

BARBARA CHING

Happily Ever After in the Marketplace: The Ballads of the Southern Mountains and the Escape from Old Europe

Between 1882 and 1898, Harvard English Professor Francis J. Child published *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, a five volume collection of ballad lyrics that he believed to pre-date the printing press. While ballad collections had been published before, the scope and purported antiquity of Child's project captured the public imagination; within a decade, folklorists and amateur folk song collectors excitedly reported finding versions of the ballads in the Appalachians. Many enthused about the 'purity' of their discoveries – due to the supposed isolation of the British immigrants from the corrupting influences of modernization. When Englishman Cecil Sharp visited the mountains in search of English ballads, he described the people he encountered as “just English peasant folk [who] do not seem to me to have taken on any distinctive American traits” (cited in Whisnant 116). Even during the mid-century folk revival, Kentuckian Jean Thomas, founder of the American Folk Song Festival, wrote in the liner notes to a 1960 Folkways album featuring highlights from the festival that

at the close of the Elizabethan era, English, Scotch, and Scotch Irish wearied of the tyranny of their kings and spurred by undaunted courage and love of independence they braved the perils of uncharted seas to seek freedom in a new world. Some tarried in the colonies but the braver, bolder, more venturesome of spirit pressed deep into the Appalachians bringing with them – hope in their hearts, song on their lips – the song their Anglo-Saxon forbears had gathered from the wandering minstrels of Shakespeare's time. These sturdy Anglo-Saxons so loved the mountainous regions of Appalachia that they were content there to live almost untouched by the outside world until a century later. From these sturdy Anglo-Saxons descended the sturdy mountain people of today – who still love to sing the songs of their forbears.

In 1934, *Time Magazine* reported that Thomas acted as mistress of ceremonies at the festival dressed in Elizabethan costume thus visu-

ally reinforcing the connection between twentieth century Appalachia and sixteenth century England.

As David Whisnant has carefully documented, some enthusiasts found the ballads particularly compelling because they could favorably contrast the ethnic origins of the British Appalachians with the seemingly overwhelming influx of non-English speaking immigrants. Robert Winslow Gordon, the first director of the Library of Congress' Folk-Song Archive (now the American Folklife Center), advocated the collection of English folk songs for just that reason: "I frankly believe that the whole project of reviving and making known our true American folk stuff is one of the most worthwhile things to be done today. From the point of view of true Americanism. [sic] That stuff is the very soul of our past, of pioneers, of the men who made America. It's not modern Hebrew Broadway jazz."¹ By this (il)logic, a song of British origins is more American than a song associated with other American immigrants – even after those immigrants begin to sing in English. Gordon's statement also nominates men as the tradition bearers. Even now, after the 'Great Boom' folk revival of the late 1950s-early 1960s thematized diversity and scholars can document that the music of the Appalachians, like most American music, can be traced to multiple ethnic sources and to both men and women,² the origins of American country music continue to be linked to British traces of the Child ballads and their male collectors. For example, Bob Dylan, introducing the Carter Family's "Wildwood Flower" on his *Theme Time Radio Hour* devoted to flowers, called the family "the most influential group in country music history" and specifically credited founding member A.P. Carter's songcatching for their repertoire: "A.P. collected hundreds of British Appalachian folk songs and recorded them" (July 12, 2006).³

At the turn of the twentieth-first century, interest in this heritage has shifted to portraying its survival not as a vestige of pure British culture preserved by a few valiant men but rather as a triumphantly American tradition flourishing thanks to a diverse network of creative artists and equally creative entrepreneurs. To make this argument, I will focus on a fictional celebration of this severance from old England in the film *Songcatcher* (Maggie Greenwald, 2000). I chose this text because of its wide circulation and because it features a soundtrack that reinforces its musical themes, but recent novels such as Sharyn McCrumb's *The Songcatcher* (2001), Lee Smith's *The Devil's Dream* (1992), and Nashville Agrarian Donald Davidson's *Big Ballad Jamboree* (1996) similarly imagine a productive and progressive relation

between songcatching and commercial country music.⁴ Most often, these fictions take the form of romance and thus this essay underscores the way the plot of this film implicitly intervenes in debates about the authenticity and origins of country and folk music. As a form of storytelling reinforced by a camera and carefully selected songs, the film engages the audience in an identification with songcatchers and the music they ‘discover.’

While Dave Harker has thoroughly de-mystified the process of folk-song collecting in the British Isles, the word ‘songcatcher’ is used in the American vernacular as a colloquial term for the folklorists and amateurs in search of old songs. While Harker insists on the clarity of the term “song mediator” (xiii), the thoroughly ideological and romantic term ‘songcatcher’ appeals to the imagination by implying that songs are elusive, living creatures that need to be skillfully captured. Songcatchers can thus easily be compared to knights in search of a grail; the title of Benjamin Filene’s history of early 20th century work, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music*, for example, draws attention to this resemblance. Likewise, songcatchers became a subject for fiction almost as soon as they appeared on the cultural landscape. For example, Columbia University professor, songcatcher, and novelist Dorothy Scarborough incorporated folk lyrics and melodies into her novels, and she opened her 1935 memoir *A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains* by explaining that “this book represents the partial results of a summer spent *questing* for folk songs in Virginia and North Carolina” (ix, emphasis mine).⁵

The choice of the romance plot – however unconscious or automatic – shapes these stories about ballad collecting into idealized visions of American culture, a form of wish fulfilment or wish articulation that Fredric Jameson has ascribed to romance as a genre, which he defines as a “utopian fantasy which aims at the transfiguration of the world of everyday life in such a way as to restore the conditions of some lost Eden, or to anticipate a future realm from which the . . . imperfections will have been effaced” (110). Jameson, in turn, points to Northrop Frye’s theory of the genre. Frye breaks the structure into “three main stages . . . the perilous journey . . . the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero” (187). He also notes that the object of the quest embodies “wealth in its ideal forms: power and wisdom” and a triumph of “fertility over the waste land” (193). In these respects, the film *Songcatcher* adapts the romantic quest framework that

moves from the lost eden to the future realm while adding significant new details: Greenwald highlights the importance of the female quester and the wide variety of traditions that combined and transformed to make American folk music. Approached by a producer to do a film about the early days of the country music industry, Greenwald says she was struck by the role of women as both bearers of the ballad tradition and collectors of it. She mentions ballad collector and settlement school founder Olive Dame Campbell in particular. “I set the film in 1907 in honor of Olive Campbell. That was the year that she heard a schoolgirl sing ‘Barbara Allen’ and recognized it [as a Child ballad] and collected ballads” (Feinstein).⁶

But rather than signifying the ballad tradition as a sort of grail, “Barbara Allen” serves as a sounding board and signpost for a series of ‘crucial struggles’ – gender conflicts and role reversals – throughout the film, struggles that Campbell never wrote about.⁷ Nevertheless, Greenwald surrounds her heroine, Lily Penleric, with helping characters, at once stock characters of romance and reminiscent of ‘real’ songcatchers (Frye 193). Alice Kincaid echoes Emma Bell Miles, another historical figure who brought news of mountain music to the mainstream when she published an account of it in Harper’s (1904). The well-educated daughter of school teachers, Miles eloped with a feckless mountaineer and supported her family with her paintings, poems, and accounts of life in the highlands much as Alice Kincaid does in the film.⁸ The mountaineer with the most knowledge about ballads, Viney Butler, also embodies a familiar figure in the lore of ballad collecting; Bufwack and Oermann cite several passages of ballad collectors’⁹ praise for the “old prophetesses” and grandmothers who shared their vast repository of song (12). Zwonitzer and Hirshberg tell about the Carter family neighbor, Amanda “Aunt Mandy” Groves, an old woman whose “mother lode of songs” frequently brought A. P. to her door (119-20). Greenwald also speculates that *Songcatcher*’s lesbian subplot has a basis in the history of settlement schools given the number of ‘spinster schoolteachers’ who migrated to the mountains in search of worthwhile work and meaningful lives. By emphasizing the role of women, Greenwald (perhaps subconsciously) associates American culture with liberating innovation and European culture with a stultifying patriarchy in spite of the love for the old English ballads that several characters profess.

Songcatcher’s heroine, Lily Penleric, internalizes these conflicting cultures or “crucial struggles.” The only woman faculty member at a

stuffy New England music conservatory (in 1907),¹⁰ Lily struggles to gain acceptance in Clover, North Carolina, a Blue Ridge community where her sister Elna runs a settlement school with her lover Harriet. After being refused a promotion to full professor, ostensibly so the conservatory can hire Cyrus Whittle, an English-born expert in balladry, Lily sets out on a quest to the mountains. Lugging cumbersome recording equipment, she hopes to capture pure English folk ballads to serve as incontrovertible evidence of her scholarly prowess. While questing heroes inherently have our sympathy, Lily initially fulfills the role more awkwardly – and not simply because she is a woman in a man’s role. Despite Greenwald’s desire to highlight women’s contributions to early country music, Lily, as a lover of the old British ballads, identifies herself with the male scholarship that appropriates these songs. Feminine in the conservatory yet cold and commanding in Carolina, Lily is an alien or barbarian wherever she goes. No wonder the movie opens with her seated at a piano singing “Barbara Allen” to a classroom full of stiff young men and another lone woman. Once the performance ends, she tells that class that they “must learn to appreciate . . . the simple purity of emotions” contained in this folk song although she does not begin to explain what could possibly be pure or simple about it. The first verses tell of a sweet William who died for hardhearted Barbara’s love and a chastened Barbara who dies in repentance. In the final verses, these two deaths come to represent true love when a rose growing from William’s grave entwines with the briar growing from Barbara’s. But, as Christine Cartwright points out, the tragic deaths related in the song are nearly incomprehensible. “There are no characters other than the lovers; their love does nothing but kill them both; and there is neither motive nor agent of death other than love itself” (245).¹¹ At this point, all that is clear is that Lily, whose first name associates her with purity (and whose last name implies a sort of mechanical, perhaps unmusical, transcribing), wants to believe in the purity and simplicity of this music.

In fact, the love in death, or *liebestod*, narrated in this ballad serves as an ironic counterpoint to Lily’s quest throughout the movie, complicating the normally stark differences between good and evil and men and women that typically structure a romance. “Barbara Allen” is also the first song Lily hears when she arrives in Clover, North Carolina – sung by Deladis Slocumb, a young orphan who lives at the school. This song, she explains, is one of many “love songs” she learned from her grandmother, and the closing image of the “true love knot”

gives shape to the experience of many of the mountaineers Lily encounters – but only as a contrast or reverse image. One scene even shows two young lovers, Deladis and Fate, the school handyman, tying young branches together to create a “love knot” in order to test the endurance of their regard. But the “true love knots” formed in the Carolina mountains do not hold, and lovers thus avoid Barbara’s and William’s early grave. When placed in the context of the experiences of the mountain women, “Barbara Allen” tells a story about another place and time, about an alien.

Three mountain women assist Lily in her quest for these love songs even as they teach her alternatives to “Barbara Allen”’s barbarity. Mountain matriarch and ballad keeper Viney Butler transmits her skepticism about love knots while two young women, Deladis and Alice Kincaid, survive broken love knots. Alice, a talented painter and once affluent woman, fell in love with a shiftless, ballad-singing mountain man on a family vacation in the region. Subsequently abandoned by him, she struggles to feed their children, including an unborn baby. Because Alice shares Lily’s love of ballads, she persuades Viney to share the songs. Her suspicion readily overcome, Viney joyfully sings into Lily’s machine, refusing payment but taking pride in the cultural capital that the association with a book gives her. She also gives Lily an object lesson in the love stories of mountain womanhood when she insists that Lily assist at the near-fatal birth of Alice’s baby. Viney welcomes the baby girl to the world by wishing her a life free of love knots: “stay single,” she says emphatically. Then, spattered with Alice’s blood, all three women sing a song that Viney introduces: “I wish I was a single girl again.” Significantly, this move away from the love song imagines a release from the rustic abjection that Pamela Fox suggests has been engendered into contemporary ‘alternative’ country music’s nostalgic celebration of tradition. Indeed, as Lily makes stronger connections in *Clover*, she wants to use the new songs she gathers to further rupture the abjection and break from the tradition she has ostensibly come to preserve. She gradually comes to understand that other songs may better tell the stories and feelings of mountain women rather than the British ballad book that she originally uses as her template.

Lily finds another helper in Viney’s grandson, Tom Bledsoe, whose name connects him to the women’s blood-stained suffering and who further alienates her from the British traditions. Initially, he suspects Lily’s motives and tries to get Viney to stop working with her. Bledsoe

has lived outside the mountains, fighting in Cuba, working in coal mines, and returning with hitherto unknown instruments, a banjo and guitar.¹² Thus, his musicianship has specific roots in the new world. While Lily assures him that she intends to “exalt” his grandmother’s stock of ballads, Tom insists she will “exploit” them. The difference turns on a syllable and will never be fully resolved; instead, Lily’s quest culminates in an embrace of this ambiguity. The unspoken term that negotiates the dispute may be ‘creativity’ because Tom seeks out the new at the same time that he defends the old. He plays at community gatherings such as barn dances and funerals but he also writes his own songs and, as his instrument collection suggests, he seeks out new sources of material. In a key scene, suitably set at Clover’s post office, he plays a banjo duet with Dexter Speaks, a black musician (played by Taj Mahal) thereby introducing an unsettling dose of ‘impurity’ in the music. Lily, Fate, and Deladis happen upon them as they play. While Lily has the composure to compliment the men on their original composition, Deladis gapes in wonder. When Tom asks her if she has never seen a black man before, her subdued response – “where would I?” – lingers unanswered and uncomfortably in the open air. Although Deladis owes her remarkable ballad repertoire to her grandmother, her unspecified parentage suddenly seems as mysterious as her dark eyes and dark hair. Tom further unsettles tradition when he voices his approval of the lesbian affair between Elna and Harriet. In contrast, when Lily reacts with disgust to the relationship, Elna accuses her of repressive paternalism: “you sound just like father,” she retorts.

Just as Lily’s experiences in Clover disrupt her own traditionalist and heteronormative instincts, they also progressively blur the line between heroes and villains, and this confusion further alienates Lily from her original grail. The villains first appear in all the simplicity of the romance plot but the worst villains are not immediately apparent. Lily’s male colleagues chauvinistically deny her the laurels she has earned, and later, once they get news of her discoveries in the mountains, they announce that they are sending Cyrus Whittle to supervise her work. When he arrives in the mountains, however, Whittle says he intends to assist Lily. Likewise, the McFarland coal company, representative of rapacious American capitalism, and its agent Earl Giddens do not consistently thwart the romance of the music. Nevertheless, the company plans to buy up the land around Clover and mine it. Native to the region, Earl tries to convince his neighbors to

sell their land to McFarland. He repeatedly reminds them that they could leave the mountains and get an education if they were not saddled with failing farms. Although his neighbors unflinchingly treat him with hostility, he attends the big barn dance and leads off the final song of the night, a haunting rendition of “O Death” – even though he claims to prefer Bach to ballads thanks to his education at the University of North Carolina. The music thus enfolds him in the community even as his work seems to undermine it. Likewise, he inadvertently unites Lily with Tom. She repeatedly rejects his attempts to entice her to join him on the dance floor, and when his aggression escalates, Tom intervenes. No longer an exploiter on par with the coal company, she begins an affair with Tom and he takes on the role of ‘faithful companion’ when he gives her a dulcimer and begins to teach her to make her own music.

The villainy of the McFarland coal company becomes even more tenuous when McFarland himself attends a tea party at the Clover School and implicitly supports the gender disruptions in effect there. (The camera never shows what the depredations of coal mining *do* to the landscape.) While a withered minister argues that the church should run the school since a clergyman and his wife “would integrate more normally into the community” than the two women who currently preside there, McFarland and his wife simply ignore him. Instead they talk about Mrs. McFarland’s enthusiasm for collecting the native arts. Deladis immediately draws the parallel between Mrs. McFarland’s collecting and Lily’s songcatching. Lily herself recognizes the connection and seizes the opportunity to interest the McFarlands in Alice Kincaid’s landscape paintings. The party culminates with McFarland implicitly rebuffing the minister’s chauvinism by offering a substantial donation to the women of the Clover School. He even states that this gift demonstrates his belief in ‘progress’ and will allow the women to add plumbing to their building. Elna and Harriet high-mindedly refuse the money, even though the running water that it would have afforded may have saved the school from its fiery end.

While most mountain music has come to our ears as a product of the men – Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, Bill Monroe and the Blue Mountain Boys, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and the Foggy Mountain Boys – a mountain man, Fate Honeycutt, (as the name suggests) turns out to be the true enemy of Lily and the music. A petulant employee of the school, Fate resents the extra work Lily creates. He hears no value in the music so he particularly dislikes haul-

ing her heavy recording equipment through the wilderness. He also resents the influence Lily has over Deladis and the judgment she subtly passes on him. As the residents of the school house gather around the fire on Lily's first night there, Lily, glancing at Fate as he whittles, asks the women if they are not afraid of their surroundings. Harriett asks for specifics: what would we be afraid of? Of savagery, Lily replies as she gazes at Fate and his knife. When he stumbles upon Elna and Harriet in an embrace, his 'savagery' finds an outlet and brings Lily to the 'crucial struggle' that culminates a quest. Fate joins forces with the most vocally religious men in the community and sets the school on fire. In the church meeting that follows, it becomes even clearer that the ballads do not speak for this entire community. Instead, an even more antiquated voice of the community emerges. Viney speaks first, declaring her shame about the destruction of the school and asserting that she has seen "nothing but good" come from the schoolteachers' work. Those who side with Fate, however, cite scripture condemning the "whores of Babylon." As part of their religion, they have also given up ballad singing. In its place, they inherit the scorched earth of the schoolyard and their exhausted farms while those who side with the settlement school and the songcatcher ultimately decide to keep the music but join the world outside the mountains – even if, like Viney, they choose to finish their days in Clover. Similarly, Alice, now a 'single girl' since her husband has been shot by his lover, will support her family as a painter of mountain landscapes. Her images, like the ballads, will take on a life elsewhere.

The presence of alt.country star Iris Dement also confirms the eventual transformation, or evolution, of the ballads.¹³ Playing mountain woman Rose Gentry, she and her husband Parley decide to sell their depleted land for an obscenely low price of fifty cents an acre. Giddens has persuaded them with the promise of jobs in town and education for their children. Lily witnesses the 'bargain' and although she berates Giddens, the Gentrys seem resigned to the deal. As a closing gesture, Parley solemnly takes down his fiddle to accompany Rose as she stoically sings "Saro Jane," a sort of farewell to their life in the mountains, an announcement of a broken love knot. ("Well, my true love she won't have me and it's this I understand / For she wants some free holder and I have no land.") The performance also implies that the Gentrys are giving the song to Lily for much the same reason that they turned the land over to the coal company: they need new, more fertile, forms of sustenance. Later, when the churchgoers and the

Clover school women have their confrontation, Parley echoes Viney's support of the school (and simultaneously conflates the teachers with the Gidden / McFarland team) when he speaks in favor of education – especially the education his grandchildren will have when they leave the mountain¹⁴ – the education that Giddens and Lily already have. The Gentrys, as their name implies, want what a city can offer them: freedom from rustic abjection, a place in a changing world, a stake in the future.

The city calls to Lily, too. As heroes and villains blur, the object of Lily's quest loses its luster. While she braves death by running into the burning schoolhouse to retrieve her manuscripts and cylinders, once they are gone, she decides not to begin again. The folk song collection, she claims, no longer interests her since she has come to love the (southern) voices of those who sing them more than she loves the ancestry of the songs. Instead she proposes that she and Tom move to the city (unnamed) where she will produce recordings of *his* music and sell them to crowds of new phonograph owners. She also makes it clear that she is not envisioning a typical heterosexual partnership when she scoffs at his concerns about being unable to support her. In other words, they do not plan to 'tie the knot.' Interestingly, Tom does not give his consent to the plan until Lily's declaration of love for Deladis – made to comfort the girl when she rejects Fate – but no less sincere for that. While Deladis first rejects the young man with a statement of her will – "I don't want no part of you," she also gestures toward the inevitability of this outcome: "the love knot didn't hold," she tells him. Tom then invites the young girl to join them in the exodus down the mountain and into commercial music-making, and she accepts this offer with her will alone. None of these three lives will be strangled by the broken or suffocating love knots that "Barbara Allen" recalls.

The new gender roles and unusual family configuration created by un-knotted love mirror a new relationship to the old world's love songs. As this newly formed family descends, they encounter a jaunty Englishman in a fancy car struggling to make his way up. He asks how to find Lily Penleric and the 'recognitions' unfold with Sophoclean speed: Lily meets Cyrus Whittle; he learns that the collection has burned and that she no longer cares to recreate it even with him as *her* assistant. As further temptation, Whittle proclaims that he will put her name first on the book he will publish. Yet even this willing abdication of patriarchy does not reignite Lily's faith in pure balladry. Driven out

of the academy and the mountain community and then invited back into both, Lily Penleric's triumph comes when she *can* choose to leave both. Then she gaily chooses the marketplace and the promises of profiting from new technology yoked to old-style songs. The rejection of ballad collecting is complicated only by Lily's imperious coda: she turns back to forcefully remind Whittle of the correct spelling of her name: "that's Penleric, one N, no K."¹⁵ She also tells him that Viney Butler will help him although it is not clear that he has the resourcefulness to succeed.

As the film ends, the grail of this romance enters the modern world. Lily keeps moving 'down the mountain,' leaving the once lofty space of romance and entering the city, here imagined as an escape from a mountainous wasteland, where she is no longer a songcatcher but a song producer, a Ralph Peer in love with her version of A. P. Carter. The audience can believe they succeeded since the closing credits roll with a sound from the future, Emmy Lou Harris's familiar voice singing a rock-inflected version of "Barbara Allen." While Lily once believed she had found "the purest versions in existence," what we hear is far from pure. In fact, what we hear is a happy ending in place of "Barbara Allen"'s *liebested*. Like the irresolvable difference and similarity of exploiting and exalting that bring Tom and Lily together, exploiting and exalting connect songcatching to song producing. While many forms of country music discourse cast the marketplace, especially the music business in Nashville, as the enemy, in *Songcatcher*, the marketplace is the utopian space that will allow the voices of the people to be heard outside the mountains and that will give them access to the wisdom and power that is the happy ending of romance quests. In this movie, the real enemies are not so much the mediocre musicologists or savage hillbillies or coal-mining capitalists that initially menace the music-lovers but rather the fundamentalism that enables these men to impose their visions of the past and future on others. Significantly, Lily's triumph over them comes when she forsakes the fundamentalism of the old British ballad book. When Whittle plaintively asks "What on earth could be more important than this collection of songs?", Tom and Lily exchange knowing glances. They will keep the secret from knaves like Fate and idealistic fools like Whittle, but success in the city will require them to convince many others that the ballads they want to hear are not only parts of a song collection but also part of an ever-expanding collection of voices that are neither barbarous nor alien.

In contrast to the historical songcatchers who collected songs in the southern mountains in the early twentieth century, believing they had preserved a piece of Old England in the rustic American South, then, *Songcatcher's* romance celebrates a peculiarly American configuration and commodification of the European inheritance. By re-imagining country music history and its relation to British balladry, it engages in a new discourse of authenticity which shifts emphasis away from capitalist critique, validating originality over origins and encouraging sympathy, identification, and affection in the audience. Above all, new stories about songcatchers cultivate a taste for the music by portraying it as a force of modernity and progress rather than a relic from the past. In these stories, the ballads have traveled from the old world, to the old South, and finally, to a new world of mass reproduction and admiration.

Notes

- ¹ Cited in an unsigned essay entitled "Appalachian Music" on the Library of Congress website. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cocoon/ihas/html/dollyparton/country-appalachian.html#ret3>>. See Filene, however, for a nuanced defense of Gordon's commitment to documenting African American folksongs as part of the American folk heritage (40-44).
- ² See Rahn 198-200 for a discussion of the 'Great Boom.' See Malone for a thorough, well-documented discussion of country music's pre-commercial origins (1-29).
- ³ In fact, several Carter family numbers can be linked to Child ballads (Zwonitzer and Hirshberg 24-25), and country singers regularly record key songs such as "Barbara Allen" (Child 84). On the other hand, the Carters drew from a vast range of sources for their repertoire.
- ⁴ Davidson's novel was published posthumously although he wrote the book in the 1950s.
- ⁵ Scarborough could well have been a model for novelists such as Davidson, Smith, and McCrumb. As Sylvia Grider puts it, "Scarborough . . . became a literary pioneer and innovator in the use of folksong stanzas to foreshadow and progress the plots of her novels" (100).
- ⁶ According to McCarthy, this discovery occurred in December 1908 (71).
- ⁷ Nevertheless, Whisnant provides evidence that the women at settlement schools found mountain society remarkably patriarchal (262).
- ⁸ See Bufwack and Oermann for a concise account of Miles' life and works in the mountains (2-22).
- ⁹ See also Miles' *The Spirit of the Mountains* for a discussion of music in the mountains.
- ¹⁰ In the director's commentary segment on the DVD of *Songcatcher*, Greenwald notes that there were no women musicologists at that date. This commentary gives

a good account of several of the anachronisms and deviations from the historical record.

- ¹¹ See also Dave Marsh's discussion of the murky nature of this story (10-12).
- ¹² Actually, banjos were quite common in the mountains but Greenwald seems to want to emphasize the African connections of the instrument. See Cantwell's *Bluegrass Breakdown* for an extensive discussion of this connection.
- ¹³ Traditional and alt.country musicians informed every aspect of the score: Hazel Dickens, a key figure in the mid-century folk revival, sang a verse of "O Death," and North Carolina based folksinger and writer Sheila Kay Adams served as musical advisor for the film.
- ¹⁴ Dwight Yoakam's "Readin', Rightin', Rt. 23" makes a similar statement about leaving the mountains; it is worth noting that *Songcatcher* music director David Mansfield played on the record.
- ¹⁵ This ending reconnects Lily's story with Olive Dame Campbell's. "In 1917 . . . she actually brought this small collection to a famous English musicologist, Cecil Sharp. He sensed a great discovery and went into the mountains to collect the ballads. They were going to collect them together, but Olive was pregnant and couldn't travel through the mountains with him. He did indeed publish the definitive book of mountain ballads that he collected over two summers, 1917 and 1918 and he put her name on the book" (Greenwald, *Indiewire*). In subsequent editions of the book, Campbell was named as a "contributor," and Maud Karpeles, Sharp's assistant, was listed as editor (McCarthy 73). The name of Lily's potential partner, "Cyrus Whittle," clearly points to Sharp; it also connects him to Fate Honeycutt's ominous "whittling."

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