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Seabury Quinn: A *Weird Tales* View of Gender and Sexuality

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes conceptions of gender and sexuality during the progressive and interwar periods by examining Seabury Quinn’s *Weird Tales* stories. It also examines Quinn’s life and various influences on his storytelling. The pulp magazine *Weird Tales* served as a highly accessible platform from which Quinn both challenged and abided by traditionalist attitudes. This thesis examines Quinn’s depictions of femininity in *Weird Tales*, and demonstrates that his stories often punished independent female characters as a means to reinforce traditionalist ideas. Quinn’s stories reflected a backlash against many of the freedoms that women had gained during the progressive and interwar periods. American conceptions of masculinity continued to change during the interwar period especially, during the Depression which produced new assumptions about American manhood. Amidst these reformulations of American masculinity, a unique male characterization was born in Seabury Quinn’s protagonist Jules de Grandin. Unlike other interwar characters, Quinn’s Jules de Grandin rejected the figure of American bodybuilder in favor of one that emphasized male effeminacy. The sexuality of these effeminate male characters was often unclear, and it is difficult to discern whether this was a serious attempt by Quinn to circulate literature with homosexual elements in the public sphere or just an attempt to lure readers with mentions of social taboos. Quinn’s challenge to emerging ideas of masculinity and femininity are important to a study of the era of interwar history.

Keywords: Weird Tales, Seabury Quinn, Masculinity, Femininity, Interwar Period, Gender, Effeminacy, Pulp Fiction, Jules de Grandin
Introduction

The emergence of modern culture during the early twentieth-century continued an ongoing transformation of American perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Although new ideas on gender marked a step toward modernism, a backlash to many emerging gender forms arose from traditionalists attempting to maintain the status quo. Many of these gender debates can easily be seen in pulp fiction publications, especially in the offbeat *Weird Tales: The Unique Magazine*, which often portrayed both old and new values. My analysis of one of *Weird Tales*’ most popular authors, Seabury Quinn, reveals that he largely reflected both change and continuity within American conceptions of sexuality and gender during the interwar period. However, it is Quinn’s unique and pioneering challenge to traditional ideals that reveal him to be an important figure for the study of history.

In the early twenty-first century, Seabury Quinn was largely forgotten. Very few people recognize that he once prominently graced the pages of *Weird Tales* magazine, a pulp fiction magazine that most twenty-first-century fans associate with famous horror and fantasy writers like H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. However, Quinn wrote so many stories for *Weird Tales: The Unique Magazine* that one contemporary pulp writer and friend, E. Hoffmann Price, referred to him as “Mr. Weird Tales.”¹ Quinn’s most popular creation was Jules de Grandin, an occult detective living in Harrisonville, New Jersey.² Quinn once estimated that he had contributed nearly three hundred Jules de Grandin stories to *Weird Tales*.³ Early twenty-first-century scholars insist that this number was only around ninety stories. Still, Quinn was prolific

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in his time. According to an essay entitled, “Seabury Quinn’s Jules de Grandin: The Supernatural Sleuth in *Weird Tales,*” scholar Gary Hoppenstand states, “From 1925 until 1951, Seabury Quinn published 93 Jules de Grandin adventures in the pages of *Weird Tales,* part of the larger total of 159 stories and articles that established him as the most industrious writer of the *Weird Tales* circle.”

Although Quinn’s de Grandin stories were extremely popular during the interwar period, his tales did not benefit from the mid twentieth-century resurgence of interest that has taken place with other authors published in *Weird Tales.* Writers such as Robert E. Howard garnered a vast fan base from the 1960s into the next century. According to Jeffrey Shanks, a co-chair for Pulp Studies within the Popular Culture Association, Robert E. Howard regained some of his former pulp fiction glory with the 1966 reprint of his Conan series. His popularity grew in the 1970s with a comic book series dedicated to Conan and later in 1982 with the film *Conan the Barbarian* starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

It is strange that Quinn did not make a reemergence considering that he was one of the most popular authors in *Weird Tales* during the interwar period. However, this leads one to question, what made Quinn’s Jules de Grandin stories so popular during that time period? Many later readers of Jules de Grandin tales argue that Quinn’s work was unexceptional. Even past readers like fellow pulp writer H.P. Lovecraft criticized Quinn’s work. In a letter dated on July 5, 1927 to *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright, Lovecraft demeaned Quinn by stating that his writings attracted simplistic readers:

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4 Hoppenstand, *Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s,* 167.
5 Ibid., 11-12.
6 Ibid., 167-168.
I doubt if my work . . . would “go” very well with the sort of readers whose reactions are represented in the “Eyrie”. The general trend of the yarns which seem to suit the public is that of essential normality of outlook and simplicity of point of view—with thoroughly conventional human values and motives predominating, and with brisk action of the best-seller type as indispensable attribute. The weird element in such material does not extend far into the fabric—it is the artificial weirdness of the fireside tale and the Victorian ghost story . . . You can see this sort of thing at its best in Seabury Quinn, and at its worst in the general run of contributors.7

This quote reveals that although many fans clamored for his work, a few of Quinn’s colleagues considered him to be mediocre. However, Quinn catered to the masses, and many readers begged for more from him. For example, in the August/September 1936 issue of Weird Tales, reader William L. Ebelein wrote to “The Eyrie,” praising Seabury Quinn as his favorite author and encouraging that the editor, “make Quinn write more de Grandin stories. It has been nearly six months since you published the last one. I have noticed, with very much regret, that during the past three years Quinn has given us only about ten de Grandin stories . . . Make him produce or I will feel like giving him a good punch in the nose.”8

It is difficult to reconstruct who read Weird Tales and even more challenging to determine who Seabury Quinn’s fans were. In How the Other Half Read: Advertising, Working-Class Readers, and Pulp Magazines, scholar Erin A. Smith argues that pulp fiction magazine readers were overwhelmingly a part of the male working class. She supports this assertion through an examination of secondary source scholarship on general magazine readership and a case study on pulp advertisements found in Black Mask. Smith argues that pulp advertisements pandered to perceived working class needs by marketing writing courses, vocational training, and business

apparel. She discusses how the introduction of scientific management practices posed a challenge to previous notions of manhood and that this tension was reflected in magazine advertisements. Advertisers tried to ease tensions over masculinity by offering products that would help define and display masculinity. She also speculates that pulp readers were comprised of people with less education or immigrants because she found a large amount of advertisements for educational materials within her case study.9

Although Smith has made some interesting observations, many of her arguments appear to be tailored toward specific types of pulp fiction magazines and should not be used for general assertions about pulp fiction readership. In fact, Smith also published a book entitled Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines, which specifically examines hard-boiled detective fiction to reconstruct readership.10 Many of the advertisements in Weird Tales have shown that a reconstruction of pulp readership is a complex problem that cannot be generalized. For example, the quantity of ads and the types of ads within Weird Tales vary according to time period. In the very late 1930s and early 1940s, a reader would come across the types of advertisements that Smith focuses on in her examination of Black Mask magazine. These ads address educational and job opportunities of which Smith argued indicated that the readers were working class.11 However, the mid and later 1930s Weird Tales magazines had a completely different style of advertising that contained a variety of different ads, many of which contradict Smith’s argument that pulp readers were working-class men who had lower levels of literacy. In

*Weird Tales* magazine from March 1938, one advertisement is for an illustrated addition of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The advertisement right above it is asking for readers to submit manuscripts to be published in foreign countries. *Weird Tales* also had several advertisements that were geared toward women. In the same magazine, there is an advertisement for a product called “slendarette,” that purportedly helped women lose weight. A general overview of the readers who wrote into “The Eyrie” and the types of advertisements that graced the magazine reveal that it is probable that men were the primary readers of the magazine. However, *Weird Tales*’ advertising was very diverse, making it difficult to conclude who read them.

Despite emerging studies on pulp fiction readership, scholars have yet to reconstruct *Weird Tales* readership out of the diverse material provided by the magazine. The same can be said of scholars’ overall examinations of Seabury Quinn. Despite the praise Quinn received during his pulp writing years, there are very few studies done on Seabury Quinn and his work. Gary Hoppenstand is one scholar who has written about Seabury Quinn and his contributions to *Weird Tales*. Hoppenstand’s essay provides readers with a general biography of Quinn and a list of authors influenced by his writing.

Although Hoppenstand’s study is very informative and useful, this thesis adds to the existing historiography of pulp fiction and specifically, of Seabury Quinn, by examining his use of sexuality and gender in his storytelling and connecting it to the cultural shifts of the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the current historiography of pulp fiction does not discuss how pulp fiction was

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15 Hoppenstand, *Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s*, 166-177.
used as a venue for nonconformity. Instead, most pulp historiography shows that the pulps reinforced the status quo. For example, Nathan Vernon Madison’s book *Anti-Foreign Imagery in American Pulps and Comic Books, 1920-1960*, examines American nativism in pulp fiction and comics.\(^{16}\) Madison’s work is very valuable, however his study does not examine any challenge to the status quo during the interwar period. Instead, Madison’s study examines nativism within the pulps, a common problem during the interwar period. Leif Sorensen’s article, “A Weird Modernist Archive: Pulp Fiction, Pseudobiblia, H.P. Lovecraft,” is another study that largely avoids the topic of nonconformity. Sorenson does, however, argue that Lovecraft’s stories reveal an aversion to modernism, especially as reflected in ethnographic studies. According to Sorenson, Lovecraft feared a rising multiculturalism with the great increase in immigration.\(^{17}\) Sorenson writes, “Lovecraft’s interests are shaped thoroughly by his antiquarian interest in Anglo-colonial folklore and his conviction that the twin encroaching forces of modernization and multiculturalism threatened this cultural tradition.”\(^{18}\) Although Quinn may have agreed with Lovecraft, and this antipathy to multiculturalism can also be seen throughout his work, Quinn’s stories are much more complicated.

Although many pulp fiction scholars study conformist themes within pulp fiction literature, there are a few academics who examine nonconformist subject matter within the pulps. In *Partners in Wonder: Women and the Birth of Science Fiction 1926-1965*, Eric Leif Davin argues that female science fiction writers often created strong alien characters that were female.

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., 504.
He asserts that these female aliens were created as both a rejection and reinforcement of traditional mindsets that categorized women as the “other.” On the one hand, female pulp writers reinforced this notion by presenting female characters as aliens instead of human. On the other hand, they rejected traditional notions of femininity by making female aliens powerful. In general, Davin’s study demonstrates a compromise between traditional and unconventional portrayals of women in science fiction pulps. Although this study is limited to examining conventional characterizations of femininity within Quinn’s fiction, it will address a topic that Davin, Sorenson, and Madison all failed to examine. The failure of these studies to explore nonconformist themes in masculinity within pulp fiction reveals a gap in scholarship, particularly because many pulp fiction magazines were popular in the 1920s and 1930s, times of great societal transitions. During the Progressive Era and 1920s, the emergence of the New Woman began to change societal attitudes about gender. The 1930s presented new revelations regarding masculinity due to the stress of massive unemployment and the perceived degradation of manhood, which led many to reconstruct masculine ideals. This thesis addresses this missing component in scholarship by examining both gender and sexual nonconformities within Seabury Quinn’s *Weird Tales* stories.

*Weird Tales* was an important outlet for exploring taboos of the interwar period. Its stories often featured dark themes such as murder, witchcraft, occult practices, excessive violence and rape. However, Seabury Quinn often went against the grain thematically as compared with other *Weird Tales* authors, specifically in his themes regarding sexuality. Some *Weird Tales* pulp fiction

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authors depict scenes of near rape or infidelity, but most stick within the confines of heterosexuality. Quinn’s portrayals of sexuality went against these societal confines through his creation of homosexual characters. Quinn also separated himself from his colleagues through his depiction of male gender. He largely rejected the male bodybuilder figure that emerged during the Progressive and 1920s periods and instead embraced a figure of masculinity which portrayed inner intellectual strengths and exterior diminutiveness. This diverged from other Weird Tales writers such as Robert E. Howard who popularized the figure of the brawny male. Writers like Howard created characters who defeated their enemies through pure strength and muscle. It is hard to imagine that Quinn’s Jules de Grandin, the eccentric and slender Frenchman and the main hero of his most popular tales, was popular at the same time as Robert E. Howard’s hyper-masculine heroes. However, this fact reveals a kind of elasticity in the American concept of masculinity.

Numerous scholarly studies that have emerged over the past few decades have explored the ambiguities in American conceptions of gender. Scholarship relating to gender tends to display a variety of interpretations over society’s views of gender. However, each of these emerging interpretations of gender have proved helpful for this study by showing a multifaceted approach to a complex topic. For example, in Creating the Modern Man: American Magazine and Consumer Culture 1900-1950, historian Tom Pendergast argues that twentieth-century masculinity has been reconstructed over time. According to Pendergast, two images of masculinity coexisted during the first fifty years of the twentieth-century, Victorian and modern masculinity. Victorian masculinity valued self-restraint, property ownership, hard work and the development of a strong character. However, this type of masculinity began to be undermined
when America became more corporate in the 1890s and continued to be undermined up into the 1920s and 1930s. Modern masculinity valued characteristics that would aid men in the corporate world such as a pleasing personality and appearance.\textsuperscript{21} Pendergast’s examination of masculinity is important to this study because many of Quinn’s characters possess both modern and Victorian characteristics.

In \textit{Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man}, John F. Kasson discusses some of the reactions men had toward modernism and the rise of scientific management practices. He explains that the loss in male autonomy that occurred at work between 1890 and 1914 caused many men to seek new ways to express masculinity. By examining Progressive-era bodybuilding figure Eugen Sandow, Kasson argues that the American bodybuilder was born out of frustrations from an ever growing modern society. According to Kasson, men began to build up their bodies as a means of proving themselves masculine. The diminishment of other rituals to establish male identity like war and conquering the frontier took away men’s ability to prove themselves men. Nevertheless, these men could now prove themselves men through a well-maintained and built male body.\textsuperscript{22} Kasson’s study provides good contextual information for my thesis. However, this study of Seabury Quinn’s fiction demonstrates that in this case the effeminate male figure proves his manhood through strong inner masculine values, not his strength or appearance.

Historian George Chauncey’s book \textit{Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940}, is a very useful examination of homosexuality during the interwar period. According to Chauncey, homosexuality was more socially accepted in


New York before the U.S. entered WWII. In fact, many people who lived during the interwar era did not classify men by their sexual preferences, but instead by their gendered behaviors. Men could still be considered masculine if they had sexual intercourse with other men as long as they enacted masculine roles. Men who chose to act feminine or performed passive sexual roles were looked down upon by society. Because Quinn was a resident of New York for many years, he may have been influenced by these aspects of urban sexualities. Through my own research of Seabury Quinn’s *Weird Tales* stories, I discovered a freer expression of homosexuality and male gender inversions, one that does not shun male effeminacy.

This thesis adds to these ongoing debates by examining gender and sexuality within a largely ignored medium. Quinn’s transgressions of gender and sexuality reveal the pulps to be a pathway toward unencumbered expression during the time when other outlets of expression were closed. Although a few studies have been done on select popular pulp fiction writers, very little has been done on Seabury Quinn who was an integral part of *Weird Tales*. This is an unfortunate lack of scholarship because Quinn explores masculinity and male homosexuality in a different way than his contemporaries. Although much of this thesis focuses on Quinn’s unconventional representations of masculinity, it also explores considerable conventionality when he depicts femininity.

The first chapter, “The Life and Times of Seabury Quinn: A Look at ‘Mr. *Weird Tales,*’” gives a brief history of *Weird Tales* magazine and includes a detailed biography on Seabury Quinn. It also discusses several factors that may have influenced Quinn’s work in *Weird Tales*. Quinn was a lawyer who specialized in mortuary jurisprudence and edited a mortuary trade

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journal, a factor that must have influenced Quinn’s portrayals of death and the dead in his *Weird Tales* stories.\(^{24}\) This chapter also examines literature that was written around the same time that Quinn was writing and discusses its possible influence on Quinn's Jules de Grandin stories. Although I was unable to find an abundance of information regarding Quinn's World War One (WWI) experiences in the American Expeditionary Forces, I briefly examine how WWI was referenced in a few of his stories.

The second chapter entitled, “Seabury Quinn: An Unconventional View of Traditional Femininity,” examines Seabury Quinn's descriptions of femininity and its relationship to larger historical movements within the interwar and progressive periods. The majority of Quinn's writings supported a reaction against the figure of the "New Woman" through his continual presentations of helpless female figures. Intriguingly, much of this orthodox view of femininity is veiled in depictions of unconventionality. Quinn will often place women in anti-feminine, and therefore unorthodox positions, in order to reaffirm traditional femininity by the end of the story. One can find this in stories like "The Devil's Bride," that portrays an anti-maternal female character only to transform her into a maternal character at the end of the story.\(^{25}\)

The last chapter entitled, “Jules de Grandin: The Ninety-Seven Pound Hero,” examines the evolution of the ideal masculine image in American culture from the Progressive Era to the 1930s and compares it with Seabury Quinn's representation of masculinity. Although Quinn stuck with traditional attitudes in his presentations of femininity, he was willing to portray different, non-masculine versions of manhood. This chapter delves deeply into Quinn’s depiction

\(^{24}\) Seabury Quinn, *A Syllabus of Mortuary Jurisprudence* (Kansas City: Clement Williams, 1933), forward.

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of his primary masculine character, Jules de Grandin, and argues that he symbolized a rejection of progressive-era and 1920s strongman figures while subsequently elevating and dignifying effeminate male characters. Quinn’s characterizations of inner masculine qualities are also examined. One will find that his most unconventional effeminate male characters are made conventional through an emphasis on their inner masculine qualities. Lastly, Quinn’s implied depiction of homosexuality is examined and its possible connection to effeminate men discussed.

Seabury Quinn was one of the most prolific storytellers of the *Weird Tales* genre. Surprisingly, his work and the details of his life have been relatively unexplored within pop culture scholarship. This study aims to bring a largely ignored author to the forefront. Although his technical writing skills are considered by some to be mediocre, his ideas transcended the boundaries of socially acceptable norms and crossed into the truly taboo. His portrayals of gender and sexuality were unique, even for *The Unique Magazine*. 
Chapter One

The Life and Times of Seabury Quinn: A Look at “Mr. Weird Tales”

The works of Seabury Quinn both challenge and conform to societal expectations in many unexpected ways. His idiosyncrasies can be better understood by examining different facets of Quinn’s life that may have influenced his writing. This chapter will begin with a brief biography of Seabury Quinn. In this section, Quinn’s occupational history will be examined and its impact on his writing discussed. This will be followed by a comparison and analysis of contemporary literary works that influenced Quinn throughout his writing career. The chapter will also examine Quinn’s depictions of WWI and discuss how the war influenced his writing. These influences shaped Quinn’s storytelling which enabled him to contribute a myriad of stylistically unique stories to *Weird Tales*, establishing him as one of the most popular authors to be published in the magazine.

This chapter will demonstrate that there were many different aspects of Quinn’s life that influenced his writing. One of the most straightforward examples of this can be found in literary comparisons. An examination of stories written by Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle reveal that Quinn was heavily impacted by previous models of detective fiction and utilized many of these models in his writing. His experiences with the mortuary industry also impacted his writing by constantly exposing him to the topic of death. However, probably the most significant underlying influence to Quinn’s *Weird Tales* is his experiences with WWI. Quinn’s rendition of WWI is varied, showing both soldiers’ experiences in battle and their lives outside of the front. However, it is Quinn’s dismal means of storytelling which most reflected the war. Much like other pulp writers who subscribed to the dark fantasy genre, Quinn’s grim settings
show that humankind is not safe and at any moment anyone could die. Men, women, and children are all victims of powerful enemies in Quinn’s stories. This is similar to dark fantasy stories which describe the approaching demise of humankind to a powerful force.\(^1\) Quinn’s fantasies reflect the destructive force of war which can destroy any life be it man, woman, or child.

Samuel Seabury Grandin Quinn (known as Seabury Quinn) was born to William and Augusta Quinn in Washington, D.C. on January 1, 1889 and died on December 24th, 1969, just seven days short of his eightieth birthday.\(^2\) Seabury Quinn’s father worked in the postal service while his mother was a homemaker.\(^3\) Not much is known about Quinn’s childhood, but as a young adult he aspired to be a soldier.\(^4\) This desire may have stemmed from the fact that Quinn’s paternal grandfather was Francis Quinn, a colonel who fought for the Union in the Civil War.\(^5\) Seabury Quinn’s middle name, Grandin, reveals his French heritage and is the basis for the name of his most popular serial character’s name, Jules de Grandin.\(^6\) Seabury Quinn also derived his name from a distant ancestor named Samuel Seabury who was the first Episcopalian bishop of America.\(^7\) According to a 1934 interview with Quinn by Julius Schwartz and Mortimer

\(^{1}\) Gary Hoppenstand, *The Nightmare, and Other Tales of Dark Fantasy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), ix.

\(^{2}\) Records that refer to Quinn as Samuel are scarce. One of the only records that has Quinn’s full name can be found on his application to National University Law School in Washington D.C. Seabury Quinn, “National University Law School: Entrance Application,” [1908]. RG0123, National University Records, University Archives, Special Collections Research Center, George Washington University, Washington D.C.


\(^{4}\) Schwartz and Weisinger, 10.


Weisinger, the *Weird Tales* author revealed that his parents seemed to have wanted him to follow his namesake and become a clergyman, but they eventually accepted his decision to pursue a career in law.⁸ Quinn graduated from Washington, D.C.’s National University Law School in 1910 with a Bachelor’s degree and only a year later he passed the bar and received his Master’s degree in law.⁹

After he finished school, Quinn began working in mortuary law. One of Quinn’s earliest law pieces was a 1915 article for *The Law Student’s Helper* entitled, “Burial Associations and the Law.” The article also references his earlier mortuary work entitled *Syllabus of Mortuary Jurisprudence* which was likely written sometime before 1915.¹⁰ Mortuary law was not the only subject on which Quinn published articles, he also wrote in several fictional and non-fictional magazines. For example, in December of 1917, Quinn sold a non-fiction article entitled, “Law of the Movies,” to *Brewster’s Motion Picture Magazine* which discussed numerous factual errors in movies that portrayed the legal system.¹¹

In 1917, Seabury Quinn’s career life was disrupted with the emergence of WWI when he was drafted at the age of twenty-eight.¹² Very little is known about Quinn’s participation in the war because his records were likely destroyed in the National Archives and Record

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⁸ Schwartz and Weisinger, 10.
Administration fire of 1973. Fortunately, Quinn left a brief record of his participation in the war through a comment in “The Eyrie,” a section of *Weird Tales* that printed reader comments and editorial remarks. In one issue Joseph A. Lovchik, a reader, accused Quinn of inaccuracies in his description of the procedures of the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) officers in his story “Washington Nocturne.” Lovchik disputed Quinn’s assertions that A.E.F. officers wore no identification tags. Quinn responded:

Says friend Lovchik: “. . . it is stated that officers in the A.E.F. wore no identification or ‘dog tags.’ This is wrong, I have upon good authority.” Vas you dere, Joie? Well, *I was*, and officers did *not* wear dog tags...Officers have [sic] no serial numbers, and dog tags were not issued to them. They were permitted, at their own expense, to have bracelets with their name, rank and arm of service, together with their unit, engraved upon them, but these had to be changed if they were transferred from one outfit to another. Also (especially in scout patrol work) they were required to remove all indicia of units from their persons and uniforms before going over . . . in conclusion I leave off as I began. Officers did *not* wear dog tags.14

This passage suggests that Quinn was likely a member of the A.E.F. with an extensive knowledge of this military branch. His familiarity with the procedures and regulations of scout patrols and officers indicates that he had experienced this first hand. With his college degree, he was likely an officer and his writings suggest that he served overseas.15

After the war, Quinn became a legal advisor to a mortuary trade journal called *The Casket*. According to Schwartz and Weisinger, Quinn needed the extra income to support his

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15 One can speculate that he may have been transferred to France to aid in the war effort. According to Brigham Young University’s statistical summary of WWI, 2,086,000 Americans went overseas during the war. Out of these 2,086,000 men, 1,390,000 fought in France. This places Quinn’s chances of having been in France at about 50%. While in France, Quinn could have picked up on the culture and used his experiences to create his French character, Jules de Grandin. Richard Hacken, “The War With Germany, A Statistical Summery,” Brigham Young University, [http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/memoir/docs/statistics/statstc.htm#5](http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/memoir/docs/statistics/statstc.htm#5) (accessed September 27, 2014).
recently widowed mother. Quinn’s previous experience with mortuary law seemed to help him immensely during his legal counselorship of The Casket. Eventually, Quinn became managing editor of The Casket and remained in that position after it merged with another mortuary trade journal called Sunnyside. It was during his early years as a legal practitioner and an expert on mortuary jurisprudence that Quinn began to write for various magazines. These new work opportunities soon proved invaluable to Quinn who, in 1921, married Mary Helen Molster, a woman he had known since grade school. By 1925, Quinn and his wife had moved from Washington, D.C. and were living in Brooklyn, New York. Only a year later Quinn’s only son, Seabury Quinn Jr., was born. Quinn’s marriage to Molster and the arrival of their only son did not change the author’s penchant for churning out fiction as he continued to contribute to numerous fictional magazines. Although many fans associate Quinn with his contributions to Weird Tales, he contributed stories to a plethora of other magazines during his lifetime. In addition to both Weird Tales and Young’s Magazine, his writing also appeared in The Thrill Book, Real Detective Tales, Detective Story Magazine, and Magic Carpet.

16 Schwartz and Wesinger state that Quinn became editor of The Casket after the death of his father, William Quinn who died on October 10, 1918, a month before armistice was declared. Schwartz and Weisinger, 10.
17 Ibid.
18 Mary Agnes Dougherty, “Jerome Burke’s Literary Agent,” American Funeral Director, April 2014, 52-54.
22 Hoppenstand, Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s, 168-175.
In 1923, Quinn submitted one of his first stories, “The Phantom Farmhouse,” to *Weird Tales*. Weird Tales provided a venue for Quinn to freely experiment with the grotesque and the taboo. This freedom allowed Quinn to create a unique style of storytelling that helped attract many readers to *Weird Tales*. This was important to *Weird Tales* editors who struggled to keep the magazine afloat. Although many *Weird Tales* stories such as H.P. Lovecraft’s “The Call of Cthulhu,” remain popular into the twenty-first century, in its day *Weird Tales* was never a popular magazine in terms of sales.

The first issue of *Weird Tales* appeared in March of 1923. A typical *Weird Tales* issue contained about ten stories and one or two poems dispersed throughout the issue. These stories and poems were not all horror focused, instead many stories were dedicated to science fiction, fantasy, and adventure topics. At the end of almost every *Weird Tales* issue, “The Eyrie,” published readers’, writers’, and editorial comments. Sometimes “The Eyrie,” would also include a brief preview of stories that would appear in the next issue. Some of the earliest issues of *Weird Tales* also featured a column entitled, “Ask Houdini,” where fans could write to the magazine about puzzling magic performances or seances that they witnessed. The inquiries received responses explaining how the magician or medium performed his or her trick.

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25 Ibid.

Some of the earlier issues also contained a section entitled, “Weird Crimes,” at the end of
the issue where real crimes were discussed by Seabury Quinn. In most Weird Tales magazine
issues, the end pages of the magazine also dedicated some space to advertisements, many of
which fit with the theme of the magazine by advertising occult or mystical goods. Lastly, most
issues offered a sexually alluring cover illustration. Many Weird Tales covers have provoked
commentary by both fans and scholars alike for their unique artistry. This artistry also evoked the
taboo by its depiction of often naked, bound women and Satanic cults. Mary Elizabeth
Counselman, a contributor to Weird Tales, described the freedoms that the magazine’s editors
gave to both writers and artists. According to Counselman, cover artist Margaret Brundage
provided illustrations that depicted, “not only nudes but sadism and other things that were just
considered out-and-out taboos by other pulp magazines, but we were allowed to use them in
Weird Tales. Farnsworth Wright and Dorothy McIlwraith, the editors of Weird Tales, were very
broadminded about things like that.” Cover illustrations showing of sexually provocative
scenes of bondage and male dominance over female victims helped ease male anxieties by
reinforcing male superiority while also helping writers like Quinn to create stories that
challenged interwar sexual and gender propriety.

The history of Weird Tales was defined from early on by its tolerance and exploitation of
taboo subjects, perhaps to attract readers away from other pulp publications that were more
conventional. The magazine was originally a part of a joint venture by the founders of
Indianapolis-based Rural Publications, Jacob Clark Hennenberger and J.M. Lansinger, beginning

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27 These articles would discuss infamous criminal murders such as those performed by Gilles de Retz, a
person that Quinn later referenced in his fictional stories. Seabury Quinn, “Bluebeard,” Weird Tales, October 1923,
63-68.

28 John Pelan ed., Conversations with the Weird Tales Circle (Colorado: Centipede Press, 2009), 487.
in 1923. After only a year, the magazine experienced significant financial difficulties, which caused Lansinger to withdraw his support for *Weird Tales* and left Hennenberger to provide for the magazine under a new publishing company, Popular Fiction Publishing.²⁹ According to literary scholar Leif Sorenson, Hennenberger, “envisioned *Weird Tales* as an outlet for stories that did not fit the conventions of existing pulps.”³⁰ Hennenberger dismissed the magazine’s first editor, Edwin Baird, and hired Farnsworth Wright who became the publication’s most prominent editor.³¹

Many fans argue that it was under Wright’s editorship that *Weird Tales* experienced its Golden Age. *Weird Tales* writers who knew Wright stated that he was a very thorough editor and praised him for his willingness to work with them on a rejected piece to make it publishable. While some writers complained of Wright’s meticulous editorial choices, many also saw that he was an integral part of *Weird Tales*.³² One of the most important aspects to Wright’s editorship was how he helped establish the “weird genre.” In an article lauding Wright’s editorship, E. Hoffmann Price wrote that Wright believed that horror stories of the past often put too much emphasis on supernatural occurrences. One example given by Price is in ghost stories. Traditionally, the climax of a ghost story was the appearance of the ghost and its subsequent negative effect on the leading character.³³ According to Price, Wright asserted that modern readers demanded a more dynamic type of story:

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³⁰ Ibid.
³¹ Ibid.
We can accept a ghost, a vampire, or an evil spirit only when unusual and
dramatic action rather than mere presence is the substance of the story. The
supernatural as such is by no means adequate; and since we deal with the
impossible, it is all the more necessary that they should be convincing; that they
should seem real. We have printed tales of vampires vividly and humanly
characterized instead of being obscured by a time-worn litany of garlic and holly
sprigs; and we have presented stories whose point was not the personal
appearance of Satan, but rather his unusual reaction to a startling and dramatic
situation.34

This dynamism was evident in stories by popular authors like Seabury Quinn who cast a
sympathetic eye on many traditional monsters and used them as characters. This may be one
reason why Wright accepted so many of Quinn’s stories. It is even claimed that during Quinn’s
entire relationship with the magazine, he never received a rejection slip for a single story.35
Though this might be exaggerated, reader comments left in “The Eyrie,” indicate that Quinn was
one of the most popular and beloved authors of Weird Tales.

Wright’s editorial choice of publishing works by popular authors like Quinn indicate that
he was able to anticipate readers’ preferences very well. However, it was Wright’s open
mindedness that most influenced the magazine. In an interview conducted by Stephen Gresham,
Mary Elizabeth Counselman stated that Weird Tales was, “the one pulp that had no restrictions
and no taboos . . . you could tryout [sic] a lot of things that got several writers into trouble, such
as devil-worship and witchcraft. You wouldn’t believe the trouble that Seabury Quinn got in with
his De Grandin novels.”36 Counselman describes both Wright and his successor, Dorothy
McIlwraith, as very broadminded.37 These editorial attitudes gave writers a welcoming
atmosphere where they could test and push the limits of convention.

34 Ibid., 90.
35 Schwartz and Weisinger, 12.
36 Pelan, 487.
37 Ibid.
Dorothy McIlwraith was the third editor for *Weird Tales* who took over for Wright in May of 1940. Wright had been suffering from Parkinson’s disease for many years and finally succumbed to the illness on June 12, 1940. Although the magazine still suffered financially, McIlwraith kept it going for fourteen more years. There were some minor changes under McIlwraith’s editorship, but many established writers continued to write for the magazine until it released its final issue in September of 1954.

As previously indicated, *Weird Tales* was an important outlet that allowed creative writers like Seabury Quinn to express their individuality. Each editor enabled Quinn to further his writing career and depict taboo subjects that may have otherwise been banned in other literary avenues. Though Baird was only editor for the first year of *Weird Tales*, he gave Quinn a door through which he could enter to become one of *Weird Tales*’ most beloved authors. Both Wright and McIlwraith continued to allow Quinn to publish his stories without inhibiting his creative and unconventional writing style. This was not a mistake on the part of the editors as Quinn remained one of the most popular and prolific writers of the magazine, and his Jules de Grandin stories lasted from nearly the magazine’s inception to its last decade.

Although it may be difficult for contemporary readers to grasp the appeal of his stories, many readers of the interwar period could not get enough of Quinn. Joseph C. Kempe from Detroit wrote, “The de Grandin tale was much better than *Pledged to the Dead* [another Quinn

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41 While it is possible that some of his works were edited, E. Hoffmann Price, a contemporary of Quinn’s, stated that Quinn was extremely opposed to any changes made to his manuscripts. E. Hoffmann Price, *Book of the Dead: Friends of Yesteryear: Fictioneers & Others*, 156.

story], in the October issue. I think Jules is a swell WT character. I’ve never yet read one of his exploits that didn’t fascinate me in some way and to some extent."43 William F. Zuckert, Jr. paid another compliment to Quinn by stating, “This letter would be incomplete without a mention of my favorite author and character. I refer, of course, to Seabury Quinn with his inimitable Jules de Grandin—a grand pair whose adventures I hope to be able to follow as long as these old eyes can see the printed page.”44 In another fan letter, Alexis Papoff wrote, “Seabury Quinn’s story Lynne Foster is Dead was one of the most absorbing stories I have ever read . . . Seabury Quinn is one of your best and most versatile authors. His stories are always excellent, lovely and imaginative and fantastic . . . He is one of my main reasons for buying this magazine.”45

By the late 1930s, a handful of readers seemed tired of the French detective and began calling on Quinn to find new material. For example, in the April 1939 issue of Weird Tales, reader C. Wilkos writes, “Mr. Quinn’s Globe of Memories, Roads, and Goetterdaemmerung ought to be enough encouragement for him to forget M. de Grandin.”46 Weird Tales reader Arthur E. Walker’s comment seemed to concur with Wilkos when in 1937 he wrote, “Seabury Quinn rates much higher when he drops the silly de Grandin stuff.”47 In 1938, T. Gelbert, from Niagara Falls, remarked, “I am glad to see Seabury Quinn’s tales featuring others besides Jules de Grandin and the stupid Trowbridge.”48 Although these comments are encountered sporadically

throughout “The Eyrie,” they were not overwhelming enough to lead to any discernible editorial change in the policy regarding Quinn’s stories. Quinn remained one of *Weird Tales*’ most published writers and continued to produce de Grandin stories. Judging from the complaints posted when Quinn did not publish enough stories, many readers seem to have agreed that Quinn was a vital asset to the magazine.49

Jules de Grandin proved to be one of Quinn’s most popular characters, however, Quinn never established a detailed biography for his serial protagonist. Jules de Grandin was a French detective who investigates supernatural phenomena. Although de Grandin was the central character of the series, Quinn never revealed much about his character’s life before he arrived at the doorstep of the office of Dr. Trowbridge who emerged as the narrator and a secondary character of the de Grandin series. In the first story, “Terror on the Links,” de Grandin is introduced as Professor Jules de Grandin of the Paris police. Jules de Grandin states that he works for the University of Paris and St. Lazaire Hospital.50 He explains, “at present I combine the vocation of savant with the avocation of criminologist.”51 After these brief statements, however, little is revealed about de Grandin. Instead, readers are forced to piece together his past from bits and pieces of information told in other stories.

De Grandin occasionally describes his life in France and other locales when a case connects to an event from the past. For example, in "The House Without a Mirror," readers learn


51 Ibid., 21.
that de Grandin was once a plastic surgeon. During WWI, de Grandin reconstructed the faces and bodies of soldiers who had been damaged by flamethrowers. This past experience connected with present events in "The House Without a Mirror," when de Grandin had to reconstruct a woman's disfigured face.\textsuperscript{52} One can see a brief reference to WWI through this story by de Grandin’s experience as a plastic surgeon. Both during and after WWI, there was a surge in facial reconstruction surgeries, many of which were performed on survivors of the war. Although facial prosthesis was not a new concept in the field of medicine, facial reconstructions had never been in such high demand as they were during and after WWI. As Katherine Feo points out in her article entitled, “Memory, Masks and Masculinities in the Great War,” modern technological advancements greatly increased the chances of facial injury during the war, which increased the need for such reconstructions.\textsuperscript{53} Quinn was likely reflecting some of his own encounters with men who had undergone this type of surgery during the war.

In a few stories, de Grandin describes a long lost love. For example, in his de Grandin novelette, "The Devil's Bride," Quinn reveals that de Grandin was once in love with a beautiful woman named Heloise. However, de Grandin’s family forbade their marriage and Heloise became a Carmelite nun.\textsuperscript{54} Although this seemed to have affected de Grandin deeply, he found solace in his friendship with his sidekick Dr. Trowbridge and the adventures they shared together.

Quinn revealed less about Dr. Samuel Trowbridge's past and very little about his character in general. Some Seabury Quinn fans argue that Dr. Trowbridge first appeared as Dr. 

\textsuperscript{52} Seabury Quinn, “The House Without a Mirror,” in \textit{The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin} (Shelburne: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2001), 360-362.


\textsuperscript{54} Seabury Quinn, \textit{The Devil's Bride}, 118-119.
Towbridge in a non-de Grandin story called, “The Stone Image” (1919). In this story, a Dr. Towbridge appears as a physician who cares for the narrator of the story, Phil Haig. Dr. Towbridge’s maid in the de Grandin tales, Nora McGinnis, also makes an appearance in this story. However, instead of working for Dr. Towbridge, she is Phil Haig’s maid. Like the de Grandin stories, little else is revealed about Dr. Towbridge in “The Stone Image.”

As the narrator of the Jules de Grandin stories, Towbridge’s characterization is built upon his present thoughts and feelings about the events surrounding him. This makes Towbridge’s background difficult to piece together. For example, when Dr. Towbridge is introduced in “Terror on the Links,” readers learn only that he is a doctor who used to be an emergency hospital intern. In the short story, “The Devil-People,” Quinn divulges that Dr. Towbridge attended Amherst College, but tells nothing about what he did at Amherst or what degree he pursued. Readers learn that Towbridge is very logical and does not believe in the supernatural. He often scoffs or questions de Grandin's thought processes despite the fact that he has been directly exposed to the supernatural several times. Like de Grandin, there is scant information about Dr. Towbridge’s love life. In "The Hand of Glory," Dr. Towbridge reveals that his only love was resting peacefully in a cemetery. Dr. Towbridge also seems to find solace through his companionship with de Grandin.

After reading three or more de Grandin stories, readers could probably predict what would occur in subsequent tales. Dr. Towbridge and de Grandin usually stumble upon some

55 Hoppenstand, *Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s*, 174-175.
supernatural case either through a client seeking help or through information from a baffled
sergeant named Jeremiah Costello. De Grandin promises to investigate the case while Dr.
Trowbridge expresses skepticism that the case is really supernatural. During his cases, de
Grandin often interviews witnesses or conducts a stake out to flush out the supernatural
phenomenon. De Grandin then disappears for a few days to follow a lead, leaving Dr.
Trowbridge to speculate about de Grandin’s activities. When de Grandin returns, he sets up a trap
for the supernatural entity and destroys it. De Grandin then explains to his stupefied partner step
by step how he solved the case. Quinn’s use of this formula in most of his de Grandin stories
allows his readers to become fully engaged without feeling overly apprehensive over the well
being of his popular characters.

While it is unclear why Quinn became so popular during this time, many scholars argue
that interwar readers desired formulaic and optimistic stories. In *The American Private Eye: The
Image in Fiction*, scholar David Geherin argues that the American interwar period was fraught
with negative social, political, and economic changes, including uncertainties over the post-WWI
era, Prohibition, and the Great Depression. These changes challenged the belief that the world
was a benevolent place and that people could control their own destiny through their actions.
Geherin notes that the enforcement of prohibition produced a rise in crime through bootlegging.
The rise in crime made many Americans question the legitimacy of classic detective fiction
which often portrayed crime as a rarity, easily solved by the detective hero. American objections
toward classical detective models led to the birth of the hard-boiled detective genre. However,
Geherin writes that many Americans still found comfort in reading traditional detective stories.60

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Co., 1985), 4-8.
Their popularity can be seen, “less as evidence of the willful blindness of its readers and more as a tribute to the persistence of its strong nostalgic appeal, for the neat logical conclusions to most such mysteries continued to celebrate the ‘cozy tea-and-crumpety-sense of God’s-in-His-heaven-all’s-right-with-the-world’ assurance that was noticeably missing from real life.”

Gary Hoppenstand offers a similar analysis in his essay entitled, “Seabury Quinn’s Jules de Grandin: The Supernatural Sleuth in Weird Tales.” He writes that Quinn’s highly formulaic writing and positive depictions of American crime and punishment fulfilled interwar readers’ sense of justice. Hoppenstand explains:

[T]he use of a recognizably predictable pattern of narrative action in which a baffling crime is committed, a highly intelligent detective is summoned to solve the mystery, and the guilty party is caught and brought to justice offers readers a sense of comfort and security. The psychology of the classic detective story is to reassure the reader that law and justice prevail in a world sometimes disrupted by chaos and violence. The detective hero, in his or her various adventures, reestablishes the prevailing social order.

On the one hand, Quinn’s Jules de Grandin stories certainly satisfy these needs through their predictability and positive portrayal of justice revealed at the conclusion. On the other hand, Quinn offers a very dark and unpredictable portrayal of life before the story’s villain is conquered. Quinn’s characterizations of the supernatural, bodily mutilations, and the murder of young children connect him to the genre of dark fantasy.

In his book In Search of the Paper Tiger: A Sociological Perspective of Myth, Formula and the Mystery Genre in Entertainment Print Mass Medium, Hoppenstand argues that pulp

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61 Ibid., 6-7.
62 Hoppenstand, Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s, 171-172.
63 Ibid., 171.
author H.P. Lovecraft helped found dark fantasy through his 1917 story “Dagon.” However, after further research, Hoppenstand revised his assertion when he edited an anthology of stories by Francis Stevens entitled, *The Nightmare, and Other Tales of Dark Fantasy*. In his introduction to this anthology, Hoppenstand attributes the popularization of dark fantasy to Francis Stevens, a pulp author and occasional *Weird Tales* contributor. Hoppenstand argues that dark fantasy arose from Stevens’ and other *Weird Tales* authors’ reactions to WWI. He writes that WWI:

[W]as unlike any that preceded it in human history in its apocalyptic sense of global conflict and destruction . . . the war . . . helped to reshape popular fiction, as illustrated in the supernatural tale. The popular British, Edwardian, antiquarian ghost story . . . became less dominant in popular fiction by the 1920s and was supplanted by pulp fiction dark fantasy.

Dark fantasy, as described by Hoppenstand, portrays a very dismal view of life. It usually describes a non-human, malevolent being that is intent upon the destruction of humanity. In the typical dark fantasy story, the hero often does not prevail when faced against these dark forces.

In a review entitled “The King of Weird,” Joyce Carol Oates discusses the work of famous dark fantasy writer H.P. Lovecraft. Oates states that Lovecraft often depicted the destruction of his scholarly protagonists when they unearth a secret that unlocks the past. The discovery of the past brings almost certain doom to the scholars of the present. Oates states, “Yet in many Lovecraft tales the intellectual protagonist is lured to his doom or disintegration by the prospect of transcending time, by attempting a Faustian ‘entry to many unknown and incomprehensible

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65 Hoppenstand, *The Nightmare, and Other Tales of Dark Fantasy*, x-xix.
66 Ibid., xviii.
67 Ibid., ix.
realms of additional or indefinitely multiplied dimensions—be they within or outside the given
space-time continuum.”69 Although H.P. Lovecraft’s dark fantasy stories almost always portray
the demise of humanity, Quinn’s de Grandin tales offer a structure in which dark forces never
win.

An examination of Quinn’s *Weird Tales* stories reveal that they were not quite consistent
with Hoppenstand’s definition of dark fantasy. In Quinn’s stories, non-human entities often target
specific people to torment and a few supernatural beings are even virtuous. The hero almost
always prevails and justice is served. This goes against traditional dark fantasy that gives
supernatural characters power over mankind. These entities often overpower human protagonists
as they vie for power, indicating that they will eventually take over humanity.70 This rarely
happens to Quinn’s protagonists who fulfill the classic detective role by establishing equilibrium.

Although Quinn does not fit perfectly into previous scholars’ definitions of dark fantasy,
one can see very dismal tones in his writing. In general, Quinn’s tales often do not involve the
destruction of the earth by evil forces, but they do portray the murder of children in vivid detail.
Even writers such as H.P. Lovecraft usually did not describe the corpses of dead children in their
stories. The notion that no one is safe from the rampages of evil supernatural antagonists
suggests that Quinn’s stories were founded on a bleak conception of the world. However, this
bitterness is matched by the figure of de Grandin who shows that the world is safe in his hands.
Quinn’s stories had great shock value and his constant description of the forbidden matched the
overall ambience of *Weird Tales*. These tales were probably meant to lure readers, who grew tired
of the everyday conventionality of other publications.

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69 Ibid.
Still, it is difficult to directly link Quinn’s dismal depictions of the world directly to WWI. Most of Quinn’s stories do not recount the war and it is difficult to discern how much of his writing style is based directly on his war experiences. It could be argued that the grotesque portrayals of the dead in Quinn’s fictions are representational of his experiences in WWI as well as his familiarity with mortuary science. There are a few stories that reference the war through various characters’ recollections. These characters are well respected in Quinn’s narratives and often reflect the sacrifices WWI soldiers made for their country.

One of Quinn’s earliest references to the war can be found in his first fictional story entitled, “Painted Gold” (1919). In his interview with Schwartz and Weisinger, Quinn described the story as a “sort of a sexy story based on personal experiences.”\(^71\) The story is not set in the battlefront, but is, instead, a romantic story that emphasizes the loneliness soldiers endured during the war. It provides an inside look into the life of a fictional lieutenant named Rathburn Thomas, a member of the Adjutant General’s Department (A.G.D.) in New York. He was in charge of the embarkation of overseas forces and never served overseas during the war. Instead of focusing on the horrors of the war, this story emphasizes longing and despair. The war, as described by Thomas, caused a great sense of detachment and loneliness for him. Thomas also describes the boredom of his life as a lieutenant stuck in his homeland.\(^72\) According to Thomas the “months of continuous masculine association at table, in quarters, on duty and at play, began to tell on his nerves. He grew to hate the sight of a uniform as a convict loathes the garb of his fellow jailbirds, and looked longingly after every pretty face . . . that passed him on the street.”\(^73\)

\(^71\) Schwartz and Weisinger, 11.
\(^73\) Ibid., loc. 993.
This led Thomas to seek out a woman named Susan Gregory who, though the author does not explicitly say so, is likely a prostitute. Although turned off by Gregory’s obvious impropriety, Thomas realizes that she possesses a heart of gold and he has fallen in love. The story ends with Thomas asking her to marry him. At first, Gregory refuses his offer, stating that he looks down upon her kind. However, he convinces her that she is a true lady in his eyes and she accepts his proposal. This is truly a unique story for Quinn, who usually depicts women in a more conventional light. However, the story really reflects some of the problems that men faced during the war. The depiction of a prostitute with a heart of gold probably softened some of the shame that men in the military may have felt after their indiscretions with prostitutes. Quinn also keeps some of his conventionality by having his character marry the prostitute because he is taking Gregory out of that life of prostitution.

A story that discusses more of the combat aspect of the war is “The Gods of East and West” (1928). In this story, a Native American character named Dr. Wolf briefly describes his experience during the war, “I was transferred to the A.E.F., and finished my military career in a burst of shrapnel in the Argonne. I’ve three silver bones in each leg now and am drawing half-compensation from the government every month.” This conversation on the war continues when Dr. Trowbridge describes a dinner conversation with Dr. Wolf:

[H]is [Dr. Wolf’s] matter-of-fact stories of the ‘old contempts’ titanic struggle from the Marne and back, night raids in the trenches and desperate hand-to-hand fights in the blackness of No Man’s Land, of the mud and blood and silent heroism of the dressing-stations and of the phantom armies which rallied to the assistance of the British at Mons were colorful as the scenes of some old Spanish tapestry.

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74 Ibid., loc. 1080-1329.
76 Ibid.
While these are the only two quotes that discuss the war in this story, readers get a clear picture of the sacrifice that Dr. Wolf made for his country.

Like many veterans of WWI, Dr. Wolf suffered an injury from shrapnel and had surgery to help him walk. Reconstructive surgery also appears in “The House Without a Mirror.” In the story, a young woman’s face is disfigured by a mad surgeon and it is up to de Grandin to reconstruct it. Before he operates on her face, de Grandin explains that he reconstructed soldier’s faces during the war. Two other references to the war can also be found in “Mephistopheles and Company Ltd.,” (1928) and “A Gamble in Souls” (1933). In “A Gamble in Souls,” there is a brief description of two brothers who fought in the war and both suffered from a gas attack.

The beginning of “Mephistopheles and Company Ltd.,” describes de Grandin’s dedication to the memory of dead WWI soldiers by his salute to a monument in a park. Quinn writes, “Ten thousand times a day friends and neighbors—even relatives—of the gold-starred names on the honor roll of that monument passed through the park, yet of all the passers-by Jules de Grandin was the only one who habitually rendered military honors to the cenotaph each time his steps led past it.” This is a touching tribute to the memory of WWI soldiers, but Quinn spends little time on the monument and quickly commences to the core of the story, which deals with a fraudulent medium.

A few stories do discuss the war in more detail. In “Satan’s Stepson,” the main character, Donald Tanis, is a captain during the war and meets his wife, Sonia, when she nurses him back

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80 Ibid., 183-217.
from shell shock. Sonia’s first husband, Alexis Konstantin, was a Russian spy who was believed to be dead, executed in France for espionage. However, Konstantin survives and kidnaps Sonia to perform a black mass for which he needs a pure soul to willingly participate. This story uses fiction to discuss many of the war’s realities. Besides shell shock, Quinn also mentions gassing and war injuries sustained by troops. In one section, de Grandin and his colleagues must escape from an attack of phosgene gas, the same chemical used against troops in WWI. Sonia’s work as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.) allowed her to meet many injured soldiers during WWI. This included her husband who she treated for shell shock and another soldier who died from the loss of his leg.  

Quinn also voices his disappointment at the Russians for their withdrawal from the war. Quinn writes, “The second revolution had taken place in Russia and her new masters had betrayed the Allies at Brest-Litovsk. But America had come into the war and things began to look bright for us, despite the Bolshevik’s perfidy.” Whether Quinn posed a fictional Russian character as an antagonist because of the Brest-Litovsk treaty is a matter of debate. However, it is likely that Quinn’s deep disappointment in the Russians continued to be reflected in his portrayals of Russian characters throughout his career.

Though most of Quinn’s stories are sporadic in their mention of WWI, there is one tale that Quinn dedicated to the war. “Washington Nocturne” (1939) dealt with the consequences and realities of the war. It describes the lives of three people who lose loved ones during the war and the subsequent choices they made because of their losses. While this story seems to reflect more of the events that led up to WWII, it describes these occurrences within the context of the

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82 Ibid., 121.
first world war. The rich descriptions of trench warfare make “Washington Nocturne,” an illuminating story that was likely retold from first hand experience of the author. For example, one detailed description states:

The line of shadows moved with less noise than the breeze among the wheat as they [the soldiers] slipped along the gully, faces darkened, rifles held well out to keep them from betraying clinks on buttons, gas masks at alert . . . The detonation of a field gun broke the quiet, followed by another, and another, and another. Shells whined with shrill crescendo . . . Now the air was filled with whistling, shrieking shells, the earth was going crazy, bubbling and bursting like a pot of boiling porridge . . . Sergeant Ernst Moeller lay upon his side, blood gushing from his neck. A shell fragment had struck him just below the ear, crashing through his jawbone as if it has been egg-shell, shattering veins and arteries.\(^\text{84}\)

This passage not only has a very detailed description of events likely to occur during trench warfare, it also reveals some inside military details like the positioning of the gun while marching to minimize detection by enemies.

Although the war clearly impacted some of Quinn’s work, there were other influences on the development of his leading protagonist. According to Quinn, the creation of Jules de Grandin was nearly instantaneous: “One day, thinking up an idea for a yarn, I picked up my pen, started to write—and de Grandin materialized. Jules de Grandin is entirely a synthetic character, as is the locale, Harrisonville.”\(^\text{85}\) The fact that Quinn admits that de Grandin is a synthetic character is a good indication that his formulation was taken from various sources whether subconsciously or not. Although he claimed to have simply thought up de Grandin, a few scholars have speculated that Quinn may have been influenced by Agatha Christie’s popular Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, who first emerged in 1920.\(^\text{86}\) Though there is no proof of this, it is hard to deny that Jules

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 47.
\(^{85}\) Schwartz and Weisinger, 11.
\(^{86}\) Hoppenstand, Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s, 174.
de Grandin and Poirot share similar characteristics. Both de Grandin and Poirot speak French as a lingua franca in their stories. Both Poirot and de Grandin mix the English and French languages together while they speak, but not to the extent where it would be confusing for non-French speaking readers. This makes Agatha Christie’s and Seabury Quinn’s writing styles very similar and familiar for readers acquainted with the works of both authors. The abundance of similarities between de Grandin and Christie’s Hercule Poirot could indicate that Quinn mirrored his character after Christie’s in an attempt to draw in readers.

In the authors’ descriptions of Poirot and de Grandin, they both emphasize their characters’ eccentricities. Both Poirot and de Grandin share overzealous and eccentric reactions to the discovery of evidence. For example, in Christie’s *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), Poirot leaps when he learns that a character’s bell was damaged. Poirot exclaims, “‘See you, one should not ask for outside proof — no, reason should be enough. But the flesh is weak, it is consolation to find that one is on the right track. Ah, my friend, I am like a giant refreshed. I run! I leap!’ And, in very truth, run and leap he did, gambolling wildly down the stretch of lawn outside the long window.” In Seabury Quinn’s, “The Isle of Missing Ships,” (1926) de Grandin becomes excited when he and Dr. Trowbridge discover rocket launchers. De Grandin states, “Do you see? he asked. These are for firing rockets — observe the powder burns on them. And here’ — his voice rose to an excited pitch and he fairly danced in eagerness — see what is before

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87 Quinn stated that he did not speak French but incorporated French phrases within his de Grandin stories for comedic relief. Schwartz and Weisinger, 11.
89 Ibid., 129.
us!"\textsuperscript{90} For an American reader, both leaping and dancing over the discovery of evidence are highly unusual behaviors for male detectives.

Physical descriptions of Poirot and de Grandin are also very similar. In a comparison of Poirot from Agatha Christie’s \textit{The Murder on the Links} (1923) and de Grandin from Seabury Quinn’s similarly titled “Terror on the Links,” (1925) both protagonists are nearly indistinguishable. Christie describes Poirot as, “An extraordinary little man! Height, five feet four inches, egg-shaped head carried a little to one side, eyes that shone green when he was excited, stiff military moustache, air of dignity immense! He was neat and dandified in appearance.”\textsuperscript{91} In “Terror on the Links,” Seabury Quinn introduces readers to Jules de Grandin for the first time as, “the perfect example of the rare French blond type, rather under medium height, but with a military erectness of carriage that made him seem several inches taller than he was actually was . . . With his blond mustache waxed at the ends in two perfectly horizontal points and those twinkling, stock-taking eyes, he reminded me of an alert tom-cat.”\textsuperscript{92} Poirot and de Grandin are both short, mustached, possess remarkable eyes, and a military air.

Like de Grandin in “Terror on the Links,” Poirot has also distinguished himself in Christie’s works by his feline mannerisms and attributes. For example, in \textit{The Murder on the Links}, Christie writes, “Poirot looked at him, his eyes narrowed, catlike, until they only showed a gleam of green.”\textsuperscript{93} Much later in the same story Christie compares Poirot’s agility to that of a

\textsuperscript{92}Quinn, “Terror on the Links,” 20.
\textsuperscript{93}Christie, \textit{Murder on the Links}, 157.
This is similar to Quinn’s own remarks on de Grandin’s feline features. In the story, “The Dust of Egypt,” (1930) Dr. Trowbridge describes de Grandin:

His attitude was one of intent listening for some expected sound, and I found myself thinking again how suggestive of a feline the little fellow was. With his round, blue eyes widened by the intenitness of his attention, the sharp, needle-fine ends of his waxed mustache fairly quivering with nervous tautness and his delicate, narrow nostrils now and again expanding as though he would discover the presence of that for which he waited by virtue of his sense of smell, he was for all the world tensed, expectant, but infinitely patient tom-cat stationed at the entrance of a promising rathole.\(^95\)

This passage features yet another example of Quinn’s emulation of Christie. However, it is important to consider that both passages that describe Poirot and de Grandin as catlike accompany descriptions of detection. The detectives were likely personified as cats because cats are seen as sly and agile creatures, the ideal characteristics for a detective to possess, albeit, usually not male ones.\(^96\)

Lastly, both de Grandin and Poirot share a deductive omniscience. Mr. Hastings, the sidekick of Poirot, and de Grandin’s sidekick, Dr. Trowbridge, seem only to exist as narrators and admirers of their colleagues. Both de Grandin and Poirot criticize their sidekicks for their lack of reasoning. In Seabury Quinn’s, “Pledged to the Dead,” (1937) de Grandin sharply rebukes his companion for not following a connection he made between a ghost story and what had been happening to their client. Dr. Trowbridge states, ‘I can’t see the connection between ———’ ‘Night and breaking dawn, perhaps?’ [Dr. de Grandin] asked sarcastically. ‘If two and two make four, my friend, and even you will not deny they do, then these things I have told you give

\(^{94}\) Ibid., 235.
an explanation of our young friend’s trouble.’”\textsuperscript{97} Poirot had similar reactions to Mr. Hastings’ seeming dim wittedness. In \textit{The Murder on the Links} Poirot examined some footprints that other detectives had ignored because they appeared to be separate from the crime. Hastings doubted the significance of the footprints as well until Poirot explained that they had been covered up after the crime took place. Hastings states, “‘I did not realize—’ ‘That the foot would be inside the boot? [Poirot replied] You do not use your excellent mental capacities sufficiently.’”\textsuperscript{98} It is only at the conclusion of the stories that de Grandin and Poirot reveal their investigative processes, much of which is hidden from their assistants, as well as from the reader, until the end.

An ostensible omniscience is also characteristic of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes as well. This is a trait that both Christie and Quinn may have borrowed from Doyle, who also describes the thought process of Sherlock Holmes at the end of each story. For example, in \textit{The Hound of Baskervilles}, the last chapter is dedicated to Holmes’ explanation of his deductions.\textsuperscript{99} Watson always remains in awe over Holmes’ abilities. After Holmes compliments him on his seemingly logical deductions regarding a cane, Watson states, “He had never said as much before, and I must admit that his words gave me keen pleasure, for I had often been piqued by his indifference to my admiration and to the attempts which I had made to give publicity to his methods. I was proud, too, to think that I had so far mastered his system.”\textsuperscript{100} However, Holmes soon scoffs at Watson’s logic when he deduces that most of Watson’s guesses about the cane were wrong. On the other hand, Watson is depicted as a much more capable individual as

\textsuperscript{98}Christie, \textit{The Murder on the Links}, 61.
\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., 3.
compared with Dr. Trowbridge when it comes to gathering clues. For example, Holmes entrusted
Watson to go to Baskervilles and gather information. Although Holmes was trailing Watson and
doing some investigation in secret, Watson uncovered many useful clues. Trowbridge almost
always accompanies de Grandin on investigations and is usually too skeptical to be helpful with
investigations. Most of the time, Trowbridge’s aid to de Grandin consists of doing as he is told
and occasionally, along with the detective, physically fighting off villains. Although this differs
from Doyle’s description of Watson, it is clear that Quinn was following the precedent set by
Doyle on male companionship.

The biggest difference between Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes and de Grandin
is the lack of eccentricity. Holmes could be seen as an eccentric because of his deductive abilities
in solving crime. However, Holmes acts within the bounds of traditional masculinity through his
behaviors. Whereas Poirot and de Grandin may dance at the sight of evidence, Holmes remains
composed and calculating. This indicates that although Christie and Quinn integrated basic
Sherlock-Holmesian principles into their writing, much of it was altered to create their
characters’ specific personalities. Out of all the authors that could have influenced Quinn,
Christie is the most obviously similar.

While there are many commonalities between Quinn’s and Christie’s works, there are
also many differences. One of the main points of contrast between Poirot and de Grandin is the
way in which they undertake their investigations. Poirot is primarily interested in searching for
clues and analyzing people’s motives. De Grandin’s search for clues is usually not used to

\[^{101}\text{Ibid., 3-180.}\]
discern the motive of the killer, but to find their location and destroy or stop them. This gives Quinn’s stories a feeling of simplicity as compared to Christie’s more complex narratives.

Though Quinn’s stories are rather straightforward, they are much darker than Christie’s tales. When the body of a murdered victim is discovered, it is vaguely described, with little attention paid to grotesque elements. For example, in Agatha Christie’s, *Death on the Nile*, several characters endure gruesome deaths. However, none of the victims who were stabbed or shot were described in full detail. Christie describes Linnet Doyle’s head wound as:

She was shot—shot at close quarters...A very little bullet...The pistol, it was held close against her head; see, there is a blackening here, the skin is scorched...Linnet Doyle was lying on her side. Her attitude was natural and peaceful. But above the ear was a tiny hole with an incrustation of dried blood round it.

The description of another female character’s wound to the head, Mrs. Otterbourne’s, is almost the same as Doyle’s but even more vague. Christie describes the wound as, “a neat round hole.”

Although victims who are shot in the head are not a common occurrence in Quinn’s stories, one appears in his story, “The Corpse-Master,” where a man appears to have committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Quinn describes the victim through Sergeant Costello, an Irish detective. Costello states, “When th’ feller from th’ club comes runnin’ out to say that Mr. Wolkof’s shot himself, Mulligan [a patrolman] goes in and takes a look around. He finds him layin’ on his back with a little hole in his forehead an’ th’ back blown out o’ his head.”

When comparing these two descriptions by Quinn and Christie, one is struck by the cleanliness of

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103 Ibid., 549.
Christie’s description as compared with Quinn’s morbid rendition. Christie emphasizes the smallness of the bullet hole while also describing Doyle’s peaceful repose. Quinn’s short description gives readers a more graphic image of murder by describing the back of the victim’s head instead of focusing on the “little hole” in the forehead.

Quinn’s decidedly more dismal tone is due to the lengths to which he will go to portray the grotesque. Many of Quinn’s victims are children and babies. These victims are subject to some of the most brutal forms of murder. Seabury Quinn’s de Grandin novelette, “The Devil’s Bride,” describes the sacrifice of several babies in a satanic ritual. This ritual required that a baby’s throat be slit open so that its blood be drunk by the satanists in a mock Eucharist. In “The White Lady of the Orphanage,” children also suffer a heinous death, murdered by their matron who eats them. The short story, “The Corpse-Master,” probably portrays one of the most brutal descriptions of a murdered child. In the story, a three-and-a-half-year-old girl is found dead. Her body was beaten almost to the point of being unrecognizable and described in great detail by Quinn.

A knowledgable scholar of Agatha Christie’s fiction may argue that her work also portrayed young murder victims. For example, in Murder on the Orient Express, three year old kidnapping victim Daisy Armstrong is discovered dead after her parents pay a hefty sum for her safe return. Though any mention of a child murder victim is dismal, Christie’s description of the murder is missing, leaving it up to readers to imagine how the child was killed. Some scholars argue that Christie did not utilize graphic descriptions of murder victims because of the

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105 Quinn, The Devil’s Bride, 97-98.
post-traumatic war stress suffered by Britons. In *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body*, scholar Gill Plain’s cites scholar Alison Light who argues that Agatha Christie’s unspecific description of bodies within her stories is due to the traumatic impact WWI had on the British psyche. However, Plain adds to this argument by stating that death in Christie’s writings was allowed by British readers to mourn the victims of WWI. During the war, thousands of troops were killed, leaving Britons to grieve thousands of whom they had no personal association.\(^{109}\) Plain explains the:

> [D]ismembered bodies of the battlefield become the tidily reassembled corpses of Christie’s fiction . . . the fragmented . . . corpses of war are replaced by the whole, over-explained, completely known bodies of detection. The detective reassembles that which war had exploded, and the over-invested signifier of the corpse becomes a ritual, ‘grievable’ body.\(^{110}\)

Because American readers did not experience WWI in the same way as British readers, it may have allowed Quinn to be more graphic and grotesque.

Although Quinn’s stories extend into other genres, including horror, fantasy, and detective fiction, there is a connection to dark fantasy and thus, WWI. As previously mentioned, according to Hoppenstand, dark fantasy is an American creation and one that is based largely on American authors’ responses to the war.\(^{111}\) In his book *In Search of the Paper Tiger*, Hoppenstand points out that the forbidden knowledge presented in Lovecraft’s dark fantasy stories (which was later also attributed to Stevens) connects with the advancement of weapon technology during WWI.\(^{112}\) Hoppenstand explains that:


\(^{110}\) Ibid., 33-34.

\(^{111}\) Hoppenstand, *The Nightmare, and Other Tales of Dark Fantasy*, xix.

\(^{112}\) Hoppenstand, *In Search of the Paper Tiger*, 52-55.
The world maintenance function of dark fantasy exemplifies the physical and/or spiritual destruction of these deviant individuals, since the successful completion of the “heretic’s” scientific experiments would result in worldwide havoc. And though the scientific heretic is consumed by the demonic agencies he seeks to contact (and inadvertently release upon the world) before the “worst” happens, the message of the tale remains clear: those demons are out there still, just beyond the individual’s vision, waiting for the right person to release them at the right time. It would be another “war” in which divine forces do impinge upon the lives of people, and in which no individual wins.113

The passage above depicts a very grim worldview, one that many English readers would have felt that they personally witnessed. It is clear from their acceptance of dark fantasy, that American readers did not suffer the same trauma from WWI as English readers who would have reacted negatively to the dismal genre. American fiction was able to expand its boundaries because American readers were willing to read new representations of the weird and the horrific. Justice always prevails when Poirot is on the case in Agatha Christie’s stories, avenging the neatly arranged, figurative war dead. However, justice is never guaranteed in American dark fantasy and those who die are rarely avenged.

Mary Elizabeth Counselman, a friend of Seabury Quinn, wrote a memorial tribute to him after his death. She revealed that Quinn did not deny that many of his plots were influenced by the works of other authors. Counselman wrote in her tribute that she had once apologized to Quinn for copying aspects of his, “The Devil’s Bride,” in her story, “The Girl with Green Eyes.” Quinn was very courteous to Counselman and after they had become friends, confessed to her that he “plagiarized” her story, “Something Old,” in his, “Ring of Bastet.”114 Counselman wrote, “Seabury it was, too, who taught me how to dig up plot ideas from old myths, and bits of ana

113 Ibid., 55.
garnered from columns like Ripley’s “Believe it or Not,” and from perusing our fantasy-Bible, *The Golden Bough,* [emphasis Counselman’s] by Sir James Frazer (“A Study of Magic and Religion”).”¹¹⁵

One can see how *The Golden Bough* influenced Quinn’s storytelling by closely comparing his work with *The Golden Bough.* For example, in “The Drums of Damballah,” de Grandin explains:

The sacrifice of the priest or priestess, even of the god’s own proxy, is no strange thing in many religions. The priest of Dionysos at Potmice was sacrificed following the performance of his priestly office; the Phrygian priests of Attis were of old destroyed when they had done serving their god; a man impersonating Osiris, Sun God of Egypt, was first worshiped with all fervor, then ruthlessly slain in commemoration of the murder of Osiris by Set; and among the ancient Aztecs, Chicomecohuatl, the Corn Goddess, was likewise impersonated by a beauteous maiden who afterward was butchered and flayed in public.¹¹⁶

These examples were almost certainly taken from *The Golden Bough* although, of course, there are some alterations. Quinn’s descriptions of the rituals surrounding the worship of Osiris and Chicomecohuatl were the least altered stories from *The Golden Bough.* The human that represented Osiris was dismembered during a ceremony commemorating the god. Quinn closely follows the *The Golden Bough* when he describes that the beautiful young female slave who was chosen to impersonate Chicomecohuatl was decapitated and then flayed after days of celebrating her role as Chicomecohuatl.¹¹⁷ Though many people knew about the gods Dionysus and Osiris, Chicomecohuatl and Attis were less known and give more credence to Counselman’s assertion that Quinn borrowed ideas from *The Golden Bough.*

¹¹⁵ Ibid.
Myths, legends, and other authors’ works were not all that influenced Quinn’s writing. Quinn also used a lot of his own personal experiences to write his stories. Schwartz and Weisinger describe how Quinn’s witnessing autopsies affected his writing by stating, “Much of the color for his [Quinn’s] yarns are supplied from personal experiences. [Quinn] frequently attends autopsies. He felt deathly sick after witnessing his first one, but now he can stand almost anything.” Both Schwartz and Weisinger add, however, that Quinn hated to see both the eyes and tongue removed. Quinn’s experiences researching, teaching, and lecturing on mortuary law clearly influenced his writings as well. The attention given to the examination of the body and embalming in Seabury Quinn’s fictional writings reflect that he was constantly surrounded by the topic of death through his association with mortuary law, an association which lasted throughout his employment with *Weird Tales*.

Quinn’s writings often give a detailed information that would suggest that he was using his own experiences viewing dead bodies in his writings. For example, in “The Corpse-Master,” (1929) Dr. Jules de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge examine a series of murder victims. Quinn describes the body of one little girl in a highly detailed way by writing:

Bruised and battered almost beyond human semblance, her baby-fine hair matted with blood and cerebral matter . . . the queer, unnatural angle of her right wrist denoting a Colles’ fracture; a subclavicular dislocation of the left shoulder was apparent by the projection of bone beneath the clavicle, and the vault of her small skull had been literally beaten in.

The incorporation of medical terminology within this description makes it both highly vivid and believable. It is likely that Quinn learned some medical terminology in his mortuary work.

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118 Schwartz and Weisinger, 11.
119 Ibid.
120 Dougherty, 52-54.
“The House of Horror,” (1926) is another example that reflects his autopsy experience more closely. This story is about a vengeful surgeon who kidnaps women and performs outrageous surgeries on them, fusing animal parts to their bodies. However, the idea likely sprang from Quinn’s experience witnessing the dismemberment of human bodies during an autopsy. Quinn even mentions the tampering of the eyes and tongue of two victims within the story, a description likely inspired by his aforementioned disgust with the removal of these body parts during an autopsy. In the story, one of the women had her tongue split apart and elongated like a snake while another had her eyes opposing each other.

Quinn’s autopsy experiences probably helped inspire some of his stories for The Dodge Magazine as well. Seabury Quinn wrote for the mortuary magazine The Dodge Magazine under the moniker Jerome Burke. Burke was publicized as a professional undertaker who wrote about his real life experiences running a funeral home. His stories were usually heartfelt tales of loss and acceptance. Many tales consist of death caused from illness or accidents and a few give detailed accounts of the bodies of the deceased. In a short story entitled, “The Brutalizing Game,” Quinn writes about a young boy who loved football. Writing from funeral director Burke’s viewpoint, Quinn starts the story with a confrontation that Burke had with a woman who found football to be too brutal a game for children. This woman reminded Burke of the death of Earl Kemp who was a young football player. Kemp was killed while tackling a three year old child out of the road. Quinn compared Kemp’s remains to a crushed eggshell, stating, “The results were enough to make an ambulance surgeon blench and retch. Earl’s entire rib case had

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123 Ibid., 60-73.
124 Dougherty, 52-54.
been crushed like a trodden eggshell and pointed slivers of broken bone mingled with the blood that dyed his T-shirt.”\textsuperscript{126} While it is not known whether Quinn witnessed postmortem exams for accident or murder victims, it is clear that Quinn used his experience to create a vivid portrayal of the dead.

Throughout his life, Seabury Quinn experienced many different events that he reflected in writing. One can see subtle references to the great war in many Quinn stories. Though it is hard to connect the majority of Quinn’s writings to his real life war experiences, it is clear that the war had a deep impact on his life. His experiences with the war, writing for mortuary journals, and witnessing autopsies provided inspiration for the graphic depictions of the dead he used in his murder fiction. Additionally, the external influence of other authors, such as Agatha Christie, clearly had an impact on Quinn’s storytelling. Through various influences and experiences, Seabury Quinn created a unique and original synthesis of detective fiction, dark fantasy, and horror genres which reflected a confluence of cultural ideas of the interwar period.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 34.
Chapter Two

Seabury Quinn: An Unconventional View of Traditional Femininity

The previous chapter provided a context to understanding Seabury Quinn’s literary and personal influences. This chapter will examine Quinn’s representations of femininity and its relation to the wider history of women’s position during the Progressive Era, 1920s, and the Great Depression. A separate section will be dedicated to New Age metaphysical movements and the impact they had on popular American perceptions of women. During these eras, both change and continuity was present within women’s activities. In particular, there was a backlash to the New Woman that emerged during these time periods. Those critics rejecting the New Woman argued for her limited participation in the public sphere and emphasized traditional gender expectations. According to traditionalists, women were a part of the sphere of domesticity where they were expected to care for their children and maintain the house. The examination of Seabury Quinn’s stories in this chapter will reveal that he places women in unconventional situations to strengthen these conservative ideals.

This chapter will argue that Seabury Quinn’s writings reflect a reaction to changing American conceptions of femininity during the interwar period. A close examination of Quinn’s \textit{Weird Tales} stories reveals the subjugation of women to be a theme in almost every story. Many of these fictional women represent the freedoms that began to emerge for women during the interwar period. Female characters who are working and traveling on their own prove to be the most vulnerable to murder, kidnapping, or some other form of degrading punishment. Some of these punishments even managed to show a flip side to cultural and religious movements that were seen as empowering to women. Spiritualist movements that allowed for some young
women to enter the public sphere were transformed in Quinn’s fictions as death traps. Instead of mediums interpreting messages for peaceful spirits, Quinn ensured the potential destruction of the medium through the influence of evil spirits. The endangerment to female characters, whether independent or traditional, is almost always accompanied by a reestablishment of conventional values by the end of the story.

Seabury Quinn largely employed Progressive-era, 1920s, and 1930s traditionalist ideas of femininity within his writing. The themes of female domesticity, maternalism, passivity, spirituality, emotionalism, victimization, hysteria and irrationality can all be found in Quinn’s *Weird Tales*’ stories. Still, Quinn often used unconventionality to uphold these traditions. These non-traditionalist depictions of femininity provided great shock value for *Weird Tales* readers, but still maintained conventional overtones by allowing these gender nonconformities to be challenged by male protagonists. The continual degradation of women in his tales reveals a backlash to new notions of femininity, particularly the idea that women should be present in the public sphere. In Quinn’s tales, female characters that go against dogmatic traditionalist expectations almost always suffer for it. Independent women are usually portrayed as antagonists who are defeated at the end of the story. Women who exhibit independence, but are benign, have their independence taken away from them through kidnapping or death.

Quinn used a variety of storytelling devices to place women in traditional roles. Kidnapping was a popular theme in Quinn’s fiction and was also used on female characters with traditional values, however, its use on independent women resulted in the reestablishment of traditional values. These kidnappings also reinforced white Americans’ fears of immigration and miscegenation during this time. In most of Quinn’s tales, women are kidnapped or threatened by
non-white antagonists, spreading the message that if white women were allowed to be independent, they would fall into the hands of foreign men.

Quinn characterized women in a number of ways. His representation of women as mothers exhibits another way in which he imparted traditional values through his work. Similar to his portrayal of independent women, mothers who suffered the loss of a child were also depicted in a negative light. These women did not need to be captured to reestablish traditional values. Instead Quinn imposed traditional values on these women by introducing surrogate children to them. Good mothers are not prevalent in Quinn’s stories. Lastly, Quinn complicates the figure of the medium by rendering them incapable of shielding themselves from evil spirits. He describes female mediums as more likely to be possessed because of intellectual, physical, and emotional fragility, supporting traditional expectations that women needed to be protected. These women are almost always the victims and prove incapable of caring for themselves.

The image of femininity during the interwar period was an amalgamation of many different thoughts and ideas. In many ways, women gained new forms of independence through strides made during the women’s suffrage movement. However, many men and women sought to curb this newfound independence by emphasizing traditional female roles. During the Progressive Era, this repression can be seen in women’s educational choices. Jean V. Matthews’ book *The Rise of the New Woman: The Woman’s Movement in America 1875-1930*, argues that women who enrolled in college during the Progressive Era often chose traditionally feminine courses. Instead of choosing traditionally masculine pursuits such as law, many women enrolled in home economics courses.¹

During the Progressive Era, women also became involved in social work both in and out of college. This was a step away from traditional gender norms that emphasized women’s domesticity. Matthews is quick to point out, however, that these social betterment programs ultimately reflect traditional gender expectations. Traditionalists viewed women as the nurturers of humanity. This stereotype fit in well with social programs like Jane Addams’ Hull House which directed women to care for the needy in a domestic environment. Although women were now admitted into the public sphere, many still conveyed traditional domestic feminine values within the public sphere.

The passage of the 19th Amendment marked the 1920s as an important decade for the women’s rights movement. American women were finally allowed to vote, a fact that raised many women’s hopes of being viewed as capable and independent. However, many women discovered that American society still maintained traditional feminine values despite their newly acquired political rights. In The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s, Lynn Dumenil argues that although women gained some freedoms from ascribed gender norms, many women were still confined by traditional gender expectations in the 1920s. In her section entitled, “The New Woman and Work,” Dumenil argued that in the 1920s most women performed in traditionally feminized work like nursing, domestic service, teaching, and social work.

The image of femininity underwent one of its most noticeable changes with the emergence of the flapper figure of the 1920s. The flapper was openly flirtatious, an attribute that was very different from Victorian characterizations of femininity that emphasized women’s non-

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2 Ibid., 52-57.
sexual natures. In *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media*, Carolyn Kitch argues that magazine and film depictions of the flapper illustrated both her independence and traditionalism. The ways in which flappers dressed and behaved went against many traditional female behaviors. Traditional women did not dress scantily, drink, smoke, or ideally work outside the home—all activities in which the flapper reportedly participated. However, according to Kitch and several other scholars, the immature flapper figure symbolized a backlash to the Suffrage Movement. The depiction of irresponsible, careless, and adolescent flappers indicated that women’s voting rights were not a threat to men. In fact, many film portrayals of the flapper indicated that there was an underlying expectation that the flapper would eventually grow out of her independence and embrace conventional ideals by getting married.

Depression-era popular culture also depicted conservative feminine ideals. In *Daughters of the Great Depression: Women, Work, and Fiction in the American 1930s*, Laura Hapke argues that many Depression-era fiction writers, particularly male writers, de-emphasized or problematized female labor roles. This was in part a reaction to men’s perceived degradation during the Great Depression. Traditionally, men were viewed as the providers of the family while women were viewed as the nurturers of the family. Any rendition of women outside the familial role challenged these perceived gender expectations. According to Hapke, Depression-era literature often connected women to their traditional maternal roles. These female figures would

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4 The emergence of the sexy flapper figure not only reflected new attitudes about female sexuality, but also the increase in premarital sex that was occurring during the 1920s. In “The New Woman in the Private Sphere,” Dumenil examined some of the statistics on female sexuality in the 1920s. She explains that the 1950s Kinsey Report found that women born after 1900 were, “two and a half times as likely (36 percent) to have had premarital intercourse,” than women born before 1900. Ibid., 136.

either be obscure figures in the text or use their maternal values to aid men. For example, in John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, Ma Joad is characterized by her motherliness.6 Hapke writes, “Ma’s [will] cannot be a personal will to power; her drive is to extend mothering to the Joad men and their bruised psyches...Thus her attempt to prevent her oldest son from leaving the family is couched as a plea that he replace his listless father.”7 Although an extra set of hands might have been valuable in lifting the Joad family out of poverty, Ma Joad and her daughters were kept on the sidelines so as not to interfere with men’s responsibilities.8

One area where scholars may find some variation on women’s positions in society is in alternative religious movements. Some scholars have argued that the prominence of female leaders in Spiritualist and New Age movements indicate that there were some areas within society where women could perform more dominant roles. Other scholars, however, have examined underlying, traditionally feminine roles, within these dominant positions. In her essay entitled, “The Perils of Passivity: Women’s Leadership in Spiritualism and Christian Science,” Ann Braude argues that Spiritualism largely fit in with traditional notions of female passivity. She states that although most spiritualists were women and some practiced outside the domestic sphere, female spiritualists were acting passively through the guidance of a specter.9 Braude writes:

These figures [adolescent girls] epitomized the ideal feminine characteristics of the Victorian period: purity, piety, passivity, and domesticity. Untainted by the corrupting influence of the world beyond home—or even by the sexual contact implied in marriage—teenaged girls were believed to make good mediums

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7 Ibid., 38.
8 Ibid., 35-39.
because their own characters were not powerful enough to interfere with an external intelligence’s use of their bodies.\textsuperscript{10}

Although women’s leadership in any organization can be seen as a step forward in women’s equality, many of the New Age movements that were led by women were sharply criticized and limited by society.

One of the most common typecasts of women that Quinn used in his writing was the weak-minded female. Much like Braude’s argument on passive female spiritualists, Quinn featured many women who were passively acting upon someone else’s commands. His stories often featured a female medium who became entranced or influenced by a spirit or hypnotist. The spirits and hypnotists are often malevolent forces that make females do their evil bidding. This renders these female characters useless and enables men to assert their dominance. For example, in “Red Gauntlets of Czerni,” (1933) an adolescent girl named Zita Szekler is visited by an evil spirit. The spirit uses Zita’s ectoplasm, or life force, to materialize in human form.\textsuperscript{11} Similar to Braude’s argument, de Grandin states in the story that “It is a well-recognized fact among Spiritualists that the adolescent girl is regarded as the ideal medium, where it is desired that the spirits materialize. For why? Because such girls’ nerves are highly strung and their physical resistance weak.”\textsuperscript{12} Zita’s mind is portrayed as so weak that the manifestation was able to hypnotize her into damaging her own body.\textsuperscript{13} It is likely that New Age beliefs influenced Quinn because the notion that one can control their own bodily functions through the mind is a

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 56-57.
\textsuperscript{11}Ectoplasm is like an invisible physical substance that emanates from people and that spirits can feed off of to create a material self. Seabury Quinn, “Red Gauntlets of Czerni,” vol. 2 of \textit{The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin} (Shelburne: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2001), 907.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 907.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 907-912.
common belief in such religions. In *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History*, scholar Philip Jenkins states that followers of the New Thought movement believed that diseases emerged from negative thinking but that all illnesses could be cured through mind power. Acting upon the commands of the spirit, Zita’s mind causes her to develop pulpy, crushed hands. Her hands are only restored by de Grandin’s own hypnotic spell that commands them to normalcy. The control that de Grandin and the spirit have on Zita reinforces the notion that women are too weak to care for themselves and need to be under a man’s control or protection.

Spirits can also force women to harm other people as was the case in Quinn’s “The Chapel of Mystic Horror” (1928). This story has another female medium named Dunroe O’Shane who is under the influence of evil Knights Templars spirits. Similar to the “Red Gauntlets of Czerni,” spirits are able to materialize because O’Shane is a medium. However, instead of depicting the influence of a single male spirit, the Knights Templars characters are examples of the power men can have while acting as a cohesive unit. In a comparison with the

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14 New Age thought was extremely popular during the interwar era, making it likely that Quinn had some exposure to it before working for *Weird Tales*. If Quinn had somehow not been familiar with New Age thought before his *Weird Tales* career, he was definitely introduced to it through the magazine. *Weird Tales* presented many different advertisements from New Age groups such as the Rosicrucians. It also has several advertisements from Psychiana founder Frank B. Robinson. In his book, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History*, scholar Philip Jenkins states that Psychiana was, “created as a purely commercial operation . . . Robinson pursued a clever marketing strategy from his base in Idaho, advertising in magazines whose audiences might be interested in his readily accessible form of popular mysticism: at the height of his business, he was advertising in two hundred publications.” Robinson appears to have viewed *Weird Tales* as a potential outlet for his religious works as he advertised and offered a free copy of his treatise on Psychiana through the magazine. This indicates that *Weird Tales* audiences showed an interest in New Age religions and that Quinn may have had to learn about them in order to please his audience. Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 93-94.

15 Ibid., 53-56.


17 Quinn explains that mediums are people who are sensitive to spirits. Although O’Shane does not know she is a medium, she can still attract spirits. Quinn explains that mediums are like radios that can channel spirits, an ability that most people do not have. This does not make female mediums powerful within stories. Instead Quinn's female mediums are left vulnerable to evil spirits. Seabury Quinn, “The Chapel of Mystic Horror,” vol. 1 of *The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin* (Shelburne: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2001), 259.
apparition in the “Red Gauntlets of Czerni,” the Knights Templars not only control O’Shane, but also kidnap a child and kill a trooper, corroborating the power men are able to achieve when they unite. In the end, these spirits completely take over O’Shane’s mind, forcing her to participate in a sacrilegious ceremony. Before O’Shane completes the ceremony by slaying a child, de Grandin emerges from hiding and destroys the evil spirits. Once more, one can see that women are shown to be defenseless and require a man for protection.

In contrast, Quinn often reinforces traditional masculinity through the hypnotism of men by demonstrating male perseverance and struggle. In “The Brain-Thief” (1930) both male and female characters are hypnotized. Two couples, the Nortons and the Baintrees, are mesmerized by an angry Indian hypnotist named Chunda Lal. Christopher Norton admonishes Lal for staring openly and longingly at his wife’s face. In an act of vengeance, he hypnotizes Norton and commands him to elope with Betty Baintree. Norton and Baintree live as man and wife for two years until Lal brings them out of their hypnotic spell. Shocked, they discover that they have committed adultery and bigamy and that they now have a child. Although Norton demonstrated a brief lapse in his masculinity by submitting to another man’s hypnotism, he regains it by seeking the assistance of de Grandin and Trowbridge who are able to stop Lal. Baintree, on the other hand, is so horrified at having had a child from an adulterous affair that she drowns herself and her baby. Baintree’s actions could symbolize women’s inability to handle hardship or difficult problems since Norton seeks outside help while Baintree wallows in her guilt. However,
her actions also demonstrate the importance Quinn placed on female fidelity. One will notice that the harsh punishment of female infidelity is not mirrored in Quinn’s characterization of Norton.

After Lal hypnotized the Baintrees and Nortons, he targets Marjorie Abbot, a wife of another white couple. Lal hypnotizes Marjorie and forces her to visit him every night. Marjorie’s husband, Homer, notices that his wife is acting differently and, like Norton, also visits Dr. Trowbridge’s office to seek help. Jules de Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge, Norton, and Abbot follow the hypnotized Marjorie to Lal’s house and discover his nefarious schemes. Lal is a good example of how Quinn stressed racial inferiority within his writing. The use of non-Caucasian antagonists is very prominent in Quinn’s stories. This is unsurprising considering the racial assumptions of the period and the pulp format in which these stories were written. In fact, many of Quinn’s stories use women to emphasize the dangers of immigrants and/or racial others. White males are often utilized to protect women from these foreign villains, again reinforcing women’s inferiority and subordination. Lal’s hypnotic control over Marjorie Abbot demonstrates a direct foreign male threat to white women. Quinn also uses Lal to demonstrate the dangers within America’s foreign immigration policy by discussing Lal’s entrance into the United States as an Indian refugee. While explaining his passage to America, Lal snidely stated that:

[I]n France I found a welcome—they drew no color line there, but received me as a great artist. Ha—the Frenchmen proved almost as stupid as your Americans, but not quite; no nation in the world is composed of such utter fools as you! You welcomed me as a refugee from British oppression; I am free to work my will here.

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21 Ibid., 144-161.
This passage supports the idea that immigration needed to be highly restricted, one that was not uncommon during the period.

However, Quinn’s ultimate argument against immigration is depicted by the way in which Lal interacts with Marjorie Abbot. Quinn constantly uses white American women to demonstrate a perceived threat that immigrants posed against American society, a threat that is illustrated by Marjorie’s passiveness to Lal’s commands.\(^{24}\) After they follow Majorie to Lal’s lair, De Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge, Norton, and Abbot find Marjorie rendered helpless as she follows Lal’s commands.\(^{25}\) Lal states, “At my unspoken command you have left your silly husband and come to me; you have exposed your body to my eyes when I ordered it, though your strongest instincts forbade it. Here after you obey my slightest thought; you have neither volition nor will of your own when I command otherwise.”\(^{26}\) Marjorie appears upset by Lal’s speech, but remains fairly passive, unable to resist his commands. It is up to Marjorie’s husband to rescue her. After breaking through Lal’s window to save his wife, Homer Abbot also becomes hypnotized. Unlike his wife, however, Quinn describes Homer as trying to fight the trance.\(^{27}\) Homer stopped, “stone-still in mid-stride as though he had run into an invisible wall of steel. A dazed, half-puzzled, half-frightened look came to his face as he bent every ounce of energy toward advancing, yet remained fixed as a thing carved of stone.”\(^{28}\) While Homer was trying to attack Lal, Quinn describes Marjorie as, “Unconcerned at [sic] though there had been no interruption, [Marjorie]

\(^{24}\) It is unclear whether Quinn discriminated against certain immigrant groups or all immigrants in general. He appears to have changed his attitude near the advent of WWII as shown in his story “Washington Nocturne,” which argues that Americans should welcome political refugees from Europe. Quinn, “Washington Nocturne,” 48-55.

\(^{25}\) Quinn, “The Brain-Thief,” 144-169.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 159-160.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 159-162.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 162.
proceeded with the process of donning her flimsy silk undergarments.”29 The “The Brain-Thief,” addresses two primary concerns of the era. It illuminates American insecurities on immigration through the endangerment of white women. “The Brain-Thief,” also sheds light on traditionalist’s concerns with perceived female empowerment. Both of these concerns are rectified by the end of the story. The Indian foe is easily crushed by de Grandin at the end of the story and normalcy reestablished by the rescue of the endangered white female.30 The difference in the way the men and women of this story respond to their hypnotism also supports the idea that women are weaker and more passive than men. The men’s attempts to fight hypnotism mark them as the protectors of their women.

In Quinn tales, dependent, submissive, and weak women rely heavily on male characters who are forced into dominant masculine roles. Women who are shown to be independent of men are usually punished and re-feminized. The punishment of female empowerment is a common theme in Quinn tales and often ends with power being taken away from female characters and returned to males. Female empowerment and autonomy can vary from complete independence like working women to less independence like traditional women who are simply traveling alone. Most Quinn stories even punish women who travel without a male escort. This both emphasizes women’s need for male protection and their vulnerability to the outside world and public sphere.

In Seabury Quinn’s first Jules de Grandin story, “Terror on the Links,” (1925) Sarah Humphreys is killed by a gorilla while walking from her job to a bus station. The very same night that Humphreys is killed, Paul Maitland who is accompanying his girlfriend to her home, discovers that he had left his lighter at a country club. Returning to the club, he is also attacked

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 163-169.
by a giant gorilla. Maitland makes it to his car, however, and survives. A comparison between the attacks on Humphreys and Maitland indicates that she died because she was weak and walking unescorted. The fact that Humphreys perished while walking unaccompanied from her job shows a rejection of working women. If Humphreys had been a homemaker, she would have never been outside the home. It is telling that at the beginning of Maitland’s story, he states that he was escorting his girlfriend home. Maitland was able to fight off and escape the beast’s attack whereas Humphreys died. Conversely, a second female character, Millicent Comstock, is subsequently attacked by the gorilla and is an example of a more traditional female victim. Comstock is taken from her house by her fiancée, Mr. Manly, who is actually an African gorilla who can transform into a human.\(^\text{31}\) Again, one can see Quinn utilizing degrading racist stereotypes and presenting foreigners as antagonists by making Mr. Manly, the gorilla from Africa, one of the main adversaries to de Grandin. Unlike Humphreys, Comstock is allowed to live after de Grandin slays the gorilla.\(^\text{32}\) Although it may seem odd that Quinn choose depict a traditional character like Comstock to be endangered by a gorilla, it still conveys the idea that women, no matter what their qualities, are not fit for independence, and they must rely on men for protection.

Quinn’s “The House of Horror,” (1926) shares a similar framework to “Terror on the Links,” in that it also features young women who are punished while traveling without men. In the story, de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge become lost while driving and ask to stay at a secluded mansion owned by a surgeon named John Beirsfield Marston. While there, de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge discover newspaper clippings that discuss the disappearances of several women at

\(^{31}\) Occasionally, Quinn would ascribe meaning to or create a pun with a character’s last name. Quinn punned the name Mr. Manly because he could transform from a gorilla into a man.

\(^{32}\) Quinn, “Terror on the Links,” 18-41.
the home of their mysterious host. According to one article, these women had all disappeared while on their way home.\textsuperscript{33} The article states, “Are sinister, unseen hands reaching out from the darkness to seize our girls from palace and hovel, shop, stage, and office? . . . Where are Ellen Munro and Dorothy Sawyer and Phyllis Bouchet and three other lovely, light-haired girls who have walked into oblivion during the past year?”\textsuperscript{34} Although it is unclear whether or not these women were accompanied by men, this article hints that they were alone when they were captured.

Upon further investigation, de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge discover a young female prisoner who had her eyes surgically altered by Marston. Her description of her capture supports the notion that the other missing women disappeared while unaccompanied. According to this woman, she was driving home alone when her tires were slashed, forcing her to seek Marston for help. Once in his possession, Marston drugged her and then operated on her eyes, forcing them to both look outward. De Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge discover more of Marston’s victims in the basement where they find the women mentioned in the newspaper. However, their bodies are surgically transformed into animal-like monstrosities. Although Jules de Grandin and Dr. Samuel Trowbridge ask for Marston’s help as well, they are not tricked or punished. Instead, they successfully evade Marston’s malevolent plans and rescue the drugged female, making the previously unconventional portrayals of female independence moot by the end of the story. De Grandin’s rescue of the helpless, but once independent female victim marks a return to conventionality. De Grandin promises to successfully perform corrective surgery on the woman’s eyes and thus make her once more acceptable to society. However, de Grandin fails to save the

\textsuperscript{33} Quinn, “The House of Horror,” 51-77.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 68.
rest of Marston’s mutilated victims from the basement, which was quickly submerged underwater almost as soon as Trowbridge and de Grandin left it. These deaths were justified by de Grandin, who remarks that it was better that the women die than face society with their deformities.\textsuperscript{35} This remark obviously demonstrates the importance that society placed on conventional female beauty. In Quinn’s stories, the frequent mutilation of women and de Grandin’s responses to them raise some questions about ownership over the female body. Quinn rarely mutilates male characters while female characters often suffer some form of mutilation. The disfigurement of women by male antagonists illustrate the idea that a woman’s body is not her own.

The punishment of independent women and mutilation of female bodies can also be seen in “The House of Golden Masks,” (1929). This story features several women who are captured while traveling either alone or with an all female group. The first two women are kidnapped while driving to meet their significant others. De Grandin deduces from the women’s footprints that their car was run off the road and they had been chased by someone and captured. Another group of women are seized around midnight while driving home after a sorority meeting. The final woman that is abducted worked in a department store and disappeared after she left work. Although it is not revealed whether the store employee had been walking with a colleague or not, it is unlikely, because no male bodies were found near the location of the disappearance. It is later discovered that most of these women suffered the ultimate subversion of their independence through slavery. These once independent women are forced to perform exotic dances for male customers. To ensure that no one would recognize the kidnapped victims, their master had sewn

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 52-77.
a golden mask over their face. The performance of the exotic dances and the physical sewing on of the golden mask once again shows that a woman’s body is not her own. Women are not able to protect themselves and like “The House of Horror,” it takes the intervention of a male character to rescue these women from their enslavement.

Quinn’s “Children of Ubasti,” (1929) is one rare story that could be seen as a challenge to the argument that Quinn portrayed women as dependent, helpless victims. The independence of the main female character of the story, Trula Peterson, is emphasized by her successful escape from a den of beings that are half-lion and half-human. Trula is hired as a maid by Mrs. d’Afrique. Like “Terror on the Links,” and “The Brain-Thief,” Quinn is again using immigrant antagonists to threaten American women. As their name suggests, Mrs. d’Afrique and her husband had immigrated from Africa and were a part of an ancient race that were part human and part beast. As in “The Brain-Thief,” Quinn discusses the dangers he perceived in immigration:

From the tumuli of Africa they come, for there they were pursued with gun and dog like the beast-things they are. In this new land where their kind is unknown they did assume the garb and manners of man . . . they had been educated like human beings in the schools conducted by well-meaning but thick-headed American missionaries, and all was prepared for their invasion. America is tolerant—too tolerant—of foreigners. More than due allowance is made for their strangeness by those who seek to make them feel at home, and unsuspected, unmolested, these vile ones plied their trade of death among us.

This passage makes it quite clear that Quinn, like other Americans, regarded foreigners as an unwelcome addition to America. Besides the general targeting of foreign immigrants, this passage also targets people of African descent, another group that was highly discriminated against.

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38 Ibid., 41-43.
39 Ibid., 49.
against in America. The fact that these characters are depicted as half human, half animal is very reflective of white supremacist attitudes toward African Americans who have a long history of being caricatured as animals.

The moment Trula arrives at the d’Afrique home, she is taken to a room and held captive. Although Trula is never raped by Mr. d’Afrique during her imprisonment, the fact that she is a white woman held in captivity by a man of African descent would have played on fears of miscegenation held by many white readers of this period. In her own narrative, Trula brings up the thought of rape when she states, “I’d read about the white-slave stockades of Chicago where young girls were ‘broken in’ by professional rapists, and when I heard the sound of several people running back and forth in the room right above me I went absolutely sick with terror.” This concern disappears when Mr. and Mrs. d’Afrique release Trula and offer her the opportunity to try to escape them while they hunt her down.

Trula’s ability to escape these lion-like people can be admired and likened to a positive depiction of female independence and empowerment. Trula states:

It seemed to me that all the forces of hell were let loose in that great dark room . . . Scarcely knowing what I did I snatched up a heavy footstool and hurled it at the nearer pair of eyes. They say a woman can’t throw straight, but my shot took effect. I saw the blurred outline of a body double up with an agonized howl and go crashing to the floor, where it flopped and contorted like a fish jerked from the water . . . I’d managed to roll near the window, and as I came in contact with another stool I grasped it and hurled it with all my might at the panes. They shattered outward with a crash, and I dived through the opening . . . An instant after I’d landed on the rain-soaked lawn I was on my feet and running as no woman ever ran before.

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40 Ibid., 28-29.
41 Ibid., 30.
42 Ibid., 25-34.
43 Ibid., 33-34.
This victory for Trula, however, is later undercut by de Grandin’s suggestion that she play the victim once more while he and three other men kill the beasts.\footnote{Ibid., 43-49.} The repositioning of Trula as the victim establishes the men as the dominant figure. Trula’s escape was a remarkable exception to Quinn’s usual characterizations of women, but she ultimately fails to kill her pursuers. Instead, Quinn reasserts that white women are reliant on dominant white men to protect them against foreign aggressors.

“Children of Ubasti,” is very similar to an earlier Quinn story that was published in Street and Smith’s Detective Story entitled “Was She Mad?” (1918).\footnote{Gene Christie, ed., “Introduction: The Early Work of Seabury Quinn,” in Demons of the Night, Kindle Edition (Illinois: Black Dog Books, 2012), loc. 71.} In this story, the female protagonist, Miss Vickers, responds to a help wanted ad asking for a female secretary. When she is hired, Miss Vickers is escorted to her new employer’s home by car. Her employer is Mr. Jones who has Asian features but, as she later finds out, is an anthropophagi.\footnote{Seabury Quinn, “Was She Mad?” in Demons of the Night, Kindle Edition (Illinois: Black Dog Books, 2012), loc. 329-623.} These creatures are defined in the story as, “eaters of humane [sic] flesh, there can bee [sic] no doubt that such exist; for it is said—and with much truth and reason—that those who have once tasted the meate [sic] of a man or of a woman become thereafter tiger-men.”\footnote{Ibid., loc. 587.} At the end of the story, Miss Vickers escapes Mr. Jones by dodging his grasp and running outside. Once outside, she scales a glass encrusted fence while Mr. Jones is attacked and eaten by his own starving hounds. It appears as if this independent woman has succeeded in the destruction of her evil captor. However, the story ends with a description of Miss Vickers in an insane asylum.\footnote{Ibid., loc. 623-633.} Miss Vickers’ insanity leaves readers questioning whether her heroics were simply a figment of her imagination. Readers are
not left with an image of a successful, strong and unconventional woman who could fend for herself. Instead, readers are given the impression that she is a delusional and weak woman.

Quinn depicts many of his female characters as mothers and his portrayals are in keeping with Hapke’s discussion of mother figures in Depression-era literature. Quinn usually features maternal instincts in stories with antagonistic women. Antagonistic women often suffer the loss of a child and engage in immoral acts as a result of this loss. These women are frequently cured of their wickedness by the introduction of a new child. For example, in Seabury Quinn’s only Jules de Grandin novelette, “The Devil’s Bride,” (1932) Abigail Kimble turns to Satanism after she loses her son Arthur to diphtheria. However, when Abigail nearly witnesses the sacrifice of a child in a Satanic ritual, she withdraws from Satanism and joins with de Grandin to help defeat her former associates. Describing her renunciation of Satanism, de Grandin emphasizes her maternal instincts: “She had undoubtlessly [sic] served as alter cloth that night, my friends, and did not tarry for an instant when she fled...The little victim of that night so much resembled her dead babe that the frozen heart within her was softened all at once, and she became once more a woman with a woman’s tender pity.” According to de Grandin, it is a child that evokes the feminine quality of tenderness and pity that is within every woman. Thus, Abigail’s character is only brought out of her immorality by the appearance of a child and she is transformed once again into the figure of the traditional feminine mother.

“The Serpent Woman” (1928) is another story that describes an irrational reaction a woman has when she loses her child. A Sicilian named Gioconda Vitale becomes so distraught

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49 Quinn’s emphasis on maternity preceded the Depression and is present throughout his writing career.
50 Quinn, The Devil’s Bride, 38-78.
51 Ibid., 78.
and upset over losing her son Antonio that she goes temporarily insane and steals someone else’s son.\textsuperscript{52} Vitale states:

\begin{quote}
I was one crazed woman . . . In Signor Candace’s house is a little boy about the size of my lost one if he had lived till now. I watch him all day when I go there to work. All the time my empty heart cry out for the feel of a baby’s head against it. Finally, a week . . . ago, I go clear mad . . . I am a wicked woman . . . If I suffer because the good God, who own him take my little boy to heaven, how much more shall this other poor mother suffer because a mortal, sinful woman, who have no right, steal away her little son from her?\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Much like Kimble, Vitale is driven mad by the death of her child. The association of madness with the loss of motherhood reinforces the idea that motherhood is a part of femininity. For these women the loss of motherhood allows them to transgress into more deviant roles as evidenced by their willingness to participate in immoral behaviors.

Some Seabury Quinn tales portray female characters who are bad mothers. These mothers seem to contradict the idea that Quinn viewed motherhood as a natural feminine instinct. A close examination of these types of stories, however, shows that Quinn’s primary objective was to scorn their lack of maternal instincts, often rendering them as inappropriately masculine. For example, in “The Tenants of Broussac,” (1925) Mrs. Bixby, the mother of the story, is described as very domineering. She controls much of what occurs in her household. Although her husband approves of their daughter Adrienne’s fiancee, Ray Keefer, Mrs. Bixby tries to prevent their marriage.\textsuperscript{54} Mr. Bixby is emasculated in his role as husband and father. He does not interfere in his wife’s decisions, indicating that she is the head of the household.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 196-197.
The way Mrs. Bixby chooses to run the household, however, is non-traditional and questionable. In the story, Mrs. Bixby’s daughter Adrienne is discovered each morning with bruises all over her body. De Grandin realizes that these bruises are caused by a giant snake that wraps itself around her at night. The snake possesses the spirit of a cursed man and his nightly visits to Adrienne is symbolic of rape. De Grandin orders the maid to keep the door and windows shut so that the daughter could not leave her room to visit the malevolent serpent. However, because of Mrs. Bixby’s willful behavior, she fails to heed the maid’s pleas to keep everything shut and instead opens both the door and windows, an action that nearly costs Adrienne her life.\(^55\) De Grandin scolds Mrs. Bixby, shouting, “To your room, foolish, criminally foolish one, pray \textit{le bon Dieu} on your bare knees that the pig-ignorance of her mother shall not have cost your daughter her life this night! Come, Trowbridge, my friend, come away; the breath of this woman is a contamination, and we must hurry if we are to undo her fool’s work.”\(^56\) Although it is not revealed whether Mrs. Bixby relinquishes her masculine authority at the end of the story, her control is undermined when Adrienne runs away from her home to marry and live with her fiancee.\(^57\) In the words of Adrienne, “no matter what Mother says or does, we’re going to be married, right away. I’ve been Mrs. Bixby’s daughter long enough; now I’m going to be Mr. Keefer’s wife...I’m going to have my man—my own man—and no one—\textit{no one at all}—shall keep him away from me one day longer!”\(^58\) This quote reinforces ideas of male ownership. The daughter is being passed on from her dominant mother’s care to the husband’s possession. The

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 64-75.  
^{56}\) Ibid., 66.  
^{57}\) Ibid., 61-71.  
^{58}\) Ibid., 61.
daughter is practically without distinctive character because she identifies herself solely according to her relationships.

Although the majority of Quinn’s stories depict conventionally heterosexual relationships, a few feature plot lines that are outside the realm of such conventionality. These stories feature taboo sexual scenarios like lesbianism. In the 1920s and 1930s, lesbianism was considered an unconventional sexuality, although some scholars have argued that the acceptance of lesbian relationships by society was much more prominent than has been assumed. In *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*, Lillian Faderman argues that the 1920s experienced new conceptions of female sexuality. Psychologists like Freud argued that every adolescent went through a phase of homosexuality that was often brought on by sexual suppression. According to Freud, this psychoanalysis could be applied to fully grown women as well.59 Faderman states that men viewed lesbianism as, “just a phase some women went through and while it was all right to express it [lesbianism] in order to get rid of suppressions, it must not become arrested as a way of life. They were confident it could be gotten out of a woman by a good psychoanalyst or a good man.”60 Sexual experimentation was even en vogue in some bohemian circles, but there was always the expectation among those who argued that lesbianism was a phase that these women would eventually marry a man.61 Although lesbianism was accepted in some 1920s circles, it was still considered a taboo in much of 1920s society and largely discouraged.

60 Ibid., 85.
61 Ibid., 85-90.
According to Faderman, this discouragement worsened at the onset of the Great Depression in the late 1920s and 1930s. She argues that in the 1920s, the ability for women to support themselves and live independently from men enabled lesbianism. However, the Depression restricted this ability because women were viewed not as the providers of the family. Many women were unable to obtain jobs and those who sought employment or were employed during this time were seen as taking away employment opportunities for men. Thus, many women chose to marry to a man who they knew could care for them. Faderman also asserts that the 1930s witnessed a very large backlash against female homosexuality in the media. Most films and books suppressed lesbian-themes in the 1930s. The occasional film or book that did depict lesbianism usually did so in a negative light. For example, some 1930s films and books portrayed monstrous lesbians. Faderman speculates that the monstrous lesbian image, “proliferated during the 1930s not only because they mirrored a moralistic disapproval of lesbianism which seemed decadent during grim times, but also because those extreme depictions afforded the distraction of the bizarre and the exotic to a drab and gloomy decade.”

Although Faderman identifies the 1930s as a time when lesbianism was depicted negatively in the media, Quinn demonstrates that this pattern can be found in earlier work such as his 1927 story, “The Poltergeist.” Quinn and other 1930s authors correlate lesbianism and suicide in their stories. Typical plots would show lesbian women distraught over their own homosexuality, eventually leading to their suicides. In “The Poltergeist,” Quinn extinguished unorthodox lesbian behaviors by the end of the story, restoring all characters to their traditional roles.

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62 Ibid., 93-103.
63 Ibid., 101.
64 Ibid., 102.
Quinn’s *Weird Tales* story, “The Poltergeist,” (1927) is a good example of the restoration of conventionality in a nonconventional story. In “The Poltergeist,” a young woman named Julia Loudon is possessed by the spirit of her dead cousin, Anna Wassilko. Wassilko came to live with her uncle after her parents had died of tuberculosis. During her stay, Anna became very attached to Julia and grew enraged when her cousin became engaged. Anna insisted that instead of dating her current fiancee Lieutenant Proudfit, Julia remain celibate and devote the rest of her life to her friendship with Anna. When Anna hears of Julia’s and Proudfit’s engagement, she commits suicide and after a few months, begins to possess Julia. Although Quinn integrates lesbian yearnings within, “The Poltergeist,” his portrayal is undermined with the destruction of the spirit by Jules de Grandin. The destruction of Anna’s spirit allows Julia to fulfill her conventional obligations and marry the aptly named Lieutenant Proudfit. Quinn’s remarks at the end of “The Poltergeist” also convey the message that lesbianism was a forbidden form of sexuality. De Grandin states that Anna was, “the slave of dark passions, and dominated by a strange, forbidden love like that of the women of ancient Lesbos. Also she went forth from the world uncalled and in an evil way.”

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65 It is likely that this story contains a typo as celibate is written as celibrate. Given the context of the sentence, it is the author’s conclusion that the word is supposed to be celibate. The sentence states, “Seems she [Anna] had some sort of fool idea that she and Julia were more than cousins, and ought to remain celibate to devote their lives to each other.” Seabury Quinn, “The Poltergeist,” in *The Phantom-Fighter* (Wisconsin: Mycroft & Moran Publishers, 1966), 135.

66 Ibid., 121-137.

67 The nomenclature that Quinn chose for Lieutenant Proudfit during a time of profound interest in freudian theories.

68 “The Poltergeist,” is one of the only stories where Quinn directly discusses lesbianism during the interwar period, however, there are a few other stories that could be interpreted as having lesbian themes. These stories present an unclear depiction of the female relationships within them which could be interpreted as either extremely close friendships or lesbian romances. A few stories that share this ambiguity are, “The Curse of Everard Maundy,” and “The Priestess with Ivory Feet.” Quinn, “The Poltergeist,” 121-142. Seabury Quinn, “The Curse of Everard Maundy,” in *The Adventures of Jules de Grandin* (New York: Popular Library, 1976), 186-220. Seabury Quinn, “The Priestess with Ivory Feet,” vol. 2 of *The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin* (Shelburne: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2001), 516-531.

69 Quinn, “The Poltergeist,” 142.
Even within the most unconventional of Quinn stories, he tends to stick with traditional female gender expectations. “The Jest of Warburg Tantavul,” is about a brother and sister who are tricked by their father into marrying each other. The father, Warburg Tantavul, told his son Dennis that Arabella was his cousin. Although he warned Dennis that he would regret marrying Arabella, he left a provision in his will that would give only half his assets to Dennis if he chose not to marry her. The father also left an envelope for the couple to be opened upon the birth of their first child. The envelope’s contents reveal that Arabella and Dennis are, in fact, siblings and that their child is a product of an incestuous relationship. However, before Arabella and Dennis are able to read the note, de Grandin hides it, covering up the secret. Nevertheless, Arabella is visited by the spirit of her father who reveals her husband’s true identity. Instead of condemning this relationship in the story, Quinn takes a very unconventional story and forces it back to conventionality. Arabella tries to kill her child because she is so ashamed of its parentage, but Dennis, who does not learn the truth, prevents her. Arabella runs away and becomes a prostitute, but Jules de Grandin finds her and demands that she comes home, stating that her husband and child need her care. The argument that Arabella must come home because of her role as a mother and wife fits well with established familial expectations. Jules de Grandin then hypnotizes Arabella into forgetting her incestuous relationship. De Grandin’s hypnosis of Arabella indicates that he favored the preservation of the family over the dissolution of an unorthodox marriage. De Grandin supports the relationship by stating, “They are . . . [a] man and woman, husband and wife, and father and mother . . . they love each other, not as brother and

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71 Ibid., 116-125.
72 Ibid., 124-132.
sister, but man and woman. He is her happiness, she is his, and little Monsieur Dennis is the happiness of both.”

Quinn’s emphasis on traditional feminine values is prevalent throughout his *Weird Tales* stories. His emphasis follows traditionalist renderings of women that responded to the changing perceptions of women that occurred during interwar period. Instead of reinforcing New Women characteristics like female independence or sociality, Quinn stuck with traditional characteristics like dependence, weakness, and maternity. Quinn even went so far as to punish the independent women by means of mutilation or enslavement. Even when depicting unconventionality, Quinn continued to strive for orthodoxy. One of the only instances where readers can find a support for the unconventional is in Quinn’s discussion on incest, however, the incestuous relationship harkens readers back to the traditional family. Though women remain figures for traditionalism in these *Weird Tales* stories, there is a marked difference in the way masculinity is formulated in Quinn’s fiction.

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73 Ibid., 131-132.
Chapter Three

Jules de Grandin: The Ninety-Seven Pound Hero

The last chapter examined Seabury Quinn’s conventional and unconventional portrayals of femininity and their relationship to the larger history of women’s movements. Quinn reacted differently to changes in masculine ideals during the interwar period. Contrary to his adherence to traditional roles for women and harsh treatment of unconventional women, Quinn demonstrates remarkable variability with masculine traits, showing support for both traditional and non-traditional notions of gender and sexuality in his male characters. This section will examine changes in masculinity within the Progressive and Interwar Eras. As shown in the last chapter, many men had a negative reaction to women’s rights movements and sought to downplay female independence. While they created their own characterizations of powerless females, many men also sought to strengthen presentations of masculinity. This chapter will examine how masculinity was represented during this time and juxtapose it with Quinn’s characterizations of masculinity. Unlike most of Quinn’s descriptions of femininity, Quinn’s depictions of masculinity through effeminacy goes against many orthodox portrayals of men. This is a clear rejection of the strongman image that had begun to proliferate during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Although Quinn rejects the emergence of the strongman masculine image in much of his writing, he maintains most conventional masculine traits such as bravery, dominance, and honor. The combination of traditional and unconventional depictions of masculinity makes his narratives unique and highly valuable to understanding cultural history for this time period.
In his *Weird Tales* stories he responded uniquely to changing conceptions of masculinity during the interwar period. It is clear that Quinn primarily sought to restore order from chaos through the dominant characteristics of his male protagonist, reinforcing some conventional notions of masculinity. His constant portrayal of male dominance went hand in hand with his suppression of female characters whose independence symbolized a threat to manhood. However, Quinn also took advantage of the interwar changes in conceptions of masculinity by circulating new ideas of masculinity.

Men experienced many different challenges to their conceptions of masculinity during the Progressive Era. As previously discussed, women had begun to enter the public sphere in pursuit of societal reform. Their entrance into the usually masculine public sphere was not welcomed by many men who saw their presence as a threat to their masculinity. However, it was not only the entrance of women into the public sphere that men found threatening, it was also the emergence of scientific management. In *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*, John F. Kasson argues that many men felt overwhelmed by changes in the way businesses were run. Traditionally, masculinity was tied to male independence and domination. However, many skilled male workers who were used to managing their own work schedules felt that their autonomous masculine identities were being compromised by scientific management practices. Instead of being able to work at their own pace and determine their own quotas, workers now had to obey managerial demands which governed the pace of work and controlled most aspects of production. White men also became alarmed by the disappearance of many potential outlets to establish manhood like conquering the frontier or fighting in wars. Among the wealthier classes, some medical scientists witnessed an
alarming increase in cases of neurasthenia, a purported condition that caused tiredness and
“nervous weakness.”¹ According to medical scientists, neurasthenia was brought about by,
“excessive brain work, intense competition, constant hurry, rapid communications, the
ubiquitous rhythm and din of technology.”²

The loss of traditional ways to express masculinity led to the creation of new outlets for
masculinity. One venue that men chose to emphasize their masculinity was the male body. Men
like Eugen Sandow, an American bodybuilder, taught men that they could reclaim their broken
masculinities by building up their weak bodies. Bodybuilding was a new way that masculinity
could be measured. As Kasson points out, bodybuilding was a way a man could demonstrate that
he had control over his own body. This new form of control was perceived as a new way to
reestablish classical masculinities that were lost in the modern era.³ Kasson states, “Sandow
struck chords about masculine strength and self-determination that have been played by many
exemplars of American manhood...Making his body became a sign of man’s ability to make his
way in the world against all adversaries, strictly on his own merits. A strong, muscular body was
an emblem of strong character and command.”⁴ Bodybuilding not only represented a way in
which men could define their own masculinities, but a way to define women as separate and
inferior. In his discussion of bodybuilding in Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the
Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940, historian George Chauncey points out that the focus
on male bodies during this period distinguished men from women. Chauncey argues that
progressive-era women’s emphasis on the similarities between men and women made the male

¹ John F. Kasson, Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man, 10-12.
² Ibid., 11.
³ Ibid., 21-33.
⁴ Ibid., 30.
body a particularly valuable attribute. This reveals that despite many of the perceived drawbacks to modernity, men’s mastery over their bodies ensured that they could be viewed once again as “manly” men.

Male bodybuilding did not fade with the prosperity encountered in the 1920s. Instead, it fit in nicely within the emerging consumer culture of the era and its emphases on modern appearance. In *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950*, Tom Pendergast argues that 1920s magazines began to show a transition from Victorian masculine norms to more modern masculine ideals. Victorian portrayals of masculinity emphasized character traits like hard-work, self-control, and integrity as being a venue for financial success. However, the emergence of consumer products caused a shift in how masculinity was presented. Hard-work and integrity remained important characteristics for manliness, but an emphasis on appearance began to take hold more and more during the 1920s. Product advertising indicated that business success could be purchased instead of earned through hard-work. For example, one Mifflin Alkohol ad showed a shaved man and stated, “Moving blood—stamina—the decks of his mind cleared for action—it’s going to be a mighty good day in business for him.” This advertisement implies that because this man took the time to groom and shave he has opened a path for a successful day at work. In *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity 1920-1940*, scholar Roland Marchand affirms this emphasis over modern appearance through his examination of scare copy advertisements. These types of advertisements were very popular with companies like Listerine which attributed all types of

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5 Chauncey, 114.
6 Pendergast, 111-150.
7 Ibid., 148.
social catastrophes to “halitosis,” or bad breath. Marchand explains that advertisers sought to relieve tensions brought on by modernism through their products. He states, “As society’s increasing pressures and complexities made the consumer uneasy, the advertiser intervened with sympathetic advice on how to triumph over the impersonal judgments of the modern world.”

Male personalities were also a focus in the 1920s. Personalities were tied to advancement by promoting the idea that an adaptable personality led to success in a career. Many magazine advertisements would promote ways in which salesmen or businessmen could develop their charisma to please customers. According to many advertisements, the key to being a successful salesman is the ability to read character traits in a potential buyer and adapting one’s character to those traits. For example, in an advertisement for “Dr. Blackford’s Course on Reading Character at Sight,” one faux product reviewer states, “What I have learned about judging people . . . has already added 25% to my sales.” As one can see, this attitude toward personality and business success is markedly different from previous Victorian attitudes which emphasized hard work and self-control as the keys to success in the business world. However, Pendergast notes that even with this new emphasis on adaptable male personalities, there was still pressure to maintain Victorian ideals, making many magazines an amalgamation of the two masculine ideals.

These types of advertisements were not found in all magazines and Pendergast is careful to note that magazine editors also played a large role in discerning how products were advertised.

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9 Ibid., 14.
10 Pendergast, 145-150.
11 Ibid., 147.
12 Ibid., 145-150.
In upper class magazines like *Vanity Fair*, there are few advertisements which suggest that subscribers needed to improve themselves. Instead, this appeared in middle class magazines where one could expect to find more insecurities over status.\(^{13}\) Pendergast states:

*Vanity Fair* did not experience the same degree of self-consciousness about masculinity betrayed by middle-class (or middlebrow) publications. Perhaps because of the certainty of their income, their breeding, or their social prestige, male *Vanity Fair* readers were not subjected to the kinds of lures toward self-improvement and personality-building that advertisers used to allure those less certain of their status.\(^{14}\)

Pendergast’s comparison of *Vanity Fair* with middle class magazines like *American Magazine* reveals that many of the aforementioned changes in masculinity occurred within middle class culture. This supports the idea that the recent development of middle class consumerism added a new way in which middle class men could express a new concept of masculinity. This new concept demonstrates a transformation from male characteristics to male image and personality.\(^{15}\)

The disappearance of jobs during the Great Depression challenged both progressive-era and 1920s ideals of masculinity. These ideals held that masculine men provided for their families through employment, however, the massive loss of jobs experienced by men during the Depression created severe anxiety regarding their masculinity. In his book, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941*, historian Robert McElvaine argues that men’s roles were feminized during the Great Depression. The loss of jobs made men dependent, a traditionally feminine quality. Even when men sought to improve their situation through New Deal programs, they did so through feminine means.\(^{16}\) McElvaine argues that, “When, with the New Deal, they got beyond passivity and became active in their quest to improve their situation, depression

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 136-144.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 140.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 121-150.
\(^{16}\) McElvaine, 337-341.
victims tended to do so through “female” values. They sought to escape dependence not through ‘male’ self-centered, “rugged” individualism, but through cooperation and compassion.”

Examinations of male gender roles during the interwar period, like those cited above, reveal continued anxieties about masculinity that occurred during this time. Each time that society underwent a cultural shift, American conceptions of masculinity changed. Many men could no longer be the autonomous individuals their fathers had been in the workplace and had to establish their sense of manhood through their bodies, personalities, and actions. However, while some men chose to adapt to these new concepts of manhood, others chose to hold on to old values or create new ones. This can be seen in Seabury Quinn’s representations of manhood in 

_Weird Tales_. Quinn’s fiction characterizes most men in a traditionally dominant, logical, and resolute way. However, one of the most notable and contradictory aspects of Quinn’s work lies in his use of feminine physicality to describe his primary serial character, Jules de Grandin. Quinn’s focus on the image of the effeminate man is a clear rejection of the emerging gender constructions which dictated that men display a tough persona, a muscular body, and a rough facade. Yet, even with this rejection, Quinn remained one of the most well-liked 

_Weird Tales_ writers of his time. In a close examination of Quinn’s most popular 

_Weird Tales_ characters, Jules de Grandin, it is revealed that like his constructions of femininity, Quinn’s characterizations of masculinity both accept and transgress tradition.

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17 Ibid., 340-341.
20 Hoppenstand, _Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 20s and 30s_, 166-167.
Quinn fans did not have to look very far for a model of masculinity. Jules de Grandin encompasses many traditional masculine qualities including fearlessness, integrity, dominance, independence, rationality, and fighting aptitude. However, de Grandin’s qualities eclipse other modern masculine qualities such as strength and muscle. De Grandin’s fighting abilities primarily rest on agility and guile rather than strength and muscle. Quinn continually depicts male protagonists who outwit strong antagonists, thereby emphasizing a brains over brawn theme. Although Quinn rejected some modern masculine characteristics like burliness, he also reflected many modern male characteristics that began to emerge during the 1910s and 1920s. Quinn often included trickery, a trait that can be found in many modern advertisements, as a characteristic for many of his male heroes.\footnote{Pendergast, 126-127.}

Quinn’s value of deception clearly contradicts older traditional Victorian values which emphasized qualities like integrity. This supports historian Tom Pendergast’s argument on the transition that occurred between Victorian masculinity and modern masculinity. He notes that some magazine publications even began to worry over how their own authenticities would be perceived by their readers who had begun to notice a surge of chicanery in advertising. Magazines such as *Success* sought to protect itself from accusations of deceit by joining the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, an organization that investigated advertising matter to ensure that a magazine would not compromise its credibility.\footnote{Ibid.} Much like these magazines, Quinn also performed a balancing act between these two contradictory characteristics. Although Quinn’s primary protagonist Jules de Grandin often employs deception in Quinn’s stories, he uses this trait to learn about and defeat his enemies, a goal that is for the greater good. These
clever deceptions are a reflection of America’s emphasis on ingenuity, a skill that was prized in the American working man.

Although de Grandin’s deceit is not a part of traditional masculine values, he repeatedly uses his deceptive skills for the greater good. For example, in “The Isle of Missing Ships,” (1926) de Grandin must use his wit and guile to escape from a seemingly impossible situation. In the story, de Grandin and Trowbridge are trapped in a sea cave lair. The man who maintains it, a half English, half Arab man named Goonong Besar, gives de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge the option of working for him as harem attendants. Besar envisions himself as a princely figure surrounded by slaves and women. To Trowbridge’s and de Grandin’s shock, Besar stipulated that they must “perform surgery,” on each other if they wanted to become harem attendants.23 The surgery that Quinn is likely referring to is castration, which he often references in stories that feature harems.24

The emasculation of Dr. Trowbridge and Dr. de Grandin by a man of mixed racial heritage mirrors Quinn’s previous depictions of the foreign male threats. In a way, this story embodies Quinn’s overall portrayal of foreign men by depicting Besar as an emasculator of white men. By incorporating the dilemma of castration, Quinn is showing that in order for non-white men to succeed, white men must be emasculated. If de Grandin and Trowbridge refuse, Besar threatens to feed them to his giant pet octopus. Fearlessly, de Grandin hatches an escape plan. He convinces a female slave named Miriam to gather a poisonous fruit and feed it to the giant octopus.25

De Grandin and Trowbridge then refuse Besar’s offer. As Besar prepares to feed them to his now incapacitated octopus, de Grandin escapes with Miriam and Trowbridge through the octopus’ quarter to the outside world. De Grandin aids Besar’s escape as well, but then turns to fight him. Ultimately de Grandin uses his agility and superb defensive ability to kill Besar. De Grandin’s craftiness in destroying the giant octopus enabled his safe escape from the sea cave lair. His superior combat tactics also allowed him to overcome the primary antagonist of the story without the help of his accomplices Trowbridge and Miriam. This conveys the message that to be masculine is to be independent and to have the ability to conquer one’s obstacles by utilizing superior intellect and fighting technique, rather than pure muscle.

These characteristics can also be seen in non-de Grandin stories as well. In “In the Fog,” (1927) Quinn’s male protagonist Professor Harvey Forrester outwits numerous villains through his superior intelligence as well as physical skill. In the story, Forrester is hiding from some armed smugglers in a storage room with a young female prisoner named Mumtaz Banjian. She pleads with Forrester to kill her before the smugglers find them. However, instead of giving up hope, Forrester searches the storage room and finds some rope. He uses it to outwit and capture two antagonists by creating slip knots. The third antagonist was defeated through Forrester’s superb boxing skills. Although one may argue that Forrester used his strength to defeat one of his enemies through boxing, a close examination of the text reveals that it was not Forrester’s strength that won the match, but instead his superior technique. Compared to his enemies, Forrester exhibits a clear demarcation between brawn versus skill.

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26 Ibid., 115-119.
Forrester is presented as a quick-witted contender whereas his enemies are presented as powerful combatants. For example, one scene describes Forrester’s fight with a muscular East Indian by stating, “The Hindu [Chitu] shortened his sword to drive it through Forrester’s body, employing his free hand to hold his victim in place for the death blow, and grinned savagely as his wiry muscles rose like cords in his forearms with the force of his grip on the weapon’s hilt.”

Although Chitu is described as extremely muscular and fierce, Forrester is able to defend himself through his boxing savvy:

[Forrester formed a] small and very hard fist [that] suddenly connected with his [Chitu’s] solar plexus, and Chitu crumpled downward, bending at the knees, his head sagging drunkenly. He fell just in time to act as trip-hurdle for Sookee, as the latter charged full tilt at the Professor. Once again Sookee crashed to the floor, his flying feet entangled in the flaccid arms of his unconscious fellow, and before he could rise again, Forrester drove a smashing right hook to the point of his brown jaw and followed it with a downward “haymaker” blow of his left hand.

Through this passage it is clear that there is more emphasis on the actual boxing maneuvers than the power behind them. A comparison between Chitu’s wiry arms at the beginning of the fight and the description of their flaccidity at the end of the story reveals that Forrester’s superior combat ability has beaten his opponents’ superior strength. This story not only connects craftiness and superb fighting skills to its male protagonist, but also a fair amount of bravery as a single man manages to outwit and beat three villains. This would have pleased both modern and traditional male readers by depicting a white man who used his manly prowess and bravery to beat his antagonists. Though Forrester resorted to trickery to trap the villains, he used it in the service of another traditional and important masculine role as the protector of women.

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28 Ibid., loc. 3347.
29 Ibid., loc. 3347-3356.
Aside from just emphasizing craftiness and advanced combat skill, the stories discussed above also encompass the traditional masculine trait of domination, a quality that Quinn continually utilized. This is unsurprising given the time period in which his stories were written. In every decade of the interwar era, men found their manhood being challenged, whether it was from corporate cultures, women’s liberation, or a decrease in male employment. Each of these factors were dealt with by men either reasserting or reconstructing their own idea of masculinity. Quinn constructed his male characters to be dominant, a characteristic his male characters constantly displayed. As was discussed in chapter two, much of the male dominance depicted in Quinn’s stories was asserted over women and was likely a reaction against female progressive-era movements and 1920s and 1930s cultural shifts.

In Quinn’s stories, men were overcoming the challenges posed in a fictional setting by being dominant individuals. One could question why Quinn chose to portray dominant masculine individuals during times like the Depression when the figure of the dominant man was being undermined. There is no way to discern whether his adherence to traditional masculinity is an attempt to reclaim it or is simply out of habit. When asked if writing during the 1930s and 1940s had contributed to the writing of supernatural fantasy fiction, pulp writer Mary Elizabeth Counselman responded that during these eras, “our daily lives were very bleak . . . You either did what you had to do or you did without. There were no facilities for amusement except what you thought of yourself. To get away from that bleak feeling of not having any material ‘goodies,’ and very little to look forward to, we just sort of retreated into a fantasy world.”

30 Pelan, 488-489.
that he observed men undergoing. Quinn was also a highly formulaic writer and he would likely continue to portray male dominance no matter what was occurring around him. An examination of male dominance in Quinn’s writings from the interwar period reveal that it was a prominent feature in most Quinn stories and continued well past the interwar period.

Quinn’s serial protagonist Jules de Grandin is the most obvious example of a traditionally dominant male character. In many stories, de Grandin has to intimidate or dominate his witnesses to receive valuable information. He uses this information to kill or suppress the antagonist of the story. For example, in “The Terror on the Links,” (1925) de Grandin interviews a bellicose woman named Cornelia Comstock. Comstock is described as, “a lady of imposing physique and [an] even more imposing manner. She browbeat fellow club members, society reporters, even solicitors for ‘causes,’ but to de Grandin she was merely a woman who had information he desired.” Comstock is very reluctant and hostile toward de Grandin when he asks her about her acquaintance with a mad scientist named Dr. Beneckendorff. However, when de Grandin returns her icy stare with an even colder one, she confesses that the mad scientist was once her fiancee.

Beneckendorff was originally from Austria and migrated to the United States to teach when he met Comstock. Similar to many of his other stories, Quinn is connecting his story to WWI by adding an antagonistic character who came from a country which was once a part of the enemy. Quinn even connects Beneckendorff to the war through his statement that Beneckendorff came to Paris, “[b]efore the war that wrecked the world.” This quote positions Beneckendorff as a dangerous outsider whose nation was once a threat to the entire western hemisphere.

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32 Ibid, 31-32.
33 Ibid., 30-32.
34 Ibid., 30.
Comstock revealed she had broken off her engagement to Beneckendorff after she observed his pleasure in torturing animals in his experiments. Beneckendorff became infuriated with Comstock after their breakup and threatened to make her pay. The information Comstock provides leads de Grandin to conclude that Dr. Beneckendorff is the mastermind behind recent killings. In an act of revenge against Comstock, Beneckendorff transforms a gorilla into a human, Mr. Manly, and sends it to meet the Comstock family. Previous victims of Dr. Beneckendorff had been beaten to death by the ape-man. Comstock then introduces Mr. Manly to her daughter Millicent and they become engaged. While Millicent is being carried off by Mr. Manly, de Grandin hides by a hedge and shoots and kills him. Although some may expect a strong masculine character suitably named Mr. Manly to easily conquer a less threatening opponent like Jules de Grandin, de Grandin proves to be more masculine by using his intellect and ingenuity to overcome brawn.

The use of female endangerment as a method for male empowerment can be seen in nearly every Quinn tale. The figure of the helpless female enables both male protagonist and antagonist domination. Both male antagonists and protagonists are depicted as having control over the fate of female characters. A comparison made between the way that female characters handle dangerous situations versus male characters also illustrates the power bestowed upon male characters. For example, in “The Devil-People,” (1929) a woman named Mutina goes missing. Her husband, Richard Starkweather, is devastated by her disappearance and begins searching for her. The only problem Starkweather recalls before Mutina’s disappearance was a

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35 Ibid., 31-41.
confrontation they had with an odd-looking foreigner later revealed to be a Rakshasa, or part-demon, part-human person.\textsuperscript{36}

After searching several months, Starkweather discovers that Mutina is working as an entertainer at a club in Harrisonville, de Grandin’s hometown. Starkweather then obtains Mutina’s home address from a club attendant and sets out to find her. On his way, Starkweather witnesses Dr. Trowbridge and de Grandin being attacked by a man who closely resembles a Rakshasa. Almost as soon as Starkweather tries to aid de Grandin in the battle with the stranger, he is knocked out. However, Starkweather is given a second chance to reassert his dominance at the end of the story, when he aids de Grandin in defeating a large group of Rakshasas. As is the case with most Quinn tales, de Grandin still proves to be the primary dominant male at the end of the story when he creates the plan to destroy the Rakshasas. In order to enact it, de Grandin decides to use Mutina to lure all the Rakshasas into a club. He soaks everyone’s weapons in lime juice, an ingredient that acts as an acidic agent on Rakshasas, and waits for them to attack Mutina who de Grandin cleverly protects using a circle of lime juice.\textsuperscript{37} There is a stark difference between how Mutina is described during battle in comparison to Starkweather. Quinn writes:

Mutina was like a thing possessed. Gone was every vestige of Western culture she had picked up during her residence here. She was once more a woman of the never-changing East, an elemental female creature, stark bare of all conventions, glorying in the battle and the savage part her man played in it. Safe inside her barrier of lime juice, she danced up and down in wild elation as de Grandin and Starkweather, slowly advancing across the dance floor, beat a path toward her, smashing arms and ribs and skulls with the merciless flailing of their spiked clubs.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Quinn, “The Devil-People,” 20-45.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 16-52.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 50.
This passage supports previous arguments that women were placed in their traditional positions of helplessness while men were put in their conventional positions of dominance. Mutina’s enclosure within the lime juice circle protects her against the Rashashas while Starkweather fights outside the protective circle. Throughout this story, Quinn is demonstrating that men perform independent roles by his allowing the husband to actively search for his missing wife. Starkweather’s marriage to Mutina is also noteworthy for its representation of male independence and freedom. Mutina was a native of Malaysia when Starkweather had first met her. The union of Starkweather with a foreign woman indicates a double standard between men and women. While white women were not allowed to be married to foreign men in Quinn’s fictions, white men were often allowed to marry foreign women. Starkweather further demonstrates his dominant masculinity in the end of the story by bludgeoning his enemies to death. Mutina does nothing to help de Grandin and Starkweather except lure the enemy, making her a part of a crafty male solution.

This female passivity and male dominance can also be observed in stories that depict female possession. As discussed in the previous chapter, women were viewed as passive, making it easy for men to assert their dominance. Seabury Quinn reiterated these beliefs by allowing male protagonists and antagonists complete control over female bodies. This can be easily observed in Quinn stories such as “Bride of Dewer,” (1930). In “Bride of Dewer,” de Grandin is a good example of a male protagonist who uses his hypnotic abilities to control a woman. In this story, a newly married woman named Rosemary Whitney is raped on her wedding night by a non-human creature called Dewer. The description of Whitney’s rape immediately presents

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readers with the idea that she is helpless and passive. Rosemary is in complete shock when Dewer tries to rape her and makes no effort to prevent it. Her husband, Walter, is also paralyzed with fear when he sees the creature, however he eventually makes an effort to save his wife.\textsuperscript{40} Although he fails in his efforts to save his wife, Walter is still shown to be more dominant and tenacious than his wife.

When Rosemary’s husband Walter tells de Grandin that his family is cursed, de Grandin decides to research the curse and determine the ways in which it can be stopped. De Grandin discovers that the curse affected male decedents of the Quimper family line whose origins date back to mediaeval times. According to legend, Sir Guy of Quimper was dying on the battle field when he called on the Saxon gods to help him defeat his enemies. When Dewer appeared, Quimper promised him anything if he would defeat his surrounding enemies. After Dewer defeated all the enemies, he told Quimper that the price of this defeat would be the bridal night of all his male heirs. On their wedding night, the brides of the Quimper men were all visited and raped by Dewer, who sometimes returned again.\textsuperscript{41}

The only thing that could stop Dewer’s visits is if a Quimper bride could to look at the hideous, inhuman face of Dewer and bid him to leave her chamber. Since the creation of the curse, no bride had been able to gaze at Dewer’s uncomely countenance and utter this simple declaration. Instead, all brides of Quimper men had been raped and most were driven insane. However, de Grandin finds a crafty, but simple solution to rid the newly married couple of Dewer. De Grandin hypnotizes Rosemary, demanding that she look Dewer straight in the face and bid him to leave. The hypnotism ensures that Rosemary is able to withstand Dewer’s

\textsuperscript{40} Seabury Quinn, “Bride of Dewer,” in \textit{The Skeleton Closet of Jules de Grandin} (New York: Popular Library, 1976), 186-188.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 170-201.
hideousness when he attempts to rape her again and she succeeds in warding him off. Although de Grandin displays a tremendous amount of dominance over Rosemary’s mind, he is not the only male figure who dominates her. Dewer completely dominates Rosemary body through rape, showing that women are not in possession of their own bodies.

Men who failed to live up to traditional standards of male dominance usually pay for their transgressions in Quinn’s stories. Most of the victims of supernatural phenomenons in his stories are women, however, because men are shown to be adventurous and well-traveled, they often draw in supernatural forces from their travels. Men’s ability to travel to distant lands allows them to explore exotic places that are generally forbidden to Western women in Quinn’s fictions. However, this ability comes with a price for men who leave their positive masculine attributes behind and do not utilize sound judgement or honor. Through an examination of male victims in Seabury Quinn’s stories, one can see that men who were not performing their proper masculine roles were punished.

There are numerous examples of men being punished for their unmanly or dishonorable conduct in Quinn’s fiction. Infidelity or spurned love is one theme that emerges in many of Quinn’s stories. In stories with male infidelity, Quinn often punishing the men who were unfaithful. However, Quinn’s attitude toward male versus female infidelity differed in that female characters who are unfaithful are usually punished severely whereas male philanderers are treated with more sympathy. This is not to say that Quinn painted male infidelity in a positive light, in fact both female and male infidelity are looked down upon. However, male infidelity is not only sympathized, but even excused by female characters within the story. For example, in

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42 Ibid., 197-208.
“A Rival from the Grave,” (1936) a man named Frazier Taviton falls in love with his childhood friend, Agnes. He is engaged to Agnes when WWI breaks out and is shipped overseas before he can marry her. While overseas, Taviton meets another woman named Elaine who he marries while deployed. Taviton describes Agnes’ understanding by stating, “She took my treachery standing, too...Agnes stayed away with reserve and decency until our house was opened...If their were any bitterness in her she didn’t show it. I think that my lips trembled more than hers when she took my hand and whispered, ‘I’m praying for your happiness, Frazie.’” Although Agnes appears to have forgiven him for his infidelity, Frazier still encounters punishment for it through Elaine’s spirit. Sometime after arriving in America with Frazier, Elaine dies and Frazier quickly sets his eyes upon marrying Agnes. However, after they marry, they soon encounter the spirit of Elaine who threatens and pesters both Agnes and Frazier until they seek de Grandin’s help. Thus, while Frazier is punished for his infidelity, he nevertheless has a happy ending with his one true love, Agnes.

Probably one of Quinn’s most blunt stories dealing with infidelity is “Pledged to the Dead,” (1937). In this story, a man named Ned Minton is planning on marrying his childhood sweetheart, Nella, until one day he is sent by his company to do business in New Orleans. While in New Orleans, Ned meets a beautiful woman named Julie d’Ayen who tosses a flower off of a balcony and bids Ned to come upstairs and give it to her. When he arrives in Julie’s room, she flirts with him and kisses him passionately. Ned promises her that he would visit again the next day. However, after they meet briefly in a graveyard, Ned is astounded to learn that Julie was a

44 Ibid., 1041-1042.
45 Ibid., 1041-1051.
ghost and soon heads back to New Jersey, abandoning her. Ned suffers from this very brief infidelity when a snake begins to visit him in New Jersey and torments him. He also receives notes from Julie reminding him that he had made a promise to visit her.46

One of the most telling reactions to this affair is that of Ned’s fiancee, Nella. Instead of scolding her fiancee for his infidelity with Julie, Nella accepts it as a natural consequence of being with a man.47 Nella explains:

Ned cheated, that’s the bald truth of it; he didn’t stop loving me, and he hasn’t stopped now, but I wasn’t there and that other girl was, and there were no conventions to be recognized . . . This isn’t 1892; even nice girls know the facts of life today, and while I’m no more anxious than the next one to put through a deal in shopworn goods, I still love Ned, and I don’t intend to let a single indiscretion rob us of our happiness.48

Through this passage, Nella justifies her fiancee’s infidelity by stating that she was not there in New Orleans, so the pressures of being loyal were less important. Her reference to the “facts of life” indicates that she accepts the fact that men are more likely to stray regardless of their relationship status. Compared with the punishment Baintree received after she had an affair with Norton in “The Brain Thief,” (1930) this story indicates that there was a double standard in the attitudes toward male and female infidelity.49 Although Ned is punished for his infidelity, he is nevertheless saved at the end of the story by Jules de Grandin and allowed to marry Nella.50

A man’s infidelity is not the only dishonorable action that is punished within these stories. Thievery and cowardice are also admonished by Quinn. For example, in “The Devil’s Rosary,” (1929) a financially struggling father named James Arkright is offered a job in the

47 Ibid., 399-400.
48 Ibid., 399.
49 See chapter two for more information.
50 Quinn, “Pledged to the Dead,” 414-416.
Himalayas. While there, Arkright is introduced to a man named Clendenning, a British researcher. In Tibet, Clendenning and Arkright stay as guests in a lamasery and discover that it is filled with gold. The two decide to rob their hosts and in the process steal a sacred stone which Clendenning later named Pi Yü. This stone transforms everything it touches into gold and is extremely valuable to the lamas. While Clendenning, Arkright, and a group of Bhotia workers are sleeping they are magically attacked by the lamas. All the Bhotias and Clendenning are killed, leaving Arkright the sole heir of the stone. The lamas follow Arkright home and begin killing his family, leaving a red vengeance bead by each victim.\(^{51}\)

Even after the decimation of the majority of his family, Arkright refuses to do the honorable thing and confront the lamas himself. Instead he hides from them until only Arkright and his daughter are left. He then seeks help from de Grandin. De Grandin manages to corner the lama that is pursuing them and makes a deal with him. In exchange for the stolen stone, the lama emissary promises to spare Arkright and his daughter. After the exchange is made, de Grandin scolds Arkright’s greed.\(^{52}\) He states, “Monsieur Arkright, I have saved your life, and, though against your will, restored your honor. It is true you have lost your gold, but self-respect is a more precious thing.”\(^{53}\) The restoration of the gold to the lamas is symbolic of the restoration of Arkright’s honor, an extremely important Victorian trait. Arkright’s forfeiture of his honor when he stole the gold from the lamas made him forfeit his other masculine qualities. Arkright was less of a man because he was unable to provide protection for his family.

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\(^{52}\) Ibid., 303-305.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 304.
Arkright’s greed and dishonor ended relatively well for him compared to the punishment Arbuthnot Hilliston receives for his poor choices. In “The Red Knife of Hassan,” (1934) Hilliston is decapitated by a secret group of assassins of which he was once a member. Both de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge learn from a young female survivor named Margaret Ditmas that Hilliston had joined the group of assassins while traveling in the Middle East. According to Ditmas, it was Hilliston’s idea to lead her and her friend, Helen Cassaway, to meet the assassins. Hilliston’s death may at first seem surprising given the way his masculinity is described in the beginning of the story. Colonel Hilliston is a world traveler and explorer whom had just returned to America from his trip to the Near East. When Ditmas questions Dr. Trowbridge on Hilliston’s seemingly fearful behavior, Dr. Trowbridge reasserts Hilliston’s masculine identity. Trowbridge describes Hilliston as having, “a rather lean and handsome face, bronzed as a sailor’s and with fine sun-lines about the eyes, a narrow, black mustache and strong, white teeth. A forceful, energetic face, this long-chinned countenance, [was] hardly the face of a man who could be frightened, much less terrified.”

The initial perception of Hilliston by Dr. Trowbridge makes his death at the beginning of the story odd. However, Hilliston largely undermines his own manliness through his dishonorable decision to join an assassin group. Hilliston also fails in his traditional masculine duty to protect the women he accompanies by leading Ditmas and Cassaway into an initiation ceremony, a choice which later led to the murder of Cassaway and the near death of Ditmas. Although Hilliston is described as masculine at the beginning of the story, he was depicted as

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55 Ibid., 916.
56 Ibid., 914-926.
cowardly at the time of his death. When the room Hilliston is in is suddenly submerged in darkness, he calls his servant to bring some lights through a voice that has a, “thin, hysterical quality” in it. Hilliston’s rejection of manly qualities ultimately led to his untimely death.

Man’s inability to face their fear is an underlying theme in many of Seabury Quinn’s stories. This is exemplified in “The Red Knife of Hassan,” by Hilliston’s fear of death. Hilliston was so afraid of death that he fortified his whole house, yet still underwent the assassin’s blade. A similar example of this can be found in Quinn’s 1937 story “Children of the Bat,” which features a female antagonist called La Murciélaga. La Murciélaga leads a gang referred to as Los Niños de la Murciélaga or the “Children of the Bat.” This female antagonist is an all powerful leader who commands both men and women to do her bidding. Those who do not obey her orders are crucified in front of all her followers.

While meeting with the commandant of Tupulo, a city in Mexico, de Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge, and Sergeant Costello meet La Murciélaga face to face. She had been posing as a man who came to report that his house had been robbed by her gang. When the commandant, de Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge, and Sergeant Costello meet at the site of the crime, it is revealed that the man is La Murciélaga in disguise. The group of men follow La Murciélaga to her lair and are given the choice to join her or be crucified. All men but the commandant refuse. To the disgust of Dr. Trowbridge, he witnesses the commandant muzzled like a dog and groveling at La Murciélaga’s feet. Dr. Trowbridge describes the ghastly scene, stating:

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57 Ibid., 917.
58 Ibid., 916-926.
60 Ibid., 1077-1081.
It was shocking to behold him stultify his manhood. “Misericordia muy Señora graciosa—have mercy, gracious lady!” he [the commandant] whimpered, and I turned my head with a shudder of repulsion as he put his hand beneath her instep, raised a gemmed foot to his mouth, and, thrusting forth his tongue, began to lick it as a famished dog might lap at food.61

All of the captured men agree that it is better to die than to submit to their fear of death and forfeit their manhood. Their honorable choice proves wise at the end of the story because all of La Murciélaga’s followers, including the commandant, are gunned down while Dr. Trowbridge, de Grandin, and Sergeant Costello are freed.62

Although most of his stories emphasize a protagonist’s intelligence over his brawniness, Quinn has a few non-de Grandin stories with male protagonists who perform ultra-masculine strength. Indeed, these types of stories are very reminiscent of fellow pulp writer Robert E. Howard’s writing style. Robert E. Howard is best known for his creation of wild characters, like Conan the Barbarian, who are distinguished for their brawny exteriors and savage personalities. Quinn was a fan of Robert E. Howard and it is somewhat surprising that he did not write more stories that mimicked Howard’s style.63 However, one can see an influence in Quinn’s descriptions of his male protagonists in stories like “Globe of Memories,” (1937) and “Roads.” For example, Quinn describes his main character, Claus, in “Roads,” (1938) as “brawny and wide-shouldered...he was not old; the flaxen beard was still too young to have felt shears, his lightly sun-tanned skin was smooth and fair, his sea-blue eyes were clear and youthful.”64 Yet

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61 Ibid., 1081.
62 Ibid., 1081-1083.
63 In the interview by Julius Schwartz and Mortimer Weisinger, Quinn stated that Robert E. Howard was his favorite fantasy writer, and, according to Schwartz and Weisinger, termed Howard’s work as, “wonderful—best man writing for Weird Tales.” Schwartz and Weisinger, 13.
Quinn’s writing was probably the most reminiscent of Howard’s when he described battle. Quinn ascribes battle instinct to Claus by stating:

And now the wild war-madness of his people came on Claus . . . Four soldiers of the Tetrarch’s guard he slew before they could close with him, and when two others, rushing to attack him from behind, laid hands on him, he dropped his sword and, reaching backwards, took his adversaries in his arms as if he were some monstrous bear and beat their heads together till their helmets toppled off and their skulls cracked and they fell dead, blood rushing from their ears and noses.65

One of Howard’s protagonists, King Kull, is also admired for his brawn. In “The Shadow Kingdom,” (1929) commoners motion to Kull and state, “That is Kull, see! But what a king! And what a man! Look at his arms! His shoulders!”66 In a comparison of Quinn’s passage with one of Howard’s, it hard to discern which passage belonged to Quinn and which originated with Howard. In a description of a fight between King Kull and a murderous serpent race in “The Shadow Kingdom,” Howard describes:

For the king was clear berserk, fighting in the terrible Atlantean way, that seeks death to deal death; he made no effort to avoid thrusts and slashes, standing straight up and ever plunging forward, no thought in his primitive fury, but now some chain had broken in his soul, flooding his mind with a red wave of slaughter-lust. He slew a foe at each blow, but they surged about him, and time and again Brule [Kull’s companion] turned a thrust that would have slain, as he crouched long slashes and plunges, but with short overhead blows and upward thrusts.67

Both passages connect their protagonists’ savagery to their lineage, Claus being of Nordic descent and Kull of Atlantean descent.68 However, the most common element between Quinn’s

65 Ibid., loc. 135.
67 Ibid., 94.
68 Quinn, Roads, loc. 66. Howard, 76.
Claus and Howard’s Kull is their sheer ferocity and strength in battle. Both Claus and Kull are able to slaughter oncoming hoards of enemies using mediaeval-like weaponry.

This style of writing is set apart from Quinn’s usual depiction of protagonist predicaments. Strongmen protagonists like Kull and Claus rely on their brute strength and battle skill to win battles against their antagonists whereas protagonists like de Grandin rely on strategy, skill and agility in their confrontations. This is interesting considering that the de Grandin series was created in the 1920s, a decade that continued the fixation on strong male bodies as a signifier for masculinity.\(^{69}\) It is indeed odd that Quinn had begun integrating the strongman figure in the late 1930s rather than the progressive and 1920s decades. However, Robert E. Howard committed suicide in 1936, shaking the *Weird Tales* community.\(^{70}\) Many of Quinn’s strongman stories began to surface in the years following Howard’s death. Quinn had even transformed one of his more mild-mannered characters, Dr. Trowbridge, into a warrior-like character in “Satan’s Palimpsest,” (1937). In an amazing transformation, the usually mild-mannered narrator, Trowbridge, describes his rage:

> I went stark, raving mad. For a wild, exhilarated moment I knew the fury and the joy our Saxon forebears felt when they went berserker [sic] and, armor cast aside, leapt bare-breasted into battle. I felt my ax-blade cleave the ikon’s golden plates, wrenched it free and struck again; chopping, hewing, battering . . . I drove my axhead [sic] through the center panel, cleft the figure of the beautiful young man in twain, cut the dancing horrors into bits, smashed one crawling infantile monstrosities to utter formlessness; finally, insane with murderous rage, drove the battered golden casque into the fireplace.\(^{71}\)

\(^{69}\) Kasson, 32.

\(^{70}\) Quinn wrote in the October 1936 issue of *Weird Tales* that, “The field of fantastic fiction has lost one of its outstanding and recognized masters in Robert E. Howard. His Solomon Kane stories, his tales of Kull, and latterly his Conan sagas, all of them were superb in their own way. He was a quantity producer, but always managed to keep his stuff fresh and vigorous. There are few who can do this.” Seabury Quinn, “Pointed Paragraphs,” *Weird Tales*, October 1936, under “The Eyrie,” [http://pulpmags.org/PDFs/WT_1936_10/index.html](http://pulpmags.org/PDFs/WT_1936_10/index.html), (accessed January 17, 2015), 384.

\(^{71}\) Seabury Quinn, “Satan’s Palimpsest,” vol. 3 of *The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin* (Shelburne: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2001), 1097.
One can speculate the reasons behind Quinn’s mimicry of Howard. Quinn may have simply liked
Howard’s style and tried to integrate it into his own writing for a while. It could be argued that he
wrote in this way to commemorate Howard who, he had admitted, was one of his favorite
writers.72

After Howard’s death, there was a surge of fans who clamored and requested his stories.
At least one other author, Clifford Ball, wrote his *Weird Tales* in a highly Howardesque fashion.
Although there is no solid evidence to suggest that Ball wrote in this fashion to satisfy and draw
in Howard’s fans, it is likely that his mimicry of Howard helped boost his popularity. In some
issues following a few of Ball’s Howard-style stories, Eyrie readers commented on his potential
to replace Robert E. Howard. In the October 1937 issue of *Weird Tales* Howard fan Arthur L.
Widner wrote, “Clifford Ball seems to have stepped into Robert E. Howard’s shoes, but whether
he will fill them is another question. So far he has not done too bad, but his feet will have to
grow some before he can equal *The Devil in Iron, Black Canaan,* and other creepy tales.”73
Quinn likely picked up on the revival in popularity that Howard’s stories were undergoing and
attempted to mimic his stories as a way to both commemorate him and draw in readers the same
way in which Ball had done. However, Quinn’s mimicry of Howard was quite short lived. Even
though “Roads,” and “Globe of Memories,” were immensely popular stories when they were
published, he clung overall to his de Grandin-type masculine formula that valued brains over
brawn and men’s ability to overcome any obstacle.

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72 Schwartz and Weisinger, 13.
Although Quinn’s portrayal of masculinity is different from many other popular culture
depictions of strongman masculinity that emerged during the interwar period, it is no less
important for the examination of American ideals of masculinity. Instead of focusing on the male
body as an expression of masculinity, as was so popular during the Progressive and 1920s
decades, Quinn tended to focus on inner masculine qualities that allowed men to be masculine
without a sinewy body. Although Jules de Grandin is described as seemingly feminine and mild
mannered, he is always able to overcome his enemies. The misleading appearance attributed to
de Grandin could certainly have struck a cord with many American men who during the interwar
period who were continually exposed to the shaky ground on which masculinity stood. All the
major crises that occurred in American conceptions of masculinity during the interwar period
reveal that it is only a single facade out of numerous facades that could be ascribed to
masculinity. Seabury Quinn’s depiction of masculinity presented yet another facet to masculinity
when other facets were seen as unobtainable or jeopardized. Quinn showed that instead of trying
to live up to a built image of masculinity, men could be comforted knowing that masculinity was
an inner value attainable by anyone.

The trivial nature of physicality in most of Quinn’s stories is complemented by his
continual reference to effeminate male characters. This rejection of the strongman figure can be
seen in several de Grandin stories that emphasize male effeminacy. As discussed, de Grandin has
many traditionally masculine qualities like dominance and integrity, but what makes de Grandin
truly unique is his ability to project an effeminate masculinity. Most stories have small details on
de Grandin’s feminine attributes such as a brief description of his “slender” hands. Other

74 For an example of Quinn’s “slender” hands, see his 1926 story, “Ancient Fires.” Seabury Quinn,
descriptions mention his feminine-like actions. For example, in “Restless Souls,” (1928) de Grandin is excited over the notion of going to a cafe to eat and he “skip[s] nimbly” to a car in his enthusiasm.75 Quinn even compares some of de Grandin’s actions to women’s actions. In “The Man Who Cast No Shadow,” (1927) Dr. Trowbridge describes de Grandin as, “full of moods as a prima donna.”76 Another example of this can be seen in “The Curse of Everard Maundy,” (1927) when Dr. Trowbridge states that, “Tactful women and Jules de Grandin have the talent of feeling without being told when conversation is unwelcome, and besides wishing me a pleasant good-night, he spoke not a word until we had gone upstairs to bed.”77

Even de Grandin’s bed clothes are feminine. In “The Ghost Helper” (1931) it describes de Grandin as, “Wrapped in a mauve-silk dressing-gown, [with] purple kid slippers on his womanishly small feet, [and] a pink-and-lavender muffler about his throat.”78 This description is repeated in “The Devil’s Bride,” (1932) except in this story a woman actually dons in his pajamas. Alice Hume looks “very charming and demure in a suit of Jules de Grandin’s lavender pajamas and his violet dressing-gown.”79 These descriptions are even more telling when compared with other men. In another passage from “The Man Who Cast No Shadow,” Quinn compares de Grandin to a male antagonist named Count Czerny. In a comparison of the two, Quinn writes:

The Frenchman was a bare five feet four inches in height, slender as a girl, and, like a girl, possessed of almost laughably small hands and feet. His light hair and

79 Quinn, The Devil’s Bride, 116.
fair skin, coupled with his trimly waxed diminutive blond mustache and round, unwinking eyes, gave him a curiously misleading appearance of mildness. His companion was at least six feet tall, swarthy-skinned and black-haired, with bristling black mustaches and fierce, slate-grey eyes set beneath beetling black brows. His large nose was like the predatory beak of some bird of prey, and the tilt of his long, pointed jaw bore out the uncompromising ferocity of the rest of his visage.\textsuperscript{80}

This description of de Grandin evokes an image of a dainty teenage girl facing a titan. In fact, de Grandin is hardly described in any traditionally masculine terminology. The only trace of de Grandin’s masculinity in this passage is phrased antithetically by stating that he appears mild but is not.

One could argue that Czerny, a vampire, became less intimidating at the end of “The Man Who Cast No Shadow,” because of his transformation into an older man. De Grandin explains that Czerny is the type of vampire which could live for a century in youth but after he reaches his hundredth year he must either drink the blood of a virgin or die. The Czerny’s aging signifies that he had almost reached his century mark.\textsuperscript{81} However, even if Czerny is described as old, he is still characterized as powerful. De Grandin explains that Czerny was, “an old, old man who was so strong he could overcome a policeman.”\textsuperscript{82} Czerny’s transformation into an old man supports the idea that power is internal. Even while almost a century old, Czerny still has the strength of his youth, nearly breaking the policeman’s arm in his rush to get away. In the end, de Grandin kills Count Czerny by stabbing him.\textsuperscript{83} He overcomes Czerny’s strength by his skilled swordsmanship, proving to embody a superior form of masculinity even if he appears physically weaker.

\textsuperscript{80} Quinn, “The Man Who Cast No Shadow,” 135.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 156-160.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 160.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 154-160.
This emphasis on inner masculine characteristics is made even plainer in Quinn’s 1926 story, “Ancient Fires.” In this story, de Grandin reads a want ad that seeks a man who is:

[O]f more than ordinary courage to undertake [a] confidential and possibly dangerous mission. Great physical strength is not essential, but indomitable bravery and absolute fearlessness in the face of seemingly supernatural manifestations are. This is remarkable work and will require the services of a remarkable man.  

This advertisement supports the idea that Quinn rejected contemporary notions of a physically strong masculine hero and supplemented it with internal masculine characteristics. Only brave, dominant, honorable, and intelligent men could be considered truly remarkable in Quinn’s stories. It is no surprise that the ultimate embodiment of masculinity and primary protagonist for the de Grandin series states that the description of a “remarkable man” describes himself perfectly.

Although the majority of Quinn’s stories have heterosexual elements, there are a few characters in addition to de Grandin whose sexuality one may question. While reading Quinn’s de Grandin tales, one may speculate on the relationship shared between Dr. de Grandin and Dr. Trowbridge. Both men appear inseparable throughout the series and though each man admitted to having a heterosexual relationship in the past, neither de Grandin or Dr. Trowbridge attempt to forge new relationships with women. The occasional description of de Grandin’s feminine apparel and appearance could be used to connect him to homosexuality. For example, historian George Chauncey argues that certain colors worn by men, like chartreuse, fuchsia, and green usually signified homosexuality during this time. The fact that de Grandin wore lavender pajamas that could also be worn by a woman could be indicative of homosexuality. The way de

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84 Quinn, “Ancient Fires,” 137.
85 Ibid., 137-138.
86 Chauncey, 52-53.
Grandin occasionally speaks to Dr. Trowbridge could also be perceived as a sign of male affection. For example, in “The Door to Yesterday,” (1932) Dr. Trowbridge had exclaimed, “I’m hanged if I do,” when de Grandin asked if he understood something; to this de Grandin responded, “Very well, you shall, in time . . . but you shall not be hanged. You are too good a friend to lose by hanging, dear old silly Trowbridge of my heart.”

This discussion on homosexuality makes it important to remember that Quinn largely modeled his Jules de Grandin character off of Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot and Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. Some scholars have argued that Poirot and Holmes are homosexual characters. For example, in Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century, scholar Graham Robb argues that Sherlock Holmes had an unquestionable attraction toward his sidekick, Dr. Watson. Robb points out that Holmes tries to court Watson when he discovers that his sidekick is attracted to a client named Mary Morstan. In addition to this, Robb argues that Holmes’ lifestyle is also characteristic of stereotypically homosexual lifestyles. These portrayals of Holmes likely influenced Christie, who many scholars have argued, mimicked Arthur Conan Doyle. In Murder She Wrote: A Study of Agatha Christie’s Detective Fiction, Patricia D. Maida and Nicholas B. Spornick argue that Christie modeled portions of her character, Hercule Poirot, after Sherlock Holmes. They argue, “Christie pays homage to the Sherlock Holmes literature in these stories by borrowing various clichés from the master: the Watson, the shared rooms and the landlady image; the emphasis on eccentricity in the sleuth . . .

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88 Ibid.
[and] the lack of family or romantic involvement for the great detective.” However, both Maida and Spornick make it clear that although other scholars had argued that Poirot was attracted to his sidekick Hastings, they disagree. Still, the fact that Quinn modeled his character after these detectives would make it unsurprising that readers may question his characters’ sexuality. Even more so, de Grandin sets himself apart from Poirot and Holmes by his overly feminine apparel and mannerisms.

A more straightforward portrayal of male homosexuality can be found in Quinn’s 1938 story, “Lynne Foster is Dead.” This work is significant for its inclusion of homosexuality, transsexualism, bisexuality, and transgender elements during a period that otherwise sought to suppress these expressions. Chauncey argues that male homosexuality was more socially accepted before WWII, however, he is careful to note that this acceptance was usually extended to men who behaved in a manly fashion. Men who transgressed the bounds of acceptable masculine behavior by cross dressing or behaving in a feminine way were publicly shamed and considered bisexual. According to Chauncey, bisexuality had been used to describe someone who performed two different genders. Chauncey explains, “bisexual referred to individuals who combined the physical and/or psychic attributes of both men and women. A bisexual was not attracted to both males and females; a bisexual was both male and female.” Men who cross dressed were considered bisexuals because they were displaying feminine attributes but they were physically male. Transgressive male behaviors extended to sexual behavioral styles where

90 Patricia D. Maida and Nicholas B. Spornick, Murder She Wrote: A Study of Agatha Christie’s Detective Fiction (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1982), 92.
91 Ibid., 93.
92 Chauncey, 10-81.
93 Ibid., 49.
men who performed the passive sexual roles were considered feminine whereas the men who performed active, penetrative sexual roles were considered masculine.  

These concepts make “Lynne Foster is Dead,” a unique story because it demonstrates a transgression in male behavior. “Lynne Foster is Dead,” is about an archaeologist named Lynne Foster who kills the daughter of a wealthy and powerful man in Cairo. The father, Yousouf Pasha, had promised his daughter’s hand to a good friend of his named Foulik Bey. Foster is forced to pay for the accidental death of Pasha’s daughter, Ismet, by becoming her. Pasha has some witch doctors force Foster’s soul into his daughter’s dead body, enabling the marriage to Foulik Bey to continue. During this traditional marriage, Foster is forced to adhere to strict customs which dictated he be totally subservient to his new husband.

Though there is not a description of the sexual encounter between Bey and Foster, it is strongly implied that they consummated their marriage. Even if Foster did not bed Bey, he willingly admits to sleeping with other men while a woman. In the story, Foster describes feeling both masculine and feminine on the inside, indicating that his masculinity is being shared with his femininity. Foster states:

I still admired my woman’s body and took pleasure in adorning it, but it and I—the real I—had not fused. When I was with men I felt like a man, and to come in contact with them roused purely masculine reactions. I could shake hands with them or touch them casually, but to be made love to by them outraged me as much as if I still wore a man’s body. When I was with women I felt like a woman. There was pleasure but no thrill in kissing them or being kissed by them.

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94 Ibid., 47-81.
95 Quinn, “Lynne Foster is Dead,” 600-613.
96 In Alien Flesh, Quinn’s expanded version of “Lynne Foster is Dead,” there is a much more graphic description of Foster’s sexual encounters with Foulik Bey on pages 93 and 94. Seabury Quinn, Alien Flesh, (Philadelphia: Oswald Train, 1977), 93-94.
97 Quinn, “Lynne Foster is Dead,” 615.
This paragraph presents a different depiction of masculinity through its acceptance of a male character acting femininely, a very interesting depiction of gender when put into the context of the late thirties. Foster’s entrance into a female body allows him to transgress normative masculine behaviors and express feminine behavior without being categorized as homosexual. However, one must also consider that Foster knows internally that he was a man and is choosing to express himself both as a man and a woman.

At the end of the story, Foster stumbles across an old childhood friend named Hugh Abernathy who is immediately taken with Foster. Foster quickly becomes infatuated with Hugh too but is reluctant to begin a relationship without telling Hugh about his previous life as a man. The end of the story can be interpreted in one of two ways. Ismet is biologically female and at the end of the story she completely revokes any of her former ties to Foster by stating, “The moment that I raised my eyes to yours [Hugh’s] I knew. I was no longer a man imprisoned in a woman’s body, but a woman, every inch—every cell and fiber—of me. When I put my hand in yours I felt a wild, tumultuous surf of longing breaking on my heart.” On the one hand, this can be viewed as a rejection of homosexuality because the relationship between Hugh and Ismet is biologically between a man and woman. On the other hand, one can also see a support for homosexuality through Hugh’s response to Ismet. After relating some very convincing facts that Ismet is Lynne Foster, Hugh promises to be with her as long as she never mentions Lynne Foster again. Ismet responds that since they had met Lynne Foster has been dead. The fact that Hugh knowingly chose to be with someone who was once a man indicates a tolerance, or even acceptance, toward male homosexuality and gender inversion. The story shows that Lynne’s soul

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98 Ibid., 589-616.
99 Ibid., 616.
100 Ibid.
can fall in love with a man as long as he is the right one. This attitude marks a radical depiction of homosexuality for this time period because it accepts the image of a feminine male soul.

The fiction that Seabury Quinn produced during the interwar period goes against the grain in its acceptance of male effeminacy. Although scholars like Chauncey argue that the interwar period was more tolerant of male homosexuality, he also points out that this tolerance was limited to male homosexuals that performed traditional masculine roles. Quinn’s positive portrayal of homosexuality and effeminate men in “Lynne Foster is Dead,” is striking considering the period in which it was written. This depiction of effeminate men symbolizes that there was a great deal of anxiety over masculinity, a void in which Quinn filled by embracing previously undermined conceptions of masculinity. However, Quinn was also a product of his time through his presentation of both modern and traditional masculine traits. At the same time that Quinn was illustrating the modern trait of male craftiness, he continued to emphasize traditional conceptions of masculinity by depicting traditional masculine traits such as honor, bravery, and intelligence. These traditional characterizations determined that men do not need to be physically brawny to defeat their obstacles, but instead must perform their inner strengths.

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101 Chauncey, 10-81.  
102 Pendergast, 1-166.
Conclusion

Seabury Quinn’s contributions to *Weird Tales* imparted a spirit to the magazine that could not be found in other contributors’ works. It is likely that Quinn reflected many of his own life experiences into his writing. Quinn was influenced by his experiences in WWI, as a mortuary lawyer, and as an editor for mortuary trade journals. Additionally, traces of other authors and literary works, such as Agatha Christie and James Frazier’s *The Golden Bough* can be seen in Quinn’s work. But it is Quinn’s reflection of the interwar period that makes this discussion most historically important. Seabury Quinn’s writings uniquely reflected changing ideas about masculinity, femininity, and sexuality during the interwar period. These changes were caused by many different social and political developments that occurred during the Progressive and Interwar periods.

Women’s presence and activities within the public sphere during the Progressive Era, 1920s, and the 1930s challenged many traditional notions of gender. This caused Seabury Quinn, like other traditionalist writers, to create a nostalgic version of femininity in his *Weird Tales* stories by repositioning many of his independent female characters in traditional domestic settings. Women who echoed images of the New Woman within Quinn’s writings were punished. Quinn’s conventional depiction of helpless female figures as measured against the unconventional punishments they endured reveals a unique juxtaposition. However, like many of his stories, these unconventional presentations of femininity eventually end with the reestablishment of traditional values.

Quinn’s depictions of masculinity, on the other hand, were much more diverse than traditional notions of femininity. The concept of masculinity was in a constant state of anxiety
between the years of 1920 and 1940. Quinn’s rendition of diverse masculine figures reminded readers that their own masculinities were fluid. Men did not need to adhere to a specific male body type to be masculine. In Quinn’s stories, men who adhered to strong intellectual and emotional masculine characteristics could still personify masculinity. No male character embodies this idea more than Jules de Grandin, who, despite his effeminate actions and appearance, is presented as more of a man than any other fictional character by Quinn.

There are numerous reasons why Quinn may have celebrated feminine characteristics in men. One of the most obvious is a connection with homosexuality. It is likely that Quinn’s residency in New York exposed him to the culture of gay and lesbian communities. This exposure could have been used to create his settings in stories like, “Lynne Foster is Dead.” Perhaps Lynne Foster was modeled after New York’s many male cross dressers or was a reflection of this type of gender bending. As discussed, interwar cross dressers were often regarded as bisexual, which matches well with Lynne Foster’s predicament. Although this story could be a reflection of transsexualism through its focus on a man trapped within a woman’s body, Lynne Foster identifies with both genders throughout the story, contrary to transsexuals who ascribe to one gender. Whatever the reasons behind his representations of homosexuality in Weird Tales, it is clear that he was at some level attempting to explore varieties of male sexuality.

The reasons behind Quinn’s rejection of the strongman figure are a little easier to pinpoint. In a photograph of Quinn and his son published in Etchings & Odysseys, it shows Quinn holding a cane. This could mean one of two things; it could have been a fashion accessory that Quinn used while walking around, or it could have been used as a medical

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1 Chauncey, 49.
necessity for a leg injury. The time when the photograph was taken is not the only time that Quinn was seen walking with a cane. E. Hoffmann Price, a contemporary of Quinn, had also mentioned in his memoir Quinn’s use of a cane. However, at the time Quinn met with Price, Quinn was quite frail and had just suffered from a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. Still, the picture that featured Quinn holding a cane was taken much earlier and suggests that he needed it earlier in his life.

It is possible that Quinn suffered a leg wound during WWI. This would explain why a few characters such as Dr. Wolf in “The Gods of East and West,” have injured legs. It would also explain why Quinn’s primary protagonist, Jules de Grandin, often walks with a cane in his stories. It is possible that Quinn projected a part of himself in the figure of Jules de Grandin who, consequently, shares his middle name. If Quinn had a leg injury, he may have been unable to completely embody the strongman image that was so popular during the interwar period. Therefore, Quinn rejected the strongman figure as a signifier of masculinity through the character of de Grandin. Instead Quinn viewed masculinity as being an internal quality that had to be projected outward. Unfortunately, this can only remain a speculation as Quinn’s war records have been lost.

Although this study has discussed the life and times of Seabury Quinn while he contributed to Weird Tales, he went on to do many other important things. Quinn was aged sixty-five when Weird Tales ceased publication in 1954 and he was still an active writer. He wrote for a mortuary magazine called DE-CE-CO Magazine and worked at Andrews Air Force Base in

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3 Price, Book of the Dead, 158-161.
Washington D.C. for Air Force Intelligence until 1964 when he suffered a stroke. Quinn also wrote *Alien Flesh*, a revised full novel version of Quinn’s 1938 *Weird Tales* story, “Lynne Foster is Dead.” It was published posthumously in 1977. Many of his stories were later included by numerous publishers in fantasy anthologies. *The Phantom-Fighter*, an anthology of ten Jules de Grandin stories, was published through Mycroft & Moran, three years before Quinn’s death in 1969. After his death, several of his stories were published in anthologies, the most extensive being those published by the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box collection. This shows that though Quinn’s popularity had faded with the decline of *Weird Tales* magazine, his writings were still circulating decades after his death among a subgroup of horror story fans.

It would be difficult to deny that Quinn’s de Grandin stories were formulaic and predictable. No doubt this element of his writing style proves unattractive to many modern readers. However, beneath the stylistic tediousness lies a body of work that provides significant reflection of and challenges to Interwar gender ideas. Quinn’s popularity indicates that his ideas on gender struck a cord with many interwar readers. His writings prove significant because they reflect an anxiety and response to social change. While scholars have documented these societal changes and responses to those changes in other mediums, they have largely ignored the reverberation within the *Weird Tales* genre. It is in this respect that Seabury Quinn’s literature is important and relevant for historical study.

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7 Seabury Quinn, *The Phantom-Fighter*, 1-263.
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