a wealthy New England family; he had an ivy-league education, tremendous charm, and a gift for the written word. He was indeed poised to thrive in a manner befitting his New England heritage. However, Whittemore defied the expectations that his family assuredly had for him. As a result of his decision to join the CIA and ten unimaginable years of experience thereafter, Whittemore's life changed irreversibly, and his life would pervert the path laid before him.

Nevertheless, the second half of his life might also be defined by great promise: great literary promise. Yet, the literary greatness evident to those who have ventured into his fiction remains hidden from the vast majority of the literary world. The experiences—experiences that the public can never truly fathom—that bridge the first and second halves of his life, however, define Edward Whittemore. During the shadowed ten-year period of the 1960s, Whittemore actualized his desire to share with the world through fiction his own allegorized, hyperbolized, and tragic understanding of a multi-cultural world torn apart by social, political, and religious constructs. "Jerusalem and Dorset," Wallace concludes, "one was the subject of Whittemore's dreams and books; the other the peaceful retreat in which he dreamt and wrote" (*ST* xxiii-xxiv). And so, I will analyze how he creates this world and conveys his vision through a thorough examination of "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry*.

CHAPTER THREE: A VISION OF CHAOS

By structurally paralleling the lives of two of his greatest heroes, Plantagenet Strongbow and Skanderbeg Wallenstein, Whittemore engages the symbol of a chaotic world, Strongbow, and the symbol of order, Wallenstein, in an epic battle for control, quite literally, of the universe. Both recognize the disorder of the world, but react differently to it. Strongbow, the 29th Duke of Dorset, accepts without resistance, even charges into, the chaos of his world, while Wallenstein, a fanatical Trappist monk, resists the chaos of which he learns after discovering the Sinai Bible: a book "complete and without question the oldest Bible in the world" (*ST* 32) that affirms "chaos, a void containing all things" (*ST* 69), as the true nature of existence. In "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry*, Whittemore's chapters alternate between the lives of Strongbow and Wallenstein, and, appropriately, he dedicates the first and last—four in total—to Strongbow and three to Wallenstein; in the first seven chapters of the Jerusalem Quartet, thus, Whittemore paints two landscapes: one in which a mythical hero, a literal giant among men, thrives amid what he accepts as the chaos and confusion of his world and another in which a lowly hermit slowly decays as he takes on the great burden of preserving order in humanity despite the chaotic truths of the Sinai Bible. Thus, Chaos, as represented by the Sinai Bible, becomes at the same time a symbol for the futility of religious and political conflict in the Middle East and a bitter irony regarding whether peace indeed can be found, according to Whittemore, in a deeply and irreversible chaotic world. The notion of a possible order in the new century prevails because the Sinai Bible, the one true and original bible, the proof of peace in chaos, is at the turn of the century lost to mankind forever. "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry* establishes chaos' stronghold over order despite the idea of order's stronghold upon humankind. An understanding of Strongbow as chaos begins with a closer look at his name.

In English history, the names Plantagenet and Strongbow date back to the middle of the twelfth century, but have no direct historical connection. The title Duke of Dorset which Strongbow bears, although a legitimate historical title, does not connect in any way to either of those names. Plantagenet[18] alludes to the House of Plantagenet, also known as the House of Anjou, or the Angevin dynasty, which ruled the Kingdom of England for roughly two hundred and fifty years beginning in 1154, and ruled Jerusalem for roughly one hundred years. One of the Strongbow line, during the same century, "thought to be about 1170…helped subdue eastern Ireland" (*ST* 3); Whittemore certainly alludes to Richard de Clare, the 2nd Earl of Pembroke, who is known historically for his vital participation in the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169, and carries the nickname Strongbow. The title Duke of Dorset[19], however, dates back in English history only to the seventeenth century, and associates with neither the Plantagenet nor Strongbow name, but with Lionel Sackville, 1st Duke of Dorset, 1688. Thus, through a name comprised of an amalgam of felicitous, but independent historical personages, Whittemore craftily lays the foundation for an individual who "one day end[s] six hundred and fifty years of placid Strongbow routine" (*ST* 5). With Strongbow, however, his actions more than his name most convincingly demonstrate his acceptance of and adherence to the concept of the world as an ungovernable chaos.

Plantagenet Strongbow's resistance to prevailing ideas of order in his world manifests at twelve years old, but Whittemore first intensifies the magnitude of Strongbow's initial defiance by tracing a lineage of Strongbows dating back six hundred and fifty years. Whittemore outlines

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[18] Plantagenet is also a term that refers to a gardener and derives from the Old English word meaning plant or young tree. The name Plantagenet, then, bears not only an appropriate historical link for the character Strongbow, but also alludes to the Strongbows' affinity for botany.

[19] Whittemore chooses Dorset as the source of his title for Strongbow perhaps as a tribute to a property owned by the Whittemore family in Dorset, Vermont. For how long his family owned the property is unknown, but Whittemore lived there on and off and after 1987 worked on his sixth novel. The novel remained unfinished when Whittemore passed away in 1995.

the "random family scheme" of an English house that "had lapsed into patterns" (*ST* 4). These patterns are seemingly ordered, yet a chaotic and random infrastructure seems to govern those patterns. Whittemore captures the sway of chaos over a seemingly ordered world in a single paragraph:

> From the end of the twelfth-century until the beginning of the nineteenth century, successive Plantagenet Strongbows grew up with a sound knowledge of roses and a vague memory of their parents, learned the family game[20] by watching their aunts and uncles, passed from manhood and sired an heir and a new brood of aunts and uncles before succumbing to another silly accident,[21] thereby perpetuating a random family scheme which was their sole contribution to God and man and England. (*ST* 5)

Among the Strongbows, "confusion had been lost or forgotten. Instead there was repetition and order" (*ST* 4), but, as Whittemore illustrates through "accidents [that] were routinely silly" (*ST* 4), chaos seems to dictate the family scheme. Even in creating the Strongbow lineage, Whittemore strategically blurs the real and the unreal, the historical and the fictional, order and chaos: a tactic he employs frequently throughout the Jerusalem Quartet, which suggests in the Quartet a sense of chaos in and of itself.

Two key events during England's 1831 holiday season, twelve years after the birth of Plantegenet Strongbow, define Strongbow's departure from a structured world and his open-armed embrace of a chaotic one. The first is his calm, but sarcastic denunciation of the

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[20] The game was a sort of capture the flag-like game in which the family would divide into two teams that would attempt to retrieve from the center of one room or another and return to the opposite end of the room a satin pillow. This game was marked by "intensive grappling" and "firm grip[s] on the genitals."

[21] Both the Duke of Dorset and his wife abruptly die from silly accidents around the age of thirty. Accidents include "fall[ing] asleep and fall[ing] into the fireplace," "wander[ing] off a parapet," choking on a mutton joint, or fatally hemorrhaging from the pelvic region after making love wearing medieval armor.

Strongbow Mystery, which is a Christmas tradition in which the entire Strongbow clan gathers around the manor's great fireplace while Strongbow elders spin tales about the history of their family and of Dorset Manor itself, and the second is a near-death experience with meningitis, "which killed his younger brothers and sisters" (*ST* 9) and leaves Strongbow himself completely deaf. In these two consequential events, the youthful Strongbow single-handedly uproots centuries of order and repetition.

For centuries, the Strongbow family recited holiday tales as the Strongbow Mystery, a sort of benchmark upon which family pride is built. Amid the elaborate and farcical tales, one uncle might refer to "chambers from the age of King Arthur," another may tell about "Druidical rituals," and still another suggests "massive stones placed on the plains in a mystical pattern" (*ST* 8). After each aunt and uncle spins a tale, search parties set out to uncover the entrances to these ancient underworlds, yet never do the family members search the family library. By Christmas of 1831, however, the twelve-year old Strongbow[22] had "read all the books in the [family] library," and before family members organize search parties, he calmly dismisses the fantastic fireside stories of his forebears. By virtue of his reading, Strongbow reveals that "the first Plantagenet Strongbow was a simple man who went to Ireland and had the usual success slaughtering unarmed peasants, then retired here to polish his armor and do some farming. The early books he collected were about armor, later there were a few dealing with barnyard matters" (*ST* 9). Strongbow arrogantly concludes his belittling of the great Strongbow Mystery by quipping, "it seems the family mystery is simply that no one has ever read a book from the family library" (*ST* 9). Thus, for the first time, Strongbow denies the past and upsets order, but

[22] It is important to note that Strongbow is twelve years old in 1831, which makes his birth year 1819, the same as Queen Victoria. In the same regard, it is important to note that Strongbow disappears from England in 1837, the same year that marks Victoria's ascent to the throne in England.

the days immediately following this denunciation secure Strongbow's place in a world of confusion and chaos.

The day following his tactless but honest disruption of Christmas tradition, meningitis inexplicably attacks Strongbow, but instead of sealing his fate and recapitulating the fate of all Strongbows' for six and half centuries, this inexplicable misfortune inspires Strongbow. He, unlike any of his forefathers, "[makes] up his mind to do what no Strongbow had ever done, to enter confusion and not let destiny rest" (*ST* 9). Strongbow's "first decision," writes Whittemore, "[is] to live" (*ST* 9). With his parents dead, his brothers' and sisters' dead from meningitis, his aunts and uncles "dismissed from his house and lands forever," Strongbow displaces "a comfortable routine dating from the reign of Henry II[23]" (*ST* 9) to the reign of Richard III. Strongbow's survival and imminent greatness is less a product of defying the order of his world and more a result of embracing its chaos. In fact, the deeds that define Whittemore's Strongbow as the greatest botanist, swordsman, and explorer in Engish history[24] are the opposite of order; they defy the social, political, religious, and literary logic that attempt to mask the true chaos of the world. And through these deeds, Whittemore continues to define Strongbow as a symbol of chaos itself. After these pivotal weeks in young Strongbow's fictional life, Whittemore jumps ahead four years to 1835, when Strongbow enters Cambridge at the age of sixteen, but not before highlighting the "three sensational incidents that made Strongbow a legend at Cambridge" (*ST* 11), incidents that defy order in their own right, Whittemore reveals three key traits that further characterize Strongbow's mythical and chaotic status. The first is his height: "by the age of sixteen," Whittemore reveals, "he would have reached his full height of seven feet and seven inches" (*ST* 9). Strongbow's enormous height not only defies the norm, but

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[23] Historically, Henry II is considered the 1st of the Plantagenet kings and Richard III the last.

[24] An argument could be made that Strongbow is also the greatest scholar and astronomer in English history.

also literally sets him above average men. The second trait is his academic prowess: another condition challenging what any culture's academia would consider normal. Whittemore captures Strongbow's intellectual acumen in his application to study Botany at Cambridge. Strongbow summarizes his qualifications:

> Fluent ability in Early and Middle Persian, hieroglyphics and cuneiform and Aramaic, classical and modern Arabic…Greek and Hebrew and Latin and the European tongues, Hindi where relevant and all sciences where necessary for his work…Lastly, as an example of some research already undertaken, he enclosed…the most definitive study on ferns ever written in Britain. (*ST* 11)

Thus, in the four years since recovering from meningitis and reclaiming his life, Strongbow has amassed a scholarly resumé that resembles an already suitable pedigree for a professorship, but Strongbow's scholarly career is merely budding. Finally, before leaving for Cambridge, Strongbow, a nobleman and now a Duke, defies the social constructs of Victorian England when "he decide[s] never to encumber his life with material goods" (*ST* 11). So when Strongbow later disappears into the desert in 1840, never again to be recognized as Strongbow, the 29th Duke of Dorset, he does so carrying only a magnifying glass and wearing a huge bronze sundial[25] that swings at his hip on a leather strap thrown across the giant's shoulder. Strongbow's immense wealth, however, will one day prove pivotal in his revenge against an England for which he, like England towards him, feels irreconcilable disdain. Strongbow, while at Cambridge, "had grown increasingly contemptuous toward England, which he found too small and prim and petty for his

[25] These two artifacts of Strongbow's will resurface: the magnifying glass won't appear until *Jerusalem Poker* when we meet a heretofore unmentioned friend of Strongbow, Menelik Ziwar, and the sundial surfaces later in *Sinai Tapestry* and throughout *Jerusalem Poker*. The magnifying glass makes the pupil of Strongbow's eye appear two inches wide and the sundial turns out to have been cast during the fifth abbasid caliphate, also known as the time of Harun al-Rashid, whose court is immortalized in *The Thousand and One Nights*, linking him to the Islamic renaissance.

needs" (*ST* 22), and England's resentment toward Strongbow begins during this same year. Strongbow first sets out to earn the British Empire's contempt by using his wits and brawn: a contempt that fully manifests as a result of three astounding occurrences. The means by which Strongbow accidentally becomes England's greatest swordsman challenge England's social order. Because Strongbow is by the age of sixteen seven feet and seven inches tall, "he [decides] to improve his balance [, and] fencing seems as useful as an exercise for that" (13 *ST*). Strongbow duels with himself in front of a mirror for one hour each day, and, along with studying and executing all of the techniques in the classical manuals, also develops several techniques of his own. "Strongbow's unorthodox style of fighting," according to two Italian masters, "is revolutionary and perhaps unbeatable" (*ST* 13). However, Strongbow's easy victories in the championship matches of the epee, foil, and saber divisions of Cambridge's national fencing tournament is not what offends England, nor is it Strongbow's refusal to wear a mask, since he had never worn one prior, but that "he never entered a fencing contest again," a sign of what "was assumed to be his extreme arrogance," which is "already unbearable to many" (*ST* 14). So Strongbow, who dominantly charges into and easily conquers Cambridge's prestigious tournament, disrupting a competitive and prideful tradition, adds his insult to the grace and fluidity for which most budding swordsman seek simply because he "no longer needed a special exercise and had given up the tiresome practice of parrying with himself in front of a mirror" (*ST* 14). As easily as Strongbow becomes England's greatest swordsman, he also becomes England's most accomplished botanist: a success that fully manifests itself during Strongbow's year at Cambridge.

The discovery that crowns Strongbow as England's greatest botanist does not defy social or botanical order, but how Strongbow handles his discovery most certainly does. Strongbow

"[stands] for his tripos examinations at the end of one year rather than the customary three" (*ST* 14), an accomplishment already unheard of among English scholars and academics, and passes them with a "triple first, the only time that ever happened in an English university" (*ST* 21). But the real brand in the English academic culture's hide is his "parting gift to English scholarship": a "new species of rose" Strongbow finds "on the banks of the Cam" (*ST* 21), right under generations of botanists' noses. "In a land devoted to roses" (*ST* 21), Strongbow's discovery is insult enough, but, as this Strongbow is wont to do, he salts the wound by rejecting the Archbishop of Canterbury's plea to name the rose in honor of the "new monarch…soon to be crowned from the House of Hanover" (*ST* 22). Instead, Strongbow coldly denounces the Archbishop's request:

> Your Grace has made reference to the House of Hanover, Germans who arrived here some five hundred and forty years after my own dukedom was established. It is certainly true the Plantagenet Strongbows did nothing for England in six and a half centuries, but at least they had the decency to do it on English soil. Therefore we will honor that soil…by naming this discovery the *rosa exultata plantagenetiana*. (*ST* 23)

By celebrating decades of English complacency, denying the new sentimental young English monarch, and flaunting tradition within the academic sphere, England's now most accomplished botanist continues an assault on the norms of societal constructs. The most consequential of Strongbow's order-defying actions, however, is his final offense while at Cambridge: "an insult that would be well remembered nearly half a century later when he publishe[s] his monumental thirty-three volume study entitled *Levantine Sex*" (*ST* 20).

Strongbow's final denunciation of English order offends English nobility past and present. Although Strongbow has already disrupted six and a half centuries of family complacency and order, and calmly and disparagingly belittled and confounded five hundred years of Cambridge University tradition, his credentials entitle him to become the leader of Cambridge's most secret society,[26] the Secret Seven: an "undergraduate society [that] had been founded in 1327 to mourn the passing of Edward II" (*ST* 17). The Secret Seven has a long history of notable personages among its membership, including "kings and prime ministers, scores of bishops and battalions of admirals and generals…the richest and most influential old-boy network in the land" (*ST* 17). On the night that the Secret Seven arrive at Strongbow's dormitory to induct him into their hallowed clan, Strongbow not only admits that he has never heard of their secret society, but scoffs at the idea of becoming its leader. After a verbal assault that leaves the Immortals "stunned [for] there had never been any question of explaining their society to anyone, let along justifying its purpose," Strongbow sends the seven young men "slink[ing] away into the longest night of 1836" (19 *ST*). In their view, he had "insufferably effronted over three hundred of the most powerful Englishmen of his day, not to mention the memories of another three thousand dead heroes of his race" (20 *ST*). Thus, using three crucial events prior to Strongbow's eighteenth birthday, Whittemore establishes the pseudo-mythical giant as a flaunter of established order, and Whittemore further secures Strongbow's status as a

[26] Whittemore was a member of the Scroll and Key secret society at Yale University. Scroll and Key is similar to the more nationally acclaimed Skull and Bones. Whittemore was also a member of *Yale Daily News*; he was Managing Editor of the publication in 1954-55. In a March 27, 1953 edition, Whittemore cites the pros and cons to the traditional methods of 'tapping' juniors for these societies. The article, in my opinion, ironically harbors some animosity toward the idea of secret societies in general. Perhaps this guarded animosity surfaces many years later through Strongbow's treatment of the Secret Seven.

representative of chaos with three additional incidents[27] in Strongbow's young life prior to the half-way point of the nineteenth century.

Among the high points of Strongbow's education are a prophetic conversation with the White Monk of the Sahara, his fleeting experience with love in Persia, and his disappearance from Queen Victoria's twenty-first birthday party in 1840 Cairo. These all profoundly contribute to Strongbow's chaotic self. His vast peripatetic travels and his experiences during these travels definitively secure his mythical place in English lore and continue to disrupt the social order and structure of his homeland. The astonishing, otherworldly incidents sewn into the fabric of Strongbow's life-map lead him to cities and monuments yet unknown to European travelers save for one—Johann Luigi Szondi[28]—and earn him the unofficial title of England's greatest explorer and botanist. Strongbow's unprecedented adventures take him on foot from Tunis to Tripoli, then to Timbuktu and back, a distance of two thousand and five hundred miles, pausing twice—once to and once fro—at Lake Chad to soak his feet at dusk and dawn. He works his way through western Egypt and Sudan, finally "swimming across the Red Sea under a full moon" (*ST* 46). Upon reaching Yemen—where Strongbow ultimately retires in 1904—he looks upon the Gulf of Aden before turning North through "the holy sites of Medina and Mecca disguised as an Arab" (*ST* 46), then across the Gulf of Aqaba, through Cairo and Jerusalem and Amman and Damascus and Aleppo, before "drifting on the dark languid waters of the Tigris" and "arriving in

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[27] So far in this discourse, we have seen key events occurring in 'threes' on a number of occasions. The significance of the number Three becomes especially crucial as we begin to understand Strongbow's son, Stern, who at first is an idealist striving towards a Middle East that can serve as a peaceful homeland for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. 'Threes' will continue to permeate each installment of the Jerusalem Quartet and will continue to appear throughout the remainder of this analysis.

[28] Whittemore alludes to Johann Luigi Szondi only once in *Sinai Tapestry*, on pages 29-30: "But in 1802 the new wife of a Skanderbeg happened to take to her bed a young Swiss with a passion for details, a highly gifted linguist who was on a walking tour of the Levant." Whittemore mentions Szondi because he is the father of Skanderbeg Wallenstein, whom I will discuss at length shortly. In *Jerusalem Poker*, the second installment of the Jerusalem Quartet, Szondi is a pivotal player in understanding the random, chaotic character web spun throughout the Quartet, especially the first two books. In fact, however, Whittemore models Szondi after Swiss explorer and orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817).

Baghdad under the stars" (*ST* 45), then heading east into Persia, where Strongbow finds and loses love, and as far as the Hindu Kush. During these explorations, Strongbow survives "a javelin thrown by a tribesman" in Yemen, experiences a fever that "blister[s] his tongue with ulcers and [makes] it impossible for him to speak for a month" (*ST* 46), treats another fever with leeches and opium, continues to submit innovative botanical monographs from random locations throughout the Levant, "learn[s] the techniques of hypnotism" (*ST* 67), "live[s] for a time on a raft" on "The Wadi er-Rummah" (*ST* 68), discovers a comet, is mistaken for a genie, and continuously transforms himself, so as to never be recognized as Plantagenet Strongbow, Duke of Dorset. Strongbow hides his true identity through "his endless disguises as a poor camel driver or a rich Damascus merchant, harmless haggler over pimpernel or a desert collector of sorrel and other spring herbage, an obsessed dervish given to trances and an inscrutable hakim or healer" (*ST* 66). Thus, Strongbow's adventures, experiences, and accomplishments, much like "his intellectual ferocity, his savage fighting skills, [and] his insolent disregard for tradition" (*ST* 20) at Cambridge, continue to assault the rational core of a budding Victorian England: the "very rationality that Strongbow[will] one day assault with devastating results" (*ST* 21). Plus, Strongbow's lifestyle choices during his adventures across Northern Africa and the Middle East, though perhaps on a considerably smaller scale, further comment on his disregard of Victorian social order.

Upon his departure from Cambridge and England in 1837, Strongbow's appearance and habits are nothing short of appalling to proper Englishmen who expect conventional behavior from a Duke. Strongbow's attire is the first insult toward his Dukedom and English order: "he [wears] a massive greasy black turban and shaggy short black coat made from unwashed and uncombed goats' hair" (*ST* 44). During an English age when formalism, obstinacy, and

prudishness define both male and female decorum, Strongbow's attire would undoubtedly offend his English equals. Next, the Victorian nobility would swoon at Strongbow's social choices, for he "seldom spoke to Europeans…yet he would tarry for hours in the bazaars with the poorest beggars and charlatans" (*ST* 45). Not only does Strongbow snub his European kin, he carelessly canoodles with individuals far beneath him in the social hierarchy: another no-no of Victorian culture. Finally, and most importantly, Strongbow outright rejects England's national drink dating to the reign of Charles II and one of Victorian England's established and most well-known social traditions: afternoon tea. "What [is] most disgusting to his countrymen," Whittemore writes, "[Strongbow] absolutely refuse[s] to drink tea" (*ST* 45). Thus, in dress, allegiance, and custom, Strongbow continues to defy Victorian order and embrace the chaos he willingly accepted after surviving meningitis at the age of twelve.

During his early travels and coincident with his rejection of Victorian culture, three separate incidents, as mentioned, truly ignite Strongbow's deeper and more profound adventures in the Levant, adventures that solidify his status as a symbol of chaos and climax with his literal denunciation of English order. Three events, more than any from Strongbow's youth, inspire the greatness that the explorer achieves in the last three-fourths of his life and confirm without question that Whittemore crafts his great hero to be an insurgent of chaos. The third of these three events, which is the climactic, symbolic denunciation of his English heritage and severance from English culture, spawns from and links the first two, which occur during the several weeks Strongbow spends in the presence of the White Monk of the Sahara, or Father Yakouba[29] and a

[29] Father Yakouba also has historical significance; however, as Whittemore is apt to do, he uses an anachronism. That is, Whittemore takes the real Yakouba, historically known as Auguste Dupuis (1865-1945), out of his place in time and inserts him in a year before his actual existence. Dupuis "cofounded the first Christian mission in Timbuktu in 1895" (White 541); not surprisingly, Strongbow encounters Father Yakouba in Timbuktu, but between 1837 and 1840.

brief love affair in Persia. Both of these experiences ultimately motivate Strongbow to disappear triumphantly, albeit defiantly, from English culture.

Father Yakouba is a herald of chaos in his own right, and his poignant advice to Strongbow reaffirms the importance of embracing the chaos that governs human experience and existence. Yakouba, a "former peasant priest from Normandy,…abandon[ed] his order and travel[ed] south…eventually cross[ing] the wastes to Timbuktu" (*ST* 46). Upon arriving in Timbuktu, Yakouba begins preaching the importance of treating the "Christian dictum to love thy neighbor" (*ST* 46) literally, very literally. Yakouba heretically believes that "when many bodies are pressed together…the need for vanity vanishes. The alpha and the omega are one, coming and going are one, the spirit is triumphant and all souls enter holy communion. So God is best served when as many people as possible are making love day and night" (*ST* 47). Order, in the Christian sense with regard to fornication, staunchly preaches love-making as the most profound of unions reserved for those who have entered into Holy Matrimony, so Yakouba's message, then, which encourages "sexual relations between large numbers of people all at once" (*ST* 47), must signify chaos. Just as Yakouba's Christian message defies the order prescribed by his faith, the people and happenings in Timbuktu further this defiance.

Several occurrences after Strongbow's arrival in Timbuktu and during his conversations with Yakouba strengthen its inhabitant's adherence to chaos. Upon Strongbow's arrival, "no one [takes] any notice of him" (*ST* 48), and while this seems harmless and within reason, the oddity of this neglect becomes significant upon realizing that the unusually tall Strongbow is "one of the first six or seven Europeans to arrive in the city since the Roman era" (*ST* 48), which suggests that abnormal, chaotic events are commonplace in Timbuktu. Furthermore, when Strongbow asks for assistance while trying to locate Yakouba, he receives equally chaotic

replies; “a man pointed backward and forward,” Whittemore notes, and “a woman nodded to the right and left” (*ST* 48). Finally, random mobs of children who on two occasions emanate in the streets as if from nowhere represent the final suggestion of chaos in Timbuktu. First, just after Yakouba initially addresses Strongbow, “some fifty or sixty children suddenly arrived to play in the square” (*ST* 48), and second, after Yakouba and Strongbow converse over food and drink, Strongbow observes that “two or three hundred children ran by the bench where they were sitting in a courtyard, the dust rising high in their wake and settling slowly as they swept away” (*ST* 49). Utter neglect toward a seven-foot, seven-inch outsider, paradoxical directions, and illusory mobs of children all contribute to the chaotic nature of Timbuktu, but more important is the advice the renegade Yakouba shares with Strongbow regarding the value of chaos.

Until this point in Strongbow’s young life, his defiance of physical, familial, intellectual, and social order has been in its own way accidentally or malevolently inspired. Strongbow’s full name, after all, is a product of Whittemore’s own creativity, amalgamating historical personages from different times in England’s chronology. His enormous height, perhaps a byproduct of his battle with and defeat of meningitis, is certainly beyond Strongbow’s control. The refusal by his family members to read books in the family library and their subsequent ignorance as a result catalyzes his denunciation of the Family Mystery. His renowned swordsmanship materializes from an innocent, personal desire to free his limbs from awkwardness and imbalance. Strongbow’s desire for intellectual achievement leads to his discovery of a new species of rose, and his refusal to name the rose after the House of Hanover derives from a greater pride in a lineage that predates them in England by over five-hundred years. His refusal to accept the highest position among the Secret Seven stems from disingenuous contempt for the historical importance of secret societies in general. Finally, his dress, allegiances, and customs, namely his

refusal to drink tea, all substantiate the animosity he feels toward an England that demonstrates cultural antipathy towards him. However, it is one pivotal conversation with Father Yakouba that fully inspires Strongbow to embrace chaos, to defy social order for new, more profound, more natural reasons.

Yakouba enlightens Strongbow by implicitly revealing to him that an open-minded tolerance, even acceptance, of the myriad cultural ideologies in the world is the true pathway to peace and happiness. After suggesting a haj in order to help Strongbow realize his place in the world, Yakouba encourages Strongbow to approach his haj in the following manner:

> a rich and varied journey is what you want, so pray you are slow in arriving. And when you meet someone along the way stop at once to talk and answer questions and ask your own as well, as many as you can. Curious habits and conflicting truths? Mirages as well? Embrace them all as you would your own soul, for they are your soul, especially the mirages. And never question the strange ways of others because you are as strange as they are. Just give them God's gift, listen to them. Then you'll have no regrets at the end because you'll have traced the journey in your heart. (*ST* 51)

Tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of the different and vast cultural, social, political, and religious systems are at the heart of Yakouba's words. Thus, Yakouba's hyperbolized embrace of the Christian code, love thy neighbor, is also at the core of his worldly advice to Strongbow, and these words, plus a fleeting experience with love in Persia, help Strongbow to better understand his own chaotic nature and the acceptance of chaos that is necessary for absolute peace and happiness in a presently violent, intolerant, and fanatic world. However, Yakouba's words do not fully sink in until after Strongbow falls in love—and loses love—for the first time.

Yakouba's advice to love all people that you meet in the world and love the customs and beliefs that you learn from them must be a somewhat abstract idea to Strongbow, as the eighteen or nineteen year old explorer has not yet in his young life experienced love first hand; what specifically Yakouba is asking Strongbow to do is foreign to him. However, in the spring following Strongbow's journey to Timbuktu, Yakouba's words find a concrete foundation in Strongbow's being. "In Persia," Whittemore writes, "during a cholera epidemic[30] that kill[s] seventy thousand people,…[Strongbow falls] in love with [a] mysterious Persian girl" (*ST* 51), and although their love affair lasts only for a few weeks, "her death [haunts] him for years…and the memory of their tender love never [leaves] him" (*ST* 51). With Yakouba's advice to love and embrace the people of the world regardless of thought, belief, or custom, and Strongbow's own firsthand experience with true love, the giant explorer begins his haj, which will be "a sexual exploration into the nature and meaning of love" (*ST* 52), and Strongbow's presence at and departure from Queen Victoria's twenty-first birthday party in Cairo truly and symbolically signifies Strongbow's absolute acceptance of and redefined exploration into chaos.

Strongbow's attendance at Queen Victoria's birthday party in Cairo in 1840 and a gesture immediately following his departure from the party mark Strongbow's irreparable severance from English society, but this time he severs himself not accidentally, angrily, or selfishly, but because he realizes his greater purpose in the world. First, Strongbow attends the birthday party in his birthday suit, with only his bronze sundial hanging at his hip from a shoulder strap, his magnifying glass, and a bulky leather pouch. His nakedness, however, is less an offense against English custom and more a symbol that he has stripped himself of his English heritage, that he will no longer be defined by his blood and homeland and foolish customs. What's even more interesting in this already bizarre moment is that "not one of the guests had seen his nakedness"

[30] One can't help to think that perhaps Whittemore is tipping his cap to Gabriel Garcia Marquez in this moment.

(*ST* 53): an important point to which I will return momentarily. After "dropping from sight with a whoop precisely as the clocks [chime] midnight and [announce] the arrival of the queen's birthday" (*ST* 53), Strongbow walks to a poor section of Cairo to relieve himself of one of the three items with which he arrived at the queen's party: the bulky leather pouch. In the poor section of the city, Strongbow encounters a beggar who pretends to be blind, but upon seeing Strongbow's giant, naked self, "the old man's eyes [jump] even though he had trained himself for years never to let them register a thing" (*ST* 54). The beggar, unlike the party-going English nobility, indeed notices Strongbow's nakedness, and to this beggar Strongbow bestows his leather pouch, which is full of "Maria Theresa crowns…a fortune" (*ST* 55), saying, "I've been carrying [the crowns] all night to give to someone blind enough to see the world as it is" (*ST* 55). The English nobility fail to see Strongbow's nakedness, Whittemore implies, because they see the world as they want to see it—ordered—not the way it really is—chaotic. All of Strongbow's denunciations of Victorian culture culminate in this one moment; he is naked and unencumbered with material possessions save for his sundial and magnifying glass. Strongbow, in this moment, is reborn a symbol of chaos, and now he embraces that chaos because of his greater purpose: the daunting burden of sharing with the world knowledge of the chaotic nature of man wherein lies truth, happiness, and peace.

In these early events of Strongbow's life, Whittemore establishes Strongbow as a harbinger of chaos, and Strongbow himself realizes the value of embracing the idea of chaos in a multi-cultural world. Now, Strongbow ventures forth on his haj, which climaxes with the publication of his aforementioned study *Levantine Sex*: Strongbow's—and Whittemore's—own attempt at defining and sharing the true chaotic nature of man and the world. But, before dissecting the crucial experiences during Strongbow's haj—the unrivaled importance of a

"startling discovery he [makes] in a Sinai cave" (*ST* 24) and the tenets put forth in *Levantine Sex*—I will detour through the life of Skanderbeg Wallenstein, Strongbow's antithesis and metaphysical adversary. Having established that Strongbow embodies understanding and acceptance of the chaotic nature of the world, and to re-emphasize the notion that chaos also dictates the happenings of a world that believes it operates with systems and structures, Whittemore contrasts Strongbow's existence with that of an ironic antithesis, Skanderbeg Wallenstein.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ILLUSION OF ORDER

Skanderbeg Wallenstein, an Albanian turned fanatical trappist monk who ultimately "undertake[s] the most spectacular forgery in history" (*ST* 25), and Plantagenet Strongbow, England's greatest yet most audacious scholar and explorer, never meet, yet their paths nearly intersect in two specific ways: during Strongbow's initial journey across the Levant Wallenstein is carrying out his own self-destructive journey to confirm an underlying order in the world, and through the three-thousand year old antiquities dealer, Haj Harun. Prior to and after Strongbow's departure from Queen Victoria's twenty-first birthday party in Cairo in 1840, Skanderbeg Wallenstein has already spent four years (and will spend three more) in a cave high on the slopes of Mount Sinai rewriting the Bible for reasons I will discuss shortly. Wallenstein dwells in the Mt. Sinai cave from 1836-1843[31]. Because Strongbow's vast travels carry him across Egypt and the Red Sea and to the Gulf of Aqaba, that the giant explorer at some point strolls in the shadow of Mount Sinai is an extremely tangible potentiality, and a possibility that the world's disorder predicts. Thus, on at least one occasion, only a distance of one mile, roughly five-thousand feet, conceivably separates these two legendary men. Strongbow and Wallenstein thus never come face to face, an irony Whittemore deliberately creates; the lives of the two, however, share a number of commonalities and differ in one extremely profound way.

This difference will be the primary focus of this Chapter. Wallenstein, a seeker of meaning just as Strongbow is what the poet Wallace Stevens might call a "connoisseur of chaos," is a symbol of order, and I will compare his existence with that of Strongbow, a comparison that validates in Whittemore's terms chaos's triumph over order, a theme that

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[31] Seven is, of course, one of the Western world's magic numbers, and placing Wallenstein inside the cave for seven years is a deliberate move on Whittemore's part. Biblically speaking, God created the Earth and all of its wonders in seven days, and Wallenstein recreates Christianity in seven years. The significance of Wallenstein's 'Godliness' will become more evident when I discuss the latter third of his life.

dominates each of the four books of the Jerusalem Quartet. However, before I explore the construction of Skankderbeg Wallenstein as Strongbow's antithesis, I will first briefly discuss their connection to Haj Harun and Haj Harun's connection to *Sinai Tapestry* and *Jerusalem Poker*.

Haj Harun is the common denominator in a complex character web that Whittemore purposefully creates to strengthen his notion that human experience is random, chaotic, and unpredictable. Discussing Wallenstein's and Strongbow's connection to Haj Harun might be premature at this point in the discourse, but not mentioning this connection altogether would be careless. Wallenstein purchases the fourth-century parchment on which he completes his forgery of the Bible from Haj Harun, who finds the parchment "buried at the bottom of an antique Turkish safe" (*ST* 42) in his antiquities shop, in 1824. In 1831, Haj Harun leads Wallenstein to the "basement hole" (*ST* 42) in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem where he acquires the skills needed for his forgery. Finally, Haj Harun, in 1843, leads Wallenstein back to the "basement hole" in the Armenian Quarter where Wallenstein buries the original Bible he found in St. Catherine's monastery. Thus, Haj Harun is the only character in the Quartet besides Wallenstein who knows definitively where the Sinai Bible hides. In 1865, Strongbow, after approximately twenty-five years of searching for the Sinai Bible and collecting information for *Levantine Sex*, finally sits down to compose the work "in the back room of an antiquities dealer's shop" (*ST* 72). Strongbow uses as his filing cabinet the very "antique Turkish safe" (*ST* 72) where Haj Harun found Wallenstein's fourth-century parchment. More importantly, for twelve years Strongbow occasionally converses with the one man, Haj Harun, who can lead him to the object he most desires to find. Haj Harun's antiquities shop is critical in "Part Two" and "Part Three" of *Sinai Tapestry* and in *Jerusalem Poker*. Strongbow uses Haj Harun's giant, hollow stone scarab to

smuggle *Levantine Sex* from Jerusalem to Basle for publication, and O'Sullivan Beare (Joe) later uses the stone scarab to smuggle arms. The back room where Strongbow composes *Levantine Sex* is the same back room where Joe, Munk Szondi, and Cairo Martyr play the Great Jerusalem Poker Game: a twelve year game of poker for clandestine control of the Holy City. The back room of Haj Harun's shop also becomes the final resting place for Strongbow's bronze sundial, which chimes randomly throughout the Great Jerusalem Poker Game. Stern, Strongbow's son and the man for whom Joe smuggles arms, descends in a hot-air balloon on Haj Harun in the desert, and Harun believes him to be God. He becomes Joe's travel companion and friend, and in 1936, Haj Harun retrieves the Sinai Bible from the basement hole in the Armenian Quarter and sends it to Joe after he becomes the chief medicine man of a Pueblo Village in New Mexico. Whittemore, however, reminds readers that chaos dominates human experience in a much more explicit way: through Strongbow's metaphysical triumph over Wallenstein. This comparison begins by highlighting three major similarities between these two remarkable figures that reinforce Whittemore's idea that chaotic principles influence the world. (Far more remarkable differences will emerge in an analysis of Wallenstein's and Strongbow's reactions upon realizing that chaotic conventions indeed regulate human experience.)

Whittemore uses the same strategy for naming Skanderbeg Wallenstein as he does for naming Plantagenet Strongbow, the Duke of Dorset, taking liberty with historical accuracy in order to create his own literary reality. For Strongbow, Whittemore creates a fictional character by amalgamating historically significant names from English history. Whittemore purposes to signal Strongbow's chaotic nature through his full name and title. He employs the same technique with Skanderbeg Wallenstein, but with Wallenstein, Whittemore also intends to remind us that chaos is at the core of his symbol of order's existence. Whittemore names

Strongbow's antithesis after two significant historical personages: George Castriota, a fifteenth-century Albanian "who had been given the name by which history knew him while a hostage to the Turks, Lord Alexander or Iskander Bey, or Skanderbeg" (*ST* 27), and Albrecht von Wallenstein, a late sixteenth-century, early seventeenth-century "Czech orphan [who] had twice risen to become the all-powerful Generalissimo of the Holy Roman Empire during the religious slaughter known as the Thirty Years War" (*ST* 25). Whittemore establishes the significance of Skanderbeg Wallenstein's name by exercising his penchant for historical detail, [32] and in doing so, he creates a character who at first seems fantastically fictional, but upon closer examination is revealed actually as a synthesis of factual historical data. By examining the details that Whittemore provides regarding Wallenstein's lineage, readers can be certain that Whittemore does not choose the name Skanderbeg Wallenstein without intending to create a historically disjointed name. Whittemore, as he does with Strongbow, again violates historical chronology and weaves unrelated pieces into a creative history of his own, thus blurring the line between fact and fiction. An amalgamation of historical personages, however, is not the lone element of comparison regarding Plantagenet Strongbow and Skanderbeg Wallenstein.

Wallenstein, like Strongbow, disrupts the order of his family tradition in two specific fashions; he is born without a physical peculiarity that had afflicted "his male [ancestors] for generations" (*ST* 27), and he chooses a vocation utterly contrary to that of a long line of

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[32] Whittemore flexes his historical muscle here. Besides the already-mentioned connection to the Thirty Years War, Whittemore notes that "an English captain commanded by an Irish general" murders the Wallenstein ancestor of his Skanderbeg Wallenstein and that this ancestor "immerse[s] himself…excessively in astrology" (*ST* 25-26); both of these details demonstrate historical accuracy regarding Albrecht von Wallenstein. Furthermore, Whittemore states that his Skanderbeg Wallenstein is "named after Albania's national hero" who "tirelessly storm[ed] Christian fortresses for the Turks during the first half of his life, then tirelessly defend[ed] those same fortresses against the Turks for the second half of his life" (*ST* 27). Again, these two points are historically accurate concerning the name Skanderbeg. There is no historical connection between the two sources of this fictional name; Albrecht von Wallenstein had only two children: one a son who died in infancy and the second a daughter who survived. Thus, when Whittemore comments that "the first Wallenstein in Albania considered *him*self (italics mine) a temporary exile from Germany" (*ST* 27), I am confident that he is fictionalizing his own Skanderbeg Wallenstein.

Wallensteins. In the mid 1600's, as Whittemore writes, after the first Albanian Wallenstein, that is, the first Skanderbeg Wallenstein, "stepped off [a] tower and landed on his head in a fountain one hundred feet below…the drooping left eyelid was apparent in all Skanderbegs soon after birth" (*ST* 28). Yet, this physical trait, the drooping left eyelid, is not a product of genes or inheritance, since "the Skanderbeg Wallensteins had never been father and son" (*ST* 29). Because "war was [the male Wallensteins'] vocation and they left home at an early age to pursue it" and because "combining love with sensual pleasure was beyond them" causing "[impotence] with their wives" (*ST* 28-29), Wallenstein wives looked elsewhere to ensure heirs to the Wallenstein line. For a century and a half, the male heirs born to "resident matriarchs…[and] stolid Albanian butlers or gamekeepers" (*ST* 29) all inexplicably shared two traits: a fervor for war and a drooping left eyelid. In 1802, however, a Wallenstein wife took to her bed a "Swiss with a passion for details, a highly gifted linguist who was on a walking tour of the Levant,"[33] and "later that year a Wallenstein heir was born for the first time in history without a drooping left eyelid" (*ST* 29-30). Just as this Skanderbeg Wallenstein does not share his ancestors inexplicable drooping left eyelid, he also does not share his ancestors' passion for war. At an age when previous Skanderbeg Wallensteins were learning the necessary skills for a life of war, this Wallenstein instead "passed his entire youth without leaving the castle" where he spent all of his time in a "private conservatory… memoriz[ing] the Bible in all the tongues current in the Holy Land during the Biblical era" (*ST* 30). As a result of Wallenstein's portentous hermitic behavior during the early part of his life, "no one was surprised when he paused at the gate one morning, there to cross the moat into the outside world for the first time, to announce he was on

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[33] See footnote 16 on page 25. Skanderbeg Wallenstein's father is Johann Luigi Szondi. Szondi, again, is a pivotal player in the second installment of the Jerusalem Quartet, *Jerusalem Poker*. In that novel, we learn that Szondi is the great-grandfather of three crucial players in the Great Jerusalem Poker Game: Munk Szondi, a Jew, Cairo Martyr, a Muslim, and Nubar Wallenstein, a Christian.

his way to Rome to enter the Trappist monastic order" (*ST* 30). Strongbow and Wallenstein ultimately come to represent opposite principles—a seeker of order and a connoisseur of chaos, yet in the formative years of their lives three parallels—a contradictory name, a physical abnormality, and a defiance of family tradition—are nevertheless evident.

Even though Whittemore ultimately establishes Wallenstein as a symbol of order, he nevertheless sews chaotic elements into the fabric of his life, and he does so with a very pointed purpose. Giving him a lineage that maintains "an unshakable conviction that the entire universe [is] ordered with the sole purpose of endangering Skanderbeg Wallensteins" (*ST* 28), Whittemore asserts that "the Wallenstein men [are] the exact opposites of the Strongbows" (*ST* 29), but the three commonalities highlighted in the previous two paragraphs suggest otherwise. More importantly, these similarities highlight chaos' reign over the order with which Wallenstein becomes destructively obsessed. By implanting subtle chaotic nuances into the early years of Wallenstein's existence, Whittemore quietly reminds his audience that chaos lurks at the core of even the most staunch supporters of "God's plan for regularity in the universe" (*ST* 31). Therefore, Wallenstein's desperate and calamitous infatuation with instilling order in a world he ultimately realizes to be chaotic becomes unsurprising, yet all the more tragic. Wallenstein's irreversible, pernicious preoccupation with the idea of maintaining, or more appropriately reinventing, the order-based systems that govern the world manifests after an astonishing discovery he makes during his monastic stint at St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai and propels Wallenstein down a fantastic but destructive path. Strongbow and Wallenstein share few commonalities after the discovery of the Sinai Bible, and Wallenstein's revelation at St. Catherine's marks the point at which their lives—and their psyches—move in opposite directions.

Skanderbeg Wallenstein's decent into madness and imprisonment begins in the early days of his tenure at St. Catherine's, when he unearths perhaps the most astounding archaeological find of the nineteenth century: the Sinai Bible. His decision to keep this discovery a secret catalyzes a series of events that ultimately enslave and destroy him. While "clear[ing] away the debris in the dry cellar of a storeroom long in disuse," Wallenstein stumbles on "a mound of hard earth," and in an attempt to "[chip] away the mound to level the floor[,] his tool [strikes] the edge of a cloth" (*ST* 31). Wallenstein finds wrapped inside of this cloth a manuscript that is a "flowing mixture of Aramaic and Old Hebrew" (*ST* 31), and after spending the remainder of the morning and all of the afternoon reading the text, "two facts [envelope Wallenstein's] mind in darkness. First, this Bible [is] complete and without question the oldest Bible in the world," and "second, it [denies] every religious truth ever held by anyone" (*ST* 32). After a litany of hypothetical questions blurring the histories of the major world religions, Whittemore eloquently captures the severity of Wallenstein's discovery:

> the pages of this desert manuscript where an entire fabric of history was woven in magical confusion, threaded in unexpected knots and colored in reverse patterns, the sacred shadows of belief now lengthened or shortened by a constantly revolving sun and shifting moon.
>
> For in the oldest of Bibles paradise lay everywhere on the wrong side of the river, sought by the wrong people, preached by a prophet different from the one who had been heard, an impossible history where all events occurred before or after they were said to have occurred, or instead, occurred simultaneously.
>
> Numbing in its disorder and perplexing to the edge of madness. Circular and unchronicled and calmly contradictory, suggesting infinity. (*ST* 34)

For seven days[34] Wallenstein remains alone in his cell at the monastery contemplating his next move, and "at the end of those seven days he decide[s] what [has] to be done" (*ST* 39). Wallenstein concludes, "Melchizedek must have his City of Peace, men must have their Jerusalem. There [has] to be [order] in the world and if the cause for it [isn't] there, [I will] provide it…[I will] become the Holy Ghost and rewrite Scripture the way it ought to be written. The decision [made]…[is] to forge the original Bible" (*ST* 40). With this decision, Wallenstein outright rejects the chaotic nature of the world that the Sinai Bible prescribes and shields mankind from this startling revelation by rewriting history according to his own desperate desire for the preservation of an ordered world.

For the next nineteen years, Wallenstein dedicates himself wholly to re-inventing the conditions for order in the world, the cost of bearing this heavy burden being his sanity and his freedom. For the first seven years after finding the Sinai Bible in the cellar room at St. Catherine's, Wallenstein exhausts "a huge sum of family money, his by right as the Skanderbeg of his generation" (*ST* 41), in order to assemble the materials, mostly parchment and ink, he would need to complete his forgery. During those seven years, Wallenstein "assume[s] many disguises[35] so that every step of his work would always remain untraceable" (*ST* 42), and he masters "the secrets of ink, more specifically the techniques of making ancient inks from dyes and crude chemicals" (*ST* 41). Working utterly alone, he also teaches "himself to analyze ancient parchments by feel and taste and smell in order to determine their exact age" (*ST* 41). For the next five years, Wallenstein "applie[s] himself to the eccentricities of writing styles" (*ST* 41) so that his own handwriting would appear in every detail to be of the fourth century A.D.,

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[34] Again the number seven connects to Wallenstein: seven days deciding what to do after finding the Sinai Bible, seven years collecting the materials needed for the forgery, seven years in the Sinai cave forging the Bible. Perhaps Whittemore uses the number seven to foreshadow Wallenstein's belief that he is God.

[35] Whittemore undoubtedly used numerous disguises during his decade-long stint with the CIA, during which time he worked deep cover projects in the Far East, Europe, and the Middle East (*ST* xiv).

"time enough after Christ for all the truths to have been gathered, yet still earlier than any complete Bible in existence" (*ST* 40). For five years Wallenstein dwells in a basement hole in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem "mastering the precise style of writing he would need for the forgery" (*ST* 42) and teaching himself to write ambidextrously. Thus, for twelve years, seven collecting and five preparing, Wallenstein endures loneliness coupled with the burden of justifying the systems that mankind created to govern mankind, during which time he "[spent] [his] entire…fortune, selling off farms and villages in Albania, to maintain disguises and buy what he needed" (*ST* 42) for the project. Now two thirds into the total time needed for the forgery, the most impressive, near-mythical feat of his profound, yet self-destructive literary endeavor begins.

For the next seven years, 1836-1843, Wallenstein lives alone in a cave high on the slopes of Mt. Sinai and rewrites history in the way of a forged fourth-century Bible that when found[36] will justify mankind's concept of a world regulated by order, but the task of restoring mankind's faith in order, or, as Whittemore laments, "the sensual gloom of [Wallenstein's] martyrdom" (*ST* 43), physically destroys the one time Albanian nobleman, descendant of the great General of the Holy Roman Empire. Although Wallenstein manages to maintain his lucidity until the final words of his forgery are set to parchment, his physical decay begins early during his time in the Mt. Sinai cave and climaxes soon after he finishes the forgery. During the summer,

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[36] Whittemore flexes his penchant for historical detail and astutely manipulates historical fact. Wallenstein's forgery is indeed found by "a German scholar," who "proudly announce[s] the discovery of the most ancient of Bibles…that both refine[s] and authenticate[s] all subsequent versions, irrefutable proof of the distant origins of traditional Holy Scripture" (*ST* 64). Whittemore goes on to note that "the exquisite manuscript was acquired by Czar Alexander the II, at that time as powerful as any defender of any faith" (*ST* 64). Furthermore, Whittemore notes that Wallenstein included in his New Testament "two non-canonical books…the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas" (*ST* 56). The detail Whittemore assigns to Wallenstein's forgery parallels historical fact with regard to the Codex Sinaiticus: a very real fourth-century Bible found by Constantine Tischendorf in 1844 at St. Catherine's Monastery (Codex) and a term that Strongbow uses in *Sinai Tapestry*. Thus, Whittemore, in his own rewriting of history, suggests that the Codex Sinaiticus is nothing more than a forgery: one fanatical man's attempt to validate man's need for order in the world.

"Wallenstein's cave blazed with a merciless heat," and during the winter, "ice hung in the air and torrential rains crashed down the mountain" (*ST* 56). Furthermore, during those seven years, Wallenstein ate and drank only "every third day or so…from a small pot at the foot of the mountain" (*ST* 57), and as a result of enduring extreme climatic changes and inevitable fatigue from malnourishment, "fevers blurred [Wallenstein's] brain" (*ST* 56). Whittemore captures Wallenstein's fervor for his project and the resulting physical decay:

> from first light to the last he bent over the sheaves of his thickening manuscript, unaware of the incessantly chewing sand flies and the swarms of insects that rose to feed on his frail body at dusk, so absorbed he no longer blinked when an ant crossed his eyeball, his act of creation witnessed only by an occasional ibex or gazelle or mole, a wildcat or jackal or leopard, the timid and ferocious beasts who came to stare at the unfathomable patience of this fellow animal. (*ST* 57)

Wallenstein, determined and unwavering, works uninterrupted for seven years, "switch[ing] his reed pen to the other [hand]" (*ST* 57) when one cramped hand became unusable, and as a result of his indomitable focus, he suffers at the hands of nature's elements and pests. Upon finishing his forgery, Wallenstein, with the help of the man who sold him his fourth-century parchment, Haj Harun, buries the original Sinai Bible in the basement hole of the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem where he prepared for his project, places his forged Bible on the shelf of the cellar room in St. Catherine's monastery where he found the original, and succumbs finally to the physical torment of his efforts; Whittemore writes, "deaf now…and blind…a white film covered [Wallenstein's] eyes, fevers shook him, open sores spotted his skin, his hands were immovable claws, one ear hung by cartilage and his nose was eaten away, to all appearances a leper in the final stages of decay" (*ST* 64). Seemingly at death's door, Wallenstein nonetheless spends the

next seven years crawling slowly and helplessly back to the Albanian castle where he was raised, and upon his arrival, a profound irony accompanies the loss of his sanity.

Whereas Wallenstein suffers severe physical deformity and decay as a result of his seven-year ordeal in a Mt. Sinai cave, he suffers even more severe psychological deformity and decay after returning to his Albanian castle, now itself in a state of disrepair and decay, and the irony of his insanity speaks volumes on the futility of his fantastic task. Wallenstein returns to his castle "barefoot and hairless and mostly naked, a skeleton with gaping holes in his head, [a] diseased apparition" (*ST* 94), and the two lone residents[37] of the castle, former servants living in "a small kitchen" (*ST* 95), nurse Wallenstein back to a manageable physical state, though for the rest of his life he "run[s] a steady temperature of one hundred and three degrees" (*ST* 96). Although Wallenstein slightly improves physically, he utterly and ironically decays mentally. In effect, Wallenstein, the author of the spurious account of God's order for mankind, succumbs to and ultimately accepts the very principles that he spends seven years trying to suppress; he "inexplicably…convert[s] to the very heresies he had meant to correct…[to] the stupefying contradictions of the Sinai Bible he had nearly died rewriting" (*ST* 96). The "striking confusions" (*ST* 96) of the Sinai Bible envelop Wallenstein's mind entirely; he obsesses over the vague and incoherent ideas mingling in the lost original, and in his blindness he hallucinates the characters who bring those ideas to life. Day after day, Wallenstein "[goes] striding off naked through the barren ruins of his ancestral castle in search of the innumerable shifting characters…inevitably finding a crowd of their faces in a collapsed wall" (*ST* 97), all the while "recit[ing] the entire text of the buried [Sinai Bible]" (*ST* 96). The irony and futility of Wallenstein's task, then, lies in his abandonment of the very principles of order of which he so

[37] The two are mother and daughter, and the daughter is Sophia: in *Sinai Tapestry* Sophia the Unspoken, and in *Jerusalem Poker* Sophia the Blackhand. Sophia and Wallenstein have a brief love affair and birth a son, ironically named Catherine for the monastery in which Wallenstein discovers the Sinai Bible.

desperately and destructively convinces humankind, reiterating a system of beliefs that he no longer believes. Yet, the completeness of Wallenstein's lunacy extends far beyond his recitations of the Sinai Bible and his obsession with the terrible truths within that heretical text, for in his ravings, Wallenstein's twisted logic leads him to a startling revelation.

Because in the creation God conjures order out of chaos, Wallenstein, since he also conjures order out of chaos, concludes that he is God, the ultimate symbol of order in the universe, and in the consequence of Wallenstein's self-transformation from mortal to immortal, Whittemore ironically portrays chaos' domination over order despite mankind's belief otherwise. In the beginning of time, according to Whittemore, chaos precedes the order that God—or the Gods—brought to the universe, and the tenets of a chaotic world, in the way of the Sinai Bible, precede the concept of an ordered world, reinforced in mankind by Wallenstein's biblical forgery. Wallenstein's madness is a product not of the physical and mental decay that is the inevitable result of his great errand, but rather a result of Wallenstein's own tragic realization—and therefore proof of God's own tragic purpose—that the prescription he writes for humankind is false: a realization that he shares with his caretaker and wife, Sophia.[38] Wallenstein's

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[38] Upon Wallenstein's return to his dilapidated Albanian castle, only two individuals lived there: Sophia, at the time eight years old, and her mother. Sophia's mother died a relatively short time after Wallenstein's return, and Sophia nursed Wallenstein back to health, and despite his growing madness, fell in love with him. During the twenty years in which they shared their love, Wallenstein, in rare moments of lucidity, shared also the secrets of the Sinai Bible and of his fantastic forgery. Thus, Sophia is one of the very few who know of the lost heretical text. After twenty years, they bore a child together, a boy named Catherine in honor of the monastery in which Wallenstein found the Sinai Bible, but, "his birth was the great tragedy of her life" because "from that day on Wallenstein never spoke to her, never touched her, never saw her when she was standing in front of him" (*ST* 100). Nevertheless, Sophia "the Unspoken," which became her nickname because "she never said more than a few words at a time" (*ST* 99), taught herself "the intricacies of business" (*ST* 98-99) in hopes of salvaging the Albanian castle and the Wallenstein fortune. She succeeds, and her success turns Sophia into a significant player in *Jerusalem Poker*. In the second novel of the Jerusalem Quartet, Sophia the Unspoken would come to be known as Sophia the Black Hand as well as Madame Twenty Percent, as she is now the possessor of the largest oil syndicate in the Middle East. Sophia is also the mother-in-law of Maud, who briefly marries Catherine and births a son, Nubar, shares a brief but powerful love affair with Joe, and befriends both Munk Szondi and Strongbow's son, Stern. Sophia herself shares a one night love affair with a much younger Munk Szondi, and she is the grandmother of Nubar Wallenstein, who serves throughout *Jerusalem Poker* as the foil to the great Jerusalem poker game. Finally, Whittemore bases Sophia on Calouste Gulbenkian, an "Armenian Businessman, also known as 'Mr. Five-Percent" (Breque), with a son named Nubar.

salvation from the madness that ensues from his tragic, yet ironic purpose is equally tragic. According to Whittemore, "there [is] only one way to save [Wallenstein], only one way that he [can] live" (*ST* 102). Sophia leads Wallenstein, now God, "down through the deepest recesses of the castle to a soundless black dungeon many hundreds of feet below the ground" (*ST* 102). Wallenstein finds peace again locked in a dungeon cell deep beneath his castle; Whittemore captures the final three decades of Wallenstein's burdened life:

> moments might come in the black stillness when he [can] forget his manifold duties as creator of all things and grow silent, finding at last each day the food and sleep necessary for life, which the former hermit and forger did for another three decades, surviving beneath the castle until 1906…living to the advanced age of one hundred and four deeply buried in the boundless darkness or light God had found for Himself in the universe of His cave. (*ST* 102)

In *Sinai Tapestry*, Whittemore imprisons his symbol of order, but the principles of order that Wallenstein puts forth in his forged Bible continue to exist at the heart of humankind's belief system. This notion, when evaluated in comparison to the life of Strongbow after he learns of the Sinai Bible's existence and publishes his own monumental literary work, *Levantine Sex*, reinforces Whittemore's idea that chaos nevertheless governs a world where the tenets of order merely appear to govern humankind.

During Strongbow's vast travels across parts of Africa, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Middle East, a single encounter changes the purpose of his adventures and launches him down a congruous path with Skanderbeg Wallenstein, albeit a path that ultimately leads these two legends of the nineteenth century to very different places. Sometime in the middle of the 1840's, only a short time after his departure from Queen Victoria's twenty-first birthday party in Cairo

and even a shorter time after Wallenstein's forgery is found at St. Catherine's, Strongbow learns from "the elders of a Jebeliyeh tribe" that in a cave high on Mt. Sinai a hermit "[rewrote] a sacred book he had unearthed nearby" (*ST* 68-69).[39] However, the Jebeliyeh tribesman is unable to provide Strongbow details as to what the hermit was rewriting, only that "it was chaos, a void containing all things" (*ST* 69). Strongbow, an astute scholar who is fully aware that "the Bible manuscript known as the Codex Sinaiticus had only recently been found in St. Catherine's" (*ST* 69-70), ponders the notion that the newly found, but centuries old Bible might be a forgery and that a lost original might exist. After this conversation with a Jebeliyeh tribesman, Strongbow walks unflinchingly without food, water, or rest from Mt. Sinai to Aqaba, a distance of approximately one-hundred miles, considering the possibility that the Codex Sinaiticus is a fake and that the oldest Bible exists. During his march, Strongbow concludes that "he [has] no way of knowing what [is] in the real Sinai Bible," if one exists at all, "yet for some reason [Strongbow is] convinced that it [holds] the secret to his own life" (*ST* 110-111). This realization launches Strongbow down a path, in many ways similar but in even more profound ways very different from Wallenstein's nineteen year quest to forge the Bible. The quest envelops almost forty years of the great explorer's life, searching for the lost original Sinai Bible but in the process collecting data for his own immense literary work, *Levantine Sex*.

The parallels between Strongbow and Wallenstein are many, but subtle differences remain vital to chaos' triumph over order. First, both men submit to the chaotic principles of human experience. Strongbow willfully accepts and thrives amid the chaotic nature of the world, but, at first, "the mere thought of [a chaotic world] paralyze[s] [Wallenstein]" (*ST* 38). In the end, however, Wallenstein involuntarily succumbs to chaotic truths after his own martyrdom

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[39] Wallenstein unknowingly shares the secret of his forgery with a Jebeliyeh elder. In his delusion from the experience in the cave, Wallenstein believes that "he was talking to a mole," and since "[Wallenstein] was mad he wasn't surprised at the mole's questions" (*ST* 69).

drives him mad. Furthermore, both men endure solitude, though Strongbow's is willful and Wallenstein's is coerced, both men venture far from home, both fall in love, both withdraw from mankind, and most importantly, both author monumental literary works. Strongbow, like Wallenstein, uses numerous disguises[40] in order to prepare for the twelve years he will need to compose *Levantine Sex*, but unlike Wallenstein, who endures utter solitude and bankruptcy as a result of his literary task, Strongbow, after his meeting with Father Yakouba, becomes largely social and profoundly wealthy during and after his own literary task.[41] In preparation for and composition of his great forgery, Wallenstein chooses a life of silence, solitude, and poverty, but Strongbow, during approximately twenty-five years of searching and researching, chooses a social, garrulous life, and after the publication of *Levantine Sex*, he amasses a fortune unmatched in Europe. However, the most profound difference between Wallenstein and Strongbow lies in the purpose of their enormous literary tasks, in the consequence of those tasks, and in the irony of the fate of those works. Wallenstein's forgery intends to justify mankind's adherence to the tenets of order, Strongbow's *Levantine Sex* intends to prove that no such order exists.

While Wallenstein forges the Bible for the purpose of legitimizing the systems and structures that regulate human experience and suffers imprisonment—both mental and physical—as a result of his endeavor, Strongbow, unable to locate the Sinai Bible, composes his

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[40] Strongbow embeds himself in Levantine culture by transforming himself into a variety of genuine Levantine characters, including "a poor camel driver or a rich Damascus merchant, a harmless haggler over pimpernel or a desert collector of sorrel…an obsessed dervish given to trances and an inscrutable hakīm or healer" (*ST* 66). While in these numerous disguises in numerous locations throughout the Levant, Strongbow converses with as many individuals as he can on as many topics as he can, for Strongbow's study focuses on "life-sized" Levantine subjects, who can "be plied with wine on the spot and even…alter their characteristics incessantly before his eyes" (*ST* 68). While documenting information for *Levantine Sex* and searching for the Sinai Bible, Strongbow "for three or four weeks…would sit with a man, any man, feverishly discussing…any stray topic that chanced to arise in the flames of a campfire or the dimness of a smoky tent, in a bazaar back room or under the stars in a watered garden" (*ST* 67), occasionally asking about "a mysterious lost book in which all things are written" (*ST* 111).

[41] After Western Scholars destroy *Levantine Sex*, Strongbow again uses numerous disguises to accomplish an outlandish goal. Through a series of financial transactions in which he liquidates all of his assets in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and transfers those assets into a Turkish consortium (*ST* 106), Strongbow buys the Ottoman Empire (*ST* 108). Thus, Strongbow amasses a huge fortune by purchasing the Ottoman Empire and destroying the British Empire.

own book for the purpose of advocating the concept of chaotic principles governing human interaction, and he finds tranquility and freedom in the aftermath of his forty year enterprise. Strongbow uses sex as the foundation for his vast study. Whittemore captures the scope of Strongbow's endeavor when he writes:

> Strongbow insist[s] on dealing with…sex in its entirety. Not sex as necessity or diversion or in the role of precursor and memory, not even sex as an immediate cause or a vague effect. And certainly not in terms of natural history or inevitable law. Sex neither as habit nor suggestion but simply sex by itself, unplanned and chaotic and concomitant with nothing, beyond all hope of conspiracy, previously indistinguishable and now seen in infinity. Sex as practiced. Sex as it was. (*ST* 5-6)

The topic through which Strongbow chooses to promote his ideology is enough for condemnation since, according to Whittemore, in Victorian England "the authoritative English medical manual on sex stated that…women had not sexual feelings of any kind…masturbation caused tuberculosis…gonorrhea originated in women…marital excess led to…fatal disorders, and…other than total darkness during a sexual act caused…hallucinations and…brain damage" (*ST* 81). The specific ideals—ideals that I will discuss in detail in the next chapter—that Strongbow asserts in his "vicious onslaught on the entire rational world of the nineteenth century" (*ST* 91), and the great thinkers whom he offends in the process, however, is even more offensive than the topic itself. Through his assault on the adherents to the principles of order and restraint and despite the ways in which he parallels Wallenstein, Strongbow distinguishes himself once and for all from his literary and spiritual adversary.

While an evaluation of the three key literary works in *Sinai Tapestry*—the Sinai Bible, Wallenstein's forgery, and *Levantine Sex*—suggests that order ironically triumphs as the governing principle of human experience, an analysis of the authors of two of those works—Wallenstein and Strongbow—suggests just the opposite. Wallenstein's forgery, a man-made validation of the man-made systems and structures that govern mankind, survives, and after a scholar finds Wallenstein's forgery, Europe embraces the book as the oldest and truest of all Bibles, publicizing the vitality of its existence; mankind heralds it as justification for the world's order. While Wallenstein's forgery flourishes, the Sinai Bible does not. Wallenstein buries the original Bible deep in a basement hole in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem, and the fate of *Levantine Sex* is perhaps even more tragic. English scholars, appalled at the audacity of Strongbow's claims, burn *Levantine Sex*, withholding all evidence of its existence. Scholars of the West conclude that Strongbow's work is "preposterous and true and totally unacceptable" (*ST* 91), so they do what any staunch adherents to the principles of order would do; they fire the furnaces and dump in Strongbow's manuscript as well as the towering stacks of plates used to print it (*ST* 92). By denying mankind the to them despicable truths put forth in *Levantine Sex*, followers of the principles of order save the systems by which they define their lives, yet Strongbow's fate as a consequence of his scholarly endeavor plays out quite differently from Wallenstein's.

For the final three decades of his life, Strongbow revels in a peaceful desert oasis, while during the same period of time Wallenstein suffers in a cold dungeon cell deep beneath his castle. Thus, while order seems to triumph outwardly, in Whittemore's reality chaos is the true puppeteer of human experience: a notion the author reinforces through Strongbow's freedom. Strongbow, like the Sinai Bible and *Levantine Sex* and, in part, like Wallenstein, resides behind

the scenes of human experience, far from the throngs of humanity, far from where mankind can witness or hear his influence, but he does so freely and peacefully. Wallenstein decays because of the burden of implementing mankind's adherence to the principles of order, and Strongbow thrives within the knowledge that no such principles exist. So unlike Wallenstein, Strongbow finds tranquility in his own awareness regarding the truths of human nature, though his creator Whittemore laments Strongbow's retirement and the message that is lost to mankind as a result:

> No one suspected the loss but Strongbow had taken far more than a great fortune away from Europe. He had also taken an irreplaceable vision that saw new worlds and sought them, a spirit that fed itself on the raw salads of mirages. Never again would the West send out another Strongbow. After him there would be delegations and commissions, engineers and army garrisons, circulating judicial bodies and stray wanderers on camelback. These events were still to come but the greatest of all conquests was over, the expedition that could only be launched by one man from the vast legions he found in his heart. (*ST* 109)

After the brief publication and subsequent destruction of *Levantine Sex*, Strongbow, a lifelong advocate of the chaotic principles he rightly believes govern human experience and author of *Levantine Sex*, which is his own attempt to express those principles to mankind, spends his final thirty years roaming peacefully on a Yemeni hillside: the physical manifestation of chaos still run loose, but virtually unknown in the world. Wallenstein, author of the Bible and author of the false version regarding the world's order, spends the final thirty years of his life locked in the blackness of a dungeon cell deep beneath his Albanian castle: a false God imprisoned for the crime of manipulating mankind into adhering to the laws of order in a world that is truly ruled by the lawlessness of chaos. Because of Strongbow's triumph, Whittemore implicitly suggests that

chaos maintains a stronghold over the accepted order of human existence. Strongbow finds peace and freedom in the knowledge he has attained, and Wallenstein finds distress and incarceration. Strongbow wins, and through his victory, Whittemore's novel reinforces the notion that behind the curtain of mankind's inventions lies a chaotic world, and only if mankind can embrace the chaotic principles that govern human experience can they, like Strongbow, find enduring peace and freedom.

CHAPTER FIVE: WHITTEMORE'S VOICE

In Whittemore's world, the apparatuses that define our understanding of 'society'–nation states, established religions, laws and doctrines--represent catalysts for social turmoil, political warring, and religious feuds. These institutions and ideas of order, Whittemore's novel reminds us, are a curtain of societal invention behind which chaos simultaneously mocks and celebrates the human condition. In "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry*, Whittemore establishes that chaos dictates the events of his semi-fictional Levant; Whittemore defines chaos' dominion over the structures and systems mankind has put in place to mask it. The Sinai Bible and *Levantine Sex* both describe such a world. The Sinai Bible in fact calls for chaos, a fact that Whittemore re-emphasizes through Wallenstein's own destructive obsession with chaos and Strongbow's willing submission to it. Thus, the parallels between the fates of Strongbow, Wallenstein, the Sinai Bible, and *Levantine Sex* create a crucial pattern through which one understands the entire Jerusalem Quartet. "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry* functions as a philosophical allegory, and Whittemore reinforces his own ideals through a condensed, symbolic expression of them in *Levantine Sex*, where he more blatantly asserts chaos' dominion over mankind's experiences and values, and that order only masks those chaotic principles. In order to defend "Part One" of *Sinai Tapestry*, especially the principles of *Levantine Sex*, as a presentation of Whittemore's own social vision, I must first consider the parallels between Strongbow, who is the author of *Levantine Sex*, and Whittemore himself.

Jean-Daniel Breque, French translator of the Jerusalem Quartet and Whittemore enthusiast, in his "Who's Who in the Jerusalem Quartet," names Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890) as "an obvious inspiration for Plantagenet Strongbow" (Breque). After all, the parallels between these two figures are plentiful. The most obvious comparisons one can make

between these two figures include their penchant for languages, exploration, disguise, and fencing, but, as the case always is with Whittemore, the subtle nuances of Strongbow's life reveal Whittemore's ability to mutate his astounding knowledge of historical detail and convince his audience that his characters are fantastic creations of his own imagination. For instance, Sir Richard Francis Burton's Wikipedia entry calls him an "English explorer…writer…linguist… hypnotist [and] fencer." Strongbow is all of these things. A more detailed comparison, however, lies in their writing styles. Burton's Wikipedia entry notes that his books are filled with "copious footnotes and appendices containing remarkable observations and unexpurgated information." Strongbow fills *Levantine Sex* with the same. Burton's 1911 *Encyclopedia Britannica* (*EB*) entry asserts that his "pilgrimage to Mecca in 1853 made [him] famous" and that he "was the first Englishman to enter Mecca." Strongbow, in Whittemore's fictional world, is also the first Englishman to accomplish this exploratory feat. Again in more specific detail, *EB* details that "Burton…had a javelin thrust through his jaws." Strongbow suffered the same injury. Finally, in a comparison with *Levantine Sex*, *EB* notes that Burton's writings touched on a "a wide field of pornography, apart from questions of taste, abound in valuable observations based upon long study of the manners and the writings of the Arabs. Fawn McKay Brodie, in Burton's entry on Biography.com, claims that he was "ambivalent about his national identity," quoting Burton as saying, "'England is the only country where I never feel at home.'" Strongbow feels the same sentiments of marginalization from his homeland. Brodie also writes that his wife "burned almost all of his 40-year collection of diaries and journals." Though not documented in journals or diaries, Strongbow maintained a "forty year conversation" with egyptologist and friend, Menelik Ziwar. Finally, in an essay titled "Who Was Burton" on a website titled *The Sir Richard Francis Burton Project*, James D. Gifford writes that "the primary cause of Burton's

lack of traditional success was Burton himself…Time and again he contrived to insult and offend the one person who could most help him to his next goal." Indeed, Strongbow too was the cause of his own unpopularity; his indifference to the norms and expectations of Victorian culture brand Strongbow an outcast: a title he doesn't care to carry or dissuade. But aside from the "obvious" parallels, Whittemore himself is also a convincing, albeit less obvious, archetype for Plantagenet Strongbow.

The parallels between Strongbow and Whittemore are abundant. The first significant parallel lies in their ancestries and families. Strongbow and Whittemore hale from affluent lineages with roots entrenched deeply in the region from which they came. Strongbow's English ancestry dates back half a millennium, while Whittemore's New England roots can be traced back as far as the American Revolution. Also, both men are born into large families and both are the youngest siblings in those large families. Whittemore even links himself to Strongbow through Strongbow's title and a nostalgic piece of property owned by the Whittemore family; Strongbow is the twenty-ninth Duke of Dorset, and Whittemore spent the final years of his all-too-short writing career at his family's New England retreat in Dorset, Vt. Furthermore, Strongbow and Whittemore thrived, in their own right, at University and left their respective universities with promising futures, though Whittemore pens Strongbow's character at Cambridge as a symbol of the man Whittemore became, not the man he was while at Yale. After all, Strongbow is a loner and recluse while at Cambridge, while Whittemore was the epitome of the social elite, and Strongbow outright rejects initiation by the Immortal Seven secret society, while Whittemore was a documented member of the Scroll and Key secret society. Perhaps Strongbow's mistreatment of the Secret Seven signifies the animosity Whittemore grew to harbor toward such social networks. Both Strongbow and Whittemore maintain a penchant for

languages, though Strongbow teaches himself a variety of European and Arabic languages prior to attending Cambridge, while Whittemore quickly learns and masters Japanese after being recruited by the CIA. Also, both Strongbow and Whittemore defy family traditions. Although Strongbow also defies order within the social and academic realms of Victorian England, his first defiant acts happen while very young. Strongbow, by surviving instead of dying at a young age from a silly accident, refusing to participate in the Christmas game, and denouncing the family mystery, Strongbow disrupts five centuries of family tradition. Whittemore, if indeed the success of his older brother Laurence indicates the expectations Whittemore's family had for him, also defies family tradition; instead of choosing to become a successful journalist or businessman and devoted family man, he chooses a life as a poverty-stricken, nomadic novelist. Finally, both Strongbow and Whittemore venture far from home in the immediate years following their departures from University and depend on disguises to accomplish certain goals while on their journeys. In Strongbow's early adventures to the Levant and Whittemore's to the East with the Marine Corps, both men experience singular moments that change the course of their lives forever.

Strongbow and Whittemore, when around twenty-five years of age, share single experiences that profoundly change the direction of their lives, and in those experiences, a number of even more significant parallels emerge between Strongbow and Whittemore. Strongbow, after his visit with Father Yakouba and while wandering the Levant in the early 1840s, hears from a Jebeliyeh tribesman the story of hermit in a cave high on the slopes of Mt. Sinai rewriting an ancient book because of its heretical and chaotic content. From this moment forward, Strongbow's ambition becomes threefold: to locate the Sinai Bible, to research and write his own dissertation defending the chaotic principles that govern human experience, and to

find peace within a chaotic world. Whittemore, on the other hand, joins the CIA, becoming an NOC (Non-Official Cover) field agent for the agency. This decision and Whittemore's ten years of experiences thereafter solidify Whittemore's own ambition: to research and write the Jerusalem Quartet, which is Whittemore's attempt to capture the chaotic principles that govern human experience and to find peace in what he believed to be a chaotic world. While the thirty-three volumes of *Levantine Sex* function symbolically as the Jerusalem Quartet, Whittemore's own voice expressing his understanding of a chaotic world becomes evident in specific elements of *Levantine Sex*. Given the abundant parallels between the fantastic, yet mysterious lives of Strongbow and Whittemore, that Whittemore uses Strongbow's voice to advance his own social theory does not surprise.

Whittemore binds himself to Strongbow, and he also uses Strongbow's *Levantine Sex* as a vehicle through which he expresses his own ideology concerning human experience: that chaos governs the whole of humanity despite philosophers' and theorists' efforts to prove otherwise. Strongbow, in polar opposition to Wallenstein, maintains that any underlying system, structure, or scheme at the foundation of human experience simply does not exist, and while this claim seems bold in itself, his audacious hypothesis becomes even brasher when considering the renowned thinkers who adhere to the ideals of order and whom Strongbow offends. Strongbow's "thesis outrage[s] both the contemporary defenders of Darwin and Marx and the future defenders of Freud" because the study denies "all precepts and mechanisms" of order (*ST* 83). In fact, Strongbow directly attacks these revolutionary thinkers; he insults "*a naturalist with the wit to realize he has evolved upward since infancy by selecting this and not that*" and "*a political philosopher*" who believes that "*the future [is] destined to experience explosive*

upheavals from the lower regions or classes" (*ST* 87).[42] Far greater than attacking those thinkers who "[embrace] grand schemes of order" (*ST* 84), Strongbow presents irrefutable evidence that "all yearnings for the existence of a conspiracy in life [are] hopeless illusions," that *no* system of order "[can] provide an overall explanation for events either through religion or nature, society or the psyche," and finally that "in his systemless universe no one [is] safe and there [are] no solutions, just life itself" (*ST* 88, 91). Strongbowism, Whittemore's term for the theory put forth in *Levantine Sex*, in short, "[has] the effrontery to suggest that far from there being any laws in history or man or society, there [are not] even any tendencies toward such laws" (*ST* 83). Under the tenets of Strongbowism, human experience is "random and haphazard… unruly and unruled, given to whimsy in the beginning and shaken by chaos in the end" (*ST* 83). As a result of Strongbow's experiences from nearly forty years of wandering parts of Europe, Africa, and the Levant—and Whittemore's from ten years of undercover field work with the CIA in the Middle East and Japan—he vehemently concludes that the everyday examples of human experience lack any hint of order, but his vision is not entirely pessimistic.

In the lone moment of optimism in an otherwise nihilistic discourse, Whittemore's voice emerges in the most compelling way, and in light of Whittemore's documented role as a NOC agent with the CIA, Strongbow's final thoughts resonate with an air of tragic self-encouragement. In the closing lines of the final volume of *Levantine Sex*, Strongbow "reveal[s] that in spite of everything he [is] still willing to live with his findings and even do so with a certain gusto" (*ST* 90-91). Strongbow writes, "*It's true that life is crumpled and mindless…But for the few years we have its good memories we also have to admit it remains as pleasantly soft to the touch as an old well-used wineskin*" (*ST* 91). For a period of ten years—some close to him speculate more—fear, stress, illusion, deception, risk, and instability governed Whittemore's life;

[42] Strongbow certainly alludes to Charles Darwin and Karl Marx here.

he was never truly able to let people in on the secrets of his life, for brutal truths are often internalized, and he was never truly able to let people into his heart. The experiences over those ten years and the disguises Whittemore donned to endure those experiences, one must assume, would have been enough to test any man's spirit. Whittemore indeed needed to find the strength "to live with his findings" if he was in any capacity going to re-assimilate into civilian life. Whittemore found this strength and did so "with a certain gusto." Whittemore travelled the world, spending the final two decades of his life between Europe, the Middle East, New York, and Vermont, loved fleetingly on several occasions, and became an author, warning the world of his findings, and he expresses those findings in a philosophical, allegorical, and imaginative quintet of novels, four of which comprise the Jerusalem Quartet.

Strongbow and Whittemore, in a final comparison, find the peace for which they seek: Strongbow on a quiet, secluded Yemeni hillside and Whittemore in the family's tranquil, wooded Dorset retreat. In reconciling his own happiness amid a world he believes to be unpredictable and violent, Whittemore introduces readers to his own belief in the value of mankind's submission to chaotic principles. Strongbow's metaphysical triumph over Wallenstein testifies to the value of this submission, and by using Strongbow's voice in *Levantine Sex* as his own and by embedding chaotic elements in all four novels of Jerusalem Quartet, Whittemore explicitly shares this belief. Perhaps in the years ahead, as mankind continues to search for a savior to raise us beyond the fanaticism, decadence, and violence that presently seem to permeate human interaction, someone will find, like Wallenstein's discovery of the Sinai Bible on a dusty shelf in a cellar at St. Catherine's monastery, Whittemore's message of tolerance and peace in a diverse, multi-cultural world.

Who in American Literature will define my generation? When, two hundred years from now, scholars look back on the late 20th, early 21st century, who will they laud as the period's defining novelist? Or most influential author? Or most timely? Possibly, as Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* was revived and revisited starting in the 1920s, this discourse will at least retrieve Edward Whittemore's second novel, *Sinai Tapestry*, from the dusty shelves of the "Generally Unknown" section of the contemporary American library and place him again and more solidly among the elite novelists with whom he was so frequently compared decades before the twentieth century's end.

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