Polish Journal for American Studies

Yearbook of the Polish Association for American Studies
and the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw

Vol. 8 (2014)

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Warsaw 2014

ISSN 1733–9154

Polish Association for American Studies,
Al. Niepodległości 22, 02–653 Warsaw
www.paas.org.pl

Publisher: Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw
ul. Nowy Świat 4, 00–497 Warsaw
www. angli.uw.edu.pl

Typesetting, cover design by Bartosz Mierzyński
Cover Image: "Martin R. Delany," National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C.

Nakład: 110 egz.

Printed by Sowa – Druk na życzenie
phone: +48 22 431 81 40
www.sowadruk.pl

Table of Contents

Julia Fiedorczuk

Can Poetry Save the Earth? An Interview with Gary Snyder

Gary Snyder is a poet and essayist as well as a social and environmental activist. He began his career in the 1950s as a member of the Beat Generation (Japhy Ryder, one of the characters in Jack Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums,* is inspired by Snyder). Since early childhood he has been deeply interested in wild nature, and as a young man he took up snow-peak mountaineering. Simultaneously, he started studying oriental languages and anthropology, in between his studies working as a lumberjack, a trail maker and a firewatcher. In the years 1956–1969 he lived mostly in Japan, practicing Zen and reading books about ecology. His first published books were *Riprap* (1959) and *Myths and Texts* (1960). The collection of poems *Turtle Island* (1974) brought him the Pulitzer Prize. After returning to the United States, Snyder built his own house—along the Yuba River in the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains—where he has lived since. His writing and activism are intimately connected with his Buddhist practice and the knowledge of the bioregion (northern California). His Buddhist name is Chofu, meaning "Hear the wind." The interview was conducted in May 2013 in Kraków where Gary Snyder was a guest of the Miłosz Festival and parts of it were published in Polish in *Dwutygodnik* (109/2013).

JULIA FIEDORCZUK: *The Slovenian philosopher Slavoy Žižek has famously said: "ecology is the new opium for the masses" as it diverts our attention from the real problems, which are social problems. Do you have a way of responding to this?*

GARY SNYDER: Of course I feel absolutely the opposite way. I feel that social problems is the opium for the masses so that they don't have to deal with what's happening to the planet. A few days ago I was asked a similar question during an interview. I've been talking about ecological problems and the interviewer asked me: "But what about the social problems?" My answer is: when we begin to talk about ecological problems we already have finished the discussion of social problems, we know they are there. That is taken for granted, that's a given. The ecological problems are the problems that increasingly now impact the third

world and that's what you have to look at. Or I could simply say: Slavoy Žižek is the opium for the exhausted Marxists.

Perhaps there really is no conflict between social and ecological engagement?

No, there isn't. Ecology is simply the expansion of your moral universe to include the non-humans. Whereas if you talk about the social problems your moral universe is focused only on human beings. That is outmoded now.

Some people associate ecology with a kind of fashion, or a lifestyle, a middle-class craze...

It is presented that way sometimes in advertising, as consumer economy tries to tap into it. But let us remember what the word "ecology" means and where it comes from. It comes from the biological sciences. *Oikos* in Greek means the whole economy of the planet. We're talking about the planetary system that supports all of life. We're not talking about the middle class.

In the wake of deconstruction, much of late-twentieth-century philosophy was emphasizing the constructedness of the universe humans have access to, including whatever we might mean when we talk about nature. You said once that treating nature as a construction constitutes its ultimate commodification. Can you comment on this thought a bit more?

Yes. Nature as a construction becomes an intellectual commodity. You put it on the shelf in your library and you don't have to think about it anymore. It's a way to avoid the problem.

Many people avoid even using the word "nature..."

I have my own definition of it, I formulated it in *The Practice of the Wild*. In the first chapter of this book I give my understanding of "nature" and "the wild." "Nature" is the physical universe. It is what science studies. The only thing that is other than "nature" is the supernatural. Now, "wild" is all of the physical universe without the agency of human beings. "Wild" is the process by which the universe has created and taken care of itself. Humanity's place in this universe is only very tiny, although at the moment it looks so big, it has been blown out of proportions. But it's only at the moment.

Couldn't we say that everything that the humans are doing is also nature? After all, what we have at our disposal is only the natural resources?

That can be said, yes, it's true. But for the time being, for the temporary situation it is good to make a distinction, between human actions and the wild, especially if you are going to talk about timber management, grazing, soil management and oceans. To make an argument that because we're part of nature anything we do is OK can have very dangerous consequences at the moment. You know who makes that argument? The Chinese government. It's actually quite impressive, the Chinese are very consistent, only they haven't opened their eyes yet to what is happening. China became deforested 400 years ago but they still haven't noticed.

Isn't that a more general problem—the fact that we do not realize what is happening? Perhaps it is our imagination that fails us. Some people even say that humans are perhaps not wired to perceive large-scale phenomena, such as the global warming.

That's why we need poetry!

There is a book by John Felstiner called: *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* My first reaction to the title was: "That's crazy." But then I thought about it for a while and I concluded—but, if not poetry, what else?

Felstiner looks at the English language tradition of poetry going back to very early times and he shows how poet after poet had a wonderful observant eye for nature, though they didn't make a big deal out of it. They didn't have to. They were conscious and aware and present in their poetry in the natural world. Now we think that kind of awareness is something very special. But through most of human history it was just part of being alive and sensitive. The artists have always been engaged in the natural world more than we realize now.

I believe that poetry is really always pagan. All of the arts are really pagan. When you go to the Prado in Madrid you see a strange split: half the paintings are of crosses and Madonnas, and the other half are of naked ladies in the woods. That is our wonderful European schizophrenia. We just have to hope that the naked ladies in the woods win out.

Since we're talking about naked ladies, there's another problem I'd like to mention. In a conservative country like Poland, the term "nature" has very negative associations for people involved in emancipatory movements because it is often used by the right wing as a normative concept. For instance, some forms of sexuality will be considered as contrary to "human nature."

But that's history. Let's use the terms correctly, nature is the phenomenal universe, not the world of metaphysics or religion. "Nature" as in "human nature" is another word. English has some equivalents for this other meaning of the word

nature, for instance: the character or the quality of things. We shouldn't confuse these meanings.

It is true that nature has sometimes served as a right wing icon. That actually goes back to the Nazis, the fact which is very well known. The association of nature with the right wing did not exist before that. If you go back to the eighteenth century, for instance, and look at the rhetoric of talking about nature, you discover something else: it is the rhetoric of literate people. And literate people, people who can read, are the privileged class at the time. If you want to know what ordinary people thought about nature you must turn to folk culture. And of course what you find in folk culture is that animals are also people, they can talk to each other. Folk cultures are pagan, which is one of the reasons why poetry is also pagan.

Do you believe that the old tribal cultures were more environmentally friendly or more responsible than we are?

They had to be. They didn't have the chemistry or the technology not to be. There are cases of course when even the pre-modern cultures overstepped their limits a bit, but on the whole they didn't do much damage. The world was almost intact until about a hundred and fifty years ago. It was the expansion of the money economy that began the crisis.

I don't want to say that ancient peoples were always naturally ecological: it's just that they were more radically a part of nature, so they had no choice. As a result, they also developed some very intelligent practices, basing them on practical observations. For instance, West Coast Indians in America would practice setting fire to the forests, which they did because of their insight that that kept the population of deer higher. When you study the history of forest fires in California you begin to understand why it was important. Now there hasn't been a fire for many years. When the next one comes, there is a danger that it will be really big because of all the undergrowth which has accumulated.

This brings us to the idea of bioregionalism.

Bioregionalism is the practical application of ecological sensitivity in a community.

What would be your advice to people who live in cities but would still like to practice bioregionalism? For instance, I live in Warsaw.

What river is Warsaw on, is it the Vistula?

Yes.

The Vistula is not just the Vistula. The Vistula is all the streams and tributaries that run into it. We're talking about the whole watershed. If you live in the city one of the big questions is: how is your water, where does your water come from? Another question is—where does your waste go? How is your trash dealt with? How is it burned or buried or recycled? Become aware of what is wild in the city. The cities are full of insects, weeds, birds—people don't even see them. Nature does not avoid the city, it adapts to the city. There are many species that like the cities: crows, coyotes, mice, rats—don't hate rats! Understand that they all have a place. Enjoy their presence. Of course, if they become a real problem you can also trap and kill them. But understand that they are real people.

In a country like Poland one of the problems is that a lot of people remember real poverty and living in very bad conditions. So to a lot of them the fact that Poland has made economic progress and that the standard of living is slightly higher now feels like such an achievement, that they don't really want to talk about simplifying—let alone making friends with rats.

It's just like China, though perhaps it's not as intense here. That's understandable. And it's also true that with a slightly higher standard of living people will look around and say: oh yes, it's nice to have parks. It's nice to have bicycle ways, to be able to walk in the city. The problem with some cities—especially in the United States—is that you can't walk in them, you have to drive a car. There is a whole discussion of proper urban design and many cities are moving towards good modern design which includes having more routes to walk and ride bicycles as well as public transportation. Tokyo is really good in this respect. You could say these are middle-class values: yes, these are middle-class values but they make cities livable.

For everybody.

For everybody. One problem many countries are facing is the necessity of expanding good healthcare to all people. But people are going to be healthier if they live in a clean city.

Also the world of big capital sometimes makes ecological arguments, but they get caught up where we all get caught up, since the main problem now is the problem of energy. At the moment we only have two sources of energy in the world that count. Fossil fuels and nuclear energy. That is the issue. The Japanese are caught in it right now. A lot of their population wants to give up nuclear

energy but they have no fossil fuels. If they went the way the green movement would like to go, they would have to become a small agrarian nation again. So it's very tricky. Part of what human beings will have to do is to re-examine what their goals are and scale back, towards—yes, voluntary simplicity, there is no other way.

You have said in one of your books: "we must recognize that the unknown evolutionary destinies of other life-forms are to be respected." Why? Why should we care?

It's just good manners. It's the question of etiquette.

Do you care for your neighbors? Why do you care for your neighbors? You could say you care because you're human together. With other beings—you're sharing the same planet together, you're living creatures together. We don't know who those guys are and where they are going just as they don't know who we are and where we're going. We have to respect each other. It's a Buddhist position. And that is why I became a Buddhist when I was fifteen, precisely because Buddhism demanded respect for the non-humans.

If the task of the philosophers and artists is to speak out the value of the non-human, how can it be done?

It is entirely up to you how you do it. But it is crucial to have the insight, to arrive at the position of appreciating the etiquette of the non-human, of letting your mind expand to include the non-human, to stop seeing the human world as the only world that counts. It isn't the only world. I'd say this is the true job of the artists but of course the artists have to realize that it is their job. Nobody can force them. My advice is always this: try meditating and see what your mind will tell you. Or: go for walks. See what's out there. In some cases that's enough. Sometimes people ask me—what can we do to become more environmentally aware? And I answer—go for nature walks. Find somebody who will show you birds and plants, have a good time, put on good shoes, don't worry about the weather.

But art is made of something. In the case of poetry, the material is words. Many people believe that language is an anthropomorphic construction, and that it has nothing to do with the material reality, that there is an absence at the core of words, that words only refer to other words, without any direct reference to extra-linguistic reality.

As I say in *The Practice of the Wild*, language, too, is a wild phenomenon. Language comes to us without going to school, simply by being alive and listening to

brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers. It is a natural learning process, it belongs to our wild side, much like our digestion, breathing, or blood circulation. We learn language and we master syntax before we ever go to school. Then of course society begins to impose certain standards on how you use language, so it gets more complicated, more levels of meaning are added—but what's central is the syntax, the organizing system in the brain that is inherent, and that allows us to acquire language in the first place. Language is a biological thing.

Apparently, mice can sing songs when they are in love...

Whales, too, sing beautiful songs. The point is, we have to expand our knowledge. It is not enough to expand our knowledge about the humans, we need to become nature-literate as well. We must become literate about other beings. We're just ignorant of them, that's all. Most people ignorantly assume that animals are dumber than they are. They also ignorantly assume that animals don't communicate. They do, but they do it in slightly different ways than we do. Smells, dances, body language, these are all ways to communicate.

This is the problem with humanistic intellectuals: the traditional humanistic intellectual is in a very narrow box. It is important to try to create a larger-scale model of knowledge that is a responsibility of any educated person. We're responsible for knowing what is happening outside of the human space and for thinking back through the human space to the times before history, to include pre-history. These processes are already taking place, there are books about these things, and ecocriticism is one of the fields which works towards the creation of a larger-scale model.

Ecocriticism is very interested in poetry and poetics. Do you use the term ecopoetry to refer to the kinds of writing that enlarge the space of our ethical responsibility? Do you have your own definition of it? I know in the United States this term is very widely used.

Frankly, I don't even like the word very much, as I don't like other portmanteau terms, such as ecophilosophy, ecopoetics, etc. I like the word *oikos*, which is also the word in "economics." I would say ecopoetry is nothing special, it is only focusing on something that poetry has always been doing anyway. Every artist who is a true artist has a very broad spectrum of vision and is sensitive to all kinds of things other than the immediate ego and human needs, looking to the edges or the margins all the time. I like the term "posthumanism," though. It has come with the postmodernists who are now looking for the next thing to be. (*laughter*)

But there is also a cyborg side to post-humanism.

Yes, yes, I know Donna Harraway, well, good luck. The question, again, is this: where does the energy come from? Being a human being is much cheaper than being a cyborg. Think about how much it would cost to make a cyborg cow: it really is much easier to just breed a cow.

Coming back to ecopoetics, of course it is used all the time now, I joke about it with Jonathan Skinner, whom you also know, and who advocates it. My granddaughter, who is fifteen now, was given an assignment from one of her teachers in a poetry class to explain the difference between ecopoetics and nature poetics. She wrote: ecopoetics is when you are thinking about correcting ecological mistakes with poetry. Nature poetry is just writing about nature. *(laughter)*

I think Jonathan Skinner is making a good point when he says that eco- or environmental poetry, whatever it is, does not end on the page.

The Chinese poet Yen Yu said: we use words to write poetry but there is poetry without words. And the haiku poet Buson, speaking about good haiku said: "the words stop but the meaning keeps going." In a sense that is what Jonathan is saying. I think what he means is that our moral, human artistic obligations to look at these questions and be aware of them continue outside the work of art.

In Poland the idea of the autonomy of the art object is still very important to many artists and writers. The idea that art could be politically or ethically engaged is perceived almost as a betrayal of the true character of the art of poetry.

But that was some twenty five years ago, and you still have it?

I'm not against people who practice art for art's sake. If they want to do it, they can try, there is absolutely nothing wrong with art for art's sake. The only question is: does it have an audience? Is anybody paying any attention? You can also ask: does it address in any way the moral issues that we all know we're facing? What good is the autonomy of the art if the Nazis are coming?

Or if the energy is running out...

Exactly. I just think it is more interesting to be engaged with what is really happening. If somebody likes playing around with form, practicing art for the sake of art—that is OK. For instance, I love Brançusi.

But Brançusi's objects are very real...

Yes, they are! Perhaps, ultimately there is no art for art's sake. There cannot be.

My very last question is one that Laurie Anderson once asked of John Cage: "do you think things are getting better or are they getting worse?"

I clearly must answer this, taking into account all I've said so far about the condition of the planet and the non-human world, saying that things are getting terribly worse.

Selected populations about the globe are being bought off with slight increments of consumer improvement—the Chinese public looks forward to each owning their own car when once it was a bicycle—the proliferation of smart phones and social media are a kind of contemporary Circus—so that people by the millions here and there can imagine their fate is improving. At the same time a giant chunk of global population lives in genuine poverty. The two great conundrums are Climate Change and Energy. It may well be that it's already far too late to have any effect on the progress of climate change and its effect on ecosystems and human populations. Although alternative energy resources work in specific cases and places, they cannot stand in for the energy demands that will keep the global economy from making more nuclear plants, drilling for more oil and gas, and mining for more coal. I commented on my last day in Kraków that there was a panel in progress speaking on "In the Shadow of Empire"—they were reflecting on an Empire (the Soviet) that is well into decline. Truth is, we all live right now under the shadow of a much greater intractable empire, the Global Economy—capitalism with no roots or grounding anywhere, dedicated to making profits until it all collapses.

Yet, still, every day, I feel gratitude to this world that is. Issa's haiku goes: "This dewdrop world is but a dewdrop world... and yet…." ("Tsuyu no yo wa tsuyu no yo nagara... sarinagara...").

Zoe Detsi-Diamanti

Sarah Pogson's *The Female Enthusiast* (1807) and American Republican Virtue

Sarah Pogson's five-act romantic tragedy dramatizes the story of Charlotte Corday's arrest and execution for the murder of Jean Paul Marat.[1] Romantic in style, replete with melodramatic conventions and abounding in stilted language, the play focuses upon a highly controversial historical moment of the French Revolution and an equally controversial historical figure. Although there is little evidence that Pogson's play was ever produced and rather contradictory assumptions by contemporary scholars,[2] it has been tempting to explore its dramatic merit and political significance at a time when the American nation was struggling to define and secure its identity both internally and externally.

As the event of Marat's assassination was receiving widespread attention in Europe and the United States, accounts about Corday appeared in profusion registering a wealth of primarily conflicting responses in media and art, while in most cases blending reality with imagination. Corday's murderous act underlined the already existing socio-political conflicts, brought about by the age of democratic revolutions, and added to the general sense of insecurity and anxiety at the rapid and somewhat unpredictable social changes on an international level. The very nature of Corday's crime—political and violent—caused a lot of discomfort both in Europe and the United States as it challenged deep-rooted notions of gender

1 Very little is known about Pogson's life. For more information, see Kritzer 18–20. See also Pogon's entry in Mainiero, ed., *American Women Writers*. Pogson is credited with three more plays, beside *The Female Enthusiast*, which were published in *Essays Religious, Moral, Dramatic, and Poetical* (1818). The plays are: *The Young Carolinians*, *The Orphans*, and *The Tyrant's Victims*. For an analysis of *The Young Carolinians*, see Sarah Ford.

2 In her collection of early American women's plays, Amelia Kritzer claims that *The Female Enthusiast* might have been produced at Charleston Theater under the management of Alexander Placide, while Charles Watson's earlier study on Charleston dramatists suggests that the play's "anti-French" sentiments would have disqualified it from reaching the stage (33). Watson suggests that Alexander Placide, "an enthusiastic Republican," would have been against the production of Pogson's drama because of his own pro-French sentiments (26–27).

and politics. In France, representations of Corday followed the political lines of the time and framed a rather contradictory image of her. For the Girondins, she was a heroine of admirable determination, an angel of justice, while for the Jacobins, Corday's murderous act was the product of an aberrant femininity and monstrous sexuality.[3]

However, while anti-Jacobin accounts were quick to restore Corday's femininity and refute all claims to her monstrous sexuality, their insistence on tracing her motive to a strong feeling of revenge for her lover's death substantially weakened the political significance of her act. The most widely-read text, translated from French and published in England and the United States, Louis Du Broca's *Interesting anecdotes of the heroic conduct of women previous to and during the French Revolution* (1804) promoted an image of Corday as "handsome," "dignified," and "noble" (187, 189).[4] In chapter VIII, titled "Self-Devotion for Great Objects," Broca provides a sentimentally-tinged description of her as harmoniously embodying the feminine quality of "feeling" and "a masculine energy of understanding" (187). Seeking to capture his readers' interest and trigger their imagination, Broca attempts to provide a plausible justification for Corday's act within the context of her righteous indignation at the murder of her beloved one as well as the injustice and despotism ravaging her country. Based upon the records of the trial and Corday's letters to her father, Broca draws a picture of her as a woman whose "face and person were animated with the bloom of youth and beauty," while "her words were graced with the eloquence of a sage" (194).[5] Whether the sharp

3 Among the most fervent Jacobins himself, Sade also helped promote a picture of Corday as a monstrous woman capable of the most hideous crime: "Marat's barbarous assassin, like those mixed beings to which one cannot assign a sex, vomited up from Hell to the despair of both sexes, directly belongs to neither" (qtd. in Craciun 201). *The Gazette de France Nationale* (July 20, 1793) characteristically described her as "a virago […] absolutely outside of her sex (qtd. in Kindleberger 983). Furthermore, the Jacobins seem to have been convinced that she was a gullible instrument at the hands of Girondins. In England, *The London Chronicle* reiterated the Jacobin theory that Corday was the victim of male anti-revolutionists from Caen (89).

4 *The Times* reported accounts of her trial underlining her noble origins and the fact that her beautiful countenance dispelled "the idea of her as an assassin" (2).

5 As the *Journal de Perlet* recorded on July 18, 1793: "Marat's murderer confessed everything; she displayed neither fear nor remorse. She responded to all questions put to her with a precision, an imperturbability, and a sangfroid that astounded the audience. Whenever she spoke, there was complete silence, for her voice, though assured and pleasant, was soft" (qtd. in Kindleberger 981–982).

In the United States, contemporary media reports followed the same line of thinking. For example, in January 1796 issue of *The Rural Magazine; or, Vermont Repository*,

language of gender stereotyping was employed to serve political exigencies or the literary medium to imaginatively capture the vague motives behind Corday's act, the political resonances of her transgression became increasingly difficult to contain even in a period of widespread social and ideological crisis.

As it was expected, the theater of the time responded to the challenge that Corday's story posed and various dramatizations of her act appeared primarily in Europe,[6] while in the United States the story of Corday seems to have been silenced.[7] On a political level, the reason for this neglect can be traced to the fact that, at the time, the United States was experiencing a period of social tension and political divisiveness exacerbated, to a large extent, by the aftermath of the French Revolution.[8] Though the French Revolution had proved the universalist appeal of the ideals of the American war of independence and consolidated the United States' position in the new republican world, it gradually began to challenge America's claims to ideological consensus and political coherence. As a matter of fact, the French Revolution provided a stage on which party oppositions were transformed into partisan speeches and activities. The political resonance of the French Revolution magnified the crucial ideological differences between Federalists and Republicans regarding the true locus of "the people" in a republic

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Corday is portrayed as "modest and dignified" emphasizing the difficulty "to conceive how she could have armed herself with sufficient intrepidity to execute the deed," while a few years later, in 1802, the first issue of *The New England Quarterly* insisted that Corday's "graceful manners," "modest demeanour," "softness" and "dignity" were evident indications of a heavenly mind (qtd. in Lewis 43). See also Craciun 202–03.

6 In post-revolutionary France, romantic tragedies about Corday were very popular, while in England, dramas depicting this fateful event were performed outside London or in unlicensed playhouses (Nielsen 169). In Germany, Christine Westphalen provided her own interpretation of Corday herself and the motives behind her act in her anonymously published historical tragedy *Charlotte Corday: Tragödie in fünf Akten mit Chören* (1804). For an analysis of the play, see Hilger 71–87.

7 With the bright exception of Pogson's play, there is no other record of an American play of the time dealing with Marat's assassination. There is also Charlotte Barnes' romantic tragedy, *Charlotte Corday* (1851), which appeared much later and which exists only by title. See Meserve, *Heralds of Promise*; Meserve, *Outline History*; Moody.

8 Within the context of American politics, the French Revolution intensified the already existing conflict between Federalists and Jeffersonians whose divergent views on political allegiances and social regeneration formed a distinct political ideology that wavered between fear of unrestrained republican enthusiasm and distrust of aristocratic rule. More importantly, however, the imminent prospect of the War of 1812 accentuated the already existing political differences over the system of government and the economic future of the United States.

and the changing relation between citizens and the new structures of power.[9] While the two Revolutions had brought the New and the Old World together on an ideological plane of shared universal truths and values, the aftermath of the French Revolution awoke Americans to a sudden realization of the anarchic potential of a misguided people.[10] Although American nationalism was based upon a political discourse that promoted a romantic association with the abstract concept of American exceptionalism and the peculiar conditions of the American Revolution,[11] it was affected by the repercussions of the French Revolution and the subsequent war between Britain and France in ways that began to question the meaning of the American revolutionary rhetoric and challenge nationalist consensus.

The American theatre was inevitably drawn into the mounting national controversy between Federalists and Republicans over practical issues of nation making and social construction.[12] It is within this context that *The Female Enthusiast* attempts to articulate a more complex ideological perspective underlying the rapid flow of political ideas across the Atlantic as well as their interactive effect.

9 Although both Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans considered themselves advocates of republican ideals, their vision of the new society that was taking shape in America differed considerably. Deeply conservative and elitist, the Federalists promoted commercial relations with Britain and "interpreted the Revolutionary mandate to mean the creation of a representative government responsive to, yet independent of, the popular will" (Ben-Atar and Oberg 8). On the other hand, Jefferson and his supporters sought the support of southern planters and northern laborers and championed decentralized authority and popular government (Appleby 165).

10 A staunch Federalist, John Adams feared that "it is society and social order that are threatened by the French Revolution" (qtd. in O'Neill 457), while he insisted that human passions need to be contained by political institutions (O'Neill 464). On the other hand, Republican Hugh H. Brackenridge added a sentimental note to his support of the French Revolution: "The heart of America feels the cause of France…. She is moved, impelled, elevated, and depressed with all the changes of her good and bad fortune; she feels the same fury in her veins" (qtd. in Burstein 176).

11 Benedict Anderson, referring to the American nation, observes that "it is difficult today to recreate in the imagination a condition of life in which the nation was felt to be something utterly new. But so it was in that epoch. The Declaration of Independence in 1776 makes absolutely no reference to Christopher Columbus, Roanoke, or the Pilgrim Fathers, nor are the grounds put forward to justify independence in any way 'historical,' in the sense of highlighting the antiquity of the American people" (193).

12 Just like the revolutionary period when the theatre played a significant part in promoting either Whig or Tory ideas, in the 1790s the theatre was used by both Federalists and Democratic Republicans as a public medium to expound their respective viewpoints and reach out to the largest possible audience (Wilmer 53–79).

While the majority of American romantic tragedies written in the first half of the nineteenth century used historical material from the distant or immediate past to confirm the sustained validity of the republican ideals,[13] *The Female Enthusiast* challenges the American people to re-examine their social values and political system. Although by the time *The Female Enthusiast* was written, the French Revolution had been removed from the arena of political debate in America, the story of Corday is revived in an attempt to call attention to the essential discrepancy between American revolutionary ideals and the realities of social conflict, political animosity, and exclusionary practices in the process of nation making. Pogson's play traces two major transitional moments in the American political history of the time: the sudden shift in popular consciousness from enthusiastic reception of the French cause to intense skepticism, and the transition from the unifying rhetoric of the American Revolution to the emergence of political antagonism and party opposition. Furthermore, Pogson's decision to embark on an interpretation of Corday's political act allows her to reintroduce the largely overlooked issue of women's political role in a democratic society.[14] However, Pogson's dramatic venture could prove essentially precarious. Although Corday's premeditated act of murder had earned her a prominent place in cultural imagination and artistic expression,[15] she could not easily fit within a political discourse of female empowerment and visibility without running the risk of compromising her womanliness. Especially in the United States, the image of Corday was intensely problematic as the concept of the politicized woman was inextricably linked to the ideological parameters of the American Revolution and its widely advertised promise of republican regeneration. While the idea of republican womanhood

13 In the first half of the nineteenth century, the popularity of romantic tragedies on the American stage revealed the general tendency of the American playwrights to both entertain and instruct their audiences. From James N. Barker's *Pocahontas; or, La Belle Sauvage* (1808) to Augustus Stone's *Metamora; or, The Last of the Wampanoags* (1829) and from John H. Payne's *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin* (1818) to Robert M. Bird's *The Gladiator* (1831) and George H. Boker's *Francesca da Rimini* (1855), romantic tragedies in America combined the stilted language of moral instruction with the universal themes of freedom, patriotism, love and honor, a spectacular setting and flamboyant acting.

14 Pogson follows the example of a number of early American women writers who turned to drama, and more specifically poetic drama, in an attempt to explore the complex, and rather ambiguous, relationship between women's rights and American national identity. See, Mercy O. Warren's *The Sack of Rome* and *The Ladies of Castile* (1783–1785), Frances Wright's *Altorf* (1819), Charlotte Barnes' *Octavia Bragaldi* (1837), and Julia W. Howe's *Leonore; or, The World's Own* (1857).

15 Corday began to figure in a number of paintings, poems, novels, and plays. For visual representations of Corday, see Gelbart 201–221; Walczak 254–261.

granted American women a space where it was acceptable to discuss politics and public events, it nevertheless limited women's role and activities to the domestic sphere as their contribution to the American republican society was channeled through their essentially feminine capacity as wives and mothers. Through her act, Corday had transcended the ideological boundaries of republican femininity and entered a predominantly masculine sphere of aggressive behavior. Even Judith Sargent Murray, one of the leading literary figures of post-revolutionary America who enthusiastically vouched for women's active participation in the political restructuring of society, becomes surprisingly laconic when referring to Charlotte Corday. In her essay "Observations on Female Abilities" (1798), Murray makes profuse, and rather emotionally-charged, references to a number of well-known historical women who defied tyrants, cried for justice, took up arms and fought in battle with unprecedented courage. Murray praises women's fortitude, ingenuity, perseverance, and patriotism as she links examples from Greek and Roman history with contemporary instances of female bravery (17). However, when the name of Charlotte Corday inevitably comes up, Murray seems to lose her enthusiasm as she shows a sudden reluctance to explore Corday's personality any further: "[t]he French women—Charlotte Corday—But our dispositions unexpectedly multiplying, a recollection of our engagement can alone suppress their evidence" (23).

While Murray avoids the challenge to discuss the limits of women's political power, Pogson chooses to explore the social parameters of Corday's violent act of resistance. Conforming to the aesthetics of the romantic tragedy, the play conveys a stifling atmosphere of fear and oppression through extensive use of stilted verse and long soliloquies. Le Brun, one of the oldest characters in the play and the tutor of Charlotte's brother, provides the proper moralizing as he paints a rather bleak and disheartening picture of reality. He laments the loss of political self-control and moderation and regrets the total absence of any form of reaction:

> Some demon seems to hover over France,
> Infusing rancor in the gentlest breasts.
> World of tribulation, I' m weary of thee.
> Thy storms destroy; thy calms are voids we fly from.
> Nothing satisfies the ever-restless soul:
> It boils or stagnates in cold apathy.
> Few, few blessed spirits taste the balmy sweets
> Of that supreme and only true delight
> Springing from a mind well regulated— (155)

It is within this context that Charlotte begins to seek answers to questions regarding the true meaning of democracy and freedom. From the opening lines of the

play, Pogson establishes the political dimensions of Charlotte's personality. Despite the pervasive atmosphere of fear and coercion, she experiences an invigorating awakening to a sense of personal responsibility and social duty:

> [H]ad I stayed in peaceful ignorance—
> That duty which led me first to ask of wars,
> And governments, and other scenes than those
> Enfolding sweet domestic harmony.
> Then to a wider field my views were opened.
> Simplicity retired, but my heart throbbed
> With keenest sensibility—alive
> To virtue and humanity….
> But oppression
> Stalks abroad, and stains even the peaceful
> Paths of life with blood! Merciless ferocity
> Sways, with uncontrolled dominion!
> A monster spreads destruction! And while he
> Desolates, calls aloud, ''Tis liberty!'
> Why do his black deeds remain unpunished?
> Is there not one avenging hand to strike? (140)

As she expresses her frustration and rage, Charlotte painfully realizes that blatant social injustice and senseless political violence have been devastating her country for a long time:

> The chord of harmony is broke forever.
> Since the blest spirit of my mother fled…
> Peace fled with her—and discord sprang in France. (141)

While the male characters of the play show a striking indeterminacy in dealing with the general atmosphere of chaos and disorder and, like Le Brun, mainly engage in philosophizing, Charlotte begins to develop a dynamic political consciousness that will soon transform her into an active political agent. Armed with strong patriotic sentiments and a vigilant conscience, Charlotte is prepared to transcend the limits of her gender identity and assume a catalytic role in the public events of the French Revolution:

> Let me, then, whisper that foul name: Marat,
> And the last conflict end. The monster's name
> Steals every thought, and female weakness flies.
> With strength I'm armed, and mighty energy

To crush the murderer and defy the scaffold.
Let but the deed be done. For it, *I'll die*.
For it, I sacrifice—I quit—myself
And all the softness of a woman's name…
The innocent again shall walk in safety. (147)

In Act II, in a highly sentimental scene in "a wood," where "thunder is heard," providing the necessary audio effect that signals the beginning of her undertaking, Charlotte emerges from her painful process of self-awareness as a purely political being, powerful and determined not to let the past or any "fond recollections hold [her] thoughts from vengeance and Marat" (147–148).

Throughout the play, Charlotte acquires an unprecedented eloquence as she is given plenty of opportunities to express her devotion to republican liberty and social justice projecting at the same time her intense psychological need to transform "virtue' and "liberty" from abstract political ideals into defining principles of social life in a democratic society. Gradually, her political awakening and her gender identity begin to merge in a way that confuses the other characters. When her brother Henry finds out about her design, he cannot hide his astonishment and attributes her decision to ill-judgment and uncontrolled fervor while, at the same time, he underestimates her ability to carry out such a dangerous venture on her own:

This is wonderful[16]! Charlotte, thou art lost.
Enthusiastic[17] girl, these sentiments
Are worthy of a Roman, yet are vain.
Oh, could I save thee!….
Soon I shall overtake my Charlotte,
And the sure weapon of destruction
Shall be guided by a stronger hand. (154)

In Act III, the mood of the play changes as the pace of action accelerates and the language no longer conveys abstract truths and philosophical wanderings but rather the more tangible reality of manipulation and violence. Act III begins with Marat's passionate speech to the citizens of France:

Citizens! These difficulties shall cease,
And the head of each base conspirator—
Each foe to liberty and equality
Shall roll beneath us, an abject football.
My countrymen, enlightened sons of France:

16 "Wonderful" here means "amazing" (Kritzer 154).

17 "Enthusiastic" here means "fanatical" (Kritzer 154).

> Ye—ye, who comprehend *true* freedom!….
> Destroy—destroy!
> Justice calls aloud, destroy! Well ye know
> Whose blood to spill—and whose to spare—without
> The tedious mockeries of courts and judges.
> Judge for yourselves—and quickly execute. (155–156)

In his speech, the notions of "liberty" and "equality" sound as dangerously distorted instruments of political propaganda. Marat incites the people to violent action while taking advantage of the current tumultuous situation in order to gain political power:

> MARAT: I feel a demigod—(*Struts about.*) How ennobled
> By the boundless confidence of such men—(*Points to them.*)
> Fellow citizens! I live to serve you. (*Exit* MARAT.)
> CHABOT: (*Advances.*) We, to support the champion of freedom,
> And unanimous in defense of him—
> We swear to stand or fall with great Marat
> The people's friend. (*Exit all.*) (157)

For the Americans of the time, Marat's words must have struck a most sensitive chord. In post-revolutionary America, the rhetoric of republican virtue, which connected individual morality with national well-being, served as a restraining mechanism against prioritizing one's personal ambitions and pursuits over the common good, and as an ideological shield against the danger of the people's democratic excesses. Marat stands for the Americans' worst nightmare. He hides his own ulterior motives behind noisy and passionate speeches about "the sentiments of true republicanism" (157). His populist politics, on the one hand, and the people's conditioned response to his call for mindless action, on the other, seriously question the viability of a republican society and its foundations of social regeneration and private and public morality. In Charlotte's mind, the murder of Marat will not only put an end to a series of atrocious crimes in the name of democracy and freedom, but more importantly, it will, in an extreme yet absolutely essential way, like a gangrenous part that needs to be severed, prevent any further contamination of the body politic:

> No other hand will rise. No other eye
> Will throw death's fiat on the subtle serpent.
> No more shall guileless innocence be stung
> By his envenomed tongue and thirst of blood;
> Nor shall those brave men his savage sword condemns
> Add to the mound of butchered victims. (157)

Remaining faithful to the idea that Charlotte's act was the result of a conscious decision spurred by a higher sense of social morality and justice, Pogson stages Marat's assassination in a most dramatic manner:

> CHARLOTTE: First—feel this sharper weapon! Die, monster!
> (*Stabs him*. MARAT *falls*.) There is an end to thy destructive course!
> Thou *ignis fatuus*[18] that deceived the simple;
> Murderer of prisoners—of priests defenseless—
> Of helpless women—die! The innocent
> Shall live. Now art thou death's prisoner.
> MARAT: In sin's lowest depths, alas, I perish!
> Thy friends, young woman, are too well avenged.
> How did'st thou find this courage? Oh, great God!
> God? that sacred name should not proceed
> From my polluted lips. (158)

The staging of Marat's actual murder in Pogson's play must have been a daring choice at a time when theatrical conventions and the audience's shared cultural codes did not tolerate the representation of raw violence on stage, especially violence committed by a woman. In her attempt to undercut the prevailing depictions of Charlotte as a monstrous woman or a gullible accomplice, Pogson creates a character of human dimensions, a sensitive daughter, a caring sister, a tender fiancée. Above all, however, Charlotte is presented as a political being with an extraordinary capacity for reasoning and courageous action. Pogson's insistence upon the construction of her as a paragon of feminized virtue facilitates her entrance into the public world of politics. When Charlotte is discovered and arrested for Marat's murder, she fearlessly exclaims that her act was spurred by "the cause of virtue" adding that "a woman's arm, when nerved in such a cause, is the arm of an avenging angel" (159):

> Think not I am a foe to liberty!
> My father is a real patriot;
> My brother, at this moment, joins the friends,
> Soldiers of liberty! Not assassins.
> *They* should sink beside that fallen enemy
> To all but anarchy and cruelty. (*Points to* MARAT.)
> To know that, by his death, thousands are free
> Fully repays the danger I incur! (159)

18 "Delusion" (Kritzer 158).

Pogson consistently uses the concept of virtue in order to argue that the viability of a democratic social order depends upon its national character and also to render the distinction between public and domestic spheres politically insignificant, especially at times when human rights and dignity are at stake. Charlotte's militancy introduces a radical form of political activism which, discomforting though it might have seemed to early nineteenth-century American audiences, it, in fact, points to the emergence of a female political consciousness that is realized in the commitment to social justice and political morality.[19] In the play, virtue, gender, and nationhood are tightly interrelated concepts defined within the larger political context of republicanism. By giving Charlotte Corday protagonistic status for the first time in American drama, Pogson brings back into attention American women's political potential. The French Revolution prompted American women's active involvement in public life and political matters in a way that the American Revolution had not as its ensuing ideal of Republican Womanhood created an essential paradox: on the one hand, it acknowledged women's political contributions and celebrated their patriotism, while, on the other, denied them any sense of civil existence beyond their traditional roles as wives and mothers. However, with the outbreak of the French Revolution and the resurgence of the language of republicanism, American women ventured once again into the public sphere.[20] But this time, their claim to share in political culture was marked by a desire to form a distinctive female political identity fostered by transatlantic ideas and events. According to Susan Branson, American women "were equipped with sufficient information and experience to begin to construct political identities for themselves that drew from America's revolutionary origins as well as those of France" (74–75). Although American women's support for the French Revolution was not universal and gradually began to wane when the horrors of the revolutionary excesses were made known, the dissemination of women's political activities on both sides of the Atlantic through the nation's press made

19 Referring to American women in the 1790s, David Waldstreicher points out that "revolutionary practice had meant for many of them a new awareness of public life, and, like French women of the same era, they quickly responded to this experience with new claims of rights, particularly to education, property holding, divorce, and… claims for the relevance of their political opinions" (166–167).

20 American women used public celebrations of the French cause as an avenue to the political sphere, adopting new clothing and forms of address and engaging in a wider array of public activities. By the end of the 1790s, deteriorating relations with France provoked American military preparations that included public ceremonies in which women in the capital presented militia banners and participated in protests against the French (Branson 56).

possible the creation of a space in public politics where women were recognized as efficacious members of the polity.

When the French Revolution became a point of contention between the Federalists and the Republicans, American women's public role gained new political significance. In their effort to secure women's allegiance, both parties relied heavily upon the ideology of republicanism which stressed women's contribution to the common good on the basis of their newly defined capacity as upholders of morality.[21] However, the Federalists, despite their social conservatism, were more willing than Republicans to enhance women's place in public political culture. On the other hand, while Republicans challenged social hierarchy and class distinctions and argued for a more inclusive polity, they privileged white manhood at the expense of white women and people of color.[22]

The American women of Pogson's generation soon realized that their claims to public identity were thwarted by the very promises of Jeffersonian republican thought which located political culture in the community of white males and relied upon a naturalized concept of womanhood. The resurrection of Charlotte Corday's story, though falling within the romantic tragedy aesthetic framework of distant time and place and universal theme, is particularly timely in the sense that it portrays an educated white woman from a prosperous family as the casualty of the failure of the democratic experiment. Charlotte laments the precariousness of the democratic ideal and is filled with disappointment and anger at the painful realization of her country's unashamed betrayal of its own values and nationalist principles:

> CHARLOTTE: I am prepared
> To stand the charge, as one whose act was just,
> And for the welfare of my suffering country,
> Whose gratitude and justice will proclaim me
> A benefactor—not an assassin.
> CHABOT: Thou art mistaken, mad enthusiast!
> France will condemn thee to the guillotine—
> CHARLOTTE: If such my doom, France is the fettered slave

21 According to Rosemarie Zagarri, "Republicans, like their Federalist counterparts, sometimes mobilized women for public processions and partisan rallies, as visible demonstrations of popular support for their cause" (125).

22 As Jeanne Boydston explains, "it was… the nature of white manhood to combine the liberty and restraint necessary to achieve and maintain political freedom; it was the nature of women, African Americans, and Native Americans not to be capable of achieving and maintaining that combination" (259).

Of factious, criminal, blood-thirsty men—
And soon will fall beneath *a weight of crimes*.
CHABOT: Lead on! (Charlotte *walks out with dignity*.) (166–167)

Michael Warner has observed that the rise of nationalism initiated a disjuncture between actual and merely imaginative participation in public life. As real politics diverged from those of discourse, "the public of which women were now said to be members was no longer a public in the rigorous sense of republicanism, and membership in it no longer connoted civic action" (173–174). In the case of American women, this disjuncture permitted them to be included in the "national imaginary" as discursive symbols of the political contribution of female domesticity but not as real public actors. In the years following the electoral revolution of 1800 and Jefferson's rise to presidency, the ideology of American republicanism failed to conceal its own paradoxical nature: on the one hand, it promoted a radical language of democracy while, on the other, it replaced old hierarchies with new ones thus perpetuating social prohibition and cultural exclusion.

Through *The Female Enthusiast,* Pogson portrays a model of femininity that falls within the category of women of intelligence and heroism who derive their identity from their public accomplishments than from their relation to men as mothers and wives. Charlotte stresses an active, rather than a passive or marginal, brand of female patriotism. In the final act of the play, she consciously sets a precedent of heroic patriotic action and female political activism:

'Tis but the body's death; my fame shall live,
And to my memory a tomb arise
On which all France will read and venerate
The act for which now ordains my death.
For now, as when my steps shall mount the scaffold,
I feel the strong conviction that I bleed
For the benefit of my poor country;
And should the demon of carnage present
Another fiend as murderous as Marat,
May he soon share the horrid monster's fate,
And the true patriot who dares cut him off
Find in his country's gratitude reward. (175)

Although Charlotte's transgression must be punished by death, her name survives in popular consciousness through her construction as an allegorical figure of virtue and justice. In her study on death and femininity, Elizabeth Bronfen has argued that the death of a woman "emerges as the requirement for the preservation of existing cultural norms and values or their regenerative

modification" (181). In this sense, Charlotte's public death constitutes an effective communicative act, a symbolic force that aims to modify a political order that undermines the very ideals it claims to espouse. The closing lines of the play appear to issue a warning that the "regenerative modification" of society can be achieved only in a country where liberty is cherished and the true meaning of democracy ensures social equality, political stability, and justice. Such a country is the United States of America where the idea of social reconstruction has arisen from America's peculiar conditions. Although Pogson appears to be fully aware that the emergence of multiple, and often contradictory, political meanings as the aftermath of the American Revolution have seriously complicated the powerful interplay between political rhetoric and practice, she is nevertheless confident that it is precisely these complications which empower Americans to question their own political system and protest their exclusion from the revolutionary legacy:

> HENRY: But we must part, and cross the Atlantic wave—
> Seek that repose we cannot here possess.
> ....
> Come where quiet reigns.
> Under the protection of America,
> Domestic ease securely reposes.
> There, we may yet enjoy tranquility;
> And, 'midst the sons of true-born liberty,
> Taste the pure blessings that from freedom flow. (181)

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Sostene M. Zangari

Melville's *Typee*: Toward the Poetics of Hybridity

Based on the author's four-week stay in the Polynesian island of Nukuhiva between July and August 1842, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, Herman Melville's first book, enjoyed wide popularity immediately after its publication in 1846, and even when the author died, in 1891, this first literary effort was mentioned in obituaries as one of the major achievements in his whole career—and indeed, once the author acquired canonical status after WWI, the book was still praised as "an account of escape from the conventions and the economic ideals of the time" (Howard 300). However, with the rise of New Criticism, *Typee* started to be dismissed as an immature apprentice novel and consequently became neglected.[1] The critical interest in the book eventually revived in the 1980s, thanks mainly to the rise of postcolonial studies. Being a record of the contact between an American traveler and aboriginals of the South Pacific, *Typee* appealed to scholars interested in exploring the dynamics of the cultural confrontation between the West and the so-called primitive populations.

From then on, *Typee* has continued to fascinate scholars, intrigued by Melville's surprisingly modern take on representational strategies, ironic relationship with the reader, and ability to anticipate postcolonial critique of Western ethnographic authority. In this essay, I would like to focus on one important aspect of Melville's modernity in *Typee*: the connection of the prominent hybrid figures in the economy of the tale to the peculiarly circuitous and at times troubled writing and publication history, which resulted in the appearance of several versions of *Typee* differing in title, length, vocabulary and content.[2]

1 See again the comment in Howard, "But with the development of a newer criticism, more concerned with the suggestiveness than with the substance of literature, *Typee* received less attention" (Howard 300). As an illustration, Howard quotes comments by Warner Berthoff, according to whom *Typee* showed "an imaginative power in reserve" (Howard 301).

2 The first edition, with the title *Narrative of a Four Months' Residence Among the Natives of a Valley in the Marquesas Islands; or, A Peep at Polynesian Life*, was published by John Murray, in England, on 27th February 1846. In the United States, the text came out

It is the formalist school that has mostly insisted on the contiguities between the content and the structural organization of a literary work. Viktor Shklovsky, in *Theory of Prose*, stated that "the content (hence 'the soul') of a literary work is the sum total of its stylistic devices" (qtd. in Fokkema and Bosch 17). Drawing on this formalist assumption, I will argue that the key role played by hybrid characters as well as the peculiar use of narrative techniques which undermine the traditional basis of travel writing—the genre Melville wanted his book to belong in—conflate to make "the soul" of *Typee* significantly hybrid, and this quality in turn yields new ways of representing the encounter between Europeans and primitive populations.

However, far from being the result of a conscious plan, the book both in the content represented and its production, can be seen as an accidental outcome of a voyage, a voyage of exploration in the territories of literary modernity. Much like Columbus accidentally landing on the American continent, both Melville and Tommo stumble into a "new province" of hybridity. Whereas Tommo, the narrator and protagonist of *Typee*, realizes the ineffectiveness of European-made strategies for the appropriation and control of the exotic space of Nukuhiva, Melville comes to understand the fundamental hybridity of literary composition, and the possibilities inherent in expanding the boundaries of traditional genres, in this case the travel narrative. Both Tommo and Melville embark on trips that end in the same manner, that is with the recognition that hybrid forms prove to be more suitable than traditional ones in channeling the complexities of the encounter of cultures. It is no accident that, in the famous letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne in June 1851, Melville stated that until his twenty-fifth year[3]—approximately the time when he started writing *Typee*—he had no "development" at all. It is the approach to literature—and the firsthand experience of the many issues involved

as *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life During a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* in March 1846, published by John Wiley, and included some alterations to the original text. In July, the second American edition came out, expurgated of about 30 pages of sexual, political and religious content, but with the addition of "The Story of Toby." In September Murray reissued the first edition with "The Story of Toby" and the title *Typee; or, A Narrative of a Four Month's Reisdence Among the Natives of a Valley of the Marquesas Islands; or, A Peep at Polynesian Life*. Through the years, several pirated versions were also available. See Howard, "Historical Note."

3 "My development has been all within a few years past. I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould. So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life" (*Correspondence* 193).

in telling a simple tale of adventure and getting it published—that kickstarted the cultural growth of Melville.

Melville and the Travel Form

A crucial turning point in the history of *Typee* scholarship was the publication in 1984 of Janet Giltrow's "Speaking Out: Travel and Structure in Herman Melville's Early Narratives," which questioned the then prevalent tendency to approach the book as work of fiction and advocated the recovery of Melville's own original view of *Typee* as narrative of facts.[4] According to Giltrow, "disconcerted by *Typee*'s repeated and irreverent trespass of the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, critics have tried to establish order by isolating its most conspicuously fictive aspects and then treating the whole book as a covert novel, or near-novel" (18). In other words, commentators had mostly ignored the genre which had originally provided Melville with a solid blueprint for organizing his own adventure: travel narrative. This oversight, very much in keeping with New Criticism's exclusion of the so-called "minor" or "popular" narrative forms from the literary discourse, resulted in excluding the wealth of possible meanings inherent in the book's relationship with travel writing. The perspective inaugurated by Giltrow not only made it clear how some of the features of the book that had puzzled, if not frustrated, the commentators—such as digressions, minute descriptions, and an unconvincing finale—were constitutive elements of the travel genre, but also, by identifying the model to which *Typee* referred, suggested that the parameters against which Melville's literary skills, or lack thereof, had been measured, had to be radically changed. In *Typee*, what matters is less a comparison with Melville's later fiction—a confrontation quite unflattering for the author of *Typee*—than a comparison with the available models of travel narrative. This way, it is possible to see Melville's problematic position within the tradition of travel literature and his precocious intellectual maturity.

4 Of course, *Typee* can only partly be accepted as a narrative of facts and is not immune to the "taint of fiction" that puzzled the publishers John Murray and John Wiley as well as some of the contemporary reviewers. However, Leon Howard reports how one Frederick Saunders, "a reader for the house of Harper," recalled a council at the publishing house which rejected it on the grounds that "it was impossible that it could be true and therefore was without real value" (278). Melville, then, was well aware that his manuscript had to be offered as a narrative of facts in order to be sold, and, consequently, he was not telling the whole truth when he assured his publishers about the absolute veracity of everything narrated in his work.

Travel narrative has played an important role in the cultural history of Europe and the West, being one of those cultural practices that, by providing a narrative counterpart to the voyages of exploration, contributed to the creation of a European and Western identity vs. the rest of the world. As Edward Said has pointed out, travel writing did not just represent crucial episodes of the colonial enterprise but participated in colonialism, in the Western "scramble" for non-European territories. According to Said, "the power… to represent what is beyond metropolitan borders derives from the power of an imperial society, and that power takes the discursive form of a reshaping and reordering of 'raw' or primitive data into the local conventions of European narrative and formal utterance" (*Culture* 119).

White people writing up their own travel experiences, in a manner reminiscent of a chartered mining company in Latin America or Africa, appropriate the "immaterial goods" necessary to create a narrative work. Moreover, they assemble these "goods" to fit the consumption patterns of Europeans, "the local conventions" of the specific market. Therefore, when traveling inividuals turn into travel narrators, they undergo a transformation whereby these conventions are internalized and provide the filter through which the adventure is told: they become a representative individuals, a sort of ambassadors of European civilization whose deeds and views are supposed to demonstrate its ascendancy in the world scene. The narrative thus conceived represents the experience of travel in a way suitable for a narrative that highlights European (and Western) prominence in the World.

Thus, in Melville's time, travel writing relied on a politics of representation whereby the white explorer was granted the privilege of producing the text and consequently the knowledge about the foreign populations encountered during the voyages of exploration. The latter were approached as passive objects of investigation, primitive "others" with no right to take part in the production of knowledge about themselves. As summarized by Edward Said: "the authority of the observer, and of European geographical centrality, is buttressed by a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status. Yet this secondariness is, paradoxically, essential to the primariness of the European" (*Culture* 70). Moreover, the white traveler, according to Marie Louis Pratt, is a "seeing-man", whose "eyes passively look out and possess" (7) the landscape and the people encountered in the course of the voyage. This role is carried out through "classifying, assigning value, interpreting, exotizing, and normalizing those cultures with which he comes into contact" (Ivison 116). Thus, the textual appropriation by white authors reflects the relation of power in the colonial encounter. This ideological baggage came with a toolbox of narrative strategies, discourses, patterns that reinforced the

fundamental inequality between White and the Other, and ultimately proved the inferiority of non-Europeans.

In *Typee*, this toolbox is subverted. A paradigmatic episode—a sort of declaration of intent—appears in the first pages of the book, where the reader finds a comic episode that introduces the theme of native resistance to Western representation and strategies of cultural appropriation. The episode describes an official ceremony organized by the French, the occupants of Nukuhiva at the time of Melville's visit, to celebrate the arrival of an American merchant ship. Two figures, surrounded by French soldiers, stand out at the center of the reception committee: the French-appointed King of Nukuhiva and his wife. The regal couple are dressed in the Western fashion to make an impression on the Americans, to show them the beneficial and civilizing effect of the French occupation. As Goudie has aptly summarized, the royals "suggest native capitulation to not only European fashion but also to the ideology that lies behind it" (225). Symbolically, the idea of dressing natives in European garments hints at the Western desire to "clothe the world in imperial fabric" (Goudie 225). The result, however, is not as dignified and solemn as expected:

> Their appearance was certainly calculated to produce an effect. His majesty was arrayed in a magnificent military uniform, stiff with gold lace and embroidery, while his shaven crown was concealed by a huge chapeau bras, waving with ostrich plumes. There was one slight blemish, however, in his appearance. A broad patch of tattooing stretched completely across his face, in a line with his eyes, making him look as if he wore a huge pair of goggles; and royalty in goggles suggested some ludicrous ideas. (*Typee* 16)

The use of Western clothes cannot hide some of the very visible marks of local culture, such as the tattoo on King Mowanna's face. But it is the Queen, with her transgressive behavior, who challenges Western expectations. She first approaches an old sailor, attracted by the "inscriptions in India ink" that cover his arms and chest, then takes his clothes off and "gaze[s] with admiration at the bright blue and vermillion pricking, thus disclosed to view". Finally, "the royal lady, eager to display the hieroglyphics on her own sweet form, ben[ds] forward for a moment, and turning sharply around, thr[ows] up the skirts of her mantle" (16).

The exposition of her nudity is a double act of defiance: on the one hand, it is directed against the Western sense of prudery, while on the other, it is a metaphor for the liberation from the status of colonized subject.[5] This episode is also important because it anticipates the pattern of conflict between Western representations and native reactions that will be central to the development of

5 Not surprisingly, the episode was omitted from the Second American edition.

the narrative, a strategy employed by the author to question attempts at imposing static roles and attitudes on the indigenous inhabitants of the island.

Throughout the book, the narrator Tommo repeatedly admits the irrelevance of the knowledge conveyed by the previous travel accounts of Nukuhiva—William Ellis's *Polynesian Researches* (1829), David Porter's *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean* (1822), or Reverend Charles Stewart's *A Visit to the South Seas* (1831)—as well as of his own attempts to rationally explain the behavior of the natives, in particular to understand the circumstances in which cannibalism is practiced. Moreover, Tommo discovers that his affiliation with a "superior" civilization does not automatically translate into a privileged position in the colonial environment. His whiteness, in fact, relegates him to the margins, and his fate depends on the goodwill of the Typees. In the following sections I will demonstrate two specific techniques of subversion used by Melville: the presentation of Tommo not as an exploring subject, but as an object investigated by the natives, and the presentation of the natives that defies accepted notions of savagery.

From a Subject of Knowledge to an Object of Investigation

After having jumped ship and escaped into the interior of Nukuhiva, Tommo and his companion Toby roam through the wilderness and finally meet a group of natives. A ritual exchange of names follows, which then turns into a paradigmatic episode highlighting Melville's own reworking of the conventions of travel writing and of its ideological apparatus:

> [I] hesitated for an instant, thinking that it might be difficult for him to pronounce my real name, and then with the most praiseworthy intentions intimated that I was known as 'Tom.' But I could not have made a worse selection, the chief could not master it: 'Tommo,' 'Tomma,' 'Tommee,' everything but plain 'Tom.' As he persisted in garnishing the word with an addictional syllable, I compromised the matter with him at the word 'Tommo.' (92)

The narrator's "praiseworthy intentions," betraying a feeling of superiority on his part, define the natives as humans unable to reproduce complex phonetic combinations. That is why he identifies himself through a monosyllabic name. The savages, however, do not receive this name as he gives it and add a second syllable. This is a paradigmatic moment: traditionally, the privilege of naming was granted to the white colonizer. For instance, the US captain David Porter, in the act of annexing the Marquesas archipelago renamed a group of islands after George Washington and called Nukuhiva's main harbor Massachusetts Bay.

In Melville's book, conversely, the name-giving privilege belongs to the Typees, and the episode anticipates how the natives would also perceive Tommo through their own cultural lenses. Melville shows how Tommo differs from the hero of travel narrative as he becomes an object of inquiry and appropriation by the Typees, eliciting from them a true ethnographic curiosity.

As David Spurr notes, "in classic colonial discourse, the body of the primitive becomes as much the object of examination, commentary, and valorization as the landscape" (23). And, in fact, Tommo does his best to carry out his duties. Especially after the disappearance of Toby—who had left the Typee valley escorted by some natives in order to procure medical help for Tommo at the French encampment and did not return—the book takes on a decidedly descriptive tone, with chapters informing the reader about the physical features, social organization, daily routine and language of the natives, as well as particular celebrations such as the Feast of Calabashes. The narrator documents Typee culture for the satisfaction of his readers in Europe and America. In so doing, however, he establishes a relationship between Western and Marquesan cultures which is far from equal: the latter, in fact, gains legitimacy as culture worth documenting only because the former legitimizes it as such.

In spite of his ethnographic inclination, however, Tommo refrains from theorizing about some of the cultural practices he witnesses. When trying to make sense of the taboo, he admits: "I saw everything but could comprehend nothing" (212), a comment that pertains to a number of other situations in the book. For instance, when he describes a Typee priest, who listens to a wooden idol and claims that he hears messages from the pagan god, Tommo is far from concluding that this is a show of humbuggery for the benefit of the tribe: "I shall not presume to decide," he comments (210).

In *Typee* the body of the white man becomes an object of scrutiny and, eventually, of appropriation. Tommo is held captive and, through the taboo, his mobility is limited to specific parts of the valley, where the natives can easily control him and make sure he would not run away. As Alex Calder notes, the repeated utterance of the word "taboo" constructs around Tommo an invisible barrier of prohibitions restricting his mobility. As the narrator makes wow to "never again perpetrate a similar piece of ill-manners… forbidden… by the mandates of the taboo" (*Typee* 262), he adapts to a situation wherein "his sense of location in space is defined rather more by their [the Typees] perception of him than by his perception of them" (Calder 34). The taboo limits Tommo's mobility, which is at odds with the freedom of movement that travel writing customarily allows the white explorer. In particular, taboo highlights the places where Tommo is not allowed to go, among them the beach: "my instinctive impulse was to hurry down to the beach.… As soon as Mehevi noticed… the

impatience I betrayed to reach the sea, his countenance assumed that inflexible rigidity of expression which had so awed me on the afternoon of our arrival" (145). This restriction is symptomatic of Melville's reversal of the patterns of traditional travel writing. As Franco Moretti has shown, the coast is the focal location where Western travelers developed their colonial mobility.[6] Thus, placed in the interior of the island, Tommo is once again less a subject who creates his own exotic adventure than an object of curiosity in other people's adventure.

There is a possibility that the subjugation of the white invader will become a definitive appropriation when the tattoo artist Karky, excited by the whiteness of Tommo's skin, expresses his intention to draw a tattoo on it. Karky does not accept the offer of an arm, the most Tommo would allow the artist to decorate, but wants to draw on the prisoner's face: "When his fore-finger swept across my features, in laying out the borders of those parallel bands which were to encircle my countenance, the flesh farily crawled upon my bones" (258). With his fingers, the artist draws the imaginary lines of an indigenous design that "etch[es] lines of deviation on a face that had been imagined as composed of standard lines" (Otter 19), changing irreversibly the modality by which the white man's face would be perceived by his own countrymen, who would no longer recognize him as a legitimate member of their society. A face tattoo would complicate immensely Tommo's return home, making him look like a freak, relegating him to the margin of social life, and denying him the status representative Western individual entitled to write a travel account.[7]

"What an object he would have made of me!" (260), explains Tommo, though he is already aware that he is a curiosity in the eyes of the natives. And he plays such a part, confessing that he "anticipate[s] from every new comer the same extravagant expressions of curiosity and regard" (165). That is why Tommo reacts with "great indignation" when a stranger, who seemingly enjoys a high esteem among the natives, and who will later be indentified as Marnoo, gives him an "unexpected slight" (165) and barely notices him. The narrator thus experiences the same fate that the colonial practice has imposed on the "other"—being made into an object of investigation, performed in accordance with the "local language" of the natives.

6 According to Franco Moretti, the colonial narrative is essentially linear, connecting the interior towards the sea. In *Typee*, instead, it is the natives who restrict Tommo's mobility and forbid him access to the beach. See *Atlas of the European Novel* 58–64.

7 See Evelev.

Resistance to the Western Vision

The reversal discussed above—with Tommo's transformation from subject who "creates" knowledge into an object who is examined—testifies to a more general mechanism at work in *Typee* whereby what is expected from the main character, as an exemplary white man, is challenged. In the like manner, the repertoire of images, representations, vocabulary and knowledge that the West had produced in centuries of relationship with otherness is examined and questioned. In this section our attention will be focused on the topic of cannibalism, as illustrative of the white man's effort to understand an alien culture and fit it into its own categories of thought.

As several commentators have noticed, Tommo's exploration of Nukuhiva, quite significantly, starts before he even sets foot on the island. In fact, after a long time at sea, the announcement that the ship *Dolly* would head towards the Marquesas island for supplies, strikes the fancy of the narrator, who is immediately overwhelmed with images associated to the location:

> The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked houris—cannibal banquets—groves of cocoanut—coral reefs—tattooed chiefs—and bamboo temples; sunny valleys planted with bread-fruit-trees—carved canoes dancing on the flashing blue waters—savage woodlands guarded by horrible idols—HEATHENISH RITES AND HUMAN SACRIFICES. (13)

This list is a "collection of dreams, images, and vocabularies available" (Said, *Orientalism* 73), the body of knowledge produced by whites about the Polynesian populations, the knowledge that exists only in textual form, built and channeled through a series of travelogues. What is important to stress here, however, is that the catalogue lays out an imaginary landscape that the narrator/protagonist is supposed to rely on to find his way into the complexities of the unknown environment.

Typee will only partially make good on its promise to provide exotic excitement for the reading public. Although Melville describes the beauty of the landscape and of the aboriginal women, he will prove to be disappointingly frugal with the last item in the list quoted above: "heathenish rites and human sacrifices." In fact, Melville's book does not provide any conclusive evidence of cannibalism. As Sanborn points out, *Typee* is "Melville's attempt to expose the ambivalence at the heart of the *discourse* of colonialism, as embodied in the discourse on cannibalism" (77; original italics). The natives' reluctance to perform cannibal rites in front of Tommo functions as a paradigm for their refusal to be encapsulated within the simplistic categories of the Western catalogue of exoticisms.

The emphasis on the last item on the list is not accidental, as cannibalism plays a crucial role in the construction of civilized whiteness as opposed to primitive/savage otherness, being the one cultural practice that could unquestionably be defined by Western thinkers as the decisive proof of the difference, and superiority, of the Euro-American civilization. Cannibalism is the ultimate sign of savage primitivism, the one factor that allows the white traveler to perceive himself as both different from and superior to the aborigine. For this reason, the search for evidence of cannibal practices becomes central in the last part of the book and, when no substantial proof is found, the protagonist—in order to resist assimilation to the Typees—will decide to fabricate the evidence.

As soon as Tommo and Toby desert from the whaler *Dolly* and escape into the forests of Nukuhiva, the reader learns about the existence of two tribes, the Happars and the Typees, and while the former enjoy "a reputation of gentleness and humanity" (67), the latter are known as "cruel savages" (68). Thus, when the two sailors finally fall in the hands of the Typees, the narrator asks himself: "What might not be our fearful destiny?" (96). Chapter 12 seems to provide an answer and fulfill the promise of exotic excitement. When Toby sees a fire in a distance, he thinks it is "the fire to cook us, to be sure; what else would that cannibals be kicking up such a row about if it were not for that?" (118). A sense of suspense is created when some natives approach the two Americans, but it disappears when it turns out that the islanders want to offer them food.

This is a key episode because, as Sanborn puts it, "the anticipations that Tommo has steadily heightened over the course of the narrative suddenly look comically excessive; inflated out of all proportion to the actual situation" (83). Tommo is now convinced that "the horrible character imputed to these Typees appeared to me wholly underserved" (121). Therefore, if the Typees are not cannibals, they must sure be "a human, gentlemanly, amiable set of epicures" (121). This reversal of perspective is no surprise, because the Western catalogue of stereotypes about the primitive "other" makes another representation available to Tommo—the myth of the Noble Savage that sees primitive people as creatures living in harmony with nature and following the natural laws of humanity, uncorrupted by the evils of civilization, such as money and work. And the Typees seem to fit in such a portrait: "the jealousies, the social rivalries, the family dissensions, and the thousand self-inflicted discomforts of refined life, which make up in units the swelling aggregate of human misery, are unknown among these unsophisticated people" (152). This edenic image, however, proves to be yet another ideological attempt to impose an identity on the natives and does not succeed in producing real knowledge about the Typees. The tribe refuse to be encapsulated in the category of simple and childlike creatures, and the second part of the book includes several episodes that illustrate this. There are various situations when the narrator

experiences, witnesses or learns about the aggressiveness of these "unsophisticated people," thus realizing the falseness of the myth of the Noble Savage. As it has already been shown in more detail in the previous section, by means of taboo and tattoo the Typees both limit Tommo's mobility and attempt to assimilate him. Also, Tommo learns in Chapter 17 of a violent fight between the Typee and the Happars (155–158). These and other episodes deprive Tommo of any certainty about the Noble Savage representation being a useful tool to correctly understand the natives and their behavior.

The evidence of cannibalism, however, would settle the issue for good. However, the savages did not seem willing to reveal it. In the end, just before the end of his sojourn among the Typees, Tommo accidentally bumps into what he has been looking for so desperately:

> I observed a curiously carved vessel of wood, of considerable size, with a cover placed over it… prompted by a curiosity I could not repress, in passing it I raised one end of the cover; at the same moment the chiefs, perceiving my design, loudly ejaculated, 'Taboo! taboo!' [sic!] But the slight glimpse sufficed; my eyes fell upon the disordered members of a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with particles of flesh clinging to them here and there! (280)

The bones are taken as the proof that Typees do practice cannibalism. But there is no absolute certainty that these bones, even if human, are the leftovers from a cannibal feast. As Alex Calder aptly comments, "it would have been easy to allow Tommo a more unmistakable discovery… but Melville has taken care to write in a manner that neither confirms nor denies Tommo's circumstantial inference" (36). On the one hand, such a development of the plot can be just a clumsy attempt to make up for the lack of exotic adventure. On the other, the discovery functions as a shock that, by identifying the hosts as cannibals, makes it clear that Tommo will not prefer the simple natural life of the Typees and will not assimilate, a condition that enables his return home.

This sequence is a crucial component of the whole book, as it hints at the workings of colonial travel writing. In fact, it implies that travel writers often make mistaken observations and reach false conclusions. There is "a vast deal of unintentional humbuggery in some accounts we have from scientific men" (*Typee* 203), as a result of using unreliable sources or insufficient acquaintance with the natives.[8] Melville narrates the episode in a way that shows the bones as a signifier

8 For instance, in *Typee* one of these scientific man is blamed because "according to his own statement, was only at one of the islands and remained but two weeks, sleeping every night on board his ship, and taking little kid-glove excursions ashore in the daytime, attended by an armed party" (203), a situation that does not grant the observer the closeness necessary to understand Marquesan cultures.

of the failure of the Western ideological schemes, at the same time suggesting a history that exists beyond myths, prejudices and stereotypes. *Typee* does not reveal the mystery that lies in "the souls" of primitive people and, instead, gives expression to the conflicting representations of the "other." By frustrating the readers' expectations, Melville uncovers the artificial construction of truths held as self-evident and undermines the ideological apparatus of Western travel narrative.

Hybrid Characters

So far, the present analysis has dealt with the ways in which *Typee* reverses or defies some of the constitutive devices of the travel narrative, especially those that granted the white subject a privileged position within the text, both as an ethnographic observer and a depositary of knowledge. As has been demonstrated, Tommo gives up both these roles. Melville's book, however, is remarkable not only for the way it criticizes the traditional narrative form, but also because it hints at new strategies for representing the colonial encounter by suggesting possible ways of transcending the binary logic of the travel narrative. In fact, whereas the white subject fails as the agent who accumulates knowledge, Melville postulates a new type of subjectivity, the hybrid subject who, as Tommo's Marquesan adventure proves, seems to be better equipped to negotiate his place in the environment.

There are two such characters portrayed in the book. The more prominent one is Marnoo, a Nukuhivan native who had been employed for three years by an Australian sea captain and can speak rudimentary English. After he came back to the island, Marnoo gained great esteem among the islanders and was named a "taboo," after which he could move freely all over Nukuhiva without incurring in any danger. The "civilized" Polynesian's counterpart is a white man gone native: the beachcomber Jimmy, who makes his appearance in the Sequel, which chronicles what happened to Toby after his separation from Tommo. Jimmy was an old sailor who could speak the Polynesian language and thus acted as mediator between the French occupants and the island tribes. He, too, was considered a taboo, and therefore had the right to move between the different areas of Nukuhiva without danger to his own life. What is more, he was the French-appointed king Mowanna's favorite, "and had a good deal to say in his master's council" (*Typee* 307).

Although the book gives more space to other characters, Marnoo and Jimmy play crucial roles in the dénouement of the tale: the liberation of Tommo and Toby. Marnoo, as Tommo acknowledges, told Kannaka, a native employed on a British vessel, about Tommo's captivity. Kannaka then led an expedition to the Typee bay and rescued Tommo. However, more complex and therefore "hybrid"

is the strategy employed by Jimmy to free Toby. Jimmy deceives both the American sailor and his Typee escort; he persuades Toby to come with him to the main harbor, promising they would come back to fetch Tommo, and assures the natives that they would return quickly. Jimmy's real plan, however, is to sell Toby to a whale-ship captain who needs crewmen. His fluency in both English and Marquesan as well as knowledge of taboos and superstitions make Jimmy the only one who can interact with both parties, and thus allow him to arrange events in a way that suits his purpose.

Jimmy and Marnoo illustrate how *Typee* ascribes power to those figures whose histories and identities do not fit into the polarity of the Western vs. the native opposition, but are found somewhere in between. It is appropriate to mention at this point the formalist distinction between the start of a story, in which two opposing principles collide, and the closure, which reconciles the differences. Melville's work reproduces this basic scheme by supplying a closing theme, that of hybridity, which provides a synthesis of the two opposite principles, the European and the native points of view, which have triggered off the story.

The relevance of hybridity, then, offers the reader a remarkable intuition anticipating fundamental future developments. The two hybrid characters hint at what anthropologist James Clifford has singled out as one of the "specific paths through modernity," the fact that "human future is something to be creatively imagined, not simply endured" (6). Jimmy and Marnoo, in fact, do just this: they have imagined for themselves a different future from their own countrymen, and this decision pays off in the circumstances when their hybridity brings a position of privilege.

Hybrid Texts

What Melville does in *Typee*, then, is to question some principles of travel narrative that, in the light of his personal experience in Nukuhiva, might have proven inadequate to represent what he had witnessed on the island. To Melville, these principles possibly looked like, to use Victor Shklovsky's terminology, "outdated" themes (228)—themes which become forbidden because fail to convey real meanings and only spread clichés—although the fact that colonialist writing flourished in the nineteenth century shows that Melville's view was not shared by readers or publishers. Therefore, his emphasis on the hybrid characters must strike one as remarkable by all means.

Some could object to the idea of Melville as prophet of modernity, and could rightly point out that this stress on hybridity does not emerge in the first editions of the book, those published in the early months of 1846, which did not contain the Sequel featuring Jimmy. In July of that year, the *Buffalo Commercial*

Advertiser printed a statement by Richard Tobias Greene, which attested that he was "the true and veritable Toby" of *Typee* and testified "to the entire accuracy of the work, so long as (he) was with Melville"; two weeks later, the paper published Toby's own account of his escape, mentioning the deception committed by the beachcomber. Silencing those reviewers who questioned the veracity of the book, Green's testimony provided Melville with material that he reworked in "The Story of Toby: A Sequel to *Typee*," an appendix published in the infamous American Revised edition of July 1846 and subsequent reissues.[9] Without the Sequel, there would be no Jimmy in *Typee*, and hybridity would be negligible as a theme in the book.

However, as John Bryant has argued, *Typee* is one of those text that most significantly defy the outdated notion of the finished literary work. Given the particularly troublesome and circuitous writing and publishing process, Bryant compares *Typee* to the *Bible* or the *Odissey* and labels it a "fluid text" that "exists in multiple material versions" ("Witness and Access" 17). In his introduction to the electronic version of *Typee*,[10] Bryant outlines a possible route through different stages which started from the raw material of Melville's own recollections of his adventure and ended in the different published versions. The critic writes that *Typee* "represents two experiences: a four-week adventure in the South Seas... and a several-month adventure in writing" ("Introduction" 20)—and also, we should add, in getting the work published. Importantly, this process is a journey that parallels the one performed by the main character. The outcome of this literary journey is, as Goudie sums up, a "hybrid text":

> *Typee* presents a narrator speaking in analepses and prolepses, in prefaces and sequels and appendices, in passages under erasure, in layered genres and literary conventions, in Marquesan vocabulary translated and untranslated, in direct discourse and indirect discourse and dialogue, in parody and hyperbole and reportorial language—a heteroglossic textual equivalent of the hybrid figures controlling the narrative (227).

This marked heteroglossic aspect is further reinforced by other features of the book, for example the specific uses of the existing travel accounts as sources.

In fact, Melville did not just borrow episodes from Porter, Stewart and Ellis, but also tried to undermine the validity of the sources by underlining the excessively biased attitudes of the authors towards the natives. One particular instance occurs when Melville takes phrases from Porter's account, and puts them in a

9 See Howard 287.

10 *Typee*. Fluid-Text Edition. Ed. John Bryant. The University of Virginia Press. Available at http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/.

different context: whereas in the *Journal* "the line of smoking ruins" is seen as a consequences of the "mistaken pride" of the Typees,[11] Melville uses the same words to highlight a very different point of view. According to his version, first the natives "obliged their assailants to retreat and abandon their design of conquest," and thus,

> the invaders, on their march back to the sea, consoled themselves for their repulse by setting fire to every house and temple in their route; and a long line of smoking ruins defaced the once-smiling bosom of the valley, and proclaimed to its pagan inhabitants the spirit that reigned in the breasts of Christian soldiers. (38)

The diversity of textual strategies and the complicated history of publication make *Typee* a radically unstable text; and this instability accounts for its hybridity. It is neither a novel nor an ethnographic work, it criticizes imperialism and partakes of its discourse, expresses a literary ambition and stumbles on the innovative theme of hybridity.

Critics are right in pointing out that hybridity does not emerge in full force until the very end of the book. But, again, formalist criticism comes to rescue. Franco Moretti has demonstrated that, as in biology, evolution in literature is based on "divergence," and its history is full of "casual attempts, false starts, and ends" (*Graphs* 101). And what is the "Story of Toby," if not an evolution that occurred by chance? The same could be said of all the other features that make *Typee* an amazingly modern book. If Melville had not been asked by his London publisher to include more documentary material, Melville might have never consulted other travel accounts of the Marquesas and never decided to contest the prevalent colonialist assumptions about the indigene.

Conclusion

In *The Predicament of Culture*, James Clifford states that ethnography is a "hybrid activity," which "appears as writing, as collecting, as modernist collage, as imperial power, as subversive critique." It is "a mode of travel, a way of understanding and getting around in a diverse world that, since the sixteenth century, has become

11 "When I had reached the summit of the mountain, I stopped to contemplate that valley which, in the morning, we had viewed in all its beauty, the scene of abundance and happiness. A long line of smoaking (*sic!)* ruins now marked our traces from one end to the other ; the opposite bills were covered with the unhappy fugitives, and the whole presented a scene of desolation and horror. Unhappy and heroic people, the victims of your own courage and mistaken pride", vol 2, p. 105.

cartographically unified" (13). These words perfectly describe the vicissitudes of *Typee* and its author, from the collection of the material about the Polynesian adventure to the several published versions of the book. They also account for *Typee*'s heterogeneous nature, the outcome of crossbreeding between fact and fiction, exoticism and cultural relativism, copying and rewriting, humor and suspense. It is a narrative that overflows the boundaries of genre and the material limitations of a book. Its instability is the outcome of an unfinished journey, of a historical experience, of the cartographic unification of the world. Jimmy and Marnoo, the two hybrid characters, suggest possible outcomes of the "cartographic clash"—when individuals adapt to a changing environment by shedding some features of their own identity and acquiring others from alien sources. Likewise, in the course of the writing process, the *Typee* originally planned by Melville as a straightforward account of his own adventure in the manner of travel accounts shed some of the genre's features to accomodate the new textual impulses—the same process that, years later, would allow a tale about a white whale and a strong-willed captain to become *Moby-Dick*.

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Tunde Adeleke

Black Radicalism and Black Conservatism as Complementary and Mutually Reinforcing: The Political Pragmatism of Martin R. Delany

> I care little for precedent and, therefore, discard the frivolous rules of formality…conforming always to principle, suggested by *conscience* and guided by the light of *reason*.
> – Martin Delany, *The North Star*, June 16, 1848

Introduction

Black radicalism in America has historically focused intensely on undoing entrenched systems and structures that have been used to legitimize and sustain black subordination, impoverishment and marginalization. Black "radicals" who fought against and sought to overturn the establishment adopted varied and complex strategies (Van De Burg, *New Day in Babylon* and *Modern Black Nationalism*; Robinson; McCartney; Taylor; Abraham; Brisbane). Some advocated or used violence as a means of change. Others, however, did not openly and actively embrace violence, but attempted to subvert the system from within through militant political and social activism and passive resistance. Some, within the latter group, coupled programs of political and social reforms and activism with a willingness to engage in defensive and retaliatory violence (Marine; Seale; Hilliard; Bloom and Martin; Carson; Hogan; Zinn; Jeffries; Umoja). Others still experimented with separatist strategies in the pursuit of an "independent" geo-political space within the United States. To garner support among the black masses for their separatist schemes, they advanced cultural nationalistic and jingoistic ideas. In addition, they publicly displayed an aggressive readiness and willingness to respond with violence if provoked (Hall, *Black Separatism in the United States*, Hall, ed. *Black Separatism and Social Reality*; Carmichael and Hamilton). Instead of a domestic "independent" space, however, some others preferred working to subvert the

system from without through the creation of an "independent" black nation abroad (Griffith; Miller; Uya; Redkey, *Black Exodus* and "Bishop Turner's African Dream"; Lewis and Bryan; Croton; Jacques-Garvey; Carmichael). Religion was, and remains, a critical dynamics of black radicalism. Nat Turner, who led a successful slave insurrection in 1830 in Southampton, Virginia, was a "slave preacher" who claimed divine inspiration (Lincoln and Mamiya; Wilmore; Gray; Styron). Perhaps the modern exemplar of religious radicalism is the Nation of Islam, which uses religion to construct a distinct, anti-American nationalistic space within which adherents cultivate and nurture their futuristic vision of a separate black "nation" which they hoped would emerge from the ashes of white destruction (Tsoukalos and Ellis; Curtis; Singh). Regardless of the vision and strategy, the one consistent theme in the black radical tradition is the quest for change; to overturn the systems and structures of oppression, or as Richard Moore contends, radical politics seeks, "basic change in the economic, social, and political order[.]" The essence of this "radical" vision is, "the thorough-going nature of the ends sought and the means used to achieve these basic ends" (qtd. in Boyd 44).

Black conservatism, on the other hand, by its very nature and, in a counterintuitive sense, some might argue, seeks to "conserve"; to affirm and validate attributes and ethos fundamentally mainstream, and rooted in Judeo-Christian, and Anglo-Saxon worldview. Some deem the concept "Black conservatism" oxymoronic. When the Russian anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin was informed of Black conservatism in America, he "allegedly wondered what blacks in the United States had to conserve" (Eisenstadt ix). Well, what they seek to "conserve," critics suggest, are values which have been used through the centuries to legitimize white domination. In this sense, conservatism seems to privilege sustaining, rather that radically transforming, the manner society has been organized and has functioned. According to Peter Eisenstadt, therefore, "perhaps the most basic tenet of black conservatism is a deep-seated respect for the cultures and institutions of American society and Western civilization; and the related conviction and insistence that blacks through their own resources can make it within American society" (x). Black conservatives emphasize "individual achievement rather than government action and redress," and believe strongly in "the ultimate benevolence of the American social order" (Eisenstadt x-xi). This faith in the redemptive capacity and perfectibility of the American social order led black conservatives to focus on the positive, highlighting "current black accomplishments in the face of obstacles, rather than in emphasizing the hardship of the past, or proposing a radical new restructuring of society" (Eisenstadt xi). From the perspectives of the underprivileged and subordinated, however, these tenets undergird the systems and structures of oppression and inequality. Embedded within the conservative ideal is a *laissez-faire* ethos which identifies solutions to black problems and challenges

with self-improvement and character reform. The implication, therefore, is that those problems and challenges emanate from personal failures and behavioral deficiencies. Since black problems and challenges were ascribed to personal, as opposed to systemic and structural failures, the prescribed solutions, therefore, emphasize reforming "the contents of black character" rather than governmental intervention (Adeleke, "Afro-Americans and Moral Suasion"; Ondaatje; Mwakikagile; Steele). Michael Ondaatje further explains this moral suasion imperative:

> Historically, the generic black conservative argument stipulated a theoretical and programmatic commitment to capitalism as a systemic vehicle for racial uplift. In this formulation, African Americans were to depoliticize their struggle, submit to white cultural power and racism, and display greater thrift, patience, hard work, and moral rectitude to overcome their circumstances. (7)

The above characterizations notwithstanding, a generic, all-inclusive definition of black conservatism remains a daunting task. However, as Peter Eisenstadt has argued, "the elusiveness of a comprehensive definition does not free one who wishes to write about black conservatism from the need to provide some framework for discussion" (x). For the purpose of this paper, therefore, I frame black conservatism as an ideology that entraps its black adherents within a disadvantageous and subversive discourse of self-implication and self-condemnation, while absolving the state of any responsibility, either systemic or structural, for the myriad of problems and challenges blacks confront, and must overcome. Thus, implicitly, if not, explicitly, black conservatism validates mainstream pejorative characterizations of black America, de-historicizes black problems and challenges, and places the onus and responsibility for black problems squarely on the shoulders of the victims: blacks. This conception of conservatism is rooted in history and has been a defining character of black leadership in America. At its core is the conviction that solution to problems plaguing blacks called for little, if any, fundamental change, in how society is structured and has functioned.

Nineteenth-century black conservatives identified with, and defended, ideas and strategies meant to appease the mainstream. They privileged reconciling complex and often conflicting interests, with a view to fostering a climate supposedly conducive to mutual progress, especially one in which blacks were expected to reap some benefits. This was the "Accommodationist" or "Compromise" perspective historically associated with Booker T. Washington (Harlan 441–467; Adeleke, *Booker T. Washington*). This genre emphasized interracial harmony, often within a milieu that, according to critics, required disproportionate sacrifices and concessions from blacks. Thus, as some critics contend, black conservatism seems to impose unrealistic demands on an already exploited, impoverished and disadvantaged group. Black conservatives, therefore, identify with, and amplify, ideas rooted in

mainstream discourse of personal responsibility. Blacks are socialized to cultivate habits of self-help, thrift, industry, personal responsibility, and character reform. Adherents do not consider such "conservative" strategy ideological or dogmatic, but instrumental and utilitarian; meant to underscore black compatibility with, and adaptability to, mainstream ideals.

At different epochs in American history, therefore, black conservatives functioned within an instrumentalist, as opposed to a doctrinaire, political universe. They were more focused on the utilitarian benefits or potentials that could result from a strategy meant for harmonizing and engaging discordant elements. They did not consider past negative experiences sufficient justification for discounting the benefits of moderate, conciliatory and accommodating strategies, even when the strategies entailed cooperating with erstwhile oppressors, especially if such cooperation could potentially yield beneficial outcomes. This was the dominant leadership typology in late nineteenth century America. In a contribution to Howard Rabinovitz's *Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era*, historian August Meier made the following poignant observation about the character of late-nineteenth century black political leadership:

> Overall, the typical late nineteenth-century black political leader in the South was a moderate; all were practical men who saw the necessity of compromise. They were also ambitious men who needed white support to advance themselves and the interests of their black constituencies. Even the most militant spokesmen… found astute compromise essential to obtain the benefits desired either personally or for the race. The intersection of personal rivalries among blacks, class cleavages, the activities of whites—both Democrats and Republicans—and the very nature of the American political system made inevitable the emergence of a typically moderate political type. (402)

Other scholars have corroborated Meier's contention. In *Black Conservatism* Peter Eisenstadt characterized "one of the distinctive features of southern black social thought between 1865 and 1915" as "the inextricable tangling of conservative and radical elements, often in the social thought of a single individual" (xviii). The essays in this edited volume establish the ideological flexibility and pragmatism of black leadership. Similarly, in his *Saviors or Sellouts*, Christopher Bracey described "The African American Protestant ethic" as "the touchstone of black conservative discourse," (xxii) and offered a compelling analysis of how this ethic shaped the thoughts and reform strategies of not only a known conservative like Booker T. Washington, but also acclaimed radicals such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and Louis Farrakhan and their movements. Bracey theorized that these "radicals" combined conservative ideas and strategies, and were much more ideologically nuanced and pragmatic (Bracey, *Saviors or Sellouts*: 1–25,

41–62, 83–112). Thus, these studies underscore the preeminence of a utilitarian and instrumentalist black leadership; raising critical questions about the binary of antagonistic and mutually exclusive discourse ("resistance and accommodation"; "conservatism and radicalism"; "integration and Separatism") that once dominated black leadership studies.

From the nineteenth-century contest between "integrationists" and "emigrationists," right through to the twentieth-century debate between "resistance" and "accommodation" schools, black leaders have been analyzed within a dichotomous mutually exclusive genre. Those supposedly of "radical" and anti-establishment dispositions have confronted others in favor of conservative, conciliatory and accommodating approaches (Miller). In the nineteenth century, it was "militant" Martin Delany against "conservative" Frederick Douglass. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was "militant-activist" William E. B. Du Bois against "conservative and accommodating" Booker T. Washington. For the twentieth-century civil rights struggles, it was "militant" Malcolm X against "conservative" Martin Luther King, Jr. Thus, black leaders have been fitted with ideological straight-jackets. This tradition of framing black leaders as ideologically and mutually exclusive masked the reality that these leaders were never consistently and irrevocably attached to any single ideology or movement. The evidence suggests that they were much more pragmatic and, depending on circumstances, were known to straddle, and experiment with, varied, complicating, and at time, conflicting strategies and ideals. In the process, conservative strategies had at times been used to advance radical ends and vice versa. This was the dominant black leadership typology Meier theorized for the late-nineteenth century; a leadership not blinded or constrained by dogma or ideology, but one guided, in its decisions, choices and political affiliations, by the overarching interests and aspirations of the people. Whatever advanced those interests and aspirations ultimately dictated political affiliations. This pragmatic leadership acknowledged concessions as central to political obligations, and was willing and able to embrace diverse ideals perceived potentially beneficial to the interests of the constituency, even when those ideals contradicted previously held positions. They would jettison any position or ideals, radical or conservative, the moment it ceased to advance the goal.

August Meier was right. "The very nature of the American politics" in the nineteenth century mandated a malleable and pragmatic black political leadership. In fact, the line separating ideologies such as "conservatism" and "radicalism" was often thin and blurry. This meant that the astute black leader could ill-afford doctrinaire and dogmatic adherence to any single ideology, but was free to explore different options based on a determination of what best served the interest of his/her constituency. More than any other nineteenth-century black leader, Martin R. Delany (1812–1885) exemplified this utilitarian approach to political ideology.

He had strong faith in the "Protestant ethic" as the means for improving the black condition, as well as in the ultimate redemptive capacity of America. Curiously, this dimension of his life and thought has escaped scholarly attention. Instead, scholars have consistently analyzed Delany within the discourse of militancy and radicalism. He has gone down in history as a radical and uncompromisingly anti-establishment black leader (*The North Star*; Ullman; Khan; Cruse; Harding; Stuckey). Some contemporaries portrayed Delany as the quintessence of radicalism. His militant anti-slavery rhetoric led a white observer to conclude that he (i.e., Delany) was "a thorough hater of the white race" (Magdol 308). Delany's authorized biographer Frank (Frances) Rollin described him as a man who "conformed to no conservatism for interest's sake, nor compromises for the sake of party or expediency.... His sentiments partaking of the most uncompromising radicalism" (23). Victor Ullman concurred; in "Delany's makeup," according to Ullman, "there was no compromise with whites" (516). His nationalist "Back-to-Africa" platform of the mid-nineteenth century further solidified this radical image. The above characterizations notwithstanding, there was an equally, if not far more, profoundly conservative and nuanced personality buried beneath the avalanche of radical imageries.

Delany and the Utilitarian Imperative

Delany was born a free black in 1812 in Charlestown, Virginia (now in West Virginia). However, being "free" meant little, for he grew up under the shadow of slavery and like slaves, he experienced the brutalities and inhumanity of the South's *Peculiar Institution*. Growing up under such conditions reinforced the importance of, and desire for, freedom and meaningful equality. In 1831, at the age of nineteen, young Delany left home for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in search of education and it was here that he came under the influence and tutelage of some of the leading black conservatives and moral suasionists whose ideas shaped popular discourses on the meaning of freedom and equality as well as strategies for actualizing those ideals. Moral suasion was a conservative, integrationist ideology that shaped the black abolitionist movement in its early decades. Moral suasion defined the challenges confronting blacks consistent with the views of mainstream white society. It attributed black problems and challenges to behavioral and conditional deficiencies which, *ipso facto*, required moral and character reforms (Adeleke, "Religious Dimensions"; McCormick; Bell).

The Rev. Lewis Woodson, William Whipper, "Sidney," and Samuel Cornish, among many others, debated the pros and cons of this conservative, moral suasion approach to black problems. As a student in Pittsburgh in the early 1830s,

Delany witnessed the debate between moral suasionists and separatists; the former urged blacks to seek reform through education, temperance, thrift, economic development, character reform, and cooperation with whites. The dominant moral suasion worldview depicted America as inherently progressive, and placed immense responsibility on blacks. The latter group favored similar solutions, but within a racial essentialist context which discouraged racial cooperation. In the first half of the nineteenth century, therefore, blacks overwhelmingly endorsed a "conservative" (moral suasion) philosophy which advanced, as a solution to black problems, ideas rooted in the Protestant ethic, and consistent with mainstream values. This conservatism became the defining philosophy of the black abolitionist movement and memorialized by the formation of the American Moral Reform Society in 1835; an organization that led the moral suasion crusade for the next decade (Bell). Delany embraced the tenets of moral suasion which became his guiding philosophy as he immersed himself in the abolitionist movement. He joined Frederick Douglass in the late 1840s to launch a vigorous, moral suasion abolitionist crusade spearheaded by *The North Star* and, as the paper's co-editor and roving lecturer, Delany became the standard bearer of moral suasion to free black communities across the Mid-West and North-East (Adeleke, *Booker T. Washington*).

During this "conservative" phase of his career, Delany's decisions and choices reflected deep and abiding faith in self-improvement and character reform as strategies for the development of blacks, and ultimately the attainment of true equality. He traveled extensively in Ohio, Michigan, Delaware and Pennsylvania delivering anti-slavery lectures and urging blacks to cultivate habits of industry, thrift, economy and moral reform (Adeleke, *Booker T Washington*; Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 40–69). Success in trade and business, Delany argued, would unlock the gate to progress in America. Like his moral suasion mentors—Woodson and Whipper—Delany believed in the perfectibility of America. The obstacles blacks confronted were not insurmountable. They would disappear as blacks became more enterprising and economically successful. Delany's faith in the moral force of economic entrepreneurship is worth quoting at length. He rendered the following poignant observation in an article in the *North Star*:

> You can scarcely imagine the effect it would have over the pro-slavery feeling in this slave holding country, if, in addition to the few business men we have, there were in New York city, Philadelphia, Boston, even Baltimore, Richmond, Norfolk, Washington city, and Buffalo… Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, and many other places, but one shipping house, wholesale or retail store, the proprietor or proprietors of which are colored men, and one extensive mechanic of any description and trade. Such indisputable evidence as this of the enterprise and industry of the colored man, compared with that of

> the white, would not admit of controversy. It would bear with it *truths as evident as self-existence*—truths placed beyond the shadow of a doubt. (*The North Star*, December 5, 1848; emphasis added)

Blacks responded favorably to Delany's crusade for moral suasion. Across the nation, he found and publicized abundant evidence of successful black business ventures. He devoted several pages of his book *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration* (1852) to highlighting the numerous business enterprises in black communities across the nation (49–146). Yet, such "*truths as evident as self- existence*" failed to yield the expected positive reactions from whites. By the late 1840s, Delany and leading blacks had come to a critical crossroads: the realization that "conservatism," represented by moral suasion, had failed to bring about meaningful changes; coupled with the growing appeal of "radical" political and immediatist alternative. Despite self-improvement efforts, despite achievements in education, thrift, economic development, and moral reform, blacks remained marginalized, and the mainstream society seemed determined to keep them in perpetual subordination. Attempts by blacks to overcome poverty and degradation met with violent retributions from whites (Adeleke, "Afro-Americans and Moral Suasion"). Frustrated, some became much more political in their demands and strategies. Delany, however, shifted ideological position and assumed leadership of an emerging "radical" nationalist and separatist emigration movement. Along with a few others, he concluded that freedom and equality were inconceivable within the United States. The preferred solution was now in an independent black nationality. From the early 1850s to the outbreak of the Civil War, Delany led a vigorous domestic and international campaign for an independent black nationality in Africa (Griffith; Miller). This development earned him the reputation of a radical and anti-establishment activist. His political writings and speeches evinced radical and racialized indictment of American society and culture. He discerned a conspiracy by Europeans and Americans against peoples of color worldwide, and advocated delineation of the racial boundary (Delany, "The Political Destiny"; Rollin 313–327, 327–367; Delany, "Political Aspects" and "Political Events"). He seemed uncompromising in his determination to actualize this separatist dream of an independent black nationality. However, not everyone joined the emigration movement. Many vigorously challenged this "radical" solution. Some held steadfastly to moral suasion while others opted for cultural pluralistic strategies of working with mainstream society.

The "radical" emigration phase (1850–1863) marked a turning point when Delany gave up on, and denounced, America. He acquired the reputation of a "radical" and an uncompromisingly anti-establishment leader. Yet, his "radical" ideas were neither consistent nor absolute. In fact, the "radical" ideas were fused

with conservative, moral suasion strategies of industry, self-help and character reform. Those same moral suasion values, once applied to the domestic United States contexts, became the means of structuring an external state. Though Delany's platform of an independent black nationality seemed radical in principle, when analyzed from an African perspective, its "radicalism" immediately disappears. Establishing an independent state in Africa was meant to "appeal" to the moral conscience of Europeans globally by demonstrating black capacity for nationhood, and thus, hopefully, negate the moral force of slavery and racism in the United States. Put differently, Delany reasoned that an economically viable external black state would appeal favorably to the moral conscience of whites, and thus compel concessions to black demands for equality. While to Americans, black and white, Delany's nationalist vision seemed radical, bold, anti-establishment and anti-hegemonic; especially the vitriolic condemnation of slavery and racism; to indigenous Africans, however, who were to serve as the resources (natural and human) for the independent black nationality, his solutions and strategies were anything but progressive. They were rooted in, and derived from, the European imperialist construction of the continent as "Dark," "backward" and "primitive"; a place supposedly in need of character and moral reform: civilization (Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans*). Like his contemporary nationalists, Delany envisioned black American emigrants going to Africa to help "civilize" the "backward and primitive" indigenes (Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans*). Thus, Delany's solution was consistent with, not in opposition to, the imperialist worldview. To indigenous Africans, therefore, Delany seemed retrogressive and reactionary; a "conservative" black American; indeed, an imperialist whose solution to the global black problem reflected and validated key elements of the Eurocentric worldview he professed to oppose. Delany, like other leading black nationalists, did not frontally engage European imperialism. Instead, he sought accommodation with imperial ideology, and seemed eager to work alongside the Europeans in their "civilizing mission" (Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans*; McAdoo). In essence, Delany developed a "radical" movement against American racism and inequality, which he compromised on the international stage when he flirted with the European imperial agenda. The "radical," anti-racist/anti-establishment movement for an independent black nation lost its steam as it accommodated and became entwined with the racist European imperial ideology.

Delany's "radical" nationalist ambitions seemed to dissipate with the outbreak of the Civil War. He now embraced integration, which entailed working with other black leaders such as Douglass and Henry Garnet to advance the cause of the Union. Delany's conviction and determination to reconcile blacks to the nation so impressed President Abraham Lincoln that he commissioned him the first combat Black Major in the Union army (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 76–77).

From this point till the end of the Civil War, and the early reconstruction period, Delany adopted and joggled both conservative and radical solutions and strategies. The violent and vitriolic nature of his speeches and utterances in the early years of reconstruction convinced some that he harbored pathological hatred of whites (Magdol). However, viewed from the broader context of national politics, Delany was a "radical" republican; having identified, like most blacks, with the victorious Republican Party and its radical reconstruction platform: the political elevation, enfranchisement and empowerment of blacks, and the broadening of the political spectrum to allow for greater black participation. Many deemed this early Reconstruction phase of Delany's career "radical", largely because in several of his writings and utterances, he advocated "radical" solutions such as land reform and redistribution, and strongly defended the "radical" political reforms of the era embedded in the various Constitutional Amendments: Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth—abolition of slavery, conferment of citizenship, along with equal protection of the law, and the franchise respectively (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* chapt. 4).

When the Civil War ended, Delany was reassigned as sub-assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) and posted to Hilton Head, South Carolina; a position he held from 1865 through the demise of the Bureau in 1868. His Bureau duties included the supervision and management of all abandoned lands and also the dispensation of all matters relating to freedmen and refugees (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 77–90). As a Bureau field agent, Delany had jurisdiction over some twenty-one government plantations. He assumed the task of helping freedmen navigate the slippery and complex terrain of their newly won freedom. He sought to establish a mutually beneficial *modus operandi* between freedmen (former slaves), and planters (former slave-owners) which would keep the plantations functioning under the new dispensation which included adequate compensation for the labor of freedmen. In his plantation district, therefore, Delany developed and adopted a "contract system" predicated on an economic relationship of mutual trust and dependence (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 85). Though employed as an agent of the "Radical" Republican administration, Delany's Bureau duties included, *inter alia*, the fundamentally conservative function of helping the government contain and moderate the "radical" aspirations of, and possibly nihilistic tendencies within, the newly freed black labor force. In this role, some critics perceived Delany as a government stooge; employed and deployed to tame and contain the revolutionary aspirations of freedmen for land redistribution and complete economic freedom; goals he had earlier advocated. This was corroborated by the fact that wherever there was the hint of a possible black dissatisfaction with, or resistance to, government policies, Delany was quickly dispatched by the "radical" republican

government to pacify the situation. He became the government's answer to black agitations, the agent responsible for quelling rebellious tendencies. Delany was effective in executing this "conservative" function, even though he was politically associated with a "radical" republican administration. He helped planters contain free blacks within a contractual arrangement that was fundamentally exploitative and conservative. For performing such conservative role, Delany won praises from the government, but, not surprisingly, was soon alienated from, and victimized by, "radical" elements within the black community.

Delany's conservatism led him to oppose and attempt to contain black political aspirations. Early in the Reconstruction period, while black leaders agitated for immediate and greater political rights, Delany assumed the fundamentally conservative role of curtailing the political aspirations of the black leadership. For instance, soon after the assassination of President Lincoln, a delegation of black leaders including Frederick Douglass approached President Andrew Johnson to demand immediate political reforms and the expansion of black political rights and privileges (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 91–93). In a letter to the delegation, Delany counseled moderation and gradualism. He advised the delegates to "[b]e mild… be respectful and deferential." He closed the letter with: "[b]e patience in your misery, Be meek in your despair; Be patient, O be patient! Suffer on, suffer on!" (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 93; Rollin 283) To his critics, Delany seemed against radically upstaging the existing culture of political inequality. Fundamentally, his call for gradualism derived from a concern that blacks would and could destabilize the political climate and culture through what he deemed reckless, premature and ill-timed political demands. He urged blacks to foster a culture of goodwill toward the defeated, angry and politically humbled southern whites. Through this overture, Delany hoped to reassure southern whites that black aspirations would not undermine the fundamentals of southern culture and worldview. This "conservative" concession would, Delany hoped, guarantee reciprocity and concessions from whites which would allow blacks the space within which to exercise and enjoy the more critical economic rights and privileges. In fact, by the mid-1870s, Delany had abandoned any pretense of "radicalism" and focused more intensely on appeasing the alienated and angry South Carolina state conservatives. He began openly to flirt with the state Democratic Party; party of former slave-owners; those who had fought the Civil War vigorously and passionately to defend and preserve slavery (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* chapt. 4). Why this shift to a "conservative" position for someone who less than five years earlier was in the camp of the radicals? Why this switch in national political allegiance from radicalism to conservatism? In a letter to Frederick Douglass two years earlier, Delany alluded to his growing and developing frustration with radical politics. Angrily denouncing radical republicanism, Delany concluded

that radicalism had only misled blacks, fed them unrealistic expectations and aspirations, exploited their ignorance and gullibility, and further alienated them from mainstream southern society which, he believed, held the key to their future development (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 112–118).

In numerous writings and speeches, Delany warned of the imminent return to power of South Carolina conservatives and advised blacks to respond proactively by deemphasizing, and disengaging from, radical politics, and securing the goodwill of the resurging conservatives. He now saw the interests of blacks better served through reconciliation and affiliation with the conservatives. From 1874 till 1876, Delany pitched his tent with the state conservative flag-bearer, the Democratic Party, and became a vocal spokesperson for reconciliation and accommodation. He did not perceive conservatism as necessarily negative and evil. Judged by the conciliatory tone of the public utterances of leading state Democrats, Delany believed that conservatism now held the future for blacks and promised greater opportunities for elevation and eventual empowerment. Conservatism now offered greater protection of those rights blacks had won since the end of the war. He urged blacks to give the state conservatives and conservatism a chance. From 1873 through the end of radical reconstruction Delany was a vocal advocate of the conservative option. He actively campaigned for the Democratic Party in the crucial 1876 election. In his campaign speeches, Delany emphasized the practical benefits of the Democratic/Conservative platform, and the pledge by the Democrats to respect and protect the rights and privileges of blacks. He described the Democrats as; "Men of character and intelligence who could be trusted to keep their words" (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 155, chapt. 5).

Not surprisingly, the mainstream black political leadership did not respond kindly to Delany's ideas, and from the very beginning, he found himself deep in hot waters. His speeches and campaign activities ruffled feathers and led to bitter opposition and condemnation and, on one occasion, there was a violent attempt on his life. The radical black political leadership rejected and repudiated his ideas and, at every opportunity, he was politically obstructed, intimidated and ostracized. Fellow blacks opposed and thwarted Delany's political aspirations; most notably during his senatorial bid in 1872, and the race for Lt-Governor of South Carolina in 1874. In the former, they rejected his candidacy. In the latter, they voted overwhelmingly against Delany, resulting in his defeat by a fellow black, Richard Gleaves, with a margin that underscored the depth of black resentment to his ideas—ninety-seven votes to eleven (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 111–127). Less than a year after this defeat, Delany was charged with, and found guilty of, grand larceny and was sentenced to incarceration, a charge that he and his supporters deemed politically motivated and false. Matters came

to a head at a joint Republican-Democratic campaign rally in Cainhoy, Berkley County, South Carolina. Delany narrowly escaped death when a black militia fired at a Democratic speaker named McKinley who was mistaken for Delany. Delany's public repudiation of radicalism in the campaigns leading up to the compromise of 1876 was considered by many the ultimate act of political betrayal of fellow blacks, for which he was further ostracized (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 137–141, 156–157). Though compensated with appointment as Trial Justice for the city of Charleston by Gov. Wade Hampton and the triumphant state conservatives in 1877, Delany's reputation as a black leader seemed to have suffered irreparable damage. His tenure as Trial Justice was brief and marred by hostility from fellow blacks. Ultimately, he was removed after a petition by some "citizens of Charleston" accused Delany of conducting the office "in a manner discreditable to the present administration of the state… and repugnant to the feelings of both races in this community" (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* 165). The vast majority of blacks in South Carolina did not share Delany's faith in the Democratic Party. They had difficulty believing that those who fought a bitter Civil War to protect and preserve slavery could in so short a time have abandoned that worldview.

Delany's political philosophy clearly underscored a utilitarian and perhaps even cynical approach to political ideologies and movements. Political affiliations should not serve as wedges or fences. Rather, they exist to advance the interests of members. Black political affiliation, therefore, should be dictated by this pivotal utilitarian consideration. What mattered was not the ideology, but the aspirations of blacks and, in the pursuit of those aspirations, no strategy should be rejected for purely political or ideological reason, even if it entailed associating and co-operating with erstwhile oppressors and enemies. The definition and meaning of an ideology in popular imagination was less significant. Of more relevance was its capacity to advance the goals and aspirations of blacks at any given moment. Thus, an ideology with negative experiential attributes could potentially yield positive results. The futuristic potentials should trump past negative attributes. Thus, radicalism may once have advanced black aspirations, but by the mid-1870s, Delany argued, it had become a negative and potentially destructive force. In contrast, conservatism, though represented by the Democratic Party, and might have been associated historically with slavery and racism, had by the mid-1870s, based on its electoral platform, become more promising for blacks (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* chapt. 4).

An assessment of the dynamics of power was fundamental to Delany's notion of political affiliation and ideology. He believed that a black leader should not be guided solely by ideology, be it radical or conservative, but by a determination of power relationship. The choice should be the one position or ideology that both empowers and had the capacity to advance the cause. Even then, one's loyalty

to any ideology terminated when the power dynamics changed. Thus, Delany seemed to give individuals the latitude to switch ideological positions based on their determination of the power dynamics. A black leader should never be found enslaved to an ideology of powerlessness and vulnerability. For Delany, no political ideology or affiliation should hold one unswervingly hostage to a dogmatic option that could prove detrimental and destructive to one's existential interests. This meant if one's affiliation, informed by utilitarian consideration, became threatening, destructive and disadvantageous, Delany strongly suggested the reasonableness of decamping. As he once declared at a 4th of July rally in Charleston, South Carolina, underscoring the utilitarian underpinnings of the Black-Radical Republican Party alliance, "I want you [i.e., blacks] to stick to them [i.e., radical republicans] until you find the odds too heavy against them, then get away as fast as you can" (*The Daily Republican*, July 5, 1870, 2; July 27, 1870, 2). To command the unswerving loyalty of its members, therefore, a party, according to Delany, should not only provide material benefits but also protection. This was true of the political realities of the mid-1870s, by which time, according to most historian and political critics, radical republicanism was *radical* in name only. Political power relations had changed in the South. For Martin Delany, radical republicanism had failed in its overarching goal—the nurturing of an atmosphere of reconciliation between blacks and southern whites (their former oppressors). Nationwide, angry and alienated southern conservatives were on the political rebound, and with a vengeful disposition toward blacks. Correspondingly, the zeal with which the federal government had defended black rights had dissipated. This bore ominous consequences for blacks. Thus, in Delany's judgment, it was time to switch allegiance. Republican Party "radicalism" was no longer a positive force (Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race* chapt. 5).

Delany's career, therefore, reflected a proclivity to switched political allegiances and affiliations. He vacillated between radical and conservative options, and each time, *his* conviction, *his* determination of what best advanced the interests of blacks informed *his* choices. It should be noted, however, that Delany's flirtation with South Carolina conservatives was a strategic means of securing a space for blacks which, he hoped, would enable them eventually destabilize and obliterate the entire structure of inequality. In other words, he sought a *radical* end through, and within, a *conservative* context. Delany's political philosophy had no room for irreconcilable positions or zero-sum ethos. The astute politician must be willing to embrace, and experiment with diverse, even conflicting options and strategies; must be open to working with anyone with the potential to help achieve positive results, even erstwhile enemies. Changing circumstances could dictate reconciliation, and developing common grounds, with even those with whom one had once bitterly disagreed. It should be underscored, at this juncture, that

this seemingly contradictory political philosophy was not a uniquely Delanyean phenomenon. Black leaders, who had established reputations as "radical" and "anti-establishment", even "anti-American", often flipped and embraced erstwhile ideological opponents. One such was Delany's own fellow "militant nationalist" Henry McNeal Turner, who was "famous for his blistering radical condemnation of the racism of American society". Yet, "he always expressed a surprising sympathy with both the social and political views of southern white conservatives." According to Eisenstadt:

> After 1880 Turner generally voted Democratic, and he was the first of a series of black nationalists and separatists—including Marcus Garvey, Elijah Mohammed, and Louis Farrakhan--to seek a quixotic common ground with white segregationists. Turner's ambiguous attitude toward the South and southern democrats was characteristic of southern black leaders of his generation. (xix)

This ambiguity, or more appropriately pragmatism, was central to Delany's political thought. He had no permanent political opponents. His choices were informed by his determination of whether or not they would advance what *he*, at that critical moment, determined were in the best interests of blacks. Thus, while the goals he pursued remained fairly constant: freedom, justice, equality—the shifting political contexts dictated reassessment and realignment. An astute political leader, therefore, had to know when it was strategic to switch between radical and conservative alternatives, and at times, the situation could dictate juggling both ideologies; each reinforcing the other.

Thus, though black conservatives seemed to defend establishment values and relationship, very often their ultimate goal was to destabilize the system. In this regard, Delany's support of South Carolina Democrats in the late 1870s was not, in his judgment, an acknowledgment of their right to subordinate blacks *ad infinitum*. It derived from a realistic assessment of emerging realignment of political power relations in the entire South. As a correspondent of the *New York Times* observed, commenting on emerging political realignments in the South, "[p]arties are now getting mixed in the South. Other questions than those raised by the war are now making their way into politics… which do not leave old party lines clear.… Republicans are found acting with Democrats and vice versa" (*The New York Times*, November 27, 1870). Given this reality, Delany concluded that blacks were better served by deemphasizing radicalism; an ideology that no longer was actively and effectively supportive and nurturing of their rights and privileges. Like future conservatives such as Booker T. Washington, Delany might have been naïve in reposing so much faith in accommodation as a means of radically transforming the *status quo* of inequality. His choice of a conservative approach, at any given moment, derived from a strong conviction that it was the

best option for advancing the cause of freedom and equality. This was the least to hurt blacks. In other words, such conservative choice, just like his embrace of "radicalism" in the late-1860s, situated blacks in a position of strength.

Delany deemed a "radical" posture in the early years of reconstruction rational because blacks had on their side, the force and authority of the federal government, supporting and guaranteeing their exercise of rights and privileges. This position of strength made radical republicanism a logical and realistic option. By the mid-1870s, however, that federal power and authority was disappearing and Delany felt that radicalism was bereft of any positive attributes and thus had become disadvantageous. With the gradual dismantling of federal authority in the South in the late 1870s, Delany became convinced that blacks would be powerless to confront their erstwhile enemies who had been angered and infuriated by radical politics. This strategic calculation dictated his switch to the Democratic Party in the mid-1870s. He had come to the conclusion that the conservative option now offered blacks a better chance. As indicated above, this utilitarianism shaped nineteenth-century Reconstruction black leadership. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that in black American history, political ideologies (radicalism and conservatism) have not always been mutually exclusive, zero-sum entities. This has changed significantly in the modern Civil and Post-Civil Rights contexts. Political ideologies and affiliations have assumed inflexibly jurisdictional character; reflective of the deepening crisis of racial politics. A subset of this discourse is the affiliation of black conservatism with the modern Republican Party, especially its extremity. Delany therefore personified political pragmatism which embodied utilitarian construction of political ideology. He deemed the good and astute black politician neither consistently conservative nor consistently radical. He/She is at times one and/or the other; someone who does not hesitate to embrace, and be publicly identified with, whichever option promised to advance the interests of blacks. Today, such a leader would be deemed a charlatan, a political prostitute or pimp. In Delany's times, however, the ever-shifting terrain of black political history rendered that leadership typology much more realistic; or more appropriately, pragmatic.

Conclusion

Delany's career, therefore, was characterized by what could rightly be described as a political/ideological eccentricity informed by utilitarian consideration. This underpinned the dizzying frequency with which he changed political allegiances and ideological positions; often bedazzling, confusing, disappointing and, at time, alienating supporters and detractors alike. But he was unmoved. Despite

these oppositions and intimidations, Delany remained steadfast in his political pragmatism. He switched positions and allegiance whenever he deemed it politically prudent. For Delany, radicalism and conservatism were not sacrosanct ideologies, but flexible options for advancing the interests of blacks. Those interests should dictate, and take precedence over, the ideology, and not the reverse. The individual, guided by determination of what was in the best interest of the black community, should freely experiment with either conservative or radical options. The astute and savvy black leader must know when such pragmatism dictated switching ideological positions.

Delany's concern was not so much with how *others* felt about his choices, but whether those choices truly reflected *his* convictions about what *he* deemed was in the best interest of blacks. As he once declared; "I care little for precedent, and, therefore, discard the frivolous rules of formality…conforming always to principle, suggested by *conscience*, and guided by the light of *reason*" (*The North Star*, July 16, 1848). Put differently, the decisions and choices Delany made were dictated more by *his conscience*, guided by the light of *his reason*, and less by dogmatic allegiance to some radical or conservative ideology. Thus, his political thought was rooted in a pragmatism that allowed him the flexibility to make choices and decisions based not on blind allegiance to some dogma or political principles, but *his* determination of what would best advance the interests of *his* constituency at any given political moment. Though Delany embraced, advocated and experimented with "radical" solutions and strategies, he was not averse to switching and adopting "conservative" solutions and strategies when he deemed necessary. For Delany, the strategy/approaches mattered less. The goals were far more profound and consequential and thus dictated the strategies. Paradoxically, the force of Delany's "radical" personality has historically overshadowed the other and equally profound "conservative" identity hence, the reluctance of many scholars and critics to engage the latter.

Delany's conservative strategies underscore both the complexity of black conservatism and its mutually-reinforcing relationship to radicalism. One, therefore, concurs with Peter Eisenstadt that "black conservatism transcends the usual division of integrationists and nationalists. Those of conservative disposition can be found as much among militant nationalists as among committed assimilationists." In fact, the central theme of Eisenstadt's volume is, "[t]he ambivalence of southern conservatism and its tendency to vacillate between accommodation and radical nationalism." Many of the "distinctive southern black conservatives" including Turner and Delany tended "to alternate between phases of supine accommodationism and militant nationalism or emigrationism" (Eisenstadt xix).

At different times in his career, Delany has been tagged a conservative who compromised, and at times, a radical and an uncompromisingly militant leader.

In truth, he exemplified all attributes, often combining and juggling them within contiguous historical contexts and struggles. He rejected any blind allegiance to an ideology or ideal, be it radical or conservative and seemed opposed to an existentialist conception of political ideology as an absolute category which established boundaries and set values and goals deemed inviolable. Delany was not overly concerned about political labels, whether radical or conservative. He believed that the goals trumped ideals and labels: one could be consistent on goals and yet flexible and pragmatic on ideology and strategies. This utilitarian ethos shaped the conservative phase of his career. Thus, for Delany, utilitarian consideration determined political group identity and affiliations. The critical consideration was whether such affiliation would advance the people's aspirations. As the Rabinowitz anthology established, this utilitarianism characterized black leadership in the nineteenth century, and Martin Delany, this article contends, was the perfect exemplar. Being "conservative" or "radical" was often a utilitarian, rather than an existential choice. The underlying consideration was not the meaning of, or images embedded in, the ideology, but the potentialities (radical, moderate or conservative) for achieving the desired goals.

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Beata Williamson

Henry James, Charles Nordhoff, and the Peculiarities of Christian Communes

By 1875, Henry James reached the peak of what has been frequently labeled as the "early phase" of his career. He had published several unsigned and signed stories in magazines such as the *Continental Monthly* or the *Atlantic Monthly*, serialized the novels *Watch and Ward* (1871) and *Roderick Hudson* (1875), and published his first book, *A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales* (1875). He had been writing book reviews for over ten years. His first, anonymous piece had appeared—when he was only 21—in the *North American Review* in 1864. In a now-historical article, "Young Henry James, Critic" (1948), Laurence Barrett argues that even the young James played an important role and made a substantial impact as a reviewer:

> Time and again the editors of the highly respected and widely read periodicals for which [James] wrote—the *North American Review*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Nation*—assigned him the most important review of the issue, the one to which their readers would turn first. He reviewed as they came fresh from the presses the most recent novels of George Eliot, Victor Hugo, Trollope, Kingsley, and Dickens; the poetry of William Morris, Browning, and Tennyson; and the critical writings of Matthew Arnold, Scherer, and Swinburne. His readers would not have known whom they had to thank, for these early reviews went unsigned, but they could hardly have avoided the deep influence of his persuasive arguments. (386)

Notably, James's reviews of American texts from that time are rarely positive. For example, in 1875 James published several reviews of travel literature, most of which were written in a pejorative tone. James criticized the style of the authors, which was apparently below his standards, and often complained that these Americans did not show a good understanding of the subject, that is, they treated foreigners and foreign customs with arrogant superiority. In the same year, he also wrote about *Eight Cousins*, Louisa May Alcott's novel for children, which he criticized vehemently as a work unsuitable for young readers (whose sensibilities James rarely seemed sensitive to). However, from time to time, James appeared genuinely interested in the text he was reviewing; in 1874,

for instance, Francis Parkman's historical narrative *The Old Regime in Canada* received James's high praise mainly for its fascinating content. Similarly, another historical study, Charles Nordhoff's *The Communistic Societies of the United States* elicited James's nearly enthusiastic response. His 1875 *Nation* review is detailed, lengthy, and in itself very absorbing. James appears fascinated with Nordhoff's material: he describes the various religious communes, provides the reader with multiple examples of their peculiarities, and treats Nordhoff—the author himself—with seriousness and respect.

First of all, James underlines Nordhoff's scholarly merits, labeling his "researches" "minute and exhaustive" (*Literary Criticism* 560). The writer surely worked hard; he studied the communes all over America: "Mr. Nordhoff's field was extensive, stretching as it does from Maine to Oregon, and southward down to Kentucky" (561). The tone of the study particularly appeals to James. Nordhoff is objective—"professes to take the rigidly economical and not the sentimental view... delightful to the practical mind"; at the same time, he is not morbid or unnecessarily judgmental: "he writes in a friendly spirit and tends rather, on the whole, to dip his pen into rose color" (560). In fact, the realities of communistic[1] life at that time could cause shock, disgust, and even fear. James addresses these issues later in the review, but he makes it clear that such a "rose-color" attitude is most proper when discussing certain monstrosities—they speak for themselves, and while describing them there is no need to adopt an especially scandalized stance: "It would have been possible, we think, for an acute moralist to travel over the same ground as Mr. Nordhoff and to present in consequence a rather duskier picture of human life at Amana, Mount Lebanon, and Oneida; but his work for our actual needs would doubtless have been less useful" (560). We might wonder what "actual needs" James refers to. I would venture to say that it is entertainment and the satisfaction of curiosity, just as it was the case with Parkman's historical narratives about the Jesuits in Canada, which met with young James's approval.[2] Surely, as Richard Brodhead underlines, "the idea of entertainment" is one of James' most important "conceptual schemes" (110). Distancing himself from the "acute moralist" views, however, James feels obliged to mention that Nordhoff "has not neglected the moral side of his topic." Moreover, his writing "has an extreme psychological interest" (560). The objective distance

1 "Communistic" is used by James and Nordhoff for what we would today call "communal," as relating to a commune, or "communistic" as opposed to "capitalistic," e.g.: "Hitherto, in the United States, our cheap and fertile lands have acted as an important safety-valve for the enterprise and discontent of our non-capitalist population" (Nordhoff).

2 James reviewed Parkman's books *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century* (1867) and *The Old Regime in Canada* (1874) for the *Nation*.

and the lack of moralizing are James's own rules of writing, just as much as is the presence of psychology and ethical content—the "moral side."

James's attitude to morality and moralizing calls for a digression here. There was a time when James was said to be free from "moral intentions." Such modernists as Ford Maddox Ford and T. S. Eliot subscribed to this view (Anesko), which expressed, considering the times they represented, a high praise. Later, ethical concerns came back into fashion: Brodhead called attention to James's "moral or civic function of letters" (110). Yet, critics continue to debate this. In *The Master and the Dean: The Literary Criticism of Henry James and William Dean Howells*, Rob Davidson writes: "Morality was, for James, most often related to questions of form and execution in art" (12); it was "primarily an aesthetic question" (33). Reviewing Davidson's work, Sarah Daugherty argues that

> To assert, as Davidson does, that for James morality was 'primarily an aesthetic question' is to ignore the critic's struggle with values that resisted conflation. Consider in particular James's attempts to justify his preference for the fiction of George Eliot (morally profound though aesthetically flawed) to that of Flaubert (aesthetically superior but morally inferior). (209)

Commenting on another critic's views, Neill Matheson echoes this opinion: "Poovey's claim that James wants to remove the aesthetic realm from any reference to the ethical flattens out his characteristically rich unsettling of these categories" ("Intimacy and Form"). Whatever significance James ascribes to moral issues in his own fiction, his attitude to morality in the writings of others seems clear—he frequently refers to the reviewed texts' moral content, but he always appears vexed by the author's moralizing, especially in works whose other advantages are feeble. Fortunately, Nordhoff neither moralizes nor appears to be feeble in any other respect.

Reading James's review of *The Communistic Societies*, one might wonder whether it is an assessment of a book or a response to the ideas presented in it. Indeed, it might almost appear that James talks about the communes from his own experience or knowledge; there is so little about the author of the narrative in James's review. He does not refer to Nordhoff much—neither appraises his style nor gives any advice of the kind he offered to Alcott (how to instruct children) or to some travel writers (how to behave in foreign lands). Ultimately, the review of *The Communistic Societies* is more of a personal response to the phenomenon of utopian and religious communes as described in the book rather than a critical assessment of the book itself.

Nordhoff, as James reports, describes "eight distinct communistic societies... composed of a large number of subdivisions; the Shakers alone having no less than fifty-eight settlements" (561). From this impressive number the reviewer

chooses a few and concentrates mainly on the issues of economy and the relations of the sexes. It is actually the economy which, in James's opinion, remains Nordhoff's main interest: "[h]is purpose... was to investigate communistic life from the point of view of an adversary to trades-unions, and to see whether in the United States... it might not offer a better promise to workingman than mere coalitions to increase wages and shorten the hours of labor" (560). Already, this interest in the fate of the "workingman" is very unlike James, especially when he expresses it so clearly: "[s]uch experiments would be worth examining if they did nothing more for the workingman than change the prospect of him into something better than a simple perpetuity of hire—a prospect at the best depressing and irritating" (560). It is an old story that the working class has little place in his own writings, although—as perhaps with every other possible theme—a devotee of James will provide examples to prove the opposite, the late story "In the Cage" being a case in point. His early story, "Gabrielle de Bergerac" is another good example of a favorable attitude to the lower classes—the hero, a tutor in an aristocratic home, has very humble origins, and still he receives a very respectful treatment from the author. By far, it is *The Princess Casamassima* that features in James's *oeuvre* as the most conspicuous attempt to deal with the problems of the proletariat. Yet, considering the whole of James's fiction, these are just exceptions to the rule.

But in the Nordhoff review, James devotes a lot of space to the discussion of how the experimental communities could have satisfied the working classes' higher aspirations. Unfortunately, his final judgment is that they did not: "beauty of surroundings and breath of intelligence were nowhere striking features of communistic life." Even though most of these communities were based on religion, their spiritual element was often "singularly gross and unlovely" (561). Still, they all enjoyed material prosperity, and the reader who bears in mind the contemporaneous conditions of the working class in Europe is impressed. James is also impressed and, perhaps because he feels respect, too, he develops a rather objective view of the "communists."

One manifestation of this objectivity is the necessity to remember that these people were "common, uneducated, [and] unaspiring" to begin with, and to demand from them a sudden cultivation of the mind would be unfair. James stresses that, as members of the societies, people become "more prosperous and more wealthy." They are ignorant, and their beliefs are "queer, stiff, [and] sterile," yet "the sacrifice of intelligence has not been considerable." Finally, James even allows the Shakers "a sort of angular poetry of their own" (561). There is a certain lack of logic in the above—"ignorance" and the "sterile dogmas" do not agree with what we commonly understand as "intelligence." However, James must equate intelligence with a good sense of practicality and thrift which

these people exemplified, and which he underlines throughout the review. As to calling the Shakers' customs "angular poetry," this is James's attempt at objectivity, meaning, perhaps, that asceticism and romanticism are somehow related and appeal to the imagination. His further comments on the Shakers strongly underscore angularity over poetry of any kind. In the meantime, the wealth and certain easiness of living are matters which give the "unaspiring" societies a great advantage over the living conditions of the working classes elsewhere. The Harmonists, for example, "hold property to the amount of between two and three million dollars" (562); the Zoarists "have achieved comfort... [and] are relieved from severe toil" (563). The Shakers enjoy "great prosperity," and their work is not excessive, either (564). Material comfort is the issue that connects all the societies, and James reports it duly.

Alas, their prosperity is material in the strictest sense. They have enough to eat, they own a lot of land, and their future appears safe: they "have driven the wolf permanently from their doors," as James cites directly from Nordhoff (563). Yet, the pleasures of mind and body are rarely enjoyed by the members of the communes. A pleasure of the mind would be, certainly, the contemplation of beauty. James quotes a Shaker who referred to the idea of beauty as "absurd and abnormal." The same man gives an example of a rich interior he saw, noticing especially the frames of the pictures, which he called "receptacles of dust" (365). James only recounts this; he does not offer a comment. Yet, given his own passion for the art, this dry report is surprising—apparently, the great aesthete has no words to express his horror. That James associated the interest in picture frames with a non-cultivated mind is somewhat perversely shown in his 1872 review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Passages from the French and Italian Note-Books*. This piece, much more than *Hawthorne* seven years later, expresses young James's strong condescension toward the author under review. Hawthorne, according to James, knew little of the fine arts: "The 'most delicate charm' to Mr. Hawthorne was apparently simply the primal freshness and brightness of paint and varnish, and—not to put too fine a point upon it—the new gilding of the frame" (*Literary Criticism* 311). Frames, no matter if dusty or freshly gilded, as James seems to tell us, should never attract a sophisticated person's attention.

Devout, hardworking, and disdainful of trivialities such as the contemplation of art and beauty, the various "communists" cultivate a traditionally Christian virtue "of asceticism, of the capacity for taking a grim satisfaction in dreariness" (563). James's own protagonists practice it but rarely, and quite a few of his American types (as opposed to the "Europeanized" Americans) abstain from bodily pleasures. These characters are often shown without hostility but with a mild condescension, as in the case of Mr. Wentworth from *The Europeans* (1878). Puritan-minded Mr. Wentworth is dignified and even likable despite his old-fashioned ways. Another

typical American, Longmore, the protagonist of "Madame de Mauves" (1874), also comes from the Puritan stock: "He had in his composition a lurking principle of asceticism to whose authority he had ever paid an unquestioning respect." Yet, upon encountering a situation which requires great sacrifice, Longmore is ascetic no more: "To renounce—to renounce again—to renounce for ever—was this all that youth and longing to resolve were meant for? Was experience to be muffled and mutilated, like an indecent picture?" (*Complete Stories* 882). Longmore's words could well be applied to James's attitude toward the idea of life in the communes. These people renounced experience and embraced "a life... of organized and practiced aridity" (*Literary Criticism* 565). However, Longmore's words could be significant here for more than one reason. The "indecent picture" brings to mind sexuality, the experience that youth "longs for." This experience together with the aura that surrounds it was truly "muffled" or "mutilated" in communal living.

Not surprisingly, the matters of the body were of extreme importance in the Christian communes. Extreme also were the differences in this respect: from the total renunciation of carnality in the case of the Shakers to the apparently wanton ways of the Oneida Perfectionists. James deems both attitudes as "singularly unlovely and grotesque" (561). He approaches the subject of sexuality with obvious relish, often tinged with humor. One sect, called the Harmonists at Economy or Rappists (from Father Rapp), practiced total celibacy. Nordhoff heard from the older Rappists that the idea came actually from the young members of the community. "One would have been curious to have a little personal observation of these 'young members' who were so in love with the idea of single blessedness," observes James ironically. He then compares the sectarian celibates to Catholic nuns and priests, and states that while the Catholics "find celibacy holy, and salutary to the spirit," the former ones regard this state as "positively agreeable in itself" (563). At this point, James appears so amused that he turns to outward jesting: "Mr. Nordhoff found in a Shaker Community near Rochester several French Canadians of the Catholic faith, and in another in Ohio several more Catholics, one of whom was a Spaniard and an ex-priest. A French Canadian strikes one as the most amusing imbroglio of qualities conceivable until one encounters a Spanish priest" (563). Perhaps, a French Canadian amuses James just for being one, as the tradition of joking about the northern neighbors has always been strong in the US. Moreover, in the reviews of Parkman's books about French Canada, James writes about "excessively prolific citizens"—the Catholics who were not bound to celibacy by monastic vows (*Literary Criticism* 579). Apparently, the Canadians multiplied easily, and this might be the actual reason why he finds a French Canadian Shaker a ridiculous idea. James's remark about the Spanish priest is even more frivolous. Often, in American propaganda after

the annexation of Texas, the Catholic priest was shown as a sinister figure, not at all celibate. A good example is Augusta Evans-Wilson's youthful novel, *Inez: A Tale of the Alamo* (1855), a "melodramatic attack on Catholicism" (Baym 281), where Father Mazzolin's favorite occupation is the seduction of young virgins.

While some sects, for example the Shakers or the Harmonics, held celibacy as their dogma, others, as the Zoarites, "disapprove[d] of marriage, but they permit[ted] it, which seem[ed] rather an oddity. 'Complete virginity,' sa[id] their articles of faith, 'is more commendable than marriage'" (564). Actually, the oddity is not so great if we remember these words from the Bible: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" and "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, 'It is good for them if they abide as I am'"—that is, celibate. There have been various interpretations of St. Paul's words, but it seems unsurprising that these fanatic Christians took them literally, reluctantly allowing "the touch" to escape greater evil: "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (*The Holy Bible*, 1st Corinthians 7). James's interpretation is more cynical: abstaining from marriage "is, of course, more economical" (564), family life being obviously an expensive pleasure.

Curiously, James does not devote much space to the group that was most radical in the matters of the body, the Oneida Perfectionists, although he stresses that the part of Nordhoff's book about the Perfectionists is most absorbing. He quotes an Oneida song: "And we have one home / And one family relation," adding only that it has "a delightful naïveté, shadowing forth as it does the fact that these ladies and gentlemen are all indifferently and interchangeably each other's husbands and wives" (566–567). James writes about other intriguing customs of the Oneidans, for example the short hair and trousers for women, mind healing, and the daily meetings in which particular members are "criticized." The Oneida community must have offered not only a fascinating object of study, but it also presented a strong attraction for potential converts, undoubtedly because of this "one family relation": "Propagation is carefully limited, and there are, as may be imagined, many applications for admission." There were many other curiosities of the Perfectionists that James does not mention, although he considers J. H. Noyes "a very skillful and... 'magnetic' leader" (567). For example, in Noyes's community, good looks were encouraged:

> John Humphrey Noyes valued youth and lectured his followers that one way to keep young 'was to keep up our attractiveness.' He pointed out that the 'virgin state' had proven to be the most attractive condition for women and recommended that women 'find a way to keep [them]selves in a virgin state all the time.' Dressing like children seems a logical way for women to fulfill both criteria—looking young and virginal. (Fischer 134)

Thus, it was not important to be a virgin but to look like one; perhaps the business of exchanging partners was easier then.

James appears less shocked at the relation of the sexes in the Oneida community than at another practice of theirs, the "criticisms" performed every evening on one of the members. As mentioned before, while discussing the idea of "complex marriages,"[3] James uses expressions such as "ladies and gentlemen," which imply his amusement rather than horror. Yet, he is rather disturbed by the practice of "criticism," which leads him to believe that the Perfectionists "morally and socially" are "simply hideous." Describing the "criticism" of a young man named Henry, the reviewer becomes truly appalled: it was "fathomless depths of barbarism." James makes it clear what angered him most about this practice: "an attempt to organize and glorify the detestable tendency toward the complete effacement of privacy in life and thought everywhere so rampant with us nowadays" (567). Interestingly, in Nordhoff's book the passage about Henry is nowhere to be found. The young man's name is Charles, and his fault was a preference for one woman, pregnant with his child, to other females[4].

Alfred Habegger argues that there is much more to James's confusion of names than just a simple error. According to the critic, James used the name "Henry" through as a result of an unconscious but a telling slip—confusing the young Oneidan with his own father, Henry James, Sr.:

> Now, if we attempt to read this story through Henry Jr.'s eyes, to see what he would have seen in it, we sense a disturbing resemblance between Charles and Henry Sr. as a young man. Although there is a crucial difference, Charles recapitulates Henry Sr.'s great life-crisis. Both loved a single woman. Both were pressured by invasive communists.... But there was this difference: While Charles was tragically persuaded to give up the woman he loved, Henry Sr. had emerged in triumph long ago from the mire of free love and socialism, and he had done so precisely by fathering both a family and a philosophy of marriage. Charles's 'error'—loving one woman faithfully—was the virtue that saved Henry Sr. Thus, Oneidan Charles presented a defamiliarized image of the reviewer's own father. (59)

3 "Complex marriage" is John Humphrey Noyes's own term, meaning that all men and all women on earth were married to one another, which allowed sexual relations with many partners. James does not use this expression.

4 Nordhoff reports what Noyes said as a conclusion to the "criticism": "Charles, as you know, is in the situation of one who is by and by to become a father. Under these circumstances, he has fallen under the too common temptation of selfish love, and a desire to wait upon and cultivate an exclusive intimacy with the woman who was to bear a child through him. This is an insidious temptation, very apt to attack people under such circumstances; but it must nevertheless be struggled against."

The issues reminding the son of his father's life aside, what horrifies James is the public discussion of intimate details, and that such a practice could be masqueraded as beneficial to all: "the sign of 'democratization' became the aggressive 'invasion'... by newspaper editors and reporters" (Habegger 60). Jealously guarding his own private matters, James anticipated the modern intrusions upon the private sphere.

In striving to be unemotional and objective, James appears to agree with Nordhoff as to the presentation of the communes. It would be easy to joke with happy abandon or to fall into heavy irony—the unusual ways of the communistic societies provide lots of pretexts for such reactions. But James, as if dutifully, tries to balance humor and irony with a positive description of almost every society in question. After stating that the Harmonics at Economy, for example, created "a scornfully conservative parody or burlesque," he remembers that "[t]he experiment of Father Rapp, however... has been a solid, palpable success" (562). This economic success, as stated before, was, for James, a matter of great respect. Yet, it is not only the material values that count here; James is able to notice and appreciate the human dignity of these strange people. He writes about one Dr. Keil, the leader of the Aurora society who lost five children "between the ages of eighteen and twenty one." James reports the man's statement of faith and respectfully abstains from comment. However, "James the equilibrist" is present here, as well; before giving the account of Dr. Keil's tragedy, he says: "He had been a man-milliner in his own country, but his present character, in spite of these frivolous antecedents, is a very vigorous and sturdy one" (564). It is as if James could not stop himself from making irreverent comments. As most of his reviews show, he tends to balance positive comments with negative reflections, serious statements with funny images, and so on. Speaking of Dr. Keil and his millinery, we should remember that, in James's fiction, the honest, "true" Americans boast of not-so-dignified jobs: "At one time I sold leather; at one time I manufactured wash-tubs," says the hero of *The American* (*Novels* 598). In *The Ambassadors*, the product that the Newsome family manufactured is never named; however, it surely is not something grand.

As to the Shakers, James reports on their strange customs with relish. He quotes a passage from Nordhoff, describing a Shaker ceremony, in which the very expressions attract the reader's attention: "two female subjects from Canterbury" were "at length ushered into the sanctuary": "their eyes were closed, and their faces moved in semi-gyrations"; there is also some "indubitably obvious... superhuman agency" and to top it all, certain "abnormal males... lay in a building at some distance." However, he also praises the Shakers with seriousness. They may have ridiculous, "perverted and grotesque," beliefs, but they "seem to us by far the most perfect and consistent communists" (565). They work hard and their products are of "excellent quality"; they are truly spiritual; there is also "a kind

of wholesome conservatism in [their] philosophy... which we confess takes our fancy." James underscores their "self-respect" and "sense of the value of discipline" (565–66). All in all, in his section on the Shakers, James uses the derivatives of the word "respect" and appreciative vocabulary in general the most. At the same time, he repeats words like "dreary," "grim," "arid," or "rigid"—the harsh sounds underscoring the ugliness of the subject. Sadly, James does not see the gloomy life in American experimental communes as absolutely alien to the American standards: "one must reflect not only on what people take but on what they leave, and remember that there are in America many domestic circles in which, as compared with the dreariness of private life, the dreariness of Shakerism seems like boisterous gaiety" (565). This truly chilling observation stays in the reader's mind longer than all the peculiarities of the communes. At the end of his discussion of the Shakers, James returns to the issue of the sinister shadow of Puritanism, lingering in his country: "[t]hat [the Shakers] do not continue to make recruits is perhaps a sign that family life among Americans at large is becoming more entertaining" (566). This time, his attitude is more upbeat.

In the Nordhoff review, James's humor is not very refined and concentrates on national stereotypes and sexual matters. Thus, the Germans are a target of a humorous presentation. Most of the societies were established by German immigrants; James constantly reminds the reader of such German "characteristics" as baking good bread and keeping their affairs in excellent order, but paying little attention to intellectual exercise. Other nationalities are mentioned, too: "the Icarians, a French society in Iowa; a Swedish settlement, at Bishop Hill, in Illinois; a cluster of seven hopeful Russians (one of them a 'hygienic doctor') at Cedar Vale, in Kansas... an experiment in Virginia, embodying as 'full members' two women, one man, and three boys" (564). Of the "seven hopeful Russians," James mentions only the "hygienic doctor," but the original list of members is longer and no less amusing: "There are here a 'hygienic doctor' and a 'reformed clergyman,' both Spiritualists, and a Russian sculptor of considerable fame, a Russian astronomer, and a very pretty and devoted and wonderfully industrious Russian woman" (Nordhoff). The Virginia society calls for an additional comment from James: "The three boys have a great responsibility on their shoulders; we hope they are duly sensible of it" (64). Nordhoff also lists "four women and five men as 'probationary members'" of the community (*Communistic Societies*), but James chooses to omit this information—the arithmetic "responsibility" of the three boy-members sounds funnier without it.

The review of *The Communistic Societies* leaves the reader with a positive feeling—one almost feels James's gladness. Nordhoff must have done his job well; the reviewer makes no critical remarks about his style or ideas. Actually, James does not mentions Nordhoff's style at all, which in itself might be

a compliment—Nordhoff's writing does not belong to belles-lettres, and its value is informative rather than aesthetic—thus the lack of any form assessment in the review must imply that the text meets James's stylistic standards for this kind of literature. If anything, James's negative personal opinions concern the "societies." There is a lot in their lifestyle and ideas that James does not approve of; still, the disapproval of some things is balanced by the appreciation of others. James is sorry that for some people art and beauty are not important, he is saddened by the "dreary" aspect of their lives, he laughs at certain ridiculous ideas. At the same time, he notices the dignity and even self-respect of the "communists." He emphatically points out that the "experiments" are profitable for their members and make their lives easier. He finishes the review by saying that "Mr. Nordhoff's volume... seems to establish fairly that, under certain conditions and with strictly rational hopes, communism in America may be a paying experiment" (567). His "seems," "may," "certain conditions," and "strictly rational hopes" are the cautious reservations of an upper-class intellectual, speaking of a class that does not really belong to his scope of interest. That James took a brief interest in it could be the Nordhoff's major achievement.

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Agnieszka Kotwasińska

Looking for Ghostly Crimes: Cross-Pollination of Crime and Gothic Fiction in Edith Wharton's "Mr. Jones"

Introduction

In order to trace the tangled roots of Gothic and crime fiction, I would like to look at how the two genres came to be identified as wholly separate entities with their own sets of formulas, themes and characters.[1] I want to point to a number of affinities shared by crime and Gothic (some warily recognized, most vehemently denied) which, taken together, hint at an intimate bond between the two, a connection that cannot be explained away by mere coincidence. Since crime fiction emerged as a recognizable corpus of works a few decades after the popularity of the Gothic had already declined, I will concentrate on the canonization processes and genre formation surrounding the historically later genre.[2] By focusing on the ways in which crime fiction writers and critics tried to extricate their works from the Gothic, I hope

1 Even though the distinction between crime and Gothic fiction seems to be taken for granted on today's publishing market with the two genres having their own separate shelves filled with novels that have genre-specific plots, formulas and protagonists, the development of these two fictions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in no way mutually exclusive. In fact, Heather Worthington notes that crime first found its way into fiction through the Gothic genre; in British fiction in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams; or, Things as They Are* (1794), and in American texts such as *Wieland* (1798) and *Edgar Huntly* (1799–1800) by Charles Brockden Brown (16–17). Already in late eighteenth-century American crime fiction reached "an unprecedented diversification and development in new literary forms, including Gothic and urban Gothic novels, criminal biographies and adventures, and sensational trial pamphlets" (Moudrov 132). Meanwhile, the British Newgate novels of the 1830s and 1840s, and later the sensation fiction, which Maureen T. Reddy describes as "a Victorian development from gothic fiction" (191), established themes and plot structure for crime novels to come (Worthington 25).

2 Catherine Spooner has rightly noted that even though the classic Gothic novel's popularity waned after 1820, "its distinctive tropes continued to influence other forms of nineteenth-century fiction" (246).

to reveal a deeply ingrained generic anxiety, which in turn can be linked to the accumulation of socio-cultural capital by the middle-classes and their uneasy relationship with the budding modernist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Finally, following Lucy Sussex's "polygenetic approach" to crime fiction (Sussex 1), I would like to read one of Edith Wharton's classic ghost stories, "Mr. Jones" (1928), and demonstrate how Wharton's text exemplified the often unacknowledged ways in which the Gothic and crime fiction formulas and themes came together, and how the figure of a female sleuth functioned in classic ghost stories written at the peak of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction.

The goal of this paper is three-fold. Firstly, I want to consider how and why crime fiction tried to disentangle itself from the Gothic and how at the end of the day the two types of generic literature do in fact share a number of commonalities, and their clearly demarcated borders have been and still are more porous than their respective advocates would care to admit. Secondly, I would like to prove that the reverse is also true, and crime fiction, and specifically one of its earliest and most popular genres—the detective story—did affect Gothic genres, such as Edith Wharton's "Mr. Jones". Establishing a chronological sequence of all the literary influences exceeds the scope of this essay, and for that reason, I decided to discuss this generic cross-pollination as a series of intensities and flows rather than clear-cut cause-and-result movements. The final objective of this paper is to search for new ways of reading early twentieth-century canonization processes which not only isolated specific genres but also molded them according to particular ideological agendas, which by definition could only include certain notions of generic propriety and had to exclude others. I hope that my essay will demonstrate that even though the major impetus behind the canonization of crime fiction was the emphasis on its being completely distinct from the Gothic, crime fiction conventions did seep into Gothic-inspired genres.[3]

3 The phrase "crime fiction" is now understood as an umbrella term, of which "detective fiction" remains an important part, albeit much smaller than before (Ascari 6). For the sake of clarity, I will be referring to "detective fiction" whenever I want to stress specific Anglo-American texts that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories or classic whodunit novels of the 1920s and 1930s, whereas "crime fiction" will signal a more general denomination, including all of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts. Similarly, "Gothic fiction" remains an ambiguous designation which in this essay will refer not only to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British fiction of the likes of Ann Radcliffe or Matthew Lewis, but also to their American successors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, as well as to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century texts which are nowadays understood as either late-Gothic or proto-horror texts, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. "Ghost story" will refer specifically to late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century stories, very often written by women writers.

Common Roots of Gothic and Crime

One could say that the struggle between the Romantic Spirit and Reason was finally won by the latter, and it was rationality that came to represent the standard line of inquiry by the beginning of the twentieth century. Still, this development did not automatically eliminate human longing for the marvelous, the fantastic, and the unexplainable. In fact, Maurizio Ascari, in his *Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational*, argues that "the enjoyment of readers depended precisely on the interplay between natural and supernatural elements, which engendered a fruitful tension between the domain of the intellect and that of the emotions" (2). The industrial revolution, urbanization and technological advancements offered a lifestyle bereft of superstitions, premonitions and the irrational fear of the unknown, yet at the same time these very processes cast serious doubts on the place of humanity in the larger scheme of things. All these incredible developments such as electricity, railway, photography, telephone or automobile disrupted temporal and spatial certainties offered by pre-modern times, and introduced new entries into the dictionary of phobias, fears and unexplained phenomena. Paradoxically then, the proud march of social and political progress as well as scientific invention did not dispel the shadows of the pre-industrial times, but rather perversely illuminated new fields of obscurity and the uncanny.[4]

Thus, "the melodramatic imagination," clearly noticeable in a number of nineteenth-century literary genres, "represented a conservative antidote to modernity, whose aesthetic fruit was realism and whose ideological fruit was positivism" (Ascari 58). Victorian writers in particular relied on symmetry, parallelism and opposition in order to sketch the everlasting battle between good and evil forces, fateful events and their far-reaching consequences. Ascari rightly identifies how the baroque plots, amazing coincidences and seemingly chaotic chance encounters on which the vast majority of Victorian plots are founded hint at a reality in which people are mere puppets (58). This preoccupation with auspicious turns of events and ghastly family secrets informs the concept of "gothic vestigiality" in which the sins of the fathers are visited on their children and which, in turn, nicely connects the Old Testament idea of retribution and the inescapability of punishment with the scientific emphasis on heredity and the Darwinian evolutionary theory (Spooner 246).

4 For more on the relationship between the rise of the Enlightenment and the emergence of the uncanny, see Terry Castle's *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Thus, "gothic vestigiality" came to signify one of the central tropes of nineteenth-century fiction and as such permeated and shaped a number of genres, including that of crime fiction. To use Lucy Sussex's expression, the Gothic could be seen as "a Pangea of genre literatures, containing within it the future continents of horror, science fiction (as with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*) and crime writing" (18). Sussex's broad list is also echoed in Catherine Spooner's lengthy enumeration of the specific genres influenced by the Gothic over the course of the nineteenth century: "the Newgate novel, Walter Scott's historical fiction, the realist fiction of Dickens and the Brontës, the sensation novel, the ghost story, the American Gothic of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and crucially, the detective story" (246).

Notwithstanding the pervasiveness of "the melodramatic imagination" and "gothic vestigiality," the last few decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the detective story writers and critics giving shape to the new genre by deftly "denying its sensational heritage" (Ascari 1) and, consequently, cutting any links to the Gothic. Spooner adds that "[i]n the climate of literary Modernism, Gothic was deeply unfashionable, and as a consequence Gothic associations were stripped from the detective story, which was regarded as merely a logical puzzle, ending by celebrating the triumph of rationalism" (246). The emphasis was to be placed on rationality rather than emotionality, on the one hand, and on high-brow and intellectually demanding literature rather than Victorian melodrama, on the other. Spooner links this anti-Gothic stance to the "modernist desire for severance from the nineteenth century and its supposedly torpid literary conventions" (248), which in turn could be subsumed under a much larger discussion of the place and function of the middle class on the eve of the twentieth century. As the middle-classes were vivacious and indiscriminate consumers of Victorian sentimental and sensational texts, it only stands to reason that the modernist turn to high-brow literature marked an attempt to channel and shape bourgeois aspirations to the upper-class artistic patronage. The newly emerging genre of detective fiction had to sever its ties from both its Gothic kin and sensational predecessors in the vein of the Newgate Calendar or Wilkie Collins's novels, and prove to the readers and critics alike that it had been purged of any residual emotional taints which were gradually transferred to the uncultured and easily excitable lower-class body. By denying middle-class readers their simple pleasures derived from Gothic and crime fiction, the modernist critics and authors wanted to remove generic literature from its torpid, tacky and blatantly plebeian roots.[5]

5 The elevation of crime fiction above the sensational, melodramatic and Gothic conventions can be also read in gendered terms. The emphasis on puzzle-solving and rationality could be read as a movement away from the emotionality and instability which are constructed

In a somewhat different vein, Srdjan Smajić describes the need for "generic purity" in crime fiction as a form of metatextual anxiety "that the supposedly rational genre in which the supposedly rational Holmes feels at home is everywhere contaminated by the supernatural, occult, or irrational; that the epistemological principles and investigative procedures that define detective fiction's characteristic modality are deeply implicated in what the genre insists on condescendingly treating as 'rubbish' and 'pure lunacy'" (3). Unsurprisingly, intense anxiety that the generic purity might be unattainable begets even more anxiety to a point where authors somewhat neurotically begin to probe the boundaries between the genres. Thus, even the foundational detective stories of Arthur Conan Doyle were haunted by "clairvoyance, intuitionism and spiritualism," which marked a titillating and illicit liaison between the two generic realms (Smajić 6).

The quest for generic purity in crime fiction was aided by a growing critical scholarship penned during the Golden Era of Detective Fiction in the 1920s and 1930s. Texts such as the 10 commandments of a mystery novel written by Ronald Knox in 1929 (or a more detailed list by S. S. Van Dine from 1928) sought to give shape to the expanding corpus of texts and provide a consistent framework for future critical analysis. Some of these early essays were later collected by Howard Haycraft in *The Art of the Mystery Story* (1946); he also published his own critical analysis of the genre five years earlier. These seminal works signed by Haycraft presented original crime fiction texts and their analyses selected so as "to sustain a normative view of a genre whose borders were being traced with increasing sharpness," effectively blocking unwanted elements which stood for cheap thrills and morbid Gothicism (Ascari 3). As Joel Black suggests in "Crime Fiction and the Literary Canon," the emphasis on the powers of rational and logical mind served to elevate detective fiction as an art form wholly divorced from its sordid, sensational roots: "Whereas the artistry of criminal-centered crime fiction tends to lie in Gothic sensationalism and psychological analysis, the artistry of detective fiction has traditionally been attributed to its display of what Poe called 'ratiocination' and Arthur Conan Doyle 'intellectual acuteness'" (81).

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as specifically female traits in traditional Western philosophy and culture. Still, during the Golden Era of Crime Fiction, rational and painstaking puzzle-solving was no longer read as masculine enough, and the hard-boiled detective fiction of the likes of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler was consciously fashioned as a response to the puzzle-oriented, upper- and middle-classes focused, and supposedly "softer" feminized whodunits. Due to space restrictions I cannot dwell on this issue, but I will return briefly to the subject of gender differentiation in generic fiction in the later part of my essay.

"Gothic Vestigiality" and Other Affinities

The first and perhaps most obvious element shared by crime fiction and the Gothic is the centrality of the criminal act which has to be excavated and examined in order to restore peace and close the rift that has since appeared. This epistemological fissure can take several forms and be shaped, for instance, as a temporal rift (ghostly figures invading the present or long-lost characters returning from the past), a spatial one (tombs or hidden compartments), a psychological one (doubling or paranoia), or more generally, a representational one in the sense that the protagonists are fooled by the masks and false appearances of duplicitous villains, deceitful femme fatales, or cunning patriarchs. I have avoided pointing to specific examples from Gothic or crime fiction as the motifs mentioned above can be easily found in both genres, and it is largely a matter of convention (shaped by genre-specific canonical practices) to associate, for example, femme fatales with hard-boiled detective fiction and evil father figures with classic Gothic texts. The reverse is, however, also true as prototypes of femme fatales can be found in Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872) or in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), whereas Agatha Christie included wicked relatives obsessed with inheritance in most of her classic whodunits.

The necessity of mending the epistemological rift in both Gothic and crime fiction signals two ways in which the concept of omniscience developed over the course of the nineteenth century. In its Gothic formulation, omniscience is associated with the all-knowing, but also terrifyingly whimsical Higher Being playing cruel games with humans whose perception is partial and distorted (Ascari 45). In its secular version, omniscience appears rational and stable, and as such is symbolized by Sherlock Holmes's magnifying eye. Ultimately, however, the late-Victorian fascination with the myriad ways of looking, seeing, gathering data and interpreting information unearths a troubling epistemological doubt wrapped around the idea of agency and truth in a world increasingly ruled by the unmanageable forces of physics, biology, medicine and genetics. The detective's compulsion to hunt for data, catalogue evidence and deduct information can no longer be explained away as mere curiosity, but rather it comes to signify a deep epistemological hesitancy concerning the nature of truth and representation.[6]

6 As such, crime fiction is perfectly suited to such intellectual pursuits, as it illustrates "the functioning of a chronological and linear plot that starts with a violation of order, depicts the attempts to restore it, and ends once this aim has been achieved. It also demonstrates the importance of closure, as the conclusion represents a definitive ending, which reveals the logical, causal, and temporal connections among the events" (Pyrhönen 50).

The epistemological rift shared by both detective fiction and the Gothic brings to mind the above-mentioned "gothic vestigiality" understood as the "preoccupation with the return of past upon present," which forces the protagonists to tackle the scandalous specters of the former times (Spooner 246). Drawing on Paul Askenazy's work, Spooner argues that even though secrets from the past might stand in sharp contrast to the present values, they do shed light on the protagonists' current predicaments (248). This emphasis on unearthing the past and searching for an effective resolution of a mystery underpins not just classic Gothic fiction and many of its nineteenth-century permutations, but also the vast majority of twentieth-century and later horror texts whose lineage can be traced back directly to the Gothic.[7] At the end of the day, the fixation on the mystery which requires protagonists to search for clues, investigate (family) histories and find solutions is yet another shared feature of crime and Gothic fiction.

In fact, it was the Gothic that supplied the crime fiction with the concept of a "mystery" in the first place. The term "mystery" had "a history of wandering between literary genres", and while in the Middle Ages it indicated a biblical play, "by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it connoted the Gothic", as in Ann Radcliffe's 1794 bestseller—*The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Sussex 18). Still, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the "mystery novel" denoted a detective story rather than a Gothic narrative. Yet, in contrast with earlier Gothic secrets, the mysteries in detective fiction required a mystery specialist to solve them, be it a private eye, a police officer, a nosy spinster, a consulting detective, or an amateur sleuth.[8] The new-found emphasis on a distinct class of evidence-gathering professionals points, in turn, to a shift from the concept of persecution, a staple of Gothic fiction, to its twin sister—prosecution—in crime fiction (Ascari 42).

7 In fact, Noel Carroll argues that typical horror narratives persistently follow the discovery plot, as human curiosity and morbid fascination with "cognitively threatening" monsters constitute *raison d'être* of all Gothic and horror texts (34).

8 The proto-detective figure might be traced back to the classic Gothic texts, but its first fully-fledged appearance is traditionally associated with Edgar Allan Poe's 1840s stories about C. Auguste Dupin. Poe's stories, in turn, influenced many later nineteenth-century American, British and French writers, and references to his works can be found in British sensation novels of the Victorian Era. Still, up until the mid-nineteenth century the emphasis was placed on the criminal (for instance, in widely popular Newgate novels) rather than the detective, and it was not until the late 1850s and 1860s that a slate of police detective's novels began to change that focus (Worthington 21). By the 1880s crime fiction was recognized both in the US and Britain, with the landmark Sherlock Holmes narrative, *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887 (Worthington 26).

Picking up on the changes in the Western criminal law and the philosophy of law enforcement, popular literary texts fed the rising interest in prosecution, rather than just persecution. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the socio-political theater transformed from a public demonstration of punishment associated with sovereign power to a more discrete display of disciplinary power (which included the emergence of prisons, advanced legal machine, slowly coalescing police forces, the transfer of the burden of proof from the accused to the accuser, etc.). As the bourgeoisie grew in numbers, the apparatus associated with the legal and police authorities expanded, and with time came to represent just as fascinating a subject to the middle-class authors as vengeful ghosts of the Gothicized past. In other words, the Gothic imagination was crowded with torture chambers, ghostly visitations and victimized maidens slowly gave way to more mundane dangers lurking just around the corner or, even worse, at the readers' own middle-class brownstone.[9] The frailty of a middle-class existence was further underscored by unjust inheritance laws, fickleness of the financial market, and socio-political upheavals. In "the secret theatre of home," violence, silence and abuse could be effectively hidden behind a veneer of respectability and behind a newly established insistence on the absolute right to privacy (Collins). Not surprisingly, many of the themes tackled by nineteenth-century novelists were connected to the question of inheritance, primogeniture, lost wills, passing on of titles and estates, and the myriad legal problems and potential loopholes that allowed for exploitation and misuse of paternal (and patriarchal) power.[10]

With family drama firmly embedded at the heart of the Gothic, its two distinct subtypes, the Female and the Male Gothic, revolved around the question of family and the protagonist's place in it. Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) stands for the prototype of the Female Gothic, which (quite independently of the writer's gender) focuses on the female protagonists whose main role is to escape the prison-like house and establish their own

9 That is not to say that crime fiction eclipsed or replaced Gothic fiction. Still, classic Gothic fiction as well as its many offshoots (ghost story, cosmic horror, psycho-thriller, etc.) continue to give way to crime fiction in terms of popularity, sales, publicity and critical recognition till this very day.

10 These topics are usually associated with the rise of sensation novel in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century. As Worthington argues, the sensational fiction "took crime right into the domestic sphere, the very heart of Victorian society. Abduction, adultery, murder, bigamy, fraud, seduction, forgery: the crimes in sensation fiction were social, personal, credible, and not committed by a criminal underclass but by the men and, shockingly, women of the middle and upper classes. Where the Newgate novels tended to be set in the past, sensation fiction was made sensational by its proximity to the present in both its action and its settings" (23).

safe haven by the end of the narrative, preferably through a successful marriage.[11] The key to escaping the tyrants who keep them locked is to solve the family mystery and repair the epistemological rift the secret has caused in the first place. The emphasis is thus placed on the value of knowledge as well as the ability to learn "to read (or rather, not to *misread*) appearances" by female characters (Williams 144, original italics).[12]

In contrast, the Male Gothic, perhaps best exemplified by Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), relies heavily on the figure of a male villain, whose expulsion from the warm hearth forms the center of the narrative, and whose violent tale rarely provides the readers with a resolution in the form of a happy ending. Looking at these two forms of the Gothic, Sussex suggest that the Male Gothic could be seen as a link between the picaresque and the Newgate novel, and in a way it prefigures the twentieth-century psycho-thriller, with Thomas Harris's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) being its best-known example, with a monstrous male anti-hero usurping the main stage. The Female Gothic, on the other hand, can be linked with Sherlock Holmes stories because of the shared insistence on the search for clues and the quest for rational explanations (Sussex 30).

Contrary to the popular understanding, many nineteenth-century Gothic novels emphasized the logical and rational over the irrational and fantastic. According to Anne Williams's redefinition of the Female Gothic, the "plot has a constructive and empowering function for its female readers" mainly because of its comic undertones, preoccupation with terror rather than horror, and, most importantly, the emphasis which is placed on the female ability to reason and solve the mysteries (138). Adrienne E. Gavin notes that even in the earliest examples of Gothic fiction, such as Ann Radcliffe's novels, the heroines who were victimized or imprisoned were also able to orchestrate their "escape through proto-detective methods" (259). The

11 Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith rightly point out that the usefulness of the term "Female Gothic" has been repeatedly called into question since the early 1990s (1). While some critics pointed to its limited scope and exclusionary nature, others saw in the Female Gothic a precursor to contemporary "victim feminism" (Wallace and Smith, 4). Still, in a move away from the 1970s and 80s psychoanalytically inspired criticism, contemporary criticism has opted not so much for the demolition of the term, as for its fragmentation and multiplication; hence, the proliferation of terms such as the lesbian Gothic, post-feminist Gothic, Gothic feminism, women's Gothic, etc.

12 Similarly, Eugenia C. DeLamotte in her influential study of nineteenth-century Gothic fiction puts emphasis on the complexity of knowledge, which quite often fuses the two meanings of the word: knowledge understood as more abstract result of learning, education and investigation, and knowledge understood as human intimacy and erotic familiarity (49).

women in these tales search for and find answers which are rational and logical, and which ultimately dispel the superstitions and bad omens that kept the readers glued to the previous chapters. This particular type of "the heroine-sleuth of the Female Gothic reappears across genres, in few texts that are indubitably crime," argues Sussex (34). In fact, such a heroine becomes an "organic and migrating formation," and the trope of female detection traverses a number of literary forms such as realist or domestic fiction, before finding its way to crime fiction (Sussex 35).

Female Sleuths and Female Gentlemen

Lady detectives of nineteenth-century texts were "independent, confident, clever women who variously use knowledge and observation of domestic environments and human behavior, female intuition, and their capacity for going unnoticed or being underestimated in solving crimes" (Gavin 258). Still, they usually turned to solving crime in order to clear their male relatives' names or because they needed a job. And most of them generally ended their detective adventures with settling down and getting married.[13] It was not until the Golden Age of Detective Fiction that female protagonists and women writers finally matched the popularity of their male counterparts. Still, most of the heroines of the said period were "nosy spinsters or the helpmates of male detectives" (Reddy 193).

In *Middlebrow Feminism in Classic British Detective Fiction: Female Gentleman,* Melissa Shaub examines works of popular female crime writers such as Agatha Christie or Dorothy L. Sayers and points out that a number of British women writers of the Golden Age of Crime Fiction created female sleuths who embodied the ideal of gentlemanliness. Even though after the First World War this idea became more ambiguous and debatable, still many popular cultural texts of the interwar period invoked the idealized version of this concept as a preferred condition for everyone, including women. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, the notion shed some of its aristocratic connotations, and at least theoretically became a condition that was open to the middle-classes. Shaub argues that far from disappearing in the interwar period, "[g]entlemanliness was still a desired state, and middlebrow novelists used its desirability to leverage their vision of women's

13 The examples of early detective fiction with female detectives include such disparate works as Catherine Crowe's *Susan Hopley* (1841) and William Stephens Hayward's *The Revelations of a Lady Detective* (1864) on the British scene, and *The Female Barber Detective* (1895) by Albert W. Aiken and Anna Katharine Green's *The Leavenworth Case* (1878) across the Atlantic.

progress by co-opting it for their own use" (3). And in contrast with the earlier New Woman ideal which "sought to employ an essentialist definition of women as morally superior," the Female Gentleman reworks a certain androgynous amalgamation of male and female elements discussed by Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf (Shaub 24).

In a way, the "effeteness" of certain male detectives in the Golden Age novels (such as Hercule Poiroit) was counterbalanced by a pronounced toughness, practicality and no-nonsense attitude of their female counterparts (Shaub 5). In the wake of the First World War, at a moment when the concept of gentlemanliness was all but dead, it was taken over by women writers as a way of representing strong females. According to the definition suggested by Shaub, the female gentleman is "competent, courageous, and self-reliant in practical situations, capable of subordinating her emotions to reason and the personal good to the social good, and possessed of 'honor' in the oldest sense of the term" (8). On the one hand, these traits situate the female gentleman in opposition to the Victorian Angel in the House, but at the same time they remain acutely "problematic for a twenty-first-century reader because of its emphasis on concepts like honor and birth" (Shaub 8).

Following Melissa Shaub's contention that many women detectives of the Golden Era of Crime Fiction personified the ideal of gentlemanliness, I would like to read Edith Wharton's protagonist in "Mr. Jones," Lady Lynke, in the same manner. Such a reading will reveal both the porous nature of the borders between the two genres as well as the invalidity of strictly gendered distinctions between certain conventions of generic fictions. Of course, Lady Lynke could only be read in terms of a transgeneric female sleuth whose origins may be traced back to Radcliffe's Female Gothic heroine. However, the figure of a female detective who also embodies the ideal of gentlemanliness exposes the intricate ways of creating and sustaining genre-specific versions of masculinity and femininity. Additionally, the concept of the female gentleman opens the floor for the discussion of class relations in "Mr. Jones" and, more specifically, how class distinctions functioned in the Golden Era of Detective Fiction.

Lady Lynke's Search for Gothic Crimes

Edith Wharton's ghost story "Mr. Jones" effectively collapses generic distinctions between Gothic and crime fiction by utilizing the trope of a female sleuth, a figure who not incidentally also embodies the female gentleman ideal. Lady Lynke, who through a fortuitous coincidence inherits an abandoned estate in Kent, delves into the mystery of the last mistress of the said house,Lady Juliana

Thudeney, who is simply described on Lord Thudeney's tomb as "Also His Wife." Lady Lynke attempts to learn more about Lady Juliana who, as it turns out, was a deaf and dumb daughter of a West-Indian merchant, married for her money and later kept locked in the family mansion and supervised by her philandering and gambling husband's loyal butler, Mr. Jones. Lady Juliana was not, however, the only victim of Mr. Jones who continues to exert his power from beyond the grave. It is only on the final pages of the story that readers learn that the eponymous Mr. Jones, who has never been seen by Lady Lynke and who keeps bossing around the terrified female servants, is in fact a ghost. More than that, he is a ghost who strangles one of the female servants in retaliation for Lady Lynke's direct insubordination.

Lady Lynke intuitively knows that the history of Bells includes "the unchronicled lives of the great-aunts and great-grandmothers" whose histories were buried under, rather than alongside, the histories of their husbands, fathers and brothers (Wharton 175). As a fiercely independent woman Lady Lynke is naturally drawn to the mystery of Lady Juliana, whose identity was completely subsumed under her husband's name in a rather twisted interpretation of couverture. Determined to uncover the suppressed story of Lady Juliana, Lady Lynke disobeys Mr. Jones's orders and insists on getting access to the muniment room where the family archives are kept. And when she is finally able to enter the mysterious room, she finds the annals incomplete. As a result, she breaks the ultimate ban imposed by Mr. Jones and goes through a desk in Lady Juliana's old parlor where the butler kept his personal papers. Interestingly, the punishment for this offence is dealt not to her, but to the housekeeper, Mrs. Clamm, who was unable to stop Lady Lynke from looking through the drawers in the first place. His victim, Mrs. Clamm, who throughout the narrative acted as a messenger between Mr. Jones and her mistress, is also Mr. Jones's grand-niece.

With the murder of his own offspring, Mr. Jones becomes an emblematic patriarchal tyrant, and in this respect, a typical Female Gothic plot is revisited by Wharton. It could even be argued that the mystery that Lady Lynke and her friend Stramer are trying to solve is precisely a classic Gothic tale of female exploitation and submission. And as in a typical Female Gothic plot, the supernatural is explained away rationally, as Lady Juliana's vacant and miserable look on a 1818 portrait is revealed to result from her marital unhappiness and forced seclusion arranged by Mr. Jones. It is in the outer frame of the text, that is Lady Lynke's stay at Bells and her dealings with the undetectable Mr. Jones, that the supernatural erupts with full force in the figure of the elderly servant's ghost. Ultimately Lady Lynke's dealings with Mr. Jones stray from the prescribed Gothic plot, as she becomes obsessed with the locked room mystery in which both Gothic and detective elements are fused together. This motif is

thematically performed at several points in the narrative. First of all, the muniment room to which the key mysteriously disappears; secondly, the cold blue parlor room where Lady Julianna was imprisoned by Mr. Jones and which he supposedly still treats as his own study; and lastly, Mr. Jones's own room which cannot be accounted for. This typical detective fiction trope is, however, heavily imbued with Gothic elements, the most important being a suggestion of entombment.[14]

The humorous and slightly contemptuous portrayal of Gothic themes and the supernatural brings to the surface the self-reflexivity of Gothic-inspired fiction and the problematic nature of representation (Beer and Horner 270). Lady Lynke, upon arriving at her new estate, visits the family chapel where she finds the painting of the last master of Bells, Viscount Thudeney, whose visage is mockingly described as of "a young man with a fine arrogant head, a Byronic throat and tossed-back curls" (171). The sardonic voice does not spare Lady Lynke, who is described as a thirty-five-year-old woman who "had gone early from home, lived in London lodgings, travelled in tropic lands, spent studious summers in Spain and Italy, and written two or three brisk businesslike little books about cities usually dealt with sentimentally. And now... she stood ankle-deep in wet bracken, and gazed at Bells lying there under a September sun that looked like moonlight" (171). The sharp contrast between her businesslike demeanor and the romantic estate bathed in sunlight (which, as the Gothic convention would have it, has to resemble moonlight) exposes the parodic quality of the whole story. The Gothic line of inquiry is mocked or ignored by Lady Lynke who insists on the search for rational explanations and demands to meet Mr. Jones whom she perceives only as an obstinate and insubordinate servant rather than an adversary. In this respect, she resembles Sherlock Holmes with his disdain for the supernatural and his stubborn quest for rational truth amidst the seemingly uncanny facts.

The Gothic trappings notwithstanding, it is also possible to read Lady Lynke as a female gentleman taken straight out of classic whodunits from the 1920s and 30s. As a woman of independent means, she is described as a typical gentleman, traveling to Spain, Italy and other far-off places, studying abroad, and writing businesslike books. Lady Lynke "was unlike other people" and when she heard about her inheritance "she borrowed a motor and slipped away alone to Thudeney-Blazes," which even by interwar standards would hardly be considered a typically feminine course of action (Wharton 170). When one of her female

14 At one point Lady Lynke discovers that one of the walls of the blue parlor was furtively added for no apparent reason.

guests forgets her handbag, Lady Lynke refuses her male colleague's offer to fetch it, and resolutely comes back to the unlit blue parlor unafraid to deal with whatever (or whoever) is lurking in the shadows. Angered by her servants' lack of cooperation, she hires a locksmith to help her get into the muniment room, and when that fails, she threatens to "break in that door myself, if I have to" (186). In a rather comic twist of events, it is Lady Lynke who enters first all the potentially haunted spaces throughout the narrative, while her male friend, Stramer, follows meekly "in her wake" (Wharton 192). In a way, whereas she plays the role of a rational "male," her male companion acts as the more intuitive and hesitant of the two, hence he is the one culturally coded "female." What is more, it is Stramer who intuitively suggests, albeit in a half-joking manner, that Mr. Jones might in fact be a ghost.

As a female gentleman, Lady Lynke also exemplifies some of the concept's more problematic features, specifically a prominent class short-sightedness. Karen J. Jacobsen in her analysis of Wharton's ghost stories rightly notes that Lady Lynke actually does not know much about her family's history and how exactly they managed to amass so much wealth. The only thing the heroine recalls is that her family "had never greatly distinguished themselves; they had gathered substance simply by holding on to what they had, and slowly accumulating privileges and acres. 'Mostly by clever marriages,' Lady Lynke thought with a faint contempt" (171). Contempt or not, she is more than happy to finance her independent lifestyle with the money accumulated by her female ancestors. Even though it is easy to read this particular Wharton story as an example of a feminist disruption of patriarchal tyranny represented by Mr. Jones, I find it much more interesting to examine their conflict in terms of the servant-employer relationship. Seen from this angle, Mister Jones becomes "Master Jones usurping power from the Lynkes of Thudency who have owned Bells for six hundred years" (Jacobsen 110). Instead of perpetuating the stereotype of a doggedly faithful servant, Mr. Jones supersedes the last lord of Bells (and Lady Juliana's husband) and takes over not only the estate but the household staff as well. The marked tension between the two classes is rarely one-sided in Wharton's short stories and even while presenting Mr. Jones as a renegade servant, Wharton continues to subvert Lady Lynke's authority by describing her as someone who is able to slip ever so easily into the role of an exacting mistress and who treats her servants with growing impatience and irritation. The heroine follows the ideal of gentlemanliness to the letter by flouting her class superiority, and by being convinced that all her demands must be met by all her servants, even the dead ones. Through Lady Lynke and Mr. Jones' conflict, Wharton was able to signal some of the ways in which the servant-master relationship was becoming increasingly strained in the interwar period.

Conclusion

In a way, Lady Lynke does not fare well as a Female Gothic heroine, as she is unable to see the reality for what it really is, and her intuitive perception fails her miserably. Still, the fact that she clings so tenaciously to the laws of physics and logic, may mark her as a twentieth-century female sleuth who in her practicality and will to knowledge resembles Miss Marple rather than Gothic heroines. By placing the rational and the logical before the intuitive and the emotional, she thus thwarts the essentialist stance which construes her as a feminized subject representing not the mind, but the body; not culture, but nature. As a female sleuth, Lady Lynke embodies the legacy of nineteenth-century fiction in that her character chooses rationalism and scientific inquiry over the Victorian "melodramatic imagination." At the same time, Wharton suggests that being a gentleman detective is not enough to solve certain mysteries, and a sleuth lacking intuition and sensitivity will ultimately fail. It is thus possible to argue that "Mr. Jones" offers not only a parody of Gothic tropes, but also a critique of ultra-rational classic detective subject. Lady Lynke's gentleman-like behavior, with its connotations of rationality and calm demeanor, ultimately betrays her, as she remains blind to the irrational elements and persistently disregards Gothic warnings.

"Mr. Jones" provides a fascinating example of how even such a highly codified and canonized Gothic genre as the ghost story could be influenced by other literary forms as late as the 1920s and 30s. Wharton demonstrates her ease in navigating smoothly between the two fictions and their genres: a ghost story, a detective story, a haunted house tale, a mystery. Written at a time when crime fiction and its genres were being codified and stripped of any ties to their nineteenth-century sensational and Gothic predecessors, "Mr. Jones" proves a polymorphous theory of genre formation developed by Alistair Fowler in *Kinds of Literature: an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, which postulates an organic growth of genres and "denies a mutual exclusiveness between genres," as genres do not possess explicit and fixed boundaries (Ascari 8). And just as generic conventions prove to be open to mergers and exchanges, so do the gendered distinctions of generic protagonists. Consequently, the tropes of female sleuths and female gentlemen illustrate an often-overlooked feature of crime and Gothic fictions which alongside the stereotypically gendered characters often include protagonists whose expressions of femininity and masculinity are pliable and subject to change.

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Zbigniew Maszewski

Under Kilimanjaro: Homesickness for the Wild and Hemingway's African Dressing Gown

> There is so much mystic nonsense written about hunting but it is something that is probably much older than religion.
> –Ernest Hemingway, *Under Kilimanjaro*

Of "homesickness for the wild" Nietzsche wrote famously in *On the Genealogy of Morals* in the fragment taking an evolutionary, visionary shortcut from the time of "semi-animals, well adopted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling and adventure" to the time of man's violent and ominous turn against himself, the break with "the old instincts of freedom," or rather their sudden suspension in the abstract domain of "thinking, inferring, reckoning, coordinating cause and effect," the confinement of "consciousness" equating the birth of "bad conscience." The paradoxical "leap and plunge" into a higher, radically different level of shared, communal life left man an unguarded prey to processes of "internalization," instinctual drives sublimating into the concept of the soul. In Nietzsche's vision, the sublimated, the "tamed," remains rooted in the experience of "a dreadful heaviness," the loneliness of one cut off from the sources of "strength, joy and terribleness," seeking old paths in a "new unknown world," always in need of "former guides." The "leap and plunge" which took place at an indefinite time at the dawn of mankind created a desire for some "subterranean gratifications," the presence of which has assisted humanity ever since, assuming various forms, extreme in the manifestations of both creative and repressive power. In the last sentences of fragment 16 in *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche likens human history to an ongoing spectacle which calls for "divine spectators," urges a premonition of its own justification, in some other, mystically or anti-mystically conceived, realm for what would otherwise seem a spectacle "played senselessly unobserved on some ludicrous planet!:" "From now on, man is *included* among the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws in the dice game of Heraclitus' 'great child,' be he called Zeus or chance; he gives rise to an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as if with him something were announcing and preparing itself, as if man were not a goal but only a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise—" (84–85). While the irreparable loss of freedom opens space for

the homesickness for freedom, a latent "*instinct for freedom*," the loss of religious "certainty" begets more nostalgic feelings for which art provides gratifications. In *Human, All Too Human*, in the part titled "From the Souls of Artists and Writers," Nietzsche's formulations tend to center on silenced "metaphysical strings" which account for the appreciation of art's " highest effect." He writes of plastic arts and music as "the measure of the wealth of feelings" we have lost "direct paths" to through the weakening of our religious experience. Liberated and skeptical, Nietzsche's artist still seeks former guides, "feels a profound stab in the heart and sighs for the man who will lead him back to his lost love, whether she be called religion, or metaphysics" (82). In his review of Krzysztof Michalski's *The Flame of Eternity: An Interpretation of Nietzsche's Thought*, Tamsin Shaw writes of the religious strain which was never entirely lost in Nietzsche's works despite their fervor in attacking religious emotionalism, obscurity, self-indulgence and sickliness:

> Nietzsche remained throughout his sane life a severe critic of religious illusions, but for all that he proclaimed his resilience in the face of hard truths, he could not easily reconcile himself to the fading of what he calls in *Human, All Too Human* 'the rainbow colors at the outermost ends of human knowing and imagining.' Nostalgia would not do. (52)

Nietzsche's texts are not very likely to have been selected for the spacious book bag the Hemingways took with them to Africa in 1953, or bought by them on one of their not infrequent visits to the bookstores in Nairobi. Had they been read, talked or thought about in Africa or in Havana, Cuba, where Hemingway began to work on his African memoir, they would, most probably, have found their way there to keep company with references to Virgil, Machiavelli, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, Simenon, Proust, Fitzgerald, Orwell, Whitman and others. Reference to Nietzsche's thought in this article is not a return to critical discussions of its relevance to Ernest Hemingway's work, the relevance which, as such readings when given to any of his texts admit, could be speculated on in terms of possible parallels but not demonstrated in terms of direct influence.[1] Nietzsche is quoted here to give a general, contextual perspective to the language of

1 In the essay "Hemingway and Nietzsche: The Context of Ideas," from the volume *Nietzsche in American Literature and Thought*, edited by Manfred Putz, Christoph Kuhn wrote of the only evidence of Hemingway's acquaintance with Nietzsche's writings: Hemingway's Shakespeare and Company library card for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* borrowed in 1926 and the copies of this text and of Guy de Pourtales's biographical work *Nietzsche en Italie* in the library of Finca Vigia in Havana, Cuba. In his essay, Kuhn examines the motifs of *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon* from the perspective of the struggle between the Apollonian and the Dionysian as presented in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Hemingway's *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005), the complete text of his last unfinished African manuscript edited by Robert W. Lewis and Robert. E. Fleming, earlier edited and considerably abbreviated by his son, Patrick Hemingway, in *True at First Light* (1999). The book is about Africa as much as it is about writing. In it, Africa and writing share a paradoxical quality: they call for mystifying perspectives and the need to hold back from them, they combine the idea of instinctive truth with the quest for the intensity of experience, they speak of a spectacle in which posturing and tricks do the magic of providing exceptional clarity of vision and exceptional creative energy. As Nietzsche's discussion of "homesickness for the wild," the text of *Under Kilimanjaro* depends for its suggestive undercurrents on the sense of loss as the necessary condition for the longing which seeks gratification in the acts of writing about it. What Toni Morrison says about the Africanism of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden* in *Playing in the Dark* may well apply to *Under Kilimanjaro*; Africa is in it "a blank, empty space into which he asserts himself, an uncreated void ready, waiting and offering itself up for his artistic imagination, his work, his fiction" (88–89). Perhaps what should also be said of Hemingway's need to assert himself as a writer in the text of *Under Kilimanjaro* is that the need always makes him suspicious about the meaningfulness of such concepts as artistic imagination and sometimes suspicious of the meaningfulness of the art of writing itself. In *Green Hills of Africa* Hemingway wrote: "All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa. We had not left it, yet, but when I would wake up in the night I would lie, listening, homesick for it already" (72). Readers of Hemingway's texts know that in the sentence "All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa," the word "Africa" could be substituted by the word "writing" without essentially changing the meaning of the sentence. Nostalgia for Africa, even before his leaving it, is for Hemingway a nostalgia for being able to write again, even before writing becomes lost in a completed text. The premonition of longing for Africa was particularly intense during his 1953–1954 safari. Things were not as "simple" then as they had been in 1933–1934. To use Morrison's words, there was still a considerable amount of playfulness but there was also the darkness of uncertainty whether he would ever be able to come back again.

What we learn in *Under Kilimanjaro* about the writer's attitudes towards Africa, wilderness, writing, and Africa as wilderness and writing come in the accounts of Hemingway thinking about the challenges of the present day, Hemingway reminiscing about the "good old days" and Hemingway conversing about these with his wife, Mary, who is first getting impatient to shoot her lion and then cannot help thinking about who killed it, as well as with his African companions who generally put more trust and take more pleasure in his words than his wife does. Thinking and talking which often turn to literary matters, if only in literary allusion and anecdote, are both highly gratifying and highly derided as

interruption of or end to hunting. As earlier in *Green Hills of Africa*, in *Under Kilimanjaro*, meditation and safari are wedded but safari and conversation form an even closer relationship. Relaxing and instructive, the chatty mode thrives on speculative and generalizing wit and thus both underlines and undermines what has long been recognized as Hemingway's, the writer's and the hunter's, aesthetic platitude: the art of writing and the art of hunting are mysteries insofar as they elude mystification. A writer and a hunter, Hemingway never denies taking pleasure in the recognition of a degree of mystification such epigrammatic formulations depend on. His use of highly normative and authoritative distillations of language ("clear," "good," "true") is equally typical as is his use of verbal signs of alertness to the traps of conceptualization, reflection, theoretical thinking. The compulsiveness to philosophize, to build systems, to judge, to enjoy a sense-making, value-establishing mood calls for Hemingway's coda which comes in a contrastive, counterbalancing form of declared or undeclared need to return to the idea of one simple, declarative statement but equally often of one simple, negative statement, or the protective distance of a humorous, sometimes overly bitter and sarcastic, tone. In Hemingway's fictionalized African memoirs, when the text recognizes the danger of celebrating its urge to speculate, to explain, to systematize, the deflationary, self-corrective warning usually comes from the wife, Pauline Hemingway in 1933 and Mary Hemingway in 1953–1954.

"You were getting awfully profound," P.O.M. tells her husband in the "Hunting and Conversation" chapter of *Green Hills of Africa* (29) once he has finished theorizing on the history of American literature and the fate of the American writer for their German friend, an intruder in good hunting but a welcome guest nevertheless for bringing back memories from the time of the author's first getting published in *Der Quershnitt*. Literary reminiscences, frequent and nostalgically colored in *Under Kilimanjaro*, are not viewed by Mary with as much suspicion and anger as is "Papa's religion," a system of conversational mannerisms involving quasi-mystical allusions and the language of male-bonding, a "complicated" means of relaxation which turns into a parody of Hemingway's commitment to his obligations as a loving husband, an acting temporary game ranger and a serious writer working on his text. Mary is Hemingway's audience when he talks about the concept of "truth" in his writing; like all writers a "congenial liar," he speaks of his own pride and fear when he remembers that Lawrence "could write beautifully" but with time needed "to become angry to write": "He had done some things perfectly and he was at the point of discovering something most people do not know when he began to have so many theories" (114). The "point" of discovering "something" is as close as Hemingway can allow for his work to speak of the art of writing as a means of providing compensation for lost religious insights, and even then, to strengthen rather than diminish the ef-

fect of "true" confession, it needs to be defended by the strategies of self-ironic context, of being "wet" in Africa: "I love to talk about writing and what you believe and know and care about. But it's only on a rainy day that we can talk" (113). In a play of mirror reflections, Mary, who like her husband is then thinking of his African fiancée in the Shamba and who "is a lot like [her]," verbalizes Hemingway's suspicion of and a certain measure of appreciation for such words of wisdom: "Which Lawrence were you talking about, D. H. or T. E.?" (114). Angrily reprimanded by Mary for not writing "something, occasionally," Hemingway relies for his self-control and self-assurance on G. C. saying he should be awarded the Nobel Prize for "[his] work in the religious field" and asking if he planned "to write something about how mysterious Africa was" and "to write in Swahili" (204). The metaphysics of writing/not writing are linked, in a humorously serious way such literary asides are to be made, to being/not being in Africa.

There is, in *Under Kilimanjaro*, considerable concern with what in his 1954 Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech Hemingway called "the degree of alchemy" a "true" writer must possess and, in order not to lose it, rather not talk about. The alchemy is Hemingway's to the degree readers find enduring, perhaps nostalgically so, the formula Hemingway practiced and Nietzsche had earlier affirmed in *Human, All Too Human*, the formula for turning the fragmentary, the episodic, the anecdotal into the representative, the essential, the necessary. Seeing through the "veil of unclear thinking" in the language of metaphysics, Nietzsche wrote of the "seriousness of the efficient workman" perfecting "parts," taking "more pleasure in making the little secondary things well than in the effect of the dazzling whole" (86–87). Among the many returns readers may enjoy with Hemingway in *Under Kilimanjaro*, is the return to the time of writing *Death in the Afternoon*, relevant because of the association of Mary Hemingway's preparations for the hunt for the lion with the matador's preparations for the "always postponed" corrida and, more importantly, because of the "workman's" constant preoccupation with the technical aspects of writing. For all its faintly linear patterns of fictionalization, the manuscript of *Under Kilimanjaro* (*True at First Light* would still provide a much more effective title, had it ever been given some final, satisfactory version by the author himself) approaches the evocative mode of the last chapter of Hemingway's book on the art and the religion of bullfighting and writing: "If I could have made this enough of a book, it would have had everything in it…. Let those who want to save the world if you can get to see it clear and as a whole. Then any part you make will represent the whole if it's made truly." As the reference to the concept of the "whole" gets dangerously and pleasurably too abstract, too mystical, the passage concluding Hemingway's memories of Spain appears in need of a sobering, vigorous justification of its self-reflexitivity:

"No. It is not enough of the book, but still there were a few things to be said. There were a few practical things to be said" (238).

One of the practical things, then, which *Under Kilimanjaro* has to say and which readers have no trouble relating to "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" or "Hills Like White Elephants," where Africa is only alluded to, is that talk, including talk about the need not to talk, is part of Hemingway's African experience, n e c e s s a r y material to present this experience t r u l y in a literary representation. "A large part of time in Africa is spent in talk," Hemingway feels compelled to explain, "Where people are illiterate this is always true. Once you start to hunt hardly a word is spoken" (150). Talk is essential for performing the duty of the acting game ranger Hemingway accepts for a time as his own; he can represent and administer law, spoken and unspoken, only if he can master the verbal art of negotiating, calculating, connecting causes and effects, manipulating people (including himself) into believing what he says and acting as he wants them to act. This art involves a considerable degree of mystification, trickstery, game playing and showmanship. Papa Hemingway is often seen sitting by the campfire in his "heavy dressing gown", the garment which turns emblematic of reminiscing mood and verbal ease. Not trying to mitigate his nostalgia he may then remember Pop (the white hunter, Philip Percival), his absent guide to the reality and to the myth of Africa whom, as he says, he "respected as [he] had never respected [his] father" (2) and with whom twenty years earlier he "had first sat together by the fire or the ashes of a fire and talked about the theory and practice of shooting dangerous game" (48). Pop speaks Hemingway's language and when, at the beginning of *Under Kilimanjaro*, he is asked to say "one sound thing about elephants," he, like Hemingway, chooses to joke about his knowledge. "In the classic formula" of the father addressing his son to leave him on his own, Pop tells Papa: "Now it is all yours" (6).

Is Africa all Hemingway's? The writer's answer might well again be "no" to "all," but "yes" to "parts." The fragments of *Under Kilimanjaro* in which Hemingway writes of his urge to define what Africa means to him never cease to follow complementary patterns of negation and affirmation. Especially revealing in their truth-seeking clarity are perhaps those in which he comments on his immersion in the stream of African life in terms of the awareness of his being distanced from it. Hemingway writes of being "suspended between our new African Africa and the old Africa we had dreamed and invented" (419), of bad conscience as "an invention of the whites who are temporarily occupying the country" (426), and, switching to his self-ironic, (non)formulaic tone, of Ngui's phrase "Fuck 'em all'" said in that "beautiful [English] language" which "was becoming a dead language in Africa" (350), or of the words of fatherly advice he himself preaches while drinking in Mr. Singh's general store: "Keep your bowels open and remember

that there is some corner of a foreign field that shall be forever England" (342). Sitting by the campfire in his heavy robe made in Pedleton, Oregon and his mosquito boots made in Hong Kong, Hemingway thinks "I'm a stranger here," while whiskey tells him he is not (165). On another campfire occasion, before the "clarity" of African stars makes such statements sound much too "pompous," he tells Mary: "If you don't feel like a fool in Africa a big part of the time you are a bloody fool" (273). Africa never ceases to be a challenge to the writer's desire to approximate it in words.

Serious or humorous, practical or theoretical, the affirmative mode of Hemingway's account of his 1953–1954 revisit to the African continent carries a premonition that something significant will happen and that something significant will be said about it. In the author's words: "Something, or something awful or something wonderful, was certain to happen on every day in that part of Africa" (15). The excitement of waking up to the expectation of what an African day will bring creates in the writer's and the hunter's imagination an illusion of reaching back towards the fundamental and the inevitable. In the classic formula of an imaginary union with Africa, the emotional landscape in the religious colors of nostalgia, Hemingway's acting game ranger is like Nietzsche's distant descendant of hunters, warriors, wanderers, adventurers following his instinctual desire for freedom of expression: he arouses "an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as if within him something were announcing and preparing, as if man were not a goal but just a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise…" Like Nietzsche, Hemingway associates the longing with childhood:

> There are always mystical countries that are a part of one's childhood. Those we remember and visit sometimes when we are asleep or dreaming.… Africa, being as old as it is, makes all people except the professional invaders and spoilers into children. No one says to anyone in Africa, 'Why don't you grow up?' (23)[2]

Hemingway's writer in Africa is an invader, an ex-warrior who knows the meaning of the biblical references to "compensations of combat" but at the same time one who "has kept a child's heart, a child's honesty and nobility" (24), who celebrates his own sensitivity, sensuality and the powers of identification with people and

2 On the margin of the paragraphs opening Chapter 2 and introducing the theme of childhood and its connection to Africa, Hemingway put a note "Throw out or re-write all this EH." As it is, the text he wrote may have appeared too vague, generalizing or sentimental to the author; however, as the editors observe, the theme is continued and gains significance in other places in the manuscript, so revision of the fragment is perhaps more likely than its total omission (see "Textual Notes" to *Under Kilimanjaro*, 451).

places every time the clarity and the beauty of a new day in Africa bring the experience which is probably older than religious feeling, old and fresh as the sight of the Mountain rising from the plains.

The feeling of something about to happen is Hemingway's experience of the African night when he leaves camp to walk in the moonlight, barefoot, a spear in his hand. Again, he is a warrior and a child, and more intensely so than at daybreak. The immediacy of the African night makes him free, happy, unspoilt, uncaring for "the stupidities of daily life" (361). In the moonlight the borderlines between reality and unreality, never solid in African daylight, vanish and he delights in certainty of the deeply sensual immersion of his own existence into the very existence of the African earth and its inhabitants. Hemingway hears the night birds and the lion. He looks directly into the eyes of foxes, hares and wildbeast and not into the reflection of the car headlights in them; he sees the Mountain shining white in the moonlight and not the lights of the camp. Hemingway is there "to learn" of the night, knowing already as much as Keiti knows of it when he says: "Nobody knows the night…. The night belongs to the animals" (379). Sharing the knowledge with the inhabitants of Africa, not hunting for trophy, as nobody hunts for trophy at night, and not having to hunt for meat, Hemingway tries not to kill. The African nightscape opens up an imaginary space of no bad conscience, no art tricks, no human language, not even a thought of there being no word for "I'm sorry" in Swahili (492). What keeps the promise of approaching the fundamental, the necessary is not meant to be literary. When Hemingway takes off his dressing gown and his mosquito boots and when he grasps his spear, he still makes gestures of one who knows what it takes to be and to feel like a famous "true" writer: "It was more than a bit theatrical but so is Hamlet" (359). Once he leaves the camp, with its tribal laws and rules of safety, he welcomes the danger of having no followers, no audience, no aficionados, no listeners, no readers. What he learns, he learns "alone" and he "[does] not want to share it with others" (360). Rather than suggest the possibility of being saved for future narratives where they could gain suggestive power through condensation and omission, the brief accounts of Hemingway's walks towards the Mountain tell us of the writer's desire not to be a writer, to go beyond the memory of "good old days" of hunting and writing well, beyond the hunter's and the writer's nostalgic ethics and aesthetics. And this, as he knows very well, is already exceedingly literary. The truth that he learns afresh in an attempt to learn the language of animals is again as ancient as Africa, real or invented, lost or regained: the teller's safety is in there being no escape from the longing to tell and from telling of the longing. The night walk is an actual experience but in place of an imaginary shepherd dog, the "tamed," home-guarding animal that could not keep the writer's company and break his isolation, it

is closely followed by the awareness of it being a reenactment of the dreams of childhood and the texts of the past, Hemingway's as well as other dreamers' and writers'. To walk in the grass in that part of Africa when something is always about to happen and then to be written about still feels as good for Hemingway as walking on the pine-needled and sweet fern forest floor once did for Nick Adams in the hillside part of "Big Two-Hearted River" and as walking on the springy and cool forest floor did for Nick Adams in the "good part" of "The Last Good Country."

There is also a dark aspect of Hemingway's walks, reminiscent of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," and not very remote from his sleepless night thoughts about the need to "verify the Fitzgerald quotation:" "In the real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning" (219). Back in the camp, in the verbal exchanges between Hemingway and Mary commenting on his walks, the suppressed tension is always high. Mary calls them "night wildness and wickedness," a phrase which, like the accusation of her husband's "lying about the lion" (241), bears protective, self-ironic features of Hemingway's literary gown. The literary context, however, becomes no less real, serious and feared than Mary's lion, for it concerns now not so much consideration of technical, practical difficulties but the confrontation with the very thought of the possible inability to write. As it is the case with most writers and hunters, Hemingway is superstitious, and the premonition of being incapable of practicing his metier, however truly African and attractive it may sometimes seem to him, is not to be taken lightly and not to be taken metaphorically. Asked by Mary why he has to go out at nights, he answers: "Because the time is getting short. How do you know when we can get back? How do I know we'll ever get back?" (421). In the same conversation, when they are making plans for their Christmas trip, Mary declares her understanding of her husband's needs saying "You stay until you're finished here" (423), and Hemingway knocks on the wood and finishes his drink. In the last fragment of *Under Kilimanjaro*, when the two talk about having to leave Africa, Mary asks with what seems like childish innocence: "Don't you want to see the most wonderful places before you die?", to which her husband answer is "No" (440). What is missing from the manuscript of *Under Kilimanjaro,* perhaps intentionally omitted from it and only alluded to in fragments of conversation, is the account of the airplane crashes the Hemingways' safari ended in. From that unmentioned perspective, the questions Mary asks Hemingway are the questions he asks himself about the meaningfulness of his writing, testing his own faith and his own trust in his literary career. On the one hand, as the editors of *Under Kilimanjaro* observe, working on his African manuscript in 1954, the author of *The Old Man and the Sea* and laureate of the Nobel Prize for Literature was "completely comfortable depicting his persona with self-deprecating humor" (viii).

On the other hand, there is the repetitiveness and the aggressiveness of Mary's comment on his "mental slovenliness," of the question she asks him on his return from the night "craziness:" "Why don't you write something so I'll be proud of you?" (291), of Mary's words being emphatically echoed by the words from Mrs. G. S. Held's letter: "Why not write SOMETHING that is worthwhile, before you die" (308). There is something disquieting and ominous in Hemingway's writer's urge to respond in anger to the "ignorant Iowa bitch" with the words: "I have already done this and I will do it again many times," and to Mary Welsh Hemingway: "I'm not hopeless because I still have hope. The day I haven't you'll know it bloody well" (241).

One can hardly doubt that acts of verbal violence in Hemingway's African manuscript are self-aimed and that they have their source in the experience of loss. In the text of *Under Kilimanjaro*, loss is always present. Pop is absent, back to his farm and family ("But he was nomadic," and "he was finally leaving us." [2]); the game warden, G. C., goes away for some time leaving Hemingway alone with his problems ("'I'm sorry I have to go, Ernie,' G. C. said." [222]); Mary flies to Nairobi to do her Christmas shopping and is missed ("I was lonely for Mary." [306]); the lion is killed and the excitement of preparations for the hunt and of the estimates of its danger is gone ("It's strange now without a lion to look forward to in the morning." [272]) Much of the African wilderness belongs to the past and so does Hemingway's interest in the hunt for trophy, "simply" and "hard" (407). There is the recollection of regret felt about having to leave Africa and having to kill "homesickness for Africa in different ways" (205) in the past and there is the thought of having to leave Africa soon (without taking Debba "home") and knowing already the feelings it will cause. Longing and the sense of urgency in trying different ways to compensate for it in the language of his art constituted for Hemingway a part of the truth about Africa. Hemingway discovered how potent these themes were as early as in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and he explored them again in *Under Kilimanjaro* and in *The Garden of Eden*. Of the two, only *The Garden of Eden* ends with the hope for a new day of good work. The African manuscript, lost in the ashes of the trash burner, will return to David Bourne afresh. In the last chapter of the novel Hemingway worked on until his death in 1961, his writer is seen in his dressing gown walking out "into the dew-wet early morning" (246), ready to share his faith in the possibility of bringing the African text back to life. The sentences of the lost narrative seem themselves to be ready to fall into their right places. Miraculously "returned to him," they cannot, however, communicate the African experience directly to the reader. That experience can be written about but not written down. What remains truly "intact" is older than religion or the practice of art.

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Alicja Piechucka

Fifteen Minutes of Fame, Fame in Fifteen Minutes: Andy Warhol and the Dawn of Modern-Day Celebrity Culture

Life imitates art more than art imitates life.
–Oscar Wilde

Celebrity is a mask that eats into the face.
–John Updike

If someone conducted a poll to choose an American personality who best embodies the 1960s, Andy Warhol would be a strong candidate. Pop art, the movement Warhol is typically associated with, flourished in the 60s. It was also during that decade that Warhol's career peaked. From 1964 till 1968 his studio, known as the Silver Factory, became not just a hothouse of artistic activity, but also the embodiment of the zeitgeist: the "sex, drugs and rock'n'roll" culture of the period with its penchant for experimentation and excess, the revolution in morals and sexuality (Korichi 182–183, 206–208). The seventh decade of the twentieth century was also the time when Warhol opened an important chapter in his painterly career. In the early sixties, he started executing celebrity portraits. In 1962, he completed series such as *Marilyn* and *Red Elvis* as well as portraits of Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty, followed, a year later, by *Jackie* and *Ten Lizes*. In total, Warhol produced hundreds of paintings depicting stars and famous personalities. This major chapter in his artistic career coincided, in 1969, with the founding of *Interview* magazine, a monthly devoted to cinema and to the celebration of celebrity, in which Warhol was the driving force. The aim of this essay is to analyze Warhol's portraits of famous people in terms of how they anticipate the celebrity-obsessed culture in which we now live. I shall consider various aspects of the paintings in question, such as the categories into which Warhol's sitters fall, the particular nature of Warhol's creative process, his technique, as well as the formal and visual characteristics of the representations. I shall also attempt to demonstrate how all these features correspond to or reflect the key characteristics of celebrity culture as we now know it. My argument is based on the analysis and interpretation of numerous portraits by Warhol, with particular emphasis

on those which made up *Warhol's Wide World*, a 2009 exhibition which was held in the Grand Palais in Paris. I shall also draw on Warhol's writings in an attempt to show how the American artist, whose all-pervading influence on the contemporary world and art is now universally recognized (Wolff 76), scrutinized the culture of the day for prefigurations of what fame, famous people and the general attitude to them would be like in the years to come.

Andy Warhol's love affair with celebrity was a lifelong one. As a child, the future pope of pop art collected autographed photos of film stars and had a predilection for Shirley Temple (Korichi 52–54). In the late 1940s, fresh out of the Carnegie Technology Institute and eager to make a name for himself in New York, Warhol approached various glossy magazine editors. One of them was Tina S. Fredericks, artistic director of *Glamour*, a magazine which, as its original name *Glamour of Hollywood* suggests, was devoted to stars of the silver screen before shifting its scope to career-oriented young women (Walker 4). Two decades later, when Warhol founded his own magazine, it was subtitled *The Monthly Glamour Gazette*. Fredericks suspected that it may have been *Glamour*'s connotations of Hollywood magic that sparked the budding graphic artist's interest in it in the first place (qtd. in Korichi 87). Around the same time, Warhol developed an obsession with Truman Capote, whose famously provocative photo on the cover of his debut novel *Other Voices, Other Rooms* fascinated the young artist. Half-jokingly, the author of *In Cold Blood* suggested that Warhol's obsessive interest in him was a continuation of his childhood fascination with Shirley Temple. The painter's fixation on Capote bordered on behavior typical of psycho fans: in addition to inundating the writer with letters, drawings and daily phone calls, Warhol would prowl outside his home and went so far as to pay him a visit one day. Finally, Capote's mother gave her son's fan to understand that he was not welcome. By the time relations between him and Capote resumed, Warhol himself had become a household name (Korichi 97–98). The fan had turned star and provoked fan frenzy himself, as evidenced by the crowd's reaction to the opening of Warhol's first museum exhibition in the Philadelphian Institute of Contemporary Art in 1965 (152, 179–180). Ten years later, seemingly unmindful of the Capote episode, the painter wrote in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*:

> Some people spend their whole lives thinking about one particular famous person. They pick one person who's famous, and they dwell on him or her. They devote almost their entire consciousness to thinking about this person they've never even met, or maybe met once. If you ask any famous person about the kind of mail they get, you'll find that almost every one of them has at least one person who's obsessed with them and writes constantly. It feels so strange to think that someone is spending their whole time thinking about you. (84)

Warhol hastened to point out that this was the case with him, too, complaining that "Nutty people are always writing me. I always think I must be on some nutty mailing list" (84). It was clear that the erstwhile admirer of Temple and Capote had long since crossed over to the other side.

Warhol's interest in celebrities was, of course, paralleled by his own desire to become famous. Commenting on Warhol's "attraction to the persona of the youthful and famous," McShine points out that the artist's "identification with them is twofold, both as objects of desire and as role models" (17). As one of the painter's biographers observes, such lust for fame came in for criticism, for instance from Capote, who believed Warhol wanted celebrity for its own sake rather than saw it as an almost unintended and unexpected consequence of following one's vocation, a by-product of real accomplishment (Korichi 98). While it is hard to determine if and to what extent Capote's judgment was right, the fact remains that Warhol's strategy for achieving fame was based, among other things, on unabashedly manifesting his thirst for it (Korichi 136–137). "I've always wanted people to notice me," Warhol declared in *POPism*, the book he co-wrote with Pat Hackett (47). By being famous, one is able to realize the desire which, in its most extreme form, underlies stalking: to approach the celebrity in the flesh or even become friends with him or her. In Warhol's case, his stalking having become a thing of the past, it was more of a desire to mix with a multitude of stars: "A good reason to be famous, though, is so you can read all the big magazines and know everybody in all the stories. Page after page it's just all people you've met. I love that kind of reading experience and that's the best reason to be famous" (Warhol, *Philosophy* 78). Korichi interprets this desire as purely narcissistic (251), which is hardly surprising given the fact that narcissism is one of the key features of celebrity culture. An idolater of stars and a star in his own right, Warhol was also the maker of stars. Credited with coining the term "superstar" (Taylor and Winquist 422), Warhol applied it not just to glamorous, sexy girls such as Edie Sedgwick, Nico, Viva or Ultra Violet, who would hang out in the Factory and appear in his films, but also to his elderly, bespectacled mother, who starred in his 1966 film *Mrs Warhola* (Korichi 201–202).

If Warhol's name has become a byword for modernity, if he himself declared that he wanted more than anything to be part and parcel of his day and age, enthusiastically stating "I love to be modern" (*Philosophy* 160), art critics tend to see Warhol's portraiture as one aspect of his art which inscribes itself into tradition. They point out that the portrait as a painterly genre is relatively underrepresented in the latter half of the twentieth century and untypical of pop art as a movement (Cueff 10), and see Warhol as a modern incarnation of the court painter, an Atomic Age Van Dyck or Velázquez (Lavrador 13). Such attempts to place Warhol's celebrity portraits in the context of tradition seem

particularly striking when we consider sociologist Chris Rojek's observation that "the term *celebrity* actually derives from the fall of the gods, and the rise of democratic governments and secular societies" and "suggests representations of fame that flourish beyond the boundaries of religion and Court society" (9). It is almost as if Warhol's portraits of stars and famous personalities provided such continuity. A chapter of *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* entitled *Success* shows the artist "sitting on a couch in the lobby of the Grand Hotel in Rome, watching the Stars and their hairdressers go up and down the marble staircase" (165). In the Eternal City, which has become "the new celebrity center, the new Hollywood" (165), Warhol is to attend a star-studded charity event. The luxurious surroundings, the trivial conversations, the superficial interpersonal relations, the ongoing spectacle of human vanity make the whole episode almost Felliniesque, bringing to mind the Italian director's portrayal of celebrity and glamour in the 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*. More importantly, if Rome is "a kind of museum the way Bloomingdale's is a kind of museum" (167), the exclusive hotel becomes the modern equivalent of a royal palace, each star having—in regal fashion—his or her retinue, the "hairdressers" who recur throughout the chapter. Daunted by the prospect of having to make a speech at the event, Warhol resolves to say: "Liz Taylor has changed my life: now I, too, have my own hairdressers. I've taken my business manager and my photographer and my redactor and my social secretary and made them all hairdressers" (169). In the middle of it all, Warhol seems to suddenly realize what his role is: "We were quiet for a few minutes, and I started to think about face images. B asked me what I was thinking about and I told him I was thinking about 'portraits'" (*Philosophy* 169).

It is possible to divide Warhol's celebrity sitters—rich, famous and influential—into several categories. The most obvious one includes representatives of show business: actors, such as Judy Garland, Brigitte Bardot or Denis Hopper, and pop stars, like Mick Jagger or Debbie Harry. Akin to actors and representatives of the music industry are modern-day heroes who create spectacles of their own: celebrity sportsmen Muhammad Ali, O. J. Simpson or Pele, whom Warhol views as a "[n]ew category[y] of people [who] are now being put up there as stars," "great new stars" (*Philosophy* 85). On the heels of the entertainment industry is its sister, the fashion industry, with likenesses of Halston, Giorgio Armani, Valentino, Yves Saint Laurent or Sonia Rykiel. These are, arguably, the most glamorous categories, but in creating his painterly constellation Warhol does not confine himself to the obvious and the obviously glamorous. He paints not just representatives of show business, but also business *tout court*. While tycoons like Giovanni Agnelli or Nelson Rockefeller may not exude the glamorous aura surrounding film stars, they are nevertheless associable with money, which is one of the key elements of Warhol's vision and one of his biggest personal *idées fixes* (Korichi 38–41). Big

money is, of course, tantamount to power, which brings us to the next group of Warhol's sitters: politicians, among whom are three American presidents, Gerald Ford, Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. To those who rule the modern world are roughly akin the descendants of those who used to rule the world in a bygone era and who, in some cases, still hold power, if only in symbolic rather than political terms. Warhol's celebrity portraits thus include the royalty, less powerful but more glamorous than elective politicians, and thus constituting some kind of bridge between politics on the one hand and show business and fashion on the other. The pope of pop art portrays Princess Caroline of Monaco, Princess Diana and the Shah of Iran. Numbered among his sitters are heirs to the throne, but also to vast fortunes, such as Opel heir Gunter Sachs. Modern "aristocracy" encompasses not just those who have inherited aristocratic titles or large fortunes, but also famous names, as Warhol's pictures of celebrity offspring such as Sean Lennon prove. The Warholian galaxy would, however, be incomplete if it were confined to those who make it to the society pages. Intellectuals and visual artists are also part of his celebrity gallery, though to a lesser extent than stars, aristocrats or business and political leaders. The cycle *Ten Jews of the Twentieth Century* consists, inter alia, of portraits of Sarah Bernhardt, Sigmund Freud, Martin Buber, Gertrude Stein and Franz Kafka. Among fellow painters represented by Warhol are Georgia O'Keeffe, David Hockney and Jean-Michel Basquiat. As the name of the Parisian exhibition which has inspired this essay suggests, Warhol's world is wide enough to encompass not just members of the *beau monde*, but also those who can hardly be suspected of moving in high society: Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* series is based on mugshots of famous or, properly speaking, infamous American criminals.

If we were to further divide Warhol's sitters into groups, we would have to follow the lines suggested by sociologist Chris Rojek, who, in his book-length study *Celebrity*, distinguishes between "ascribed," "achieved" and "attributed" celebrity (17–18). The first type of celebrity results from what may be called the accident of birth, and encompasses royalty, millionaire heirs and celebrity offspring. The second category, which is based on personal achievement, includes artists, intellectuals, fashion designers, sportsmen, show business personalities and politicians, to name but a few. The last category encompasses those whose fame "is largely the result of the concentrated representation of an individual as noteworthy or exceptional by cultural intermediaries" (18). "Celetoid" is Rojek's term for an individual whose status is due to the attention they are given by the media (18, 20). The socialite and onetime would-be actress Cornelia Guest, portrayed by Warhol in the eighties, may be seen as a cross between ascribed celebrity and a celetoid: the scion of a wealthy upper-class family, she received a lot of media attention, which led to her being referred to as the Debutante

of the Decade or "celebutante," the prototype of, among others, Paris and Nicky Hilton (Morris 3). The term "celeactor" completes Rojek's celebrity nomenclature, referring to a "sub-category of the celetoid," "a fictional character who is either momentarily ubiquitous or becomes an institutionalized feature of popular culture" (23). Examples of celeactors given by Rojek include Superman and Batman, "idealized representations of American heroism and the defence of justice" (25), who were both "portrayed" by Warhol on several occasions.

What is particularly important is that whatever the identity of the celebrity sitter, whatever his or her claim to fame, whether based on lineage, true achievement or mediatization and self-promotion, they are given largely the same treatment in Warhol's portraits. Though a discerning eye can distinguish—on both the stylistic and coloristic levels—subtle, nuanced differences between the innumerable portraits of not just different personalities, but also of the same sitter (Lavrador 14, 16), the fact remains that Warhol's style is unmistakable and unique, despite his famous claim that "stylessness" is highly desirable in art:

> How can you say one style is better than another? You ought to be able to be an Abstract Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling you've given up something. I think that would be so great, to be able to change styles. And I think that's what's going to happen, that's going to be the whole new scene. (The Art Story Foundation)

Despite the inescapable connotations of depersonalization and efforts to obliterate both the artist's subjectivity and the artwork's uniqueness that Warhol's *œuvre* has, his style has become his trademark. Simply put, if one sees a work by Warhol, one knows it is a Warhol. This, I would argue, has further-reaching implications for his celebrity portraiture that it does, for instance, for his paintings of food products. By painting Gertrude Stein in roughly the same way he paints Brigitte Bardot, Warhol seems to suggest that in the modern world fame is some kind of common denominator, which obliterates the particularities of individual accomplishment. The question of achievement is central to the concept of celebrity, in particular when it comes to what Daniel Boorstin defined as "celebrity-personalities," celebrated not for achievement but simply for "well-knownness" (qtd. in Henderson 49). In other words, from the point of view of the modern celebrity culture it no longer matters what your claim to fame is and it is possible to be famous simply for being famous. It is perhaps the proliferation of such arbitrary fame that Warhol anticipates in his *Philosophy*. At the beginning of a chapter entitled *Fame*, the artist expresses his surprise at the fact that an unnamed company offered to purchase his "aura" rather than his "product" (*Philosophy* 77). He also recalls that, as a young graphic designer working on shoe advertisements, he got paid, so to speak, "by the shoe": "I would count up my shoes to figure out

how much I was going to get" (85). The conclusion of the chapter in question is as follows:

> So you should always have a product that's not just 'you.' An actress should count up her plays and movies and a model should count up her photographs and a writer should count up his words and an artist should count up his pictures so you always know exactly what you're worth, and you don't get stuck thinking your product is you and your fame, and your aura. (86)

Anyone can be turned into a celebrity, since fame is achievable with or without achievement. In fact, it may even be achieved through wrongdoing, as modern celebrity studies distinguish between "fame" and "notoriety," also referred to as "unfavourable celebrity" (Rojek 10, 159). Reflecting on the nature of celebrity, Warhol remarks: "Nowadays if you're a crook you're still considered up-there. You can write books, go on TV, give interviews—you're a big celebrity and nobody even looks down on you because you're a crook. You're still really up-there. This is because more than anything people just want stars" (*Philosophy* 85).

Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* is perhaps a good illustration of Rojek's claim that transgression and celebrity are inextricably linked because "to be a celebrity is to live outside conventional, ordinary life" (148). The 1964 square mural, measuring twenty feet by twenty feet, comprises twenty-two police photos of male criminals, complete with placards containing information such as "N.Y.C. Police" or "New Orleans" as well as the relevant identification numbers. The portraits of the thirteen offenders include both head- and three-quarter shots, and both front-view and side-view photos. In some cases, the subjects are shown once only, and depicted full face; in others, they are depicted in profile as well. All the photos are black-and-white, which differentiates *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* from the majority of the Warholian portraits with which I am concerned in this essay. No touches of color are added, and the photos are seemingly unretouched, with the original graininess retained. Overall, the faces of the criminals are blurred, some of them blending into the background. The spectrum of physiognomies and facial expressions is wide: some of the subjects look suspicious, others rather innocent; some seem angry, while others are smiling. The same polarization marks their physical attractiveness, which ranges from repulsive to comparatively handsome. All the photos are close-ups of the subjects, some of whom look the viewer in the eye.

The cycle anticipates a culture in which even crime can make one famous as long as the image of the criminal is promulgated by the media, and in which hunger to be in the public eye can push people to become mass murderers or serial killers. The so-called *achievement famine* may result in celebrity-hungry individuals resorting to violence in order to attract attention to themselves or

take revenge, either "on society for not recognizing the extraordinary qualities of the individual" (Rojek 146) or—if the target is a star—on those who have made it (146, 147, 149, 159, 170, 178). The achievement of notoriety would hardly be possible without the media's contribution to it (155–156). The violence-celebrity connection inscribes itself into a culture which glorifies crime and makes it seem justifiable or even attractive (153–154). As Rojek observes, "The intention behind [mugshots] was to improve the surveillance, monitoring and control of the population. But by publicizing the physical identity of notorious figures who lived outside the law they also glamourized and mythologized them" (127). Gangster films also played a part in the process: "photography and film produced the means for not only identifying gangsters, but also romanticizing them as popular bandits" (128). Interestingly, Gabler compares individuals whose craving for fame—or notoriety to be precise—culminates in crime to show business multitaskers who write, direct and star in their own productions, as well as participate in promotional campaigns which consist in discussing their crimes in the media (qtd. in Rojek 156; Rojek 162, 169). In the light of this comparison, it is tempting to see *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* as posters advertising films whose scenarios were enacted in real life and where the hero was replaced by an anti-hero, a figure inextricably linked with notoriety (159–161). The fact that Warhol's cycle contained an element of social prognosis was perhaps behind the aura of scandal which surrounded *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*. Intended for display on the outside wall of the New York State Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair, the cycle shocked Governor Nelson Rockefeller and the fair's organizer Robert Moses, who decided to have it removed, arguing that none of the criminals depicted by Warhol were any longer wanted by the FBI. What they really feared was perhaps the inconvenient truth that American democracy is underlain with a longing for transgression. Rojek observes that "when one places the notorious celebrity in the context of democracy, with its equalizing functions, its timorous disdain for extremity and its grey affirmation of equal rights and responsibilities," one immediately notices that "the figure of notoriety possesses colour, instant cachet, and may even, in some circles, be invested with heroism for daring to release the emotions of blocked aggression and sexuality that civilized society seeks to repress" (15). The artist's suggestion that the cycle should be replaced by Moses' portrait was rejected, and Warhol finally covered the likenesses of the criminals with aluminum paint (Korichi 152–153). Seemingly, the governor and the urban planner were both unaware of a fact emphasized in modern celebrity studies, namely that "notoriety allows society to present disturbing and general social tendencies as the dislocated, anti-social behaviour of folk demons" whose "notorious celebrity distracts us from facing the eternal questions concerning life, death and the meaning of existence" (Rojek 93). The silvery paint

Warhol was obliged to use obliterated—in 1964, at least—the potential cathartic effect of his work.

Thirteen Most Wanted Men also brings us to another notion central to celebrity culture. As certain critics note, the adjective "wanted" has connotations of both police hunt and sexual desire (Cueff 10). As if to confirm the erotic connotations, a year after the New York State Pavilion scandal Warhol made a short film entitled *Thirteen Most Beautiful Boys*, consisting of footage of young and gorgeous male *habitués* of the Factory (Philippot 8). Rojek speaks of "the charm of notoriety," observing that "[t]he capacity to go beyond yourself, to be taken outside of routine constraints and responsibilities that govern role performance in ordinary social life, is immensely seductive" (172). The fact that some fans go so far as to propose to celebrity murderers is a case in point (15). More importantly, however, he speaks of celebrity culture and the relationship between stars and their audiences in quasi-erotic terms, referring to celebrities as "objects of desire" (190) and the celebrity-fan connection as a chain of desire. The sociologist also speaks of "magnetic attraction" (65), "chains of attraction" (10), "fan attachment" and the consequent fan "promiscuity," which consists in the inevitable "transference of desire to new celebrity figures" (197). He also points out that fans' desire for celebrities is doomed to remain unconsummated (63), though some fans nurture "fantasies of seducing or possessing celebrities" (66), who often tend to be "idealized sexual objects" (93), and that the image of certain stars, especially rock musicians, is *par excellence* sexualized (70–71).

This "erotic" theory is in turn inscribed into the realities of market economy, in which "[c]elebrities are commodities in the sense that consumers desire to possess them" (Rojek 15) and in which "[c]onsuming celebrity products" is one of the "manifestations of attachment" (47). Expounding on what becomes one of the main points in his study of present-day celebrity, Rojek writes:

> In summary, capitalism requires consumers to develop abstract desire for commodities. Desire is necessarily an abstract desire under capitalism, because the logic of economic accumulation means that it must be transferred in response to commodity and brand innovation. This abstract quality renders desire alienable from consumers, since they are routinely required to replace strong commodity wants with new ones. The compulsion of abstract desire under capitalism transforms the individual from a desiring object into a calculating object of desire. Consumers do not simply nourish wants for the commodity, they routinely construct the facade of embodiment in order to be desired by the abstracted mass. (187)

As everybody acquainted with Warhol's *œuvre* knows, his portraiture generally follows the principle of multiplication. This is clearly illustrated by *Marilyn Diptych*, a 1962 composition consisting of two panels subdivided into twenty-five sections

each. In total, the artwork draws on the same image of Marilyn Monroe, also used in *Gold Marilyn Monroe*, reproduced as many as fifty times. In the left panel, the likenesses of Monroe are in technicolor of orange, yellow, pink, red and turquoise—again, as in *Gold Marylin Monroe*. Unlike their garish left-hand counterparts, the images which make up the right panel are black and bluish, which is Warhol's take on black-and-white photos. Some of the right-hand images are blurred or faded so that the actress's face is either hard to recognize or simply invisible. In his portraits, the artist would simply multiply the same image within the space of the same canvas or divide one work into panels, each of which displayed one image of the sitter, with titles which sometimes indicated the exact number of the images, as is the case with, for example, *Twenty-Five Colored Marilyns* or *Eight Elvises*. Alternatively, he would execute several separate versions of the same portrait. In terms of how Warhol's art anticipates the characteristics and tendencies which we now recognize as being those of celebrity culture, the "serial" strategy is perhaps worth considering for several reasons. First of all, the mechanical, quasi-industrial approach to painting proudly adopted by Warhol, who liked to boast about it and extol its merits, reminds us that celebrity equals commodification and that, consequently, celebrity culture is an industry, in which stars are manufactured the way ordinary goods are. Secondly, Warhol's obsessive celebrity multiplication, which one critic compares to cloning (Goldberg 22), points to the omnipresence of celebrity culture, which verges on pushiness. If, as McShine observes, in his Disaster series "Warhol uses repeated images to reinforce the obsessive way our thoughts keep returning to a tragedy" (16), it may be argued that the use of repetition in his celebrity portraiture anticipates the celebrity-obsessed society in which we now live. While serialization is symbolic of the omnipresence and pushiness of celebrity culture, it also points to another celebrity-related phenomenon. "I want to be a machine, and I feel that whatever I do and do machine-like is what I want to do" (qtd. in Berg 3), Andy Warhol famously declared, suggesting that if the artist is a machine, the artwork is to be thought of as a product. His studio was known as the Factory and he employed assistants directly involved in the "industrial" execution of his works. By serializing his portraits, Warhol reproduces the likenesses of his sitters *ad infinitum*, creating what one critic terms "endlessly reproducible icons" (Goldberg 19). As a result, the image of the sitter comes to resemble a mass-produced article and one cannot help seeing an analogy between Warhol's serial portraits of Marilyn Monroe or Liz Taylor and the serial representations of Coca-Cola bottles or Campbell's Soup cans. In Warhol's interpretation, celebrities become trademarks (Goldberg 22). In this respect, the "serial" treatment the stars receive in his paintings is consistent with the confession he once made: "The people who have the best fame are those who have their name on stores. The people with very big stores named after

them are the ones I'm really jealous of" (*Philosophy* 77–78). After all, the term *household name* may refer to both people and things. Such analogies between famous individuals and brand names, between human beings and products send us back to one of the key features of celebrity culture: the commodification of celebrity. As Rojek points out, "[c]elebrity culture is irrevocably bound up with commodity culture" since "[t]he market inevitably turned the public face of the celebrity into a commodity" (14) and "celebrities are constructed as commodities for economic accumulation" (94). The connection between stars and products is obvious in a celebrity culture inextricably linked with capitalism, in which stars become marketable commodities. The culmination of this culture is the practice of celebrity endorsement, in which the stars-turned-products are used to sell other products. Finally, the fact that the same celebrity portrait often exists in different coloristic versions may be seen as symbolic of the merciless laws of "commodity and brand innovation" mentioned earlier in this paragraph. Metaphorically speaking, Warhol's sitters change their color with the same apparent ease with which some chameleonic celebrities take on new images and artistic reincarnations of themselves in order to surprise their fans, hold their attention and perpetuate their own fame and fashionableness, at the same time retaining the basic characteristics of the "brand" which once catapulted them to stardom.

While the far-reaching implications of notoriety for both celebrity culture and society at large reveal that fame is inevitably tainted by transgression and immorality, it is equally interesting to observe the connection between celebrity and immortality. As the title of David Giles's study *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity* suggests, being famous may be seen as a way of transcending the confines of one's mortality. Warhol was perfectly aware of this relationship between fame and death. His first celebrity portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy were prompted by Monroe's death and JFK's assassination respectively. By the painter's own admission, his portraits of Elizabeth Taylor were undertaken "when she was so sick and everybody said she was going to die" (Swenson 60). Seeing Warhol's Disaster works as expressive of "the flash of fame that these little-known victims achieve in death," McShine claims that Warhol's portraits of the two aforementioned film stars and the First Lady are "tinged by the same awareness of catastrophe" because in them "death coincided with his fascination with stardom and beauty" (16,17). While the painter, who remarked: "[I]f I weren't famous, I wouldn't have been shot for being Andy Warhol" (*Philosophy* 78), realized that celebrities run the risk of being physically attacked or even killed by psycho fans and other deranged individuals, he was also the one who verbalized the celebrity-death connection by stating, "Death can really make you look like a star" (Spigel 282). In saying so, he anticipated Rojek's observation that in the case of celebrities, turned into goods by capitalist

economy, "death is not an impediment to additional commodification" because "[o]nce the public face of the celebrity has been elevated and internalized in popular culture, it indeed possesses an immortal quality that permits it to be recycled, even after the physical death of the celebrity has occurred" (189). Warhol's own biographical circumstances and career are a case in point: the attempt on his life made by feminist extremist Valerie Solanas in June 1968 enhanced his fame (Korichi 243). "Mass communication preserves the cultural capital of celebrities and increases their chances of becoming immortal in the public sphere," Rojek points out, supporting his claim with a quote from Graham McCann's biography of Marilyn Monroe, which "notes the central paradox of celebrity immortality" (Rojek 78). In addition to touching on the nature of the celebrity phenomenon, the fragment in question constitutes a fitting comment on Warhol's portraits of the world's most celebrated blonde beauty: "Monroe is now everywhere yet nowhere: her image is on walls, in movies, in books—all after-images, obscuring the fact of her permanent absence" (qtd. in Rojek 78).

If celebrity may bring immortality, it may also turn out to be disappointingly fleeting. Warhol anticipated one of the key qualities of modern fame, namely its ephemerality, by prophesying, in what is arguably his best-known *bon mot*, that "In the future everyone will be world famous for fifteen minutes" (qtd. in Loughlan, McDonald and Van Kriekan 24), a prophecy sadly confirmed by his paintings of starlets and jet-setters of the moment whose faces are no longer recognizable to anyone four decades later (Lavrador 13). Ten years after the statement *loco citato* was made, it was completed by another prediction, this time prefiguring the meteoric rises to fame so typical of the era we now live in: "[i]n fifteen minutes everybody will be famous" (qtd. in Loughlan, McDonald and Van Kriekan 24). Interestingly, however, the gallery of Warhol's celebrities and the particular categories into which they fall illustrate not just many of the key characteristics of modern-day celebrity culture, proving Warhol's visionary and prophetic skills, but also the different phases of this culture's evolution. In her study of the history of celebrity, Amy Henderson shows how the identity of the American celebrity evolved in the course of time, beginning with politicians and scholars, who were then replaced by inventors and captains of industry, in turn superseded by personalities who came from the worlds of entertainment and sports (49–53). To some extent, Warhol's portrait gallery retraces this historical evolution from the national hero who embodies the national character and moral values to the celebrity who represents the triumph of individuality and personality which sets itself apart from the masses. One cannot help thinking that Warhol is often ironic or skeptical about the politicians, industrialists and intellectuals he paints, as if he knew their celebrity status was in a way a thing of the past. Into Richard Nixon's portrait, which borders on caricature, the painter incorporates

the inscription "Vote McGovern," referring to Nixon's Democratic opponent in the 1972 presidential election. The President, who was later to earn the nickname "Tricky Dicky," makes eye contact with the viewer, half-smiling, as if he were trying to convince the public that, being a trustworthy and credible person, he has nothing to hide. Yet there is something unconvincing about the image the portrait projects. The upper half of Nixon's face, which strikes the viewer as unhealthy-looking and repulsive, is greenish, the lower half bluish. His eyes, mouth and teeth are painted yellow, which is also the color of the background. Nixon's suit, whose upper part is visible in the portrait, is dusty pink. The palette chosen by Warhol makes the politician look clownish and grotesque. To make matters worse, yellow, seen as the color of Judas, has connotations of cowardice and betrayal. Placed at the bottom of the composition, the handwritten inscription "VOTE MCGOVERN," in black letters on a white background, comes as no surprise and leaves no room for illusions. Of course, the irony inherent in the portrait may be seen as resulting from the simple fact that it was commissioned as part of the Democratic candidate's presidential campaign. However, when we looks at other, admittedly less acrimonious likenesses of politicians such as Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter or Mao Tse Tung, we again realize that Warhol depicts heads of state using the same formula as in his portraits of show business personalities. In doing so, he foreshadows an oft-discussed modern-day phenomenon: the tabloidization of politics or what Rojek refers to as "the Hollywoodization of political culture" (186) in a world in which one has to become a celebrity first in order to become a politician, rather than the other way round (Michels qtd. in Rojek 184), and in which the borderline between politics and show business is becoming disconcertingly thin (Gamson qtd. in Rojek 185–186). Warhol's portrait of the scion of one of America's wealthiest dynasties is entitled somewhat ironically *Happy Rockefeller*. Building tycoon Samuel LeFrak refused to pay for his and his wife's portrait by Warhol, judging the painter had ridiculed them both (Philippot 30). Commenting on *Ten Jews of the Twentieth Century*, Warhol said that the only reason he had included a portrait of Gertrude Stein in the cycle was because she was from Pittsburgh, like himself. He also expressed his surprise that the cycle sold at all, speculating that such commercial success may have been due solely to the sitters' Jewishness and adding that there should be a follow-up to *Ten Jews*, a cycle entitled *Ten Jewish Rock Stars* (Philippot 40).

When using the word "sitters," we must remember that the celebrities portrayed by Warhol did not in actual fact "sit" for the portraits. This brings us to the nature of Warhol's creative process. His portraits were executed on the basis of photographs—press photographs in the case of the early works as well as some later non-commissioned ones and Polaroids in the case of the commissioned portraits, a lucrative activity Warhol pursued from the early 1970s onward—and

it is for them rather than the paintings themselves that Warhol's subjects sat. As Rojek reminds us, "[o]ne of the key elements in making staged celebrity prominent in society was the invention of photography" because "[t]he public image is logically crucial in the elevation and dissemination of the public face" (125). The sociologist adds:

> Photography, then, furnished celebrity culture with powerful new ways of staging and extending celebrity. It introduced a new and expanding medium of representation that swiftly displaced printed text as the primary means of communicating celebrity. Photographs made fame instant and ubiquitous in ways that the printed word could not match. (128)

While from the mid-nineteenth century onward "[p]hotography rapidly eclipsed portraits in miniature as offering the best likeness of a subject" (125), Warhol's portraiture is based on a striking combination of the two visual media. The artist "took Polaroid photos of his sitters and photos in black and white" (Lavrador 14). The painting session was in fact more of a photo shoot. "Warhol was aided by an assistant who played the role of make-up artist and stylist. For some of his portraits, Warhol used archive material" (Lavrador 14). This was the case with *Ten Jews of the Twentieth Century,* the mugshot-based *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* or Warhol's portraits of Marilyn Monroe, based on photos taken by the film studio on the set of *Niagara*. What followed was "a multistage process" which consisted in "cropping, resizing or, to be precise, blowing up the picture, which was then transferred onto an acetate sheet. The sheet became a kind of stencil on the basis of which Warhol painted the contours of the face before adding color to both the face and the background" (Lavrador 14). The technique Warhol used for most of his celebrity portraits was synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen inks on canvas. The core of the Warhol celebrity portrait was thus the photographic image, which is one of the principal vehicles for spreading celebrity images in modern culture. Similarly, the photo shoots at the heart of his creative process bring to mind the modern photo shoots held by glossy magazines.

The result of this creative process are often garishly tinted portraits which depict the sitters' heads or, less frequently, their busts: portraits *en pied* are rare in Warhol's output. The sitters are shown in close-up, looking the viewer in the eye. Warhol lays down intersecting patches of color and scribbled drawing on top of the photos which form the basis of the portraits. The outlines are often dark and clear-cut, the colors bright and unrealistic. The background is abstracted and reduced to the minimum. The pictures strike the viewer as lacking detail and ornamentation other than the occasional samples of sinuous brushwork. They also seem strikingly flat. Most of the portraits executed by Warhol are square rather than rectangular. The painter once commented that he liked them

that way because he did not need to wonder whether they should be longer or shorter, horizontal or vertical: they were just squares. Referring to the format of his works, Warhol observed: "[a]ll my portraits have to have the same size, so they'll fit together to make one big painting called 'Portrait of Society'. That's a good idea, isn't it? Maybe the Metropolitan Museum would want it someday" (Warhol and Colacello 12).

The fact that Warhol used the photo-silkscreen process, which consists in reproducing photographic images on canvas, encourages comparisons between his portraits and photographs. The focus on the sitter's face, the close-up, the absence of any concrete background, the flatness, the format—all these bring to mind passport photos. However, unlike passport photos, Warhol's portraits, especially those of Hollywood stars, are exemplars of idealized, retouched and unnatural beauty. In her study of the rise of celebrity culture in America, Henderson refers to portraits of film stars "made by each studio for publicity purposes" (52) in the 1920s and 30s. "Each of the major studios had its own portrait gallery" and "studio photographers created a style of portraiture that crystallized stardom" (52). "Armed with banks of lights, large format cameras, retouching pencils, but above all with an aesthetic of glamour," these people "coaxed celluloid icons from mere flesh and blood" (52). The resultant "packaged star imagery," meant "to represent the quintessence of glamour" and, seen as "a major component of the Hollywood dream machine," created what Henderson calls the "larger-than-life celebrity" (52). It was to such imagery that the young Warhol was exposed, growing up in the 1930s. As a child, Warhol collected autographed photos of Hollywood stars, whose aesthetic later resurfaced in his own works: "the heavy make-up, the close-up, the faces blown up out of proportion," "the cult of surfaces" and artificiality, "the flatness of the silver screen" (Philippot 24). "I believe in low lights and trick mirrors. I believe in plastic surgery," declared Warhol (*Philosophy* 63). In the "Roman" chapter of his *Philosophy*, Warhol's interlocutor mishears the word *portraits*, thinking it to be *poptarts*, which in turn incites the painter to voice—half-ironically perhaps—a dilemma that troubles him as a portraitist:

> It's funny because if someone gets a poptart when they're old, then is the artist supposed to make them look 'younger'? It's really hard to know. I've seen poptarts done by famous artists who painted old people looking old. So then, should you have your poptart done when you're very young so that will be the image that's left? But that would be strange, too[.] (169)

Whatever his doubts—and whatever the degree of their sincerity—Warhol's obsession with making his sitters look picture-perfect resurfaced at every stage

of his creative process: the imperfections which the make-up failed to conceal were corrected by the artist when he executed the portrait itself. Plastic surgery as well as other strategies for improving one's appearance have strong overtones in Warhol's life and art (Philippot 4). As early as his mid-twenties, the artist started to wear wigs to conceal his baldness (Korichi 91). In 1957, he resolved to have his nose altered by plastic surgery (180, 300). In the early 60s, when his artistic career really took off and his first celebrity portraits were produced, Warhol also executed the *Before and After* paintings of nose jobs, which drew on advertisements for plastic surgery.

But if he looks back on the Hollywood of his childhood, Warhol also anticipates the modern-day celebrity images, retouched, airbrushed, edited, manipulated, Photoshopped, sometimes to the point of making the sitters ridiculous and unrecognizable. Real people are turned into fantasy figures, justifying the question posed by Henderson in the conclusion of her study:

> To what extent has the media-generated celebrity culture contributed to what French sociologist Jean Baudrillard has characterized as a culture dominated by 'simulacra'—that is, by images with no real reference to the real world? Are we then left, in this image dominated culture, to a world that is itself but a giant simulation of reality? (54)

Warhol's portraiture is often accused of and criticized for its promotion of emptiness and superficiality. However, as Henderson reminds us, "on TV, the event is determined by the image, not its substance" (54). Importantly, vacuity and lack of depth are among the principal accusations leveled against celebrity culture, which, as I argue in the present essay, Warhol portrays and anticipates.

Warhol's portraits of celebrities are thus, on the one hand, the product of retouching and, on the other, of the artist's often arbitrary use of color. It is possible to argue that the roots of such artistic practices stretch back to Warhol's childhood, namely to his fascination with the beautified photos of Hollywood stars he was exposed to in his schooldays, echoed by his adult penchant for ideal beauty (Korichi 201) and his sense of his own unattractiveness. However, it is also tempting to see an analogy between the faces Warhol creates for his sitters and one of the key concepts in celebrity studies, namely that of the public face. Rojek's study reminds us that "[f]acial muscles, hair, make-up and clothing establish a personal front that conveys social competence" (103) and that "[a] man of note is defined by his appearance, speech and opinions. All of these qualities contribute to the cachet of the individual, the impact he or she exerts over the public" (103). The way Warhol transforms the faces of the stars he depicts is perhaps a good illustration of Rojek's statement that "celebrity in contemporary society is a version of self-presentation" (103). There is, of course, much more

to it than just taking care of external appearance: the so-called *staged celebrity* is a sum of all "the calculated technologies and strategies of performance and self projection designed to achieve a status of monumentality in public culture" (121). If Warhol's likenesses of celebrities strike us as "fabricated", so is the very nature of celebrity, to which "façade is crucial" (61) and of which "wearing a 'front' is the inescapable condition" (83). "Celebrities are," after all, "cultural fabrications" (10), and their "construction and presentation involve an imaginary public face" (25).

The fact that Warhol remodels and "manufactures" the faces of his sitters, that he "colors in" the photography-based imprints of their facial features may be seen as symbolic of the way the public faces of celebrities are constructed. However, it also brings to mind another question: that of the public's perception of celebrities. As Rojek notes, "fans [tend to] project intensely positive feelings onto the celebrity" (51). Positive as they may be, such emotions are also unrealistic, since "[t]he obsessed fan participates in imaginary relations of intimacy with the celebrity" (51). Warhol's arbitrary, unrealistic use of color makes his famous sitters look larger than life, but it also seems to parallel our emotional response to celebrities, the feelings and impressions we, so to speak, inscribe into them. Whether these emotions are positive or—in the case of non-fans—negative, they are always more or less illusory, because they are aroused by people we do not know personally. The fact that Warhol's portraits of celebrities are often close-ups of the sitters' faces may be an expression of what Rojek sees as intrinsic to the cult of stars: the compulsion "to diminish the distance between the fan and the celebrity" (58). If, as the sociologist observes, the "intimacy" strategies used by talk-show hosts are an extension of this cinematic technique (75–76), so are perhaps Warhol's choices regarding the cropping and composition of his portraits.

In short, Warhol's painterly technique may be the visual equivalent of what in sociological terms would be referred to as a "para-social interaction," that is, "relations of intimacy constructed through the mass-media rather than direct experience and face-to-face meetings" (Rojek 52). This, in turn, brings us to the media-like nature of Warhol's portraits. The faces of Warhol's celebrities have an unreal, fantastic quality, which critic Judicaël Lavrador refers to as "electric or magnetic" (16). This impalpable something, this secular halo may correspond to what is commonly known as "star quality," the celebrity magnetism, the indefinable characteristics which make celebrities stand out among mere mortals, or the "aura" for which Warhol was offered a large sum of money. It is a quality for which the existence of an audience, the presence of a viewer is a sine qua non: "I think 'aura' is something that only somebody else can see, and they only see as much of it as they want to. It's all in the other person's eyes. You can

only see an aura on people you don't know very well or don't know at all" (Warhol, *Philosophy* 77).

In Warhol's portraits, the image is, Lavrador argues, a "trembling" one, and as such it approximates the ones seen on a television screen, just as the square format of most of the portraits recalls the shape of the screen itself (16). Warhol was a self-confessed small-screen fan, who declared, "I love television," simultaneously admitting that "television is the media I'd most like to shine in" (*Philosophy* 147), a wish which came true in the 1980s, with TV shows such as *Fashion, Andy Warhol's T.V.* and *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* (Korichi 253). The "televisual" dimension of Warhol's art is reinforced by the fact that so many of his portraits are close-ups of the sitters' faces, that the celebrities the American artist depicts are, so to speak, beheaded for artistic purposes. Such a tendency to dissect or dismember stars may also be a metaphor for the fragmented nature of modern stardom, which rests on fans' fickle and far-from-unconditional attachment:

> In the early days of film, fans used to idolize a whole star—they would take one star and love everything about that star. Today there are different fan levels. Now fans only idolize parts of the stars. Today people can idolize a star in one area and forget about him in another. A big rock star might sell millions and millions of records, but then if he makes a bad movie, and when the word gets around that it's bad, forget it. (Warhol, *Philosophy* 84–85)

The "beheading" procedure likens the sitters to the "talking heads" which people our television screens. The difference is that Warhol's celebrities are, of course, mute, which may in fact contribute to their power to communicate their star quality: after all, as Warhol reminds us, "'Aura' must be until you open your mouth" (77). In addition, in Warhol's pictures, the background is abstracted and reduced, which brings to mind the studio walls against which we often see those who appear on television. While the artist's often unrealistic use of colors, which results in the sitters having pink hair or turquoise faces, seems to undermine the "TV screen" interpretation, the following remark made by Warhol elucidates the apparent paradox: "I'd love to be able to know everything about a person from watching them on television—to be able to tell *what their problem is*.… I would also be thrilled to be able to know what color eyes a person has just from looking at them, because color TV still can't help you too much there" (80; original italics).

Lavrador also compares the totality of Warhol's portraiture to an exclusive version of Facebook (13), which is indeed the impression you may get when you see them *en masse*, for example while viewing an exhibition such as *Warhol's Wide World*. I would, however, argue that the experience of seeing hundreds of

such portraits together in what Warhol referred to as "one big painting called 'Portrait of Society'" is more akin to leafing through the society pages of a magazine where snapshots of various celebrities taken at different parties, in different and sometimes geographically distant locations, are put together. The silhouettes are often as if cut out and separated from the background, which reminds us that Warhol's celebrities are also taken out of their context, lacking any concrete scenery or background. Whatever the analogies we come up with, be it to television, the Internet or the popular press, one thing is certain: Warhol's treatment of the celebrities he portrays brings out a relationship central to celebrity culture—that between celebrity and the media, both printed and electronic. Fame is, as Henderson reminds us, "media-generated" (54) and the unparalleled explosion of celebrity we now witness coincides with unparalleled advances in the field of communications technology. Rojek notes that "celebrity must be understood as a *modern* phenomenon, a phenomenon of mass-circulation newspapers, TV, radio and film" (16), adding that "mass-media representation is the key principle in the formation of celebrity culture" (13) and that "media representation is the basis of celebrity" (16).

One of the key features of Warhol's art is repetition. He produced series, such as *Ten Jews of the Twentieth Century*, or serial portraits of the same person, which were either separate works depicting different versions of the same representation in different colors, or one work divided, like a chessboard, into multiple squares which can reproduce the same image many times. Such serialization may, of course, as Itzhak Goldberg suggests, be emblematic of the omnipresence of images in American society (22). However, it may also be associated with the obsessive multiplication of images at the heart of modern celebrity culture, which floods us with photos or footage of the same person, very often identical or only slightly changed, reproduced endlessly by different media, some of which—such as the Internet—offer their users the possibility of endless replaying. It must be remembered that some of Warhol's female sitters, such as Jackie Kennedy or Princess Diana, were at one time or another referred to as "the most photographed woman in the world." In fact, repetition seems to be one of the hallmarks of media-dominated culture in general, as illustrated by the following comment made by Warhol: "*I love your* Daily News *commercial on television. I've seen it fifteen times*" (*Philosophy* 75; original italics).

In his study of celebrity culture, Chris Rojek argues that while "[t]he emergence of celebrity as a public preoccupation is the result of… the commodification of everyday life," it results in equal measure from "the decline in organized religion" (13). According to the sociologist, "celebrities have filled the absence created by… the death of God." As a result, "[i]n secular society, the sacred loses its connotation with organized religious belief and becomes attached to mass-media

celebrities who become objects of cult worship" (53). Rojek's observes that "God-like qualities are often attributed to celebrities" (9) who are frequently seen by fans as a source of comfort and support (52), much as deities are by believers. Warhol's representations of stars show that he was aware of this quasi-religious dimension of celebrity culture. The famous people he portrays are frequently referred to as icons, his universally recognizable female sitters being compared to Madonnas. Idolatry is, of course, inscribed into celebrity culture and we often speak of the cult of celebrity, but in the case of the stars depicted by Warhol, the connotations of idolatry are not just due to the sitters' status, but also to the nature of Warholian representation. Thus, the recently widowed Jackie Kennedy, who "in her dignified bearing, assumed the role of tragic queen" (McShine 18), may also be seen as a modern incarnation of the *mater dolorosa*. Art historian Robert Rosenblum speaks of "the supernatural glitter of celestial splendor, as when the single image of Marilyn Monroe is floated against a gold background, usurping the traditional realm of a Byzantine madonna" (36). As the title *Gold Marilyn Monroe* suggests, the large canvas is painted in various shades of gold and brown—sepia, rust, cinnamon, beige and hazel—with touches of other, cooler hues, such as gray or olive. Approximately in the center of the composition is placed what—were it not for the colors—could be likened to a passport photo of Marilyn Monroe in a barely visible frame. Against a backdrop whose color is the same as that of most of the canvas, the star of *Some Like It Hot* is depicted full face. While the contours are dark, Monroe's face is pale lavender, her hair bright yellow, her half-smiling lips red and her teeth snow-white. Turquoise is the color of her eyelids, her eye whites and of what is presumably the collar of her dress. In an interpretation along the lines of the one offered by Rosenblum, McShine compares Warhol's *Gold Marilyn Monroe* to "a gilded Byzantine icon" (17). Importantly, however, he also points out that "the object of veneration here is not a Blessed Virgin but a slightly lewd seductress, the image of whose face is still suffused with erotic magic" (17). For McShine, Warhol's paintings of Elizabeth Taylor are underlain by the artist's "attraction to the star who is of such magnitude as to become a divinity as well as a product" (18), revealing another ambivalence marking Warhol's depiction of celebrities. However, it must be remembered that celebrities constitute "at one and the same time, magnets of desire, envy and disapproval" (Rojek 93). Such ambiguity is interesting not only because, as most critics and commentators agree, it lies at the heart of Warhol's art, but also because, as I would argue, it corresponds to the way we react to celebrity culture. In other words, it mirrors our love-hate relationship with celebrity, at once adored and abhorred, deified and vilified.

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Małgorzata Olsza

A Cold Look at the American Society: Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* between Document and Metaphor

In many ways, *In Cold Blood* (1965) marks the height of Capote's literary career: highly anticipated by reviewers and readers alike, it was both a financial and a critical success. Indeed, 1966 apparently belonged to Capote, who was hailed as a genius and an author of a masterpiece (Garson 1). Part of the publicity and excitement was, and perhaps still is, associated with the work's supposed genre. Namely, *In Cold Blood* was the first non-fiction novel—a story meant to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Although the formula was quickly adopted by other writers, in America and abroad, the novel's generic affiliation also aroused controversy. This article analyzes the novel in terms of its genre(s) and the consequences of the generic tension. I claim that *In Cold Blood* is an essentially a hybrid literary form, combining the traditions of non-fiction (documentary) writing and the Gothic. This generic instability manifests itself in the literary techniques employed, as well as in the treatment of both form and subject matter, thus transforming a narrative of a singular event into a work of a universal dimension.

The theoretical framework for the subsequent close reading is twofold, comprising documentary writings (with history and journalism as its exemplary forms) and the Gothic, treated as a tool for metaphorizing the repressed. Thus, to paraphrase Barthes, I intend to demonstrate the creation of "non-fictionality" effect, as opposed to the re-creation of the events. The analysis of the Gothic poetics will, in turn, saturate the image of *In Cold Blood* with darker tones, thus turning it into a multidimensional work of art. Firstly, it is essential to address the controversies excited by the juxtaposition of two genres as divergent as non-fiction and the Gothic. At first glance, their coexistence within one text seems implausible, since one belongs firmly in the domain of fiction, whereas the other opposes the very idea of fictionality. Still, *In Cold Blood* manages to defy the constraining generic categories discussed by Derrida in *The Law of Genre*.

"Genres are not to be mixed," Derrida states ironically (55), postulating that the classical definition of genre assumes a certain limitation and purity which

results from the rules imposed by the category.[1] Such an understanding indeed forbids any transgression, contamination or contradiction; consequently, any defiant work will seem deformed or abnormal. What this also implies is that these categories are natural, stable, and correct, while, as Derrida points out, they are in fact constructs, perpetuated through constant repetition and ambivalent in their very nature (60). Derrida acknowledges the blurring of genre boundaries and approves of the effect of "impurity, anomaly… monstrosity" (57). And the genre which Capote's work represents is definitely a "monstrous" one: born out of contention, the novel embraces and exploits generic impurity, constituting a completely new hybrid category in which the seemingly contradictory traditions intertwine.

Indeed, generic tension manifests itself already in the novel's full title, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences*. The mention of "a true account" and "consequences" invokes the category of non-fiction and reports of undiluted truth, while phrases such as "in cold blood" and "a multiple murder" carry Gothic connotations.[2] In fact, Capote's entire *oeuvre* is essentially composed of two types of texts, the non-fiction and journalistic pieces written for *The New Yorker* and other American magazines, and the Gothic, or dark, novels and stories, such as *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948). *In Cold Blood* is neither type, or on the contrary, it is both at the same time, with much of the book's appeal deriving from the strained relationship between the genres. Non-fiction elements aim at actualizing events, while the Gothic strives to universalize them: Capote both (re)constructs an actual story and endows it with a deeper meaning.

1 The very concept of the genre stems from the natural sciences; hence the rigor and seriousness associated with the category. Indeed, as Todorov claims in *The Fantastic*, "[g]enres are precisely those relay-points by which the work assumes a relation with the universe of literature" (8) and as such should be clear markers of what a given work essentially is. According to Derrida, "[a]s soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind: 'Do,' 'Do not' says 'genre,' the word 'genre,' the figure, the voice, or the law of genre" (56).

2 For the discussion of the novel as a work of non-fiction see in-depth studies by Wiegand and Malin (*Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood'*), which challenged the book's documentary status. The body of critical literature devoted to the Gothic in Capote's work is, unfortunately, much smaller, mostly comprising succinct observations. Malin briefly comments on the issue in his *Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood'* (63, 71, 101). Similarly, Charles Crow limits his comments to declaring that Capote "claimed to have invented a genre of non-fiction novel, though the work draws on the traditions of… the Gothic" (161). More in-depth and recent studies regarding the Gothic status of the novel are provided by Michaud (2009) and Voss (2011).

Neither of the genres dominates, yet they are not reconciled either, exploring the boundary of coding history.

A short journalistic note published on November 17, 1965, headlined, "Wealthy farmer, 3 of family slain," inspired the work. In its entirety, the note read: "A wealthy wheat farmer, his wife and their two young children were found shot to death today in their home. They had been killed by shotgun blasts at close range after being bound and gagged" (qtd. in Clarke 317). This subject allowed Capote to take a critical look at the modern United States—"it's what I really think about America," the author claimed in an interview (qtd. Garret 474). Thus, a singular event, an exceptional fact, was metaphorized into a text containing an implicit diagnosis of the American mind.

The Complexities of Non-Fiction Writing

"To be a good creative reporter," Capote once said, "you have to be a very good fiction writer" (Plimton): in fact, the two traditions have always been intertwined and mutually inspiring. Still, the claim of non-fictionality invokes the fundamental questions of objectivity, truth, faithfulness, and reliability, which continue to be crucial for the discussion of Capote's novel. The non-fiction category itself encompassing a broad spectrum of works (essays, diaries, documentaries, history, photography, biography, autobiography, and journalism) proves elusive, to say the least. The only essential prerequisite concerns, so to speak, the ontological status of the text: its origins must be traceable to fact and reality.[3] The dynamics of the unwelcome but necessary cross-over between truth and embellishment thus generates a number of research problems oscillating around the fact/fiction boundary. Ernst H. Gombrich postulates that "[t]here is no reality without interpretation" (307). While such a claim merely inspires new readings when applied to the imaginative realm of the visual arts, it proves problematic when employed in the realm of non-fiction writing. Indeed, the mechanics of combining fiction with non-fiction have been addressed in a number of ways.

Scholars of history such as Paul Ricoeur or Hayden White claim that not only is it virtually impossible to demarcate a boundary between the two spheres, but that the existence of history cannot be imagined without its drawing on literature. Ricoeur in fact claims that it is through "the organization of events by emplotment" that history makes sense to the reader (20). Developing this idea, White states that "[a] true narrative account… is less a product of the historian's

3 Paweł Zajas discusses the question of non-fiction as a genre in *Jak świat prawdziwy stał się bajką: o literaturze niefikcjonalnej* (18–25).

poetic talents, as the narrative account of imaginary events is conceived to be, than it is a necessary result of a proper application of historical 'method'" (27). Thus, the co-existence of facts and their subjective interpretation—a reworking necessary to present a given story as a comprehensible whole—seems inevitable.

Another "legitimation" of merging fact and fiction can be found in the works associated with the New Journalism, a trend which favored subjectivity over objectivity in reporting[4] and drew on techniques hitherto associated with fiction. The goal was to "reconstruct the experience as it might have unfolded" (Hollowell 25) instead of providing a factual account: re-creation, if not creation, replaced objective accounts, while gaps in the narration were filled with invention.

With its extensive use of literary devices and techniques, the highly complex category of non-fiction is far from an objective and faithful account of facts. Thus, unsurprisingly, the seemingly non-fictional façade of *In Cold Blood* conceals a deeper narrative and structural content. Through emplotment, Capote destabilizes the established notions of a documentary story, complicating them further through the inclusion of elements associated with the American Gothic. Both traditions, albeit varied in their generic features, carry a potential for coding history and destabilizing perceptions of reality.

Repression and Disclosure: The Gothic as a Black Mirror

Among the leading critics who have theorized the Gothic, Leslie Fiedler, Irving Malin and Anne Williams have acknowledged the genre's "metaphorical" powers—its ability to explore the hidden and unrealized areas of the psyche, race, gender and sexuality. "It is the gothic form," Fiedler observes, "that has been most fruitful in the hands of our best writers: the gothic *symbolically* understood, its machinery and décor translated into metaphors for a terror psychological, social, and metaphysical" (28). Similarly, Malin emphasizes that American Gothic writers "are aware of tensions between ego and super-ego, self and society; they study the field of psychological conflict" (*New American Gothic* 5) and reflect these anxieties by creating a disrupted world. Williams, in turn, expands on the psychoanalytical theory of Julia Kristeva and interprets the meanings of classic Gothic tropes in their relation to the Symbolic. Through its engagement with the other, Williams argues, the Gothic suspends the Symbolic order, and thus mean-

4 "One significant direction the new writing took was toward documentary forms, eyewitness reports, and personal and confessional narratives. The work of certain novelists, as well as that of certain journalists, reflects an unusual degree of self-consciousness about the writer's role in society" (Hollowell 5).

ing, and transports the reader into the primal sphere of what Kristeva defines as the poetic or the Semiotic:

> the familiar Gothic trappings of darkness, the supernatural, the haunted castle, and so on, all express, in their various ways, the tension between the Symbolic and the inexpressible other—'the female,' the 'maternal,' the 'Semiotic.' Gothic is a discourse that shows cracks in the system that constitutes consciousness, 'reality.' Gothic, therefore, is a 'poetic' tradition in Kristeva's sense of language disrupted by the Semiotic. (66)

The return of the repressed is essential to Gothic dynamics, as it signals the breakdown of reality and realism, with the Gothic tropes functioning as a complex metaphor for the established order and its defects. Apart from castles and ghosts, the essential Gothic iconography includes uncanny settings, cursed houses, as well as various forms of otherness and monstrosity (in modern Gothic fiction the other is often portrayed as the killer).[5] All these, present also in Capote's work, function as representations of human, communal and social fears, as well as repressed memories. Indeed, the Gothic translates the underlying darkness into complex artistic conventions, proving to be a mode for "discussing some of the key issues of American society" (Crow 1). The Gothic novel is thus a black mirror that offers an abstracted, distorted and inverted reflection of the world; one can still see "reality" but endowed with piercing metaphorical qualities.

Document: A (Re)Creation of the Factual World

"Writing has laws of perspective, of light and shade, just as painting does" Truman Capote once remarked (qtd. in Hill) when asked the importance of composition in literature. The non-fiction novel is no exception; some form of artificiality, organization, narration, and literary editing must be imposed on raw verity. In other words, Capote does not present the reader with a slice of real life captured instinctively without much consideration, but rather with a work carefully composed and executed with skill.

5 Nicola Nixon observes that the killer's image in the real and in fiction is in fact highly influenced by the Gothic mode, the latter supplying writers with the imagery and tropes from which the character of the killer is constructed. "If the on-going assumption is that the killer is not what he seems, that he is "excitingly dire" behind the mere illusion of ordinariness," Nixon writes, "it shouldn't surprise us that the writers about serial killers turn to the rearticulation of the nineteenth-century as both a paradigm and a constellation of metaphors.… As 'literary solutions,' in other words, gothic figures flesh out with fiction what is otherwise unavailable in the real" (224).

An analysis of the documentary and non-fictive elements in Capote's novel ought to begin with structure—its emplotment. The composition of *In Cold Blood*[6] includes four parts ("The last to see them alive," "Persons unknown," "Answer" and "The corner"). These titles are the first instances of dramatization, imposing interpretation on a series of events. "The last to see them alive" treats of the events before and directly after the murder. It does not describe the violent act itself, but involves only the accounts of those who learned about the crime afterward. "Persons unknown" relates the investigation of the murder conducted by Al Dewey, the chief detective, and the proceedings of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. These events again are related simultaneously with the accounts of the traumatized residents of Holcomb, of the funeral, and of the murderers' shifting whereabouts, familiarizing the reader with the characters of Perry Smith and Dick Hickock. "Answer" tells of the finding and identification of Smith and Hickock as suspects, which results in their arrest: this part culminates in the murderers' confession and Smith's testimony of the killings. "The corner," finally, recounts the murderers' trial, last days and execution. The focus constantly shifts from Smith, to Hickock, to Dewey, and to the Holcomb community. The execution finally takes place, six years after the crime, but the hanging is not the definite and conclusive image with which Capote leaves the reader: *In Cold Blood* ends with Al Dewey visiting the Holcomb graveyard and pondering upon the passage of time and the strange ways of life.

Framing the story into a classical four-part structure allows Capote to impose a certain rhythm upon it. As Garrett observes, the first three sections progress swiftly and easily, with a counterpoint provided by the final, longest section (468). The suspense is retained despite the narrative's clearly defined direction, as Capote mentions "four shotgun blasts that, all told, ended six human lives" early on (17). The murder of the Clutter family and the execution of Smith and Hickock determine the novel's starting and ending points: the novel progresses from one death to another. It constitutes both a compositional procedure and a hint at the Gothic affiliation, reminding one of the novel's generic tension.

On the literary level, the four titles all correspond to the respective sections' content and, to some degree, foretell the occurrences. However, the titles also reveal an intriguing play of double meanings, pointing to the importance of interpretation and the ambivalent status of what is called a fact. Each of the titles can be read in a twofold manner, as they gradually acquire deeper meanings. "The last to see them alive" alludes to the victims' last day as seen

6 *In Cold Blood* was first published in four installments in *The New Yorker*. The first part of the text appeared in the September 25, 1965 issue and the entire book was published by Random House in 1966.

by the neighbors and the murderers, but also as "seen" by the writer and the reader: an apt and realistic (re)construction created by the author, who imposed coherence on individual witness accounts. The "Persons unknown" are unknown to the police, but familiar to the reader. Similarly, the reader does not need an "answer" concerning the perpetrators, as s/he knows either identity from the very beginning—ironically, this answer is required only by the characters in the story. The "corner" signifies a literal, symbolic, and structural end of the two main characters and, consequently, of the narrative. This play with meanings indicates that the writer is fully aware of the mechanics of the narrative and is not afraid to exploit them. It is also an ironic testimony to the fact that the more objective, realistic and authentic the narrative strives to be, the more its status as fiction is revealed.

The first section begins with rather detailed, bird's-eye-view descriptions of Kansas and Holcomb. The perspective subsequently narrows down to focus exclusively on Holcomb and its everyday life, institutions, and residents, only to allude to the murders at the end of paragraph five (17). At this moment, the convention of a "small-town America" story, chosen by the author as much for its obvious cultural connotations as for its ironic effect, splits into two separate narratives. The first seems to be a classical story of a perfect hardworking American family, but Capote challenges and ultimately deconstructs such associations. This storyline appears almost unreal and even farcical when intertwined and confronted with the second narrative, that of the murderers. "What took place in Holcomb was a nightmare collision of two incompatible Americas," Tynan remarks, "the land of heart loving, God-fearing families and the land of vengeful, anarchic outcasts" (130). There is to be no unified image of the world in this narrative; yet, the division into two storylines brings not only perplexity but also a faster and more nervous rhythm.

Momentum and tension both grow with the numerous, successive shifts in perspective. First, the reader learns more and more about the Clutter family. The past and present of the clan are recounted, the atmosphere of peace and prosperity emphasized, or perhaps subtly mocked, with Mr. Clutter's remark that this country could be "paradise—Eden on earth" (24). The tragic aspect of this observation in the face of future events is one among numerous instances of dramatic irony,[7] which yet again points to the text's status as a construct.

7 Virtually every transition from passages treating of the Clutter family to the Smith-and-Hickock sections is marked with an ironic statement. For example: "[a] bookmark lay between its pages [the Bible], a stiff piece of watered silk upon which an admonition had been embroidered: 'Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is'" (41).

In contrast to the classic introductory description of the Clutter family, the two other important persons of the drama are deliberately kept in the shadows. At first, Hickock and Smith are only referred to as "the young men" or by personal pronouns and their first names are disclosed only after some time (Capote 25–26). That notwithstanding, once the actors take the stage, the plot settles into its proper rhythm. The sections about the Clutter family life are both contrasted with and complemented by the anxiety-filled sections describing the actions of Hickock and Smith, who are approaching Holcomb and the farm. The short, dynamic paragraph in which the two intertwining stories culminate reads as follows:

> 'This is it, this is it, this has to be it, there's the school, there's the garage, now we turn south.' To Perry it seemed as though Dick was muttering jubilant mumbo-jumbo. They left the highway, sped through a deserted Holcomb, and crossed the Santa Fe tracks. 'The bank, that must be the bank, now we turn west—see the trees? This is it, this has to be it.' The headlights disclosed a lane of Chines elms; bundles of wind-blown thistle scurried across it. Dick doused the headlights, slowed down, and stopped until his eyes were adjusted to the moon-illuminated night. Presently, the car crept forward. (68)

This section is filled with animated verbal exchanges, constituting a condensed if highly realistic scene conveyed through the "right here, right now" convention, implying the immediacy of the experience, challenged by the use of the past tense. Thus, a curious mixture of past and present, of distance and directness, is created. While the present contributes to the perceived sense of the instantaneousness and thus produces an effect of the absolute, unmediated and unprocessed truth, the use of the past tense points to a conscious arrangement and alteration of the story. The conflict and interdependency of events and their structuring, of chaos and order—an inherent feature of non-fiction—is presented here with particular intensity.

Another shift in viewpoint occurs after this meaningful passage. The murder itself is not described in the following paragraph, due to a highly skilled use of ellipsis. The Clutters' perspective is now obviously impossible, and to continue with the Hickock-and-Smith storyline would rob the text of its power: instead, Capote describes the day following the crime, with the unsuspecting village community going about its business up until the discovery. However, the incident is still not recounted by means of a unified narrative, but through a bricolage of narrative voices, as if the Holcomb community has replaced the Clutter family in the narrative. Thus, the fundamental tension between the two Americas is retained.

"The last to see them alive" may serve as the model for the narrative structure employed in the remaining three sections of the novel, since the techniques and

effects used in Part One—such as dramatic irony, perspective shifts and contrasts, ellipsis, and polyphony of voices—are all present in "Persons unknown," "Answer" and "The corner." Interestingly enough, in the (re)construction of the novel's individual parts, Capote adheres to the conventional development of dramatic narrative, as far as the exposition, introduction of conflict, and rising action are concerned, but he repeatedly tinkers with the climax. The climax of the first part—the murder and, more specifically, its description—is moved to Part Three, while the climax of Part Two (the ultimate result of the conducted investigation, i.e. the execution of the murderers) is transposed to Part Four. Even though the two aforementioned critical points are not climaxes in the traditional sense, as the reader is familiar with the course of events throughout, they still manifestly demand a presence, and otherwise render the narrative incomplete. Yet, through the author's strategy even such a conventional narrative scheme is made more dramatic.

With events manipulated into a plot, the novel's ultimate indicator of non-fictionality is the "Acknowledgments" where Capote addresses the reader directly stating that "[a]ll the material in this book not derived from my own observation is either taken from official records or is the result of interviews with the persons directly concerned" (9). Thus, to paraphrase Lejeune, the author establishes "the non-fictional pact," promising the reader absolute truthfulness which, however, is contradicted by the constructed narrative. Actual events are embedded in the overwhelming structure of fictionality: the pact is heralded but not fulfilled. Indeed, the author selects, composes and positions all elements much in the same way as a painter uses color, perspective, light and shade to accentuate some events and occlude others. The picture painted by Capote might be a realist one, in the sense that it portrays life with the intention of fidelity, yet it remains a picture: an artificial (re)creation.

Metaphor: A Gothic World in the Making

A skillful "painter" that he is, Capote does not confront the reader directly with a crude vision of darkness, but rather draws them steadily into the Gothic world of America by means of carefully applied themes, motifs and imagery. With its grand aesthetic and metaphorical potential, the Gothic at least partly opens the door to the domain of fiction, supposedly locked and sealed with the promises of factuality, thus counterpoising the documentary. It records the timeless and the universal in Capote's story, portrays the confrontation of the two Americas, probes and exposes societal fears. It is at this point that "behind the mask of the dispassionate reporter we can begin to make out the excited stare

of the southern-gothic novelist with his febrile delight in weird settings and lurid details" (Tanner).

A constant generic tension present in the novel and most explicitly expressed in its title is echoed on the structural level at the novel's very beginning. A juxtaposition of document and metaphor is expressed through the appearance of the "Acknowledgments," signifying non-fictionality, next to a quote from Francois Villon's *Ballade des pendus*, yielding a macabre and grotesque charm so characteristic of the Gothic. Even before the novel begins, one is made aware of its double nature. Gothic traits are further present in the portrayal of Holcomb. The small town—albeit real—may constitute a synecdoche for the entire nation, given the town's central location in the United States. Its description, therefore, only ostensibly adheres to the facts and is intriguingly lined with fear and dread, thus contributing to the tension between the singular and the symbolic. A serene small town is transformed into a place with many disturbing features, a place whose stillness is another mask. Helen Garson points to "the unseen and hidden darkness gathering around the victims" (144)—or indeed, one might add, around the entire community. Short passages, single sentences, well-chosen adjectives or verbs contribute to this effect: "[a]fter the rain, or when snowfalls thaw, the streets, unnamed, unshaded, unpaved, turn from the thickest dust into the direst mud" (15). In these unnamed and hostile streets stand the reminders of the community's former greatness: the neglected dancing hall and the closed bank. Their ruined signboards are signals of decay, transience and gradual disintegration of town and society. It is not nostalgia that is evoked here, but anxiety. The rest of the town is presented as "equally melancholy" with "the keening hysteria of coyotes, the dry scrape of scuttling tumbleweed, the racing, receding wail of locomotive whistles" (16–17) heard at night. Lonesome, secluded, almost lifeless, strangely terrifying at nights—that is the place to which Capote transports his readers.

Another facet worthy of attention is the treatment of family relations and household spaces. On the most literal level, the fact that an entire family is brutally murdered in their own home immediately suggests Gothic connections. Indeed, Capote develops a complex analysis of a family drama, addressing the issues of history, gender relations and patriarchal rule. With the initial assumption that at the heart of the story lies the clash of two Americas, entwined in a tight deathly embrace,[8] Capote sets out to describe the two faces of the conflict—the Clutters and "the others"—extruding dark tones from either party.

8 Capote described the conflict as follows: "The Clutters were such a perfect set of symbols for every frustration in his [Perry Smith's] life. As Perry himself said, 'I didn't have anything against them, and they never did anything wrong to me—the way other people have all my life. Maybe they're just the ones who had to pay for it'" (Plimpton).

At first glance, the Clutters seem a quintessential example of a happy and successful American family: moderately rich, hard-working, church-going, community-engaged and respected by their neighbors, they represent the virtues of the American society. Yet, as implied in the description of Holcomb—a perfect small town in theory, a haunted Gothic space in fact—darkness underlies every manifestation of the apparent "normality." Mr. Clutter, the head of the family, is portrayed as patriarchal and overbearing. The familial house constitutes his space, designed and built by him. As Capote states, it was the house that "impressed Holcomb; it was a place people pointed out" (21). It belongs to Mr. Clutter both literally and figuratively and it is only gradually that the reader learns about the other family members who live there. The most unusual of the Clutters, and simultaneously the one that evokes the most compassion, is Mrs. Bonnie Clutter, first seen by the reader through her husband's eyes as a strange element in an otherwise conventional family:

> In regard to his family, Mr. Clutter had just one serious cause for disquiet—his wife's health. She was 'nervous,' she suffered little spells—such were the sheltering expressions used by those close to her. Not that the truth concerning 'poor Bonnie's afflictions' was in the least a secret; everyone knew she had been an on-and-off psychiatric patient the last half-dozen years…—the tension, the withdrawals, the pillow-muted sobbing behind locked doors[.] (19)

Mr. Clutter associates his wife's state with external factors—in an attempt to regard the "afflictions" as a medically curable (i.e. rationally explicable) illness, he refuses to make any connections between Bonnie's mental problems and her immediate environment—the family. Transformed by Capote into a Gothic character, "a mad woman in the attic," when still alive,[9] Mrs. Clutter becomes a literal ghost, haunting the neighbors with every appearance.

Furthermore, the Clutters are never portrayed as a closely-knit community. Rather, each withdraws into his or her reclusive space: Mr. Clutter into his office; Mrs. Clutter into her bedroom, the daughter Nancy into the kitchen and her bedroom, and the son Kenyon into the cellar. According to McAleer, "[h]ere, indeed, is a household the occupants of which are leading 'lives of quiet desperation'" (213). Therefore, this perfect all-American family has its dark and shameful mysteries and its inner disintegration had started long before the mur-

9 The tension between non-fiction and the Gothic tension finds its confirmation in the two oldest Clutter children's reaction to the novel. As Voss observes, they "especially disliked the way Capote portrayed their mother as emotionally very fragile and one-dimensional, a view shared by Bonnie Clutter's brother, Howard Fox, who told a reporter, 'I know who she was. Other people don't because of that book'" (144–145).

derers reached Holcomb. Symptomatically, it is only once that the reader meets the Clutter family all assembled together—in very gruesome circumstances:

> The four coffins, which quite filled the small, flower-crowded parlor, were to be sealed at the funeral services—very understandably, for despite the care taken with the appearance of the victims, the effect achieved was disquieting. Nancy wore her dress of cherry-red velvet, her brother a bright plaid shirt; the parents were more sedately attired, Mr. Clutter in navy-blue flannel, his wife in navy-blue crepe; and—it was this, especially, that lent the scene an awful aura—the head of which was completely encased in cotton, a swollen cocoon twice the size of an ordinary blown-up balloon, and the cotton, because it had been sprayed with a glossy substance, twinkled like Christmas-tree snow. (103)

Capote paints a truly dark picture here: the disintegrated family are finally seen together as their bodies are deposited in caskets. The entire scene, charged with dark and powerful undertones, brings together the issues crucial for the idea of the family in the novel. Firstly, the episode is a metaphor of the family's estrangement. It removes the family from the domain of the reality and realism to transform it by means of the Gothic imagery into a powerful symbol of an average American family. With their heads and faces enclosed in white fabric, the family loses its individuality and becomes a shrouded token of the failed American Dream, if not a warning for other over-confident dreamers. Through an ironic quirk of fate, the deceased are all dressed in national colors: the red of Nancy's dress, the blue of Mr. and Mrs. Clutter's attires, and the white of the cocoons on their heads all combine to form the flag of the United States. At the same time, marking the novel's generic tension, the above fragment is saturated with details worthy of a journalistic account (including numbers, fabrics, and names). Indeed, the Gothic elements encountered throughout the entire novel convert a non-fiction story of one Kansas family into a timeless tale of social drama. From this tragically symbolic image of the deceased in their caskets, Capote leads the reader to the final view of "four graves gathered under a single gray stone… in a far corner of the cemetery" (343): in an unceasing hum of whispering "wind voices," the Clutters continue to haunt their neighbors, by extension all fellow Americans and the reader.

The "monsters" in the story, Hickock and Smith, complete the tragic picture painted by the author but do not constitute its only driving force. Decent middle-class America is also to blame: "the other" that it fears was born dangerously near it. Indeed, one should not be satisfied with a clear-cut division between the good and the bad, the successful and the rejected. By his presentation of the family and his description of the Gothic "monsters" (whose grotesque and repelling features are emphasized as much as are their troubled pasts and toxic

family relations), Capote seems to have blurred the comfortable distinction between "I," "we" and "the other." The Clutter and the Smith families were both dysfunctional;[10] thus, the family appears as a symbolic source of threat and an immediate sign of the haunting past. America, Capote seems to suggest, is not a harmonious land of prosperity but a place tormented by desires, ravaged by patriarchy and haunted by pangs of conscience.

There is no reconciliatory ending to the novel, as there is no ease to the tension between non-fiction and the Gothic. The generic composition of *In Cold Blood* not only undermines, but also redefines the traditional notions of the genre. On the one hand, the novel adheres to the rules of both non-fiction and the Gothic and becomes entangled in the problematics inherent to the two literary modes; on the other, it defies the two genres in the very act of their counterpoising. The generic tension suggested by the title, the novel's organization, Holcomb's description, and the presentation of the Clutter's, in fact allows the book to acquire a perspective that is wider and more universal. As Helen Garson aptly observes, "[r]eaders, left with a weight of sadness and loss, recognize that they have been confronted not only with an American tragedy but also the human tragedy, the wanton as well as the inexplicable nature of existence" (164). Indeed, the novel is located between document and metaphor, its cogency lying in the contrast between the two.

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10 Indeed, in a quintessentially Gothic doubling, Mrs. Clutter may act as an equivalent to Perry Smith who, as a homosexual and social outcast, is also "the other" in the patriarchal American society of the late 1950s. This correspondence of the two characters is also observed by Michaud who points out "the mutual alienation of Perry and Bonnie" (161). In turn, Hicks writes that "[v]ictims and murderers—two versions of our founding myths—there are elements of each in the Other and they will not remain comfortably apart" (172).

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"A Bridge That Seizes Crossing": Art, Violence and Ethnic Identity in Meena Alexander's *Manhattan Music*

Meena Alexander, an American writer born in India and now living in New York City, in all of her creative work exhibits a sensitivity to the experience of crossing borders, which entails the need to form new, hybrid identities and to learn to juggle not only diverse cultures but diverse languages as well. In comparison to other women writers of the South Asian diaspora in the US, such as Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri, Alexander has been somewhat overlooked by general readers, although her writing has received substantial praise from critics, especially those of Indian provenance. However, scholarly attention so far has mostly been paid to Alexander's poetry and memoir at the expense of her two fictional texts: *Nampally Road* (1991), set in India, and *Manhattan Music* (1997), oscillating between Kerala and New York. In the latter novel, as well as in her poetry and memoir, Alexander explores the experience of immigration with its ensuing feelings of uprootedness and displacement. In this respect, Alexander's thematic interests seem to coincide with those of other writers of the South Asian diaspora in the US,[1] but this apparent similarity is in fact somewhat misleading. With its carefully crafted language and its elaborate structure, *Manhattan Music*

1 This fact is stressed by numerous scholars who have attempted to characterize South Asian American literature as a unique body of writing ever since "Indians, whether as South Asians or as diasporic Indians, acquired a distinct literary identity" (Gurleen Grewal 91) in the 1990s. In his chapter devoted to the presentation of South Asian American literature, published as early as 1992, Tapping writes: "Like other ethnic literatures in North America, writing by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent is concerned with personal and communal identity, recollection of the homeland, and the active response to this 'new' world" (285). Gurleen Grewal posits in turn that "[o]ne of the abiding concerns for most first-generation immigrants, poised between living 'back home' and in the present, is how to balance their dual affiliations in a country with the myth of the melting pot" (98). Finally, Shankar and Srikanth add that South Asian American writing occupies "interstitial spaces created by postcoloniality, diaspora, transnationalism, and multiple and ever shifting 'borderlines'" (375).

offers a representation of border crossings that is, in my view, unparalleled in South Asian American fiction.

My analysis of Alexander's *Manhattan Music* will be informed by recent theories concerning the spatial construction of ethnic identity, for Alexander presents her characters as evolving not only through time, but also, perhaps primarily, through the traversing of space. The difficulties inherent in the process of crossing borders are succinctly captured by the fragment of a poem included in the novel that I have chosen for the title of this essay. "A bridge that seizes crossing" signifies the difficult road that an immigrant needs to take in order to achieve a degree of self-acceptance in the new cultural environment. Although the presentation of movement as a constitutive element of identity is also explored by ethnic writers in general and South Asian American writers in particular, what Alexander contributes to the discussion of ethnic identity is its connection to the space of artistic creation. Art in her novel not only serves as a reflection of the processes of immigration and acculturation, but also becomes a universal language, whose importance is stressed both by the thematic concerns of the novel and by its structure.

The novel tells the story of Sandhya, an Indian woman in her mid-thirties, who currently lives in Manhattan, having married a Jewish-American man whose fascination with India had led him to Nainatal, an Indian mountain resort, where the two met. Several years later and already a mother, Sandhya begins to feel the heavy burden of living in a country which she does not think of as her own. Her immigrant anxiety, coupled with the death of her beloved father back in India and her rejection by her Egyptian lover in America, leads Sandhya to a nervous breakdown and a suicide attempt. The story of immigrant trauma, not at all unfamiliar in the context of South Asian American fiction,[2] is rendered by Alexander in a structurally complex way. She punctuates the story of Sandhya, narrated mostly in the third person, with slim chapters written in the first person from the perspective of Draupadi Dinkins, a conceptual artist whom Sandhya meets and befriends in New York City. By virtue of doing so, Alexander achieves several aims simultaneously. For one thing, this structural choice enables her to pinpoint intersections and overlaps between various spaces—both geographical and metaphorical—that her narrative evokes in its discussion of ethnic identity. All of Draupadi's artistic projects focus on the issue of ethnicity and her choice to explore by means of art not only her own ethnic background but also that of other minority groups in the US makes Draupadi, and—by inference—Alexander, a spokesperson for universal dimensions of the experience of crossing borders. At the same time, the narrative fragmentation, achieved both through the structural division into chapters as well as through the non-linear, associational structure

2 Bharati Mukherjee's early novel *Wife* may serve as an example here.

of each chapter, reminiscent of stream-of-consciousness, serves as a mirror of an immigrant's troubled mind. Ketu Katrak's comment that "[n]on-linear narrative structures"—frequent in postcolonial literature—serve to "recreate the simultaneities of spaces" (*Politics* 40) certainly pertains as well to Alexander's novel.

Space and Ethnic Identity

The convergence between spatiality and the construction of identity has been theorized by scholars for several decades now, ever since the so-called spatial turn within the humanities. Currently, the prevalent scholarly opinion holds that identity does not only evolve along a temporal axis, but is spatially located as well. For example, Susan Friedman argues for "the centrality of space... to the locations of identity" (19). She understands identity in spatial terms as "a historically embedded site, a positionality, a location, a standpoint, a terrain, an intersection, a network, a crossroads of multiply situated knowledges" (19). Hybrid identity, a particularly salient form of identity for ethnic subjects, is a result of "movement through space, from one part of the globe to another. This migration through space materializes a movement through different cultures that effectively constitutes identity as the product of cultural grafting" (Friedman 24). Thus, hybrid identity is frequently produced in borderlands or spaces in between cultures. Helena Grice connects the spatial theory of identity to the literary productions of Asian American women writers by claiming that space frequently acts as a metaphor for identity and that female writers tend to search for self through place (200). Analyzing Alexander's famous memoir *Fault Lines*, Grice posits that "Alexander's search is for her identity through an imaginative exploration of space" (217). Alexander's fictional characters are likewise preoccupied with issues of movement, border crossings, home and belonging as they bear upon the ever-changing sense of who one is and where one stands.

As far as geographical landscapes are concerned, Alexander's novel moves back and forth between Manhattan and southern India, both places familiar to Sandhya, with Draupadi's account adding several more locations that diffuse the binary model of US-versus-India, found in much of South Asian American writing.[3]

3 The vast majority of literary texts by South Asian American writers tend to focus on two locations: the home country and the adopted country, which are presented in a hierarchical fashion, the latter visibly favored by the character or narrator. Characterizing the genre of Asian immigrant woman's novel in general, Inderpal Grewal posits that a characteristic feature of the genre is that it sets up "the binary oppositions between the United States as first world site of freedom and 'Asia' as third world site of repression" (63).

Draupadi speaks of her origins in the following way: "I was born in Gingee, most part Indian, part African descended from slaves, pride of Kala Pani, sister to the Middle Passage. Also part Asian-American, from Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino blood: railroads in the West, the pineapple and sugarcane fields" (47). However, the novel does not make it clear whether this statement is a truthful account of Draupadi's origins; it is equally possible that this mix of ethnicities is actually an act of artistic creation. With her—whether real or imagined—mixed-blood origins, Draupadi creates herself as a symbol of America, a composite that it is of multiple nationalities and ethnicities. She evokes in her account major ethnic groups that migrated or were forced to migrate to America from outside the continent: black slaves, Europeans and Asians; at the same time, she leaves out from the mosaic Native Americans or Latinos/as, whom she may view as original inhabitants of the land. "[T]he fragments of her past, real and imagined, swarming into her art" (53) are used by Draupadi as artistic material. Draupadi, a symbol of immigrant America, a person who feels at ease with the multiple strands of her heritage, functions in the novel as Sandhya's alter ego, the "almost... double" (49) of the anxious immigrant.

The multiplicity of geographical landscapes the novel is set in or otherwise evokes—including North America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean—serves to show the linkage between various ethnic groups inhabiting the North American continent. It likewise suggests that it is impossible to limit the discussion of the experience of migration to one ethnic group or one location only. On the contrary, the novel explores global interconnections between lands and people without erasing the specific histories of these ethnic groups. Many of the connections that "Alexander weaves into her narrative" include "social and political incidents from India and America, for example, Hindu-Muslim riots in Hyderabad, the threat of Muslim fundamentalism in Manhattan, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by a Sri Lanka suicide bomber, racism towards Indians in New Jersey, Christian fundamentalism... and the immigrant issues of New York City" (Moka-Dias 3). Talking about Alexander's writing in general, Rajini Srikanth terms the writer's position a "globalism of outrage" (88), which she understands to mean the author's preoccupation with both local and global issues, a sensitivity that Linda McDowell in a different context calls "global localism" (38). Srikanth explains Alexander's interest in both local and global injustices in the following way: "a literature born in the United States... must of necessity evoke other locations" (87) for in the global world what happens in one place affects and is affected by events occurring elsewhere. Alexander herself, in an interview by Lopamudra Basu, corroborates her interests in matters both local and global when she says that in her work "place is layered on place to make a palimpsest of sense" (Alexander, "The Poet" 32).

Ethnicity and Art

Manhattan Music, however, does not focus solely on geographical landscapes and the roles they play in the representation of migration, but it also explores more metaphorical realms of art, violence and ethnic identity. Unlike other South Asian American writers delving into border crossings, Alexander situates the experience of migration and the construction of a viable ethnic identity against the backdrop of art. Artistic creativity, especially in its visual and conceptual forms, is imbued in Alexander's narrative with the power to express the precarious position of an ethnic individual and give voice to the history of racial oppression. It is also shown to have the capacity to aid an individual in the process of coming to terms with who she is and where she fits within the fabric of American multiculturalism.

From the very beginning of her artistic career, Alexander's Draupadi has created art with a heavy political agenda. The teenage Draupadi's first artistic, or quasi-artistic, enterprise results from her desertion by her first boyfriend at the insistence of his racist father. As a reaction to such an insult, Draupadi takes a Barbie doll, smears it black with *kajal*, a traditional kohl-like cosmetic used in Asia to darken the eyelids and eyelashes, ties a piece of pink cloth torn from her mother's sari around the doll's lips and seals her eyes with wax (92). Although this act is essentially a method of coming to terms with her personal loss and anger, it signals at the same time certain areas of interest that the adult Draupadi will keep exploring in her art, namely ethnicity and gender as two primary markers of identity that lead to one's subjection to the regulatory mechanisms of and exploitation by various ideologies. The Barbie doll's function as a symbol of mainstream ideals of female beauty is addressed here by the adolescent's use of ethnically marked *kajal* and sari. What Draupadi's first artistic project shows is that women whose bodies differ—whether due to physical features, mannerisms, dress or make-up—from what is considered conventionally attractive are deemed unworthy of (male) attention. The fact that both the doll's lips and eyes are covered may testify to the powerlessness and voicelessness of women who do not comply with the mainstream's ideals of femininity: following Draupadi's artistic intervention the doll can neither "see" nor "speak," she is deprived both of voice and of sight to stand for a redundant addition to the world the young woman feels herself to be.[4]

4 It has to be conceded here that oftentimes an ethnic woman's exotic appeal may be an asset enabling her assimilation into the mainstream American culture by means of acquiring a white partner. However, as Chu claims, "when Asian women seek or accept cross-cultural mentoring by white men they must also respond to the white men's fantasies of Asian women as docile, easily accessible mistresses rather than equals whose cultures, histories, and needs might be as complex, vital, or intractable as their own" (93). This is, however, an aspect of white-Asian relations that the young Draupadi seems unaware of.

A few examples of art Draupadi creates as a mature woman include a performance piece titled "Women of Color Whirling Through the World" prepared for the Museum of Natural History and an androgynous figure made of wire and condoms built for the AIDS show at Franklin Furnace. The figure is painted orange and put inside a box, next to which the artist herself is standing, displaying a deeply ironic sign that reads: "CHOOSE YOUR BLOOD. THIS IS AMERICA" (46). Even though the show is devoted to the AIDS epidemic, which has more to do with one's sexuality than ethnicity/race, Draupadi does not refrain from touching on the latter in her project. The fact that the figure is painted orange, which is not a natural skin color of any ethnic group, may suggest that indeed in America one's skin color is at best a matter of secondary significance. However, when read in the context of the whole novel, it is obvious that Draupadi's figure and the sign the artist is holding are an ironic commentary on the impossibility of shedding one's skin color. After all, one cannot escape the constraints of one's ethnic body,[5] which is made clear by a poignant fragment of the novel relating Sandhya's thoughts on the issue: "She gazed at her two hands, extended now in front of her. What if she could peel off her brown skin, dye her hair blonde, turn her body into a pale, Caucasian thing, would it work better with Stephen [her husband]?" (7). Sandhya in essence fantasizes about a magical transformation into a human version of a Barbie doll, which would be acceptable to the mainstream society, her husband and, most importantly, herself.

That the question of ethnicity is a recurring motif in Draupadi's art becomes clear from a detailed account of the performance she prepares to present at the Poets' Café. Asked to "[d]ream up a performance piece... that involves crossing borders" (118), Draupadi creates a performance that attempts to weave together histories of many races. In the process, she makes references to canonical American Anglo-Saxon writers, Herman Melville and Henry David Thoreau, as well as ethnic writers, represented by Harriet Jacobs, and the so-called discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus. Albeit evocative of the past, Draupadi's artistic piece renders the complex history of interracial relationships in America "in the present tense" (119), perhaps to show the continuing legacy of what happened decades and centuries before. Draupadi performs together with three other women, "one Black, one Anglo, one Hispanic-Asian" (119), who are supposed to represent

5 In her memoir *Fault Lines*, Alexander expresses a similar opinion: "I can make myself up and this is the enticement, the exhilaration, the compulsive energy of America. But only up to a point. And the point, the sticking point, is my dark female body. I may try the voice-over bit, the words-over bit, the textual pyrotechnic bit, but my body is here, now, and cannot be shed. No more than any other human being can shed her or his body and still live" (202).

all the major ethnic groups that have migrated to the US and to give voice to their repressed histories. To give an example, one of the women plays the role of "Tawana Brawley, wrapping herself up in plastic, smearing excrement on her dark skin, tarring herself, setting white feathers on her flesh like the white men did to her foremothers. Then she crept into a plastic garbage bag" (120). Present and past are blurred in this performance: Tawana Brawley is a real person known for her false accusations of a group of influential white men of alleged gang rape after she had been found mutilated and covered in feces inside a garbage bag (Taibbi and Sims-Phillips xii). In the performance, "Tawana" as if goes back in time to become a female slave punished by her master for some unnamed offence. Even if the allegations made by real-life Brawley did not hold a grain of truth, what she did and what one of Draupadi's partners recreates in her performance is a powerful reminder of the victimization and objectification of ethnic female bodies by those in positions of power, be it the power sanctioned by the institution of slavery in the past or the power of access to voice and authority in the present.

Draupadi herself plays several roles in the performance piece delivered at the Poets' Café. She is supposed to represent her own ethnic group and hence is at the outset called "Dottie," a word reminiscent of a racial slur of "dot-head" hurled repeatedly at immigrants from India.[6] Yet, she also stands for all women doubly oppressed on account of their ethnicity and gender. In the final fragment of her performance, she is locked in a cage and supposed to represent African-American writer Harriet Jacobs, or rather—to be more precise—Linda Brent, the pseudonym under which Jacobs wrote her autobiographical narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in which she gave an account, among other things, of being sexually harassed by her master. When Draupadi's male partner, playing the role of Linda's master, Dr. Flint, offers her an orange and asks for her name, the artist cries out her real name, Draupadi. Unable to pronounce the name Draupadi, the white man simplifies it to Dropti before inventing an Anglo-Saxon name for her. "'Bette,' he called me. 'Bette, you Asian cunt. Come over here, slow, take it slowly now.' And he held his hand with a lump of sugar in it as if he we beckoning a mule" (123). Due to its striking conflation of ethnicities, the fragment reveals certain convergences between the histories of ethnic women. It is a widely-known historical fact that black slaves were renamed by their masters, which served to annihilate any trace of personal history a black slave may have

6 In an endnote to their interview with Meena Alexander, Deepika Bahri and Mary Vasudeva mention the existence of the "dotbusters," who are defined as "racist and violent gangs that target Indians, particularly women who wear the traditional dot (*bindi*) on their foreheads" (53). The dotbusters were especially active in New Jersey, the birthplace of Alexander's Draupadi.

had. Draupadi is likewise renamed during the performance. Her real name, taken from the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, is shortened to Dropti, which is easier to pronounce to Americans, and then exchanged altogether for an ordinary Bette. In the process of being renamed, Draupadi is supposed to forgo her identity and accept the authority of others (here, an Anglo-Saxon male) to name her and thus shape her identity.[7]

Draupadi's name in itself carries important connotations. According to the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi was the wife of the five Pandava brothers. The most famous story concerning Draupadi is the account of her husbands' losing her, together with themselves and their kingdom, to their enemy Duryodhana in a game of dice. When the new owner of Draupadi orders her to be stripped naked in front of the whole court, Draupadi, realizing that she cannot count on her husbands' help, asks Lord Krishna to protect her. Her wish is granted and her sari gets miraculously extended so that she cannot be disrobed and in this way dishonored (The *Mahabharata*, Book Two, Section LXVII). In another fragment of Alexander's novel the mythic Draupadi is mentioned as one of several women suffering at the hands of men: "Sita, Ophelia, Draupadi, Antigone" (194). The list comprises women representing both Indian and western literary archetypes. According to the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, Sita is the wife of the king Rama famous for her loyalty to her husband. Yet, after being kidnapped by the demon Ravana, her faithfulness is doubted by her husband and hence she needs to undertake a test of fire, from which she "emerges... unscathed" (Young 12). In the Hindu collective imagination, Sita functions as a paragon of wifely virtue and sacrifice. Yet, as Katrak rightly points out, folk versions of the myth of Sita show her not as "a model of silent suffering and self-sacrifice" but rather as "an example of female resistance to patriarchy" (*Politics* 58). For example, in one of the versions of the story, fed up with her husband's repeated accusations of infidelity, after successfully passing one more test, Sita asks Mother Earth to take her body. This way Sita becomes an Eastern counterpart of Antigone and Ophelia, both women brought to death one way or another by their male kin. By placing the Indian mythical princesses Draupadi and Sita alongside female characters from Western

7 The issue of (re-)naming is also tackled by Bharati Mukherjee in her well-known novel *Jasmine*. The protagonist keeps getting new names from the men she is romantically attached to: first, her Indian husband changes her name Jyoti to Jasmine, and later, her two American lovers, unable to pronounce her Indian name, call her Jase and Jane, respectively. Each instance of re-naming is in essence an act of asserting authority over the woman's identity. In her analysis of Mukherjee's short story "Orbiting," in which the characters shorten their own ethnic names so that they sound more American, Shilpa Davé writes in a somewhat similar vein that "[t]hese fictionalized names become a construct for an acceptable ethnicity" (107).

master narratives, Alexander points to the shared history of gendered oppression that women have to contend with regardless of what part of the world they come from and what form the oppression in question may take.

Violence and/in Art

With its focus on the questions of ethnicity and gender, the art Draupadi creates constitutes a relevant element of Alexander's narrative, showing the prevalence of violence in the history of virtually any ethnic minority. The connection between art, violence, ethnicity and space in *Manhattan Music* is further illuminated if one takes into account what W. J. T. Mitchell writes in his essay "The Violence of Public Art: *Do the Right Thing*." Although Mitchell's article is devoted primarily to Spike Lee's movie, what the author points out about the connections of art and violence as well as about art's capacity to transcend, or complicate, clear-cut borders between spaces is relevant with regard to Alexander's novel as well. Addressing the question of public art, Mitchell begins his essay with a powerful example that demonstrates the convergence of (public) art and (real or symbolic) violence. The example in question is the Beijing Massacre and what Mitchell calls "the confrontation of images at the central public space in China" (29), that is the demolition by student protesters of Mao's statue and their subsequent construction of the statue of the "Goddess of Liberty." This transgression was met with a very literal violence enacted by the state—the new statue together with its supporters was wiped off the face of the square. What happened on Tiananmen Square in 1989, together with instances of public outrage at the creation of certain works of public art in the US, leads Mitchell to argue for the "erosion of the boundary between public and private art [which] is accompanied by a collapsing of the distinction between symbolic and actual violence, whether the 'official' violence of police, juridical or legislative power, or 'unofficial' violence in the responses of private individuals" (32). Mitchell does not subscribe to a conventional definition of public art, which would denote an artistic object or image displayed in a public space for the sake of viewers who may otherwise not be exposed to art on any regular basis. Instead, he quotes Scott Burton, who redefines the concept of public art by claiming that all art "might be called public art. Not because it is necessarily located in public places, but because the content is more than the private history of the maker" (Mitchell 33, footnote).

Further, Mitchell distinguishes in his essay three types of connections between violence and (public) art. First, a work of public art may constitute in itself an act or object of violence when it does symbolic violence to the viewers or when it falls victim to vandalism, respectively. Second, the artistic image may function

as a weapon of violence, "a device for attack, coercion, incitement, or more subtle 'dislocations' of public spaces" (Mitchell 37), encouraging the viewers to show a particular reaction. Finally, an object of public art may be a representation of violence, "whether a realistic imitation of a violent act, or a monument, trophy, memorial, or other trace of past violence" (37–38).

Obviously, it remains a matter of speculation whether Alexander was familiar with Mitchell's essay as she was writing her novel, yet, interestingly, in her depictions of Draupadi's art she points out all the three ties between art and violence that Mitchell enumerates in his article. Even though Draupadi's art is not presented in public spaces but rather in venues specifically created for the presentation and promotion of art (such as the Poets' Café and Franklin Furnace, both based on real places in New York City), her artistic productions conform to Burton's definition of public art cited above in that they touch upon "more than the private history of the maker," for example, issues such as the AIDS epidemic, the discrimination against people of color, or the construction of a woman's body as a product of the mainstream. What is more, all of the artistic pieces Draupadi creates are in one way or another linked to violence. Following Mitchell's typology of the ties between art and violence, Draupadi's art may be viewed as a weapon of violence inasmuch as it yanks the viewers from their comfortable positions and forces them to reconsider their own complicity with racist or sexist ideologies. Draupadi's art definitely constitutes also a representation of violence since it portrays and engraves on the viewers' memories histories of violence perpetrated by the dominant classes upon ethnic minorities, especially women. Finally, art in *Manhattan Music* functions as a very literal weapon of violence: it is with the use of an artistic utensil—a piece of rope Draupadi intends to use in one of her installations—that Sandhya tries to commit suicide by hanging herself in Draupadi's studio.

Sandhya's use of an artistic object as an instrument of death is just one example of how deeply the life of Alexander's protagonist is intertwined with the sphere of art. Even though she is not an artist herself, many crucial events in her life occur against the backdrop of artistic enterprise in one form or another. Significantly, all of the artistic pieces that have exerted some impact on Sandhya play with the notion of borders to represent her ambivalence when it comes to her status as a woman of color in the US. Unlike Draupadi's art, artistic objects relevant to Sandhya do not focus on real violence perpetrated in the history of racial relations in the US, but rather on symbolic violence against recent immigrants, which manifests itself in their exclusion from the public space.

To begin with, Sandhya remembers very vividly a visit to an art gallery in Hyderabad with her mother when she was still a child. She was transfixed at the sight of Ravi Varma's painting of "a caged lady whose long hair dripped in

black. Her sari, painted in thick dabs of white, shimmered like river water. In her right hand the painted lady held a knife" (107). Ravi Varma, a revered nineteenth-century Indian painter, gained fame for his representations of scenes from the two most important Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as well as for his paintings of middle-class women.[8] On the basis of a short description of his painting in *Manhattan Music*, as filtered through the consciousness of a girl, it is difficult to decide with any certainty whether Alexander is describing in her novel a real picture by Varma. Yet, what is more important in view of Alexander's narrative preoccupations are certain motifs that the painting plays with. The woman shown in the picture is wearing a white sari, which accentuates her dark skin and black hair.[9] She is carrying a knife, either as a means of self-defense or a weapon of attack. The cage, too, has an ambiguous meaning: the female figure may be shown inside a cage painted on the canvas, or, alternatively, the frame of the painting may seem to the child-viewer a sort of a cage keeping the woman inside the picture. Even though the description of the painting leaves these riddles unsolved, the choice of the word "cage" is significant in itself inasmuch as it conveys a certain restriction imposed on the woman resulting in her impossibility of exercising free will.

The notions of borders, restrictions and cages reappear in the description of another work of art that plays such a crucial role in the representation of Sandhya's immigrant anxiety that it merits a mention at the very outset of the novel. When already in New York and traveling by subway, Sandhya notices a sculpture in the Union Square subway station that strikes a chord with her own feelings of non-belonging and displacement: "a cage of chicken wire guarding two twin sculptures, two metal chairs, bolted to the ground, their large proportions making them curiously childlike[.] The chairs were painted red and blue, their backs ornate in a fantasy of feeling" (5). Drawn by the magnetism of the piece, "Sandhya tried to put her hand through the chicken wire that protected the art work. She wanted to shove forward till she could sit. All she wanted to do was to sit ever so quietly, waiting. She wanted her feet soldered to the rough tiles"

8 For a detailed analysis of Ravi Varma's artistic career, see Chapter 5, titled "The Artist as a Charismatic Individual: Raja Ravi Varma," in Partha Mitter's *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922: Occidental Orientations*.

9 In her analysis of the symbolism of white color in the movie *Daughters of the Dust*, Susan Friedman makes an interesting observation that the donning of white clothes by women of color may be an example of what Homi Bhabha calls "colonial mimicry" (163). The concept is meant to denote "the imitative practices of the colonized whose adaptation of certain western modes undermines the ideology of 'natural' western superiority through a performance of constructivism" (Friedman 163).

(5). The chairs, painted the colors of the American flag and fastened securely to the ground, stand in Sandhya's mind for an unquestionable belonging in the United States. The fact that she is separated from the sculpture by a cage of chicken wire becomes symbolic of her unfulfilled longing to get inside, to belong within the human mosaic of America, to have her own feet "soldered" to the American ground. As Hepburn maintains in his study of the representations of art objects in literature, display always imposes some distance between the viewer and the artistic object, and the physical distance is oftentimes perceived by the viewer as a psychological distance as well (41). Hence, the sculpture represents to Sandhya everything she would like to be but is not: as it is, she feels insecure in her brown skin, barred from the entrance to the American mainstream and unable to form a sustainable identity. In other words, the metaphorical bridge leading to belonging in America turns out in Sandhya's case to be one "that seizes crossing" (221), as Sandhya's cousin, the poet Jay, puts it in one of his poems.

Sandhya's growing depression is situated against the backdrop of the cityscape. When she begins to gradually lose her senses, the urban landscape reflects the eerie quality of her mind as the cityscape becomes a sort of a canvas on which her psychotic mind draws images, predominantly the images of wings, symbolic of freedom she is incapable of achieving (Alexander, *Manhattan* 102). Following her failed suicide attempt in Draupadi's studio, Sandhya undergoes a lengthy process of healing, but the actual moment of her recovery is again situated against the backdrop of the cityscape. To be more precise, it occurs at the intersection of man-made and natural urban environment[10] and it takes place in two stages: the first happening outside the Hunter art gallery, and the second in Central Park. Ready to enter the Hunter art gallery and looking at her reflection in the glass doors leading inside, Sandhya sees a dark shadow behind her:

> As Sandhya moved her neck the shadow moved too, and then her arm, torso, thigh were all taken up in a quick step, a dark, marginal being basted to the reflection of moving flesh.... She was tempted. She should turn back, go down into that darkness, never come back.... Sandhya looked back at the glass window. It couldn't have been more than a moment or two, but the sun had moved behind a passing cloud. It was the angle of light, nothing more or less, but the shadow had vanished. And Sandhya Rosenblum stood there... staring at herself

10 See an interesting typology of various elements of the city, i.e. natural, built, human and verbal in Hana Wirth-Nesher's introductory chapter to her *City Codes: Reading a Modern Urban Novel*, 11–14.

> in a bright mirror. There she was, intact and whole, no doubleness seizing her from behind. She felt the sunlight on her throat and relaxed, letting her feet increase their hold on a warm sidewalk. How long it would last she could not tell. Perhaps in a few months, a few years, it would all splinter[11] again, and she would be seized by unknown passions welling out of her flesh. But for now, she would be, she would let herself be. (214–215)

Unlike her alter ego Draupadi, Sandhya has never felt whole in the US for "[t]he borders she had crossed had marked her very soul" to make her "a tattooed thing" (74). She has even grown envious of her husband Stephen's wholeness, symbolized by his knowledge and usage of only one language, American English. Sandhya feels whole for the first time in the US while looking inside through the glass doors, and it is not inside any building that she looks but inside a gallery. By definition, a gallery is a place that trades in images. Sandhya "buys" the image of herself reflected in the surface of the glass window and that image suggests wholeness and belonging. Her own reflection is superimposed on the image of the painting that is hung on the gallery wall, "a triangle of green paint signifying a mountain, a trickle of dull red down its flank" (214). Although the red trickle that Sandhya identifies as "a stream of rusty water" (214) draws attention due to its color so different from its background, it still remains part of the larger whole. She seems to understand that within the human composition of a place what stands out by virtue of its color is not necessarily outside but part of the whole. Armed with this knowledge, Sandhya feels her wish articulated at the subway station come partly true: her feet press hard into the sidewalk to become metaphorically "soldered" to the American ground. Her recovery becomes complete when, in Central Park, she takes off her sandals and walks into the lake, which for her becomes a manifestation of her belonging in the American metropolis. As the novel ends, Sandhya, feeling that "[t]here was a place for her here... walk[s] quickly into the waiting city" (228).

Sandhya's feelings of lostness, generated by the experience of immigration, are contrasted in the novel with Draupadi's syncretism and the ease with which she weaves her family's real and imagined ethnic backgrounds into one whole, which is if not coherent then at least sustainable. Perhaps because she comes from a relatively homogenous family background, Sandhya cannot come to terms with the duality generated by the experience of crossing borders: "she feared she might die of the sheer transparency needed to be in two places at once"

11 In an interview she gave to Iwanaga and Srikanth, Alexander talked at length about the theme of splintered or splintering self that she explores in her poetry and fiction ("The Voice" 7).

(Alexander, *Manhattan* 95–96). Katrak in her analysis of Alexander's writing calls such a state "the *simultaneity of geography*... the possibility of living here in body and elsewhere in mind and imagination" ("South" 201, italics in the original). Sandhya's name is itself symbolic of her precarious position of being poised between two cultures, able to fit neither here nor there: "In Sanskrit the name [Sandhya] signified those threshold hours, before the sun rose or set, fragile zones of change before the clashing absolutes of light and dark took hold" (Alexander, *Manhattan* 227).

Following her emigration from India Sandhya Rosenblum suffers from agitation generated by what she perceives as her inability to fit in America on account of her facial features, her clothing and her mannerisms. Her state of mind is similar to what Gloria Anzaldúa calls "a *mestiza* consciousness" (236). In her seminal essay titled "*La conciencia de la mestiza*: Towards a New Consciousness," Anzaldúa defines *la mestiza* as "a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another"; finding herself "sandwiched between two cultures" *la mestiza* "undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war" (234). Anzaldúa further argues that "[t]he ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The *mestiza*'s dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness" (234). Sandhya fits Anzaldúa's definition of *la mestiza* perfectly,[12] and her restlessness, which leads to her depression and attempted suicide, is reflected in the fragmented, disjointed structure of Alexander's novel. The main sections of the text are the six chapters titled "Sitting," "Stirring," "Going," "Stoning," "Turning" and "Staying." The grammatical form of the gerund used in each of these one-verb titles is indicative of a certain movement or incompleteness of the action. Hence, the titles may be understood as corresponding to the development of the protagonist—from the anxiety of immigration through her nervous breakdown to a sense of relative security—in a movement that Alexander terms a "ceaseless metamorphosis of spirit" (*Manhattan* 132). The title of the last chapter, "Staying," despite using the gerund form of the verb, suggests a degree of closure, as the act of staying presupposes the decision to stay that must have been taken before.

12 Parvinder Mehta argues that all the major female characters in *Manhattan Music*—Draupadi, Sandhya and her cousin Sakhi—correspond to Anzaldúa's definition of *la mestiza* for "they learn to accept any ambiguities and transform themselves" (248). Yet, I would argue that the process is most vexed in the case of Sandhya, who is the only woman presented in the novel as undergoing what Anzaldúa's calls "a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war" (234), whereas the other two women—although undoubtedly representing hybrid identities—feel more secure with who they are.

The Language of Art

Meena Alexander's work, whether autobiographical or fictional, has always been preoccupied with the question of language, due to the author's own exposure to several languages throughout her life: her native Malayalan that she could speak but neither read nor write, Arabic heard all around her when she spent her childhood in Sudan and in which her first poems were published in translation though she was not able to read them herself, British English of her education, and, finally, American English. When asked about the importance of heteroglossia in an interview by Maxey, Alexander responded:

> I have multiple languages working for me. But I have always grown up in a world where there were things one did not understand, because there were languages that were not completely accessible... it just gives you a particular sense of being in a world where you can be comfortable even though linguistically the world is not really knowable. (191–192)

Alexander's fictional characters likewise struggle with the limitations that language imposes on communication. As Katrak puts it, language is especially important for women as it can serve as "a coping mechanism" (*Politics* 207) in situations of powerlessness.

What happens then when language generates more problems than it solves, as in the case of Sandhya, who is not convinced that "varied languages... made one better equipped for life in a world of multiple anchorages such as New York presented" (Alexander, *Manhattan* 68)? Alexander suggests that in such cases another, extra-linguistic mode of expression must be found. For example, the heroine in her first novel *Nampally Road* discards English for the sake of "a communal dream language that allows women to express themselves, and escape from the boundaries of Western definitions" (Davé 110). In *Manhattan Music* this special language, a "dream language" that enables the characters to communicate their feelings freely, is the language of art. As Mehta claims, art "provides an emotional outlet to vent frustrations or anguish faced by the immigrants in this novel. Art is like a mirror reflecting multiple identities of the (immigrant) artist. The versatility of art in this novel reflects on the adaptive, dynamic, and even fluid quality of the immigrants living in America" (234).

The role of art is emphasized in the novel's structure. As has already been pointed out, the main sections of *Manhattan Music* are interspersed with brief chapters, a mere few pages long, narrated by Draupadi Dinkins and one chapter narrated by Jay, Sandhya's cousin, a photographer-turned-poet. These artist-narrated chapters, starting with the Overture and ending with the Coda give the novel a structure resembling that of a musical composition, with Draupadi's chapters

playing the role of leitmotif. Music, it must be remembered, is also evoked in the title of the novel and seems always to be playing in the background, even though it is not paid as much attention to as other forms of art, including performance, photography or poetry. The title of the novel may also refer to the sounds of the streets, which Sandhya interprets as "curious, atonal music" (78), or it may denote the people who live in Manhattan and form the human mosaic of New York, comparable to the components of a musical composition. The—somewhat overoptimistic—lesson that Sandhya learns at the end of the novel is that although people, like instruments, sound different, they all have a place and a role to play within the composition of New York and America as such. The apparent naivety of such a conclusion stems from the fact that Sandhya has never fallen victim to racial oppression and her struggle has been of an inner, rather than outer, character. In view of that, the utopian vision of New York as a place welcoming to all is what helps her accept herself as a rightful member of America.

As argued in this essay, Meena Alexander in *Manhattan Music* deploys several interwoven discourses to express the multivalent experience of border crossings. For one thing, she frames her account of Sandhya's fraught identity in spatial terms, showing literal movement through space, from India to America, to be a crucial factor bearing upon the construction of identity. To complicate and enrich her portrayal of immigrant sensibility Alexander opens up the metaphorical space of artistic creation, which serves as a mirror of the anxious immigrant's troubled mind. Art also functions in the novel as a political tool used to raise people's awareness about the history of racial oppression and to forge coalitions among various groups of people of color. Finally, art is presented as a form of language which is universal in its accessibility to all and which enables an expression of an unrestricted range of meanings. To conclude, the novel thus seems to show that "a bridge that seizes crossing" can after all be crossed through art.

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Aneta Dybska

Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks*: Community Gardening and Urban Regeneration

Because of the hegemonic status of the suburban lifestyle in the U.S., the dominant image of American garden is a private lawn surrounding a single-family home. Yet, in recent decades, increasing numbers of Americans have engaged in community gardening projects, raising fruit and vegetables rather than mowing grass. Interest in community gardening as a grassroots initiative to countervail urban disinvestment and abandonment goes back to 1970s New York. In a city verging on bankruptcy, amidst blight and decay, environmental activists mobilized the Lower East Side residents in an effort to reclaim rundown neighborhood lots via gardening. Only when they had cleared the vacant lots that doubled as dumping grounds, did the city show interest in the land that over the years had come into city ownership for tax delinquency. Similar voluntary initiatives took root in many low-income communities of color that had been passed over by capital and deprived of public services. These infrapolitical activities involving the squatting of vacant lots[1] and cultivating vegetables and flowers were initially contested by the city but then supervised by Operation Green Thumb, a city organization established to administer the issue of temporary leases which cost a symbolic $1 per year. Thus, what began as a grassroots revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods, over the years was incorporated into the policy agenda of many American cities.

Today urban gardening is so widespread and familiar that few would question its nutritional, educational, cultural, and therapeutic benefits. The gardens offer entrepreneurial and practical skills training, as well as sustainability. The building of local economies today usually goes hand in hand with a food justice agenda that focuses on ameliorating social and economic inequalities in the underserved neighborhoods. Be it Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, or Cleveland, American municipalities make it their priority to offer access to fresh, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food to their diverse body of residents. But parallel with concerns for social justice, community gardening is extolled by experts,

1 See Sandrine Baudry's "Reclaiming Urban Space as Resistance: The Infrapolitics of Gardening."

not-for-profit organizations, community activists, and federal grant applicants for its capacity to enhance social capital at the neighborhood level, and, in the process, prompt a comprehensive regeneration of "islands of deprivation, encircled by oceans of prosperity" (Davidson, "Is Gentrification All Bad?").

One of the ways in which the idea of urban gardening has spread across the country is through didactic literature for children and young adults.[2] Such literature performs important affective work; while it spins utopian visions rather than documenting real-life projects, it also gives us an insight into the social and affective potential of community gardens. Paul Fleischman's 1997 short novel for young adults, *Seedfolks*, seems to be a literary response to the promise of urban regeneration brought on by the community gardening movement. Among other children's books published in the 1990s that deal with urban farming are *City Green* (1994) by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan and *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart (1997). Their protagonists are young resolute girls who beautify their drab urban neighborhoods with flowers, herbs, and vegetables. *City Green* is similar to *Seedfolks* in that it is set contemporaneously and makes a community garden a source of neighborhood transformation. Residents of different age and ethnicity unite and cooperate to transform a vacant lot into a garden that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also breeds joy, kindness, and happiness, even managing to seduce an old cantankerous man who initially stayed apart from the project.

The affective aspect of community gardening is also highlighted in Stewart's *The Gardener*. Set in the Depression Era, the story has a family focus, but carries a similar message of personal growth and enrichment as mediated by the beauty of nature. To make her uncle happy, the young female protagonist focuses all her energy on beautifying a drab city bakery; she achieves her goal by transforming a trash-filled rooftop into a lush flower garden. More recently, Jacqueline Briggs Martin's non-fiction picture book *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (2013) has joined the list of books on urban farming, this time with a male protagonist as the hero. Once a basketball star, Will Allen is known today for his engagement in sustainable urban farming, combining food justice activism with community building. What links Martin's informative story with the earlier fictional accounts of urban farming is that all of them reach out to children and young adults with an educational and socially transformative agenda in mind. Whereas *City Green* transitions smoothly from the imaginary world of the narrative to real-life recommendations on how to start a community garden, *The Gardener* and *Seedfolks*

2 I would like to thank Professor Daniel Hade of the University of Pennsylvania, a Children's Literature scholar who, when visiting Poland as a Fulbright Scholar in 2013, responded to my ideas, supported my line of inquiry, and prompted me to deepen my analysis with more daring questions.

conceal their political agenda behind a veil of nostalgia for the past and utopian idealism respectively.

At the very moment when children's books began to propagate the idea of urban farming, 114 out of more than 700 New York community gardens were threatened with bulldozing as part of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani neoliberal policies of stimulating growth (Knigge 63).[3] It is no coincidence, then, that sites like community gardens find their way into children's literature of the period. Yet *Seedfolks* does not merely illustrate the mechanics of community building as investigated by sociologists, urbanists or political theorists. Nor is the community garden only a convenient literary backdrop against which a sense of community is cultivated. The garden is inherent to place-based identity formation in the urban context. Informed by intellectual and public debates on the politics of multiculturalism and its ramifications for liberalism, the novel is constitutive of a public that draws on communitarian idealism to re-define the American nation.

Seedfolks is set in a 1990s working-class immigrant neighborhood in Cleveland, whose history is typical of the urban growth of the industrial era. As we learn from Ana, a Rumanian old-timer and an avid observer of neighborhood life over several decades, in the early twentieth century, the area experienced an influx of European immigrants: Slovaks, Italians, Rumanians, and Poles. When in the 1930s African Americans migrated from the Southern states, the neighborhood reproduced the racial divisions of the Jim Crow South, with Gibb Street as the dividing line between the white and black communities. At the peak of the industrial era, Cleveland's steel mills and factories absorbed immigrant workers, yet as those industries closed or relocated South or overseas, the whites fled making room for new waves of immigrants, this time from Central and South America and Asia. But the newcomers in Ana's account do not put down roots as their predecessors did in the bygone era of prosperity and economic stability. They are a transient people from Mexico, Haiti, Guatemala, Vietnam, and India who treat the place "like a cheap hotel—[where] you stay until you've got enough money to leave" (6).

The grim fate of the Cleveland neighborhood is in many ways typical of that suffered by many Northeastern industrial towns and cities since the 1970s. Deeply affected by economic restructuring and the loss of industrial jobs, disinvestment and decline, those ethnically diverse neighborhoods have turned into sites of destitution marked by unemployment, alcohol-addiction, illicit drug economy, overcrowding, and crime.

It is against the backdrop of these demographic and economic shifts that *Seedfolks*' thirteen narrators, differing in age, race, ethnicity, and social background,

3 Giuliani announced his plans to do so in 1997.

engage in a community gardening project. Yet the dire physical environment or structural limitations to upward mobility do not seem to be the narrators' major concern. Those considerations are inserted into the individual stories in an attenuated manner, and are often alluded to by old residents who have a memory of the neighborhood's patterns of ethnic succession and disinvestment. Random yet meaningful references to the immigrant neighborhood's past and its gradual decline over the years make it a case of what in sociological parlance is defined as "social disorganization": a combined effect of residential mobility, cultural diversity as well as economic deprivation. In urban areas where social disorganization prevails, low levels of social control (formal or informal), anomic and conflictual attitudes, and weak social integration have been identified (Putnam 307–308).

The narrative focus of this short novel for young adults lies somewhere else. While the narrators acknowledge the subsistence, aesthetic, sentimental as well as therapeutic functions of the abandoned, trashy, and rat-infested lot turned into a verdant public space, the community garden has wider social implications. The blurb on the back cover of *Seedfolks* informs us that it is a story of a "garden that transforms a neighborhood," yet the transformative agency, although limited to a specific place, lies in the determination of volunteers of diverse ethnic backgrounds, with different life experiences and histories. This neighborhood project emerges in spite of, as much as against, the grueling reality of cultural estrangement, social fragmentation, as well as economic disadvantage. Giving an account of the first year of the Gibb Street community garden, *Seedfolks*' multiple narratives delineate a progression from individual anonymity and alienation, through interest generated by informal contact, to a fledgling sense of place-based identity. The Gibb Street community garden serves as a paragon of successful community-level regeneration and is symptomatic of the neoliberal governance whereby the burden and responsibility for a thorough neighborhood transformation[4] is located in the structures of the civil society rather than the welfare state (Paddison 194). An intermediate ground between the family and the distant institutions of the city, the garden fosters cross-generational and cross-cultural dialogue. More, it becomes a stepping stone towards spontaneous, grassroots-level community building.

4 According to scholars at the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, "urban regeneration has many parallels to US urban policy in the fields of economic/community development and neighborhood revitalization. Similar to the three pillars of sustainability, this definition of urban regeneration establishes a holistic policy and planning framework with a strong emphasis on placed-based approaches that links the physical transformation of the built environment with the social transformation of local residents" ("Urban Regeneration").

This paper offers a reading of *Seedfolks* that is informed by discussions of communitarianism that scholars, public intellectuals, and grassroots activists took up in the 1990s to address what they thought was ailing the American society, namely, social atomization, competition, the weakening of institutions of the civil society, and loss of traditional "community." However, not all were supportive of communitarianism; opponents of a return to the community saw it as a force destructive to individual freedoms, promoting parochialism, and perpetuating fear of cultural others. Born of a desire for stability and security, communitarianism, they claimed, was conducive to social homogenization and spatial exclusiveness, and could lead to social disunity on a larger political scale. As will be argued in this paper, *Seedfolks* attempts to find a middle ground between the two intellectual/ideological positions by subsuming the politics of difference under the communitarian goals of gardening. Yet, social capital enhanced by collective participation in the gardening project is not a means of retrieving an idealized preindustrial *Gemeinschaft*-type community in a post-industrial setting. Rather, it serves as a conduit to bottom-up community-led regeneration premised on affective investment in the garden.

While the fictional community garden could serve as a temporary anti-crisis measure, akin to Detroit's "potato patch" in the 1890s or World War II "victory gardens,"[5] the motivations that drive the project turn out to be diverse and grounded in the characters' ethnic cultures, family histories, and emotional needs: remembrance of ancestors, reconnection with one's rural roots, the healing of personal traumas caused by the loss of loved ones or the hostility of the urban environment, and, finally, dreams of financial success. Historically, such fragmented and individuated projects, evolving in a piecemeal manner, originated in times of urban crisis caused by shifting economies and globalization of capital and labor, but *Seedfolks*' characters are not undernourished or needy enough to classify for welfare benefits. Some adult immigrants perform service jobs or run small businesses (Amir has a textile shop, Sae Young—a laundry, Virgil's father—a taxi). The old timers are either state employees (Leona—a teacher, Wendel—a janitor) or retirees (Ana, Sam, Florence, Mr. Myles, and a man in a rocker). If they start gardening to supplement their modest food budget or poor diet, this is in no

5 The first urban gardens were established in the 1890s in crisis-ridden industrial cities such as Detroit, New York, Boston, Chicago, or Seattle. The municipalities encouraged the poor to cultivate root crops and vegetables as a temporary work relief measure. In Detroit Mayor Hazen Pingree's "potato patch" program targeted around fifty percent of all affected by the crisis and long-term unemployment. Most of the gardeners were first-generation immigrants with a farming past in Europe ("Mayor Hazen Pingree and the Potato Patch Plan of the 1890's").

way highlighted or even referenced. Rather, what many of the gardeners and their supporters are hungry for and what transpires from their narratives is a desire to belong to a place where contact and interaction would occur naturally, and where cooperation would breed familiarity and dispel distrust and fear of one's cultural strangers. For instance, Sam, a 78-year-old Jewish retiree, treats the garden as a site of neighborhood regeneration. Likened to a fisherman, he feels accountable for "sewing up the rips in the neighborhood['s]" social network (30–31). Even if the remaining gardeners initially do not share this communitarian impulse, with time the interconnected network of personal relationships yields a territorial community.

The narrative development from the atomized individuals' insecurity and alienation towards collective place-making across ethnic and age divisions in a culture where, as Indian immigrant Amir puts it, all are "foes unless they're known to be friends" (73), makes the garden a testing ground for communitarian ideals, with liberal multiculturalism as a political model. A utopian endeavor and a speculative exercise, *Seedfolks* points to enhanced social capital as the mainstay of the multicultural project.

There are many definitions of social capital, but the one that triggered engaged debates on the American society comes from political scientist Robert Putnam. In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam defines social capital as

> connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue.' The difference is that 'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (19)

What insights does Putnam's notion of social capital shed on our reading of *Seedfolks*? Published a few years before *Bowling Alone*, Fleischman's short novel shows a concern with lost social moorings and restoration of what sociologist Amitai Etzioni calls the "moral infrastructure" (89) of American neighborhoods. If ethnic roots, traditions, and customs are part of their identity and each narrator is embedded in a particular way of life, their ties with the larger ethnic community are not explored. Rather, Fleischman's narrators are depicted as dispersed individuals, separate from their ethnic clusters or even families, who by creating the garden put down community roots. Thus they are the eponymous seedfolks, the ancestors, the founding fathers of the Gibb Street garden.

The tangible effects of the gardening project can be measured with a progression from anonymity, suspicion, and distrust towards a gradual respect for cultural strangers and openness to cultural idiosyncrasies of others. This com-

munity of gardeners evolves organically with no prior assumptions concerning membership, plot division, or rules of operation. A work in progress that accommodates the gardeners' individual needs, the green space also becomes a commons[6] that encourages neighbors to make an investment in the community. Even though it might appear that the project's success could be stultified by the immigrants' poor English, since "pantomime was often required to get over language barriers" (65), *Seedfolks* underscores the power of affect to bind a community together. The initial feelings of inaptness and disconnectedness give way to shared experiences. As Mr. Myles's British nurse, Nora, put it, "we were all subject to the same weather and pests, the same neighborhood, and the same parental emotions toward our plants" (65).

The emergent community of affect is the synergistic effect of individual work, contact with the soil and the plants, exposure to the smells and sighs of greenery, and the "parental" attachment to the crops. For Virgil, a young Haitian boy who knew nothing of growing lettuce, this experience involves both care and responsibility: "It was like having a new baby in the family. And I was like its mother. . . . It was like a baby always crying for its milk" (43). For many, looking after their plants rekindles precious memories of loved ones, of rural origins in distant places. To a young black man named Curtis, tending tomato plants is an expression of deep affection for his former girlfriend Latisha, a symbol of his readiness to take up the responsibility for a relationship.

Apart from the emotion-charged attachment to their plants, be it carrots, squash, cauliflowers, cilantro, or flowers, the gardeners seem to naturally seek each other's physical presence and, in the common act of cultivating plants, find respite from estrangement in their adopted home. For instance, the Korean Sae Yong recovers the trust lost in people after she was assaulted in an armed robbery. She appreciates the company of others working their small lots of land, the non-intrusive sharing of public space, a non-imposing yet rewarding human presence. Amir, an Indian immigrant, expresses a similar feeling of comfort and safety: "The garden's green was soothing to the eye…. But the garden's greatest benefit, I feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors" (74). Soon a sense of connectedness develops and expresses itself with warm, casual

6 Commons are publically shared spaces that facilitate human contact and exchange, such as sidewalks, parks, public markets, squares, where people can freely come together for social, political, or commercial reasons. Vibrant community life and healthy democracies depend on the commons. The mass enclosure or privatization of public spaces under neoliberal municipal policies in the U.S. and Europe have in recent years generated discussions about and protest against the disappearance of the commons, be it through exclusionary access or surveillance. For a comprehensive discussion of the urban commons, read David Harvey's chapter on "The Creation of Urban Commons" in *Rebel Cities*.

exchanges that breed mutual interest and concern for others. Amir's eggplants and Sae Young's hot peppers encourage friendly conversations. Tío Juan, who speaks an Indian language only, shows Curtis how to grow beefsteak tomatoes, while others teach him to protect them from pests and disease.

The gardeners smile at each other a range of meaningful smiles: a breaking-the-ice smile, a befriending smile, an affirming smile, or an appreciative smile. Then follow reassuring gestures of territorial belonging that evoke associations with the safety of the hearth, close family, kin and friends. In the gardeners' own words, they feel "almost like a family" (50), "a part of community" (76), that the "small circle of earth became a second home" (63). This emotional rootedness of being "planted in the garden" (65) and the personal ties that bind them breed reciprocity, trust and care: when Royce, a homeless African American adolescent, helps them with watering plants and minor repairs, they return favors by feeding him or giving him vegetables; others offer tips on parenthood to the pregnant Mexican teenager Maricela; when Mr. Miles does not show up for a few days, all express concern. This effect of bonding spreads onto the sympathetic onlookers, Ana, Florence, and an anonymous man in a rocker, whose apartment windows look onto the green lot. They are avid participant observers of the community as it congeals around the garden. The emergent spirit of care, cooperation and involvement resonates with Etzioni's communitarian appeal, articulated in the mid-1990s, for a "change of heart," "a new way of thinking, a reaffirmation of a set of moral values that we may all share" (18).

Seedfolks suggests that enhanced social capital can breed place-based identities with their own sense of "morality of community." Developed by political scientist Yael Tamir with regard to the liberal state, the concept stresses the importance of affective bonds as the foundation of the liberal state, but also of any constitutive community. Thus, it can be equally applied at the scale of the neighborhood. The "morality of community," explains Tamir, affects our thinking about moral issues in the following ways:

> it encourages members to develop relations based on care and cooperation…. [I]t can account for our intuition that we have a reason, at least in some cases, to favor those who share their life with us, and about whom we care deeply…. [I]t is possible for individuals who care about individual others and who are well aware of their affiliations, to agree on principles of justice…. [T]he implications of the morality of community regarding attitudes toward nonmembers are no more and, in fact, probably less self-interested, than those derived from liberal theory. (96)

The morality of community is complementary to liberal morality rather than supersede it, Tamir observes (95). Yet, should a cultural community curtail an individual's rights and entitlements, the liberal state will offer protection to all

members of the political community (Szahaj 52). Modeling the fictional garden community on the principles of liberal multiculturalism, Fleischman points to the politics of recognition as a conduit to neighborhood regeneration. Philosopher Charles Taylor, in making a case for the politics of recognition, argues that "where the politics of universal dignity fought for forms of nondiscrimination that were quite 'blind' to the ways in which citizens differ, the politics of difference often redefines nondiscrimination as requiring that we make these distinctions the basis of differential treatment" (276).

How, then, does *Seedfolks* apply the multicultural agenda at the narrative and ideological level? The narrative told from multiple points of view allows for an even distribution of voices as regards race, ethnicity, gender, or age. This equality of representation does not seem to privilege one voice over another or discredit any culture-specific or race-based point of view. Even if, initially, *mis*recognition finds expression in the stereotyped images of others' ethnicity, the narrators' self-reflexivity, prompted by cross-cultural contact, leads them to affirm the cultural specificity of the participating members. Although the gardeners organize into clusters—blacks and whites at the opposing ends of the garden, with Asians and Central Americans in-between (33)—they do not perceive others' race and ethnicity in terms of exotic "otherness" or irreconcilable group interests. Nor do their diverse experiences, motives, and expectations create significant value dissonance or hierarchies of morality. At most we can speak of an axiological tension between what C. B. Macpherson calls "possessive individualism" and communitarianism, between pursuit of egoistic ends on the one hand and civic cooperation and trust on the other.

When the Vietnamese girl Kim starts growing lima beans amidst heaps of trash inhabited by rats, others follow by clearing small pieces of land for their individual needs the way homesteaders did. Officially a *community* garden after Leona, a black teacher, signs the land lease with the city, this project does not involve communal ownership of plants grown. Rather each new gardener chooses, cleans, and "appropriates" a piece of land for his or her own needs without interfering in other's designs; membership is not formalized, nor does it involve paying fees or complicity with a set of written rules. This spontaneous and haphazard grassroots endeavor involves an investment in the community founded on equal access to nature and respect for private property. Only in reaction to the violation of these basic rights does the garden transform from an open public space to a limited-access garden with vernacular forms of protection against vandalism: a board fence, chicken wire, a gate here and a padlock there, a KEEP OUT sign and, tellingly, barbed wire (35), and even an all-night watch of the crops.

The project evolves as the neighborhood experiences a general corrosion of trust in public institutions. This is exemplified by Leona's frustrating efforts to

determine the vacant lot ownership. After numerous time-consuming calls she makes a wry comment: "the people running Cleveland don't usually come down here, unless they take a wrong turn on the freeway. You can't measure the distance between my block and City Hall in miles" (27).

This disconnection from the larger polity along with excessive pursuit of self-interest at the cost of the common good, are symptomatic of the neighborhood's weak civic engagement to which the garden seems to be a viable antidote. Virgil's father, a Haitian taxi driver, stands as a parody of self-centered individualism. He treats the community in an instrumental way, as "a necessary burden and [he] cooperate[s] only for the sake and pursuing [his] private ends" (Sandel 148). He lies to others to hide the pecuniary motives of growing lettuce on a lot six times the size of others. This recourse to deceit in pursuit of self-interest is seen as sabotaging the morality of the emergent community. Disapproval of Virgil's father's anti-communitarian attitude is vividly expressed in Maricela's account: "He'd drive up in a cab, slam on the brakes like the Pope just stepped in front of him, run through our squash, cut a bunch of lettuce, and run back with it in a bucket of water. Then he'd peel out, leaving lots of rubber" (70). Thus, *Seedfolks* seems to validate the conception of the good of community based on a shared sense of belonging and solidarity, trust and cooperation rather than mere respect for individual rights under cultural pluralism. A standing example of such a practice is the barbecue party held in the Gibb Street garden during which the gardeners show off and share crops. Amir compares it to a harvest festival in his native India but, if anything, this multicultural feast evokes associations with the Plymouth Pilgrims' and the Wampanoag Indians' Thanksgiving celebration of a bountiful first harvest.

It transpires, then, that community gardening as a means of urban regeneration is possible as long as cultural communities do not threaten their members' exercise of individual rights and entitlements secured them as citizens within the political community.[7] But if the multicultural political project is to succeed, then, the role of the collective cannot be treated in an instrumental way as derivative of "what it contributes to the lives of individuals" only (Kymlicka 140).

What is at stake in the Gibb Street multicultural community garden? The narrative trajectory of Fleischman's novel from disconnection to a sense of "we-ness," from uninvolved indifference to congeniality, corresponds to the spatial and aesthetic makeover of the blighted vacant lot into a lush multicultural community garden. The regenerative aspect of the project can be discussed through the prism of social capital and its ramifications for democracy, neighborhood safety and economic

7 For a detailed discussion on the two kinds of communities, go to Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989).

growth, as laid out by Putnam in *Bowling Alone* and by Jane Jacobs in *Death and Life of American Cities*.

As regards democratic institutions, Putnam holds that their performance depends in measurable ways upon social capital. Voluntary organizations, such as churches, advocacy groups, bridge clubs or reading groups, are an inseparable element of civic training. They develop skills and practical knowledge necessary for political participation and cooperation towards achieving common goals, be it in local or nationwide politics. In uniting citizens around a common cause, formal and informal social networks create a forum for public deliberation, and introduce their members to such civic functions as organizing to gain political clout, holding their elected representatives accountable but also protecting their communities from abuse by political leaders. Civic groupings create avenues for political action even among the most marginalized, whose voice, fragmented and dispersed among uninvolved individuals, would not otherwise be heard in public (337–340).[8] *Seedfolks* offers one example of how to teach civic skills such as participation in community life to solve local problems. Sam, an old-timer with an activist past announces a contest among neighborhood children under 12 to solve the problem of water provision (the winner will get $20). He puts up a makeshift speakers' corner and lets the contestants present their ideas on a wooden box to the audience gardeners. Once they chose the best solution, the gardeners implement the plan and make the communal use of the improvement. This grassroots initiative substantiates Putnam's view that neighborhood empowerment and civic engagement are mutually enhancing and, by participating in voluntary associations or informal networks, citizens are more likely to affect the political processes so that they better address their needs and grievances (343–344). Thus *Seedfolks* bears the promise of political regeneration via neighborhood empowerment.

Next to teaching democratic participation, the multicultural garden serves the local goal of safeguarding the community against crime. In neighborhoods where people feel bound by ties of familiarity, friendship, and trust, they are less likely to engage in activity that would be harmful to their neighbors. In the early 1960s, urban scholar Jane Jacobs made a compelling argument about the role of casual contact in bringing about safe neighborhoods.[9] Public peace "is kept primarily by an intimate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves" (32). A vibrant street life, a continuous flow of people in the streets, and the

8 Putnam relies on Alexis de Tocqueville's classic discussion of voluntary associations, as articulated in *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840).

9 Although Jacobs is more willing to use words like "safety" than "crime," her focus is, indeed, on the crime-preventing or crime-combating functions of sidewalk life.

traffic generated by local shops, bars, restaurants, and other businesses all ensure sidewalk safety. Where casual sidewalk contact takes place, for instance among neighbors running errands, "a web of public respect and trust" develops (Jacobs 56), residents feel connected to the local community, and are more likely to control public space to increase neighborhood safety.

Seedfolks offers ready examples corroborating Jacobs's insights. Once, early in the evening, Amir and two other men give up gardening to chase an armed robber who attacked a woman in the garden's vicinity. The successful intervention gives Amir a rewarding feeling of identification with the place and its residents. Likewise, Florence displays a sense of what Jacobs calls a "proprietorship of the street" (*Death and Life* 38) when revealing her relationship with the garden in a descriptive manner:

> I'd always stop there, to see what was new. I was just a watcher, but I was proud of the garden, as if it were mine. Proud and protective. I remember how mad I got when I saw a man reach through someone's fence by the sidewalk and try to grab a tomato. I said "How dare you!" He pulled back his hand and said he's heard it was a *community* garden. (84–85)

The man's insistence on the garden belonging to the community as opposed to being private property raises the question of inclusiveness and openness. Physical location near the garden does not give one automatic membership in the project, nor access to the produce grown and tended by others. It is a commitment to the community that confers insider status on individuals.

Yet another aspect of the communal vs. private dichotomy is highlighted in Florence's narrative which meaningfully closes the novel. Her cursory foray into the garden's future lays bare the complementary and mutually-enhancing processes that stimulate economic growth. After the first year of the garden's operation, landlords increase rents on apartments overlooking the garden (83). A result of the quality-of-life improvement, the garden and the empowered and safe community are caught in a double bind. Because the landlords and developers detect the neighborhood-level regeneration, other investors and businesses will follow. Thus, the market will be more likely to capitalize on the volunteers' sweat equity, often in ways that countervail the original intentions of community gardening.

* * *

In the late 1980s and in the 1990s communitarian thinkers began to revise liberal theories of the state and turned towards the institutions of the civil society as conduits of a positive social change. Finding the effects of individualism corrosive

to American social and political life, they turned towards community building as a model of urban regeneration. Given that by then American cities had become the destination points for culturally diverse and distant groups of immigrants, those regenerative measures could not neglect the impact of ethnic identities on the forging of multicultural citizens within the liberal state. Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* seems to address all those concerns by using the community garden as a testing ground for neighborhood regeneration. Dispelling the threats of ethnic ghettoization shared by opponents of multiculturalism, the novel suggests that the politics of recognition can be successfully integrated into the larger goal of place-based community building. Premised on the emergence of affective bonds and a voluntary commitment to the common good, the Gibb Street garden is a wellspring of social capital that can be used as currency in rehabilitating urban spaces and reinvigorating participatory democracy.

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Jagoda Dolińska

Autofiction and New Realist Prose: Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom*

> [W]rite about yourself. Don't imitate literary models. Of course, imitating literary models is the best thing one can do.
> –Harry Mathews, "The Art of Fiction No. 191"

Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* (2010), a bestseller written in the style of psychological realism, presumably marking a retreat from postmodernist literary experimentation, is not related to life-writing in any way other than in that it employs the structure of an autobiographical account; the present article is an attempt at identifying the life-writing-related tropes used in the novel. The fact that *Freedom* is a work of prose which seems rather traditionally constructed should invite a formal analysis of the text without focusing on issues of authorial intentions, however, Franzen's views (as expressed in interviews and in pieces of criticism) concerning the distribution of the personal element in a work of fiction provide an interesting additional dimension. The book lends itself to be treated as an illustration of not only how autobiographical conventions have infiltrated the literary universe, but also how the once subversive tactics of their application have become ossified. This, in turn, accounts for a diagnosis for the tendencies in popular American literature of the present-day: New Realist writing is marked by conscious reinforcement of traditionally realist features, however "without necessarily returning us to the same place," to use Linda Anderson's formula (16). An additional conclusion is that theories of autobiography should be applied solely as interpretative methods and no longer serve generic distinction, as argued by Paul De Man ("Autobiography as De-Facement").

The autofictional characteristics as discussed in this article are viewed through a deconstructionist prism. The deconstructionist argument seems especially pertinent in that it aims at a synthesis of binary oppositions, which is one way to perceive the relation between autobiography and fiction: this accounts for the abundance of recent theoretical works in the domain of

life-writing criticism.[1] This kind of approach is by no means a crowning of any process; nor is it the latest revelation, as the last years seem to perhaps have seen a digression from the position. However, the emergence of the deconstructionist and poststructural critical stances can be interpreted as either having provoked or accompanied the debate concerning life-writing. In her study of poststructuralism, Catherine Belsey comments upon the nature of the debate which places much emphasis on the development of terminology and definitions (her remarks seem especially fitting in the context of the debate concerning autofiction with its various notions, the discussion of genres and their most accurate examples and formulas) (5).

In this article, I focus upon elements which can be regarded as relevant to the autofictional dimension of Franzen's novel. A reading of the narrative tactics as well as cultural values and conventions of autobiographical writing addressed by the novelist will be proposed, and the effects of these will be discussed. An additional context to these will be provided by an overview of the problems of the author's personal engagement and his views on the roles of the autobiographical and the literary, as expressed in interviews and pieces of criticism. Due to its growing popularity, the novel is worth examining as an instance perhaps significant for new tendencies in American literary production; it can therefore also be seen as an anticipation of the ways in which fictional and autobiographical conventions will perhaps intersect in what can be called popular literature (the novel's success with the publishing market is a factor which cannot, and should not, be overlooked).

The Debate on Autofiction

Several currents of thought have contributed to the fact that problems of the "fictions of the self," despite their universalizing character, find reference in the framework of postmodern sensibility. It is equally important to explicate the con-

1 These include sections in works of autobiography studies which are quoted here (Anderson, Smith and Watson), along with anthologies such as Thomas G. Couser's *Altered Egos: Authority in American Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press 1989) in which classic American pieces of life-writing are reexamined, and James Olney's *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980); philosophical essays (of which I quote Masschelein, Laouyen, Eakin, De Man), and notably Jacques Derrida's study "Demeure: Fiction and Testimony," in Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida, *The Instant of My Death/Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000, 13–103); as well as critical essays devoted more exclusively to problems of autofiction, e.g. Michael Sprinker's instructive essay "Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography" (Olney, 321–342).

cept of autofiction and the limitations to its application here, as it is to briefly trace the background which accounted for the emergence of the focus on the awareness of the fictional element in autobiography. In order to do so, I will indicate the major ideas which have informed the notions of autofictional writing.

Autofiction is conceptualized in two sets of terms, i.e., has two meanings: its narrow, specific sense refers to a literary genre; in a broader context, it is rather a mode of understanding, an interpretative lens which equally denotes the authorial play with conventions of autobiography (including parody and meta-commentary). Anneleen Masschelein begins the foreword to the issue of the journal *Image and Narrative* devoted exclusively to autofictional techniques in art by stating that the term is nowadays indeed understood in two quite different ways, according to "two traditions of thinking about contemporary forms of autobiography" ("Autofiction and/in Image"). As a genre, autofiction dates back to 1977, the name coined by the French theoretician Serge Doubrovsky to fit the needs of his autobiographical novel *Fils* (*The Novelist's Lexicon* 5), and is now practiced by numerous contemporary authors.[2] The other kind of approach, which is of importance for the purposes of this paper, concerns the more general perspective to be adopted in reading, present in the existing "Anglo-American debate concerning life writing and self-representation" (Masschelein).

Autofiction understood in this way, i.e. conceived "as a modus" of writing rather than a genre, Masschelein argues, is an approach pervasive in contemporary forms of artistic expression; once a formula of the avant-garde, thanks to various schools of thought it has evolved to be now universally recognized, and is observed and manifested especially explicitly in modern texts of life-writing which are "cunningly undermined by fictional elements" ("Autofiction and/in Image"). What needs to be commented upon here is the question concerning both the character of such a shift in recognition of autobiographical prose and the reasons for the emergence of this remodeling.

The phenomenon which accompanies this theoretical proposition can be perhaps defined as a certain dissolution of the concept of a coherent authorial subjectivity in the text. Masschelein seeks the underlying cause in the "erosion of the Western, Cartesian, rational subject by all kinds of 'theory' (structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstruction...)" ("Autofiction and/in Image"). This assumption concerning the role of "all kinds of 'theory'" is evidently vague, but also worth closer examination in order to pinpoint these facts of theory that have proven significant in the context: starting with the specificity of deconstructionist argument and subsequently, the notion of the modernist-postmodern change in

2 Especially French writers: the field of study of autofiction as a genre might be in fact assumed to be specifically French.

the aesthetic dominant, the influence of (post)structuralism, and the very recent current of personal criticism (Holland), should be considered as influential.

I want to argue that the key to this theoretical transformation is the following: autobiography, despite its curious character marked by both "pervasiveness and slipperiness" (Anderson 1) has been referred to, and thus solidified, in terms of generic description; whereas autofiction is proposed as a theoretical concept—a construction of perception—which in fact calls for a dissolution of the genre of autobiography as we know it.

This is why it seems indeed legitimate to see this argument as one which represents a deconstructionist logic (perhaps most aptly rendered in Paul De Man's essay "Autobiography as De-Facement"). Moreover, a hypothesis can be followed according to which the notion of autofiction has for its base an argument that is deconstructionist in its nature: i.e., based on two polarized qualities in such a way as to abolish not only the valorization of one but finally also their very opposition, and search for traces of one in the other. Even in studies which focus more on the need of generic normalization of the phenomenon, concessions such as the following can be found which indicate a certain debatability: "because autofiction has not left its formal marks on the readerly spirit, nor has it imposed, in a definitive manner, its own hermeneutic code, it cannot aspire to be perceived as a genre. Not fiction, not autobiography, it is both these things at the same time, it is the synthesis of things *incompatible*" (Laouyen, trans. J. D.). De Man's seminal work, "Autobiography as De-facement," emphasizes the paradoxical character of life-writing as a project—according to the author, any kind of text which one bases on the events of one's own life is inevitably a fictional construction rather than evidence of a reality which the text pretends to reflect. The critic concludes that autobiography has always only been considered a separate literary genre to somewhat artificially elevate its status (919) and distract the readers' attention from the fact that life-writing, as an ensemble of narrative forms, is indeed indistinguishable from fiction.

"Autobiography veils a defacement of the mind of which it is itself the cause" (930), is the main idea behind De Man's text (written in 1979 and introducing, or rather reflecting, it seems, the ideological shift in thought regarding the issues of authorship over text), autobiographical writing—of any kind, in fact—is critically regarded as an impossible and unattainable standard of almost mythical quality. This line of argument follows that of Gérard Genette's *concommitance* (manipulation of narrative time) in that it points to the fact that all texts are in a sense autobiographical, and yet no literary production can be an exact rendition of a life—De Man cites a line from Wordsworth: "of these [are] neither, and [are] both at once" (921). To attempt at filtering the presumably authentic from the fictitious, one is captured in a mechanism similar to that of a "revolving door"

(*tourniquet*), due to the constant play of references, an undecidable problem (921). The writing process consists in coding the otherwise unaccountable events into an inevitably fictional narrative built of tropes, thus authenticity ceases to be a proper criterion altogether (922).

Consequently, it is thanks to the structuralist assumptions of a systemic character of literary phenomena that the "grand persona" of the author is deprived of his status of the absolute source (Smith and Watson 116). This is most clearly seen in several canonical texts by Roland Barthes which share the message of the perhaps best-known "Death of the Author," in which Barthes writes: "the image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his life" (142). He observes, however, a possible change in reading: "*We know now* that a text is not... a single... 'message' of the Author-God" (144, my italics), therefore, equivocal interpretation should be encouraged instead of "furnish[ing] [the text] with a final signified" (147). With the role of authorial intention effaced, the reader's role is in turn emphasized.[3]

The idea of the ontological status of the text is also crucial to Brian McHale's argument about the shift in cultural dominant being the (only) significant difference between modernism and postmodernism in arts (10). Truth, one can infer from McHale's essay, in the postmodern stylistics need no more be tested out of an epistemological concern. Thus, in the context of life-writing, also the question of *knowing* which events of a life are real and of discerning them from the fictional content of a literary work can be interpreted as less relevant (McHale sees epistemology to be present, but increasingly *backgrounded*) (11). One way in which such an approach is manifested is the authors' tendency to adopt styles which reinforce the fictional undertone of a piece of life-writing. These, it may be argued, can be generally described as techniques more or less explicitly accentuating a decline of realist depiction, and defying the principle of verisimilitude in the textual ways in which they operate. In this context, Jonathan Franzen's novel might seem surprisingly traditional, as it does not overtly engage in these practices.

A few sentences should be devoted here to a phenomenon which is related to those described above and just as recent, although its problems do not fall within the scope of this paper: namely, the interest in the presence of the personal and the autobiographical within the framework of science and the humanities. One sign of this preoccupation of academic milieus with the personal and autobiographical

3 Barthes' text has enjoyed such immense popularity that it may be superfluous to summarize it here; however, it should be noted that the French author is a pioneer in the context of autofiction in the sense of treating his own autobiographical texts as fictional (as mentioned e.g. by Masschelein, Laouyen, Smith and Watson).

aspects of literary and critical production (and thus also, possibly, their inherent fictitious element) are initiatives exemplified by the *PMLA* symposium whose two parts were entitled "Inevitability of the Personal" and "Problems with Personal Criticism," a project in which writers and academics were asked to comment upon "the place, nature, or limits (if any) of the personal in scholarship" (Holland 1146). In the foreword to this collection of texts, Norman Holland states that "[t]he self *permeates reading*. The self therefore permeates criticism, theory, and scholarship. It takes no great talent as a reader to interpret scholarly essays in terms of the author's strivings, yearnings" (1146, my italics). The personal element is, then, not so much a question of programmatic authorial intention, as Anderson would argue in her introduction to autobiography studies (1), but rather it is rather reinterpreted in the process of readerly analysis.

In this paper, I will focus on the tactics by which the fictional element meets the autobiographical design and try to assess the characteristics of how those two merge to form quasi-dissimulated autobiographical undercurrents in *Freedom*. These features represent either an intentional authorial play with the conventions of life-writing, or the tropes related to these conventions which resound in Jonathan Franzen's text and beyond (in the space in-between fiction and fact, as created by the media narratives). *Freedom* is a rather traditionally constructed work of prose which devotes its nearly six hundred pages to a story of an American upper middle class family, with focalization alternating between the protagonists. It is described on the cover as an "epic" novel which "comically and tragically captures the temptations and burdens of liberty" and succeeds in convincingly presenting an "indelible and deeply moving portrait of our time." Despite the growing popularity of both the book and its author among readers in the United States and worldwide, as well as *Freedom*'s acclaim in reviews, critical assessment proves problematic due to the lack of secondary sources, as the novel was released relatively recently.

Patty and the Autobiographer

Although *Freedom* traces the course of lives of three main characters and the interplay between their decisions and desires, the protagonist is clearly Patty Berglund. A misfit in a liberal democratic family of intellectuals, Patty's story can be perhaps best summarized as a troubled individual's search for normalcy. Intelligent and sarcastic, she is endowed with a sense of humor and has a penchant for dramatizing, as well as depressive tendencies. The book's main focus is Patty's relationships—the marriage with Walter Berglund and an affair with his best friend Richard, the bond she shares with her two children—and

the way she describes and evaluates her actions and decisions in terms of success and failure.

In the chapters where it is Patty's perspective that is assumed by the narrator (who otherwise describes various events which in some way involve Patty from other characters' points of view), the twist lies in the curious approach to heterodiegetic narration: the realities of Patty's life are being related by an "autobiographer" and provided with multiple comments either expressing regret or giving explanation for Patty's actions throughout her life. Although the autobiographer and Patty represent the same person, the former has a different perspective on the past events, a perspective supposedly gained with time and experience. The "greater knowledge" of the writing instance is explicitly and repeatedly expressed in the text: we learn, for example, that a particular fact changes its meaning "in an irony then invisible to Patty but now plenty visible to the autobiographer" (Ch. 2).

This play of signifiers is not, however, limited to the purpose of providing a commentary that would otherwise be impossible to include without resorting to third-person omniscient type of narration. The narrator is aligned with the autobiographer also in order to express views on the ways in which formulas of both autobiographical account and storytelling usually operate. Just one example is the autobiographer's assumption that "one hesitates to ascribe too much explanatory significance to sex, and yet the autobiographer would be derelict in her duties if she didn't devote an uncomfortable paragraph to it" (Ch. 3), evoking one of autobiography's criteria, i.e. in this case, that of sincerity as well as candidness towards the reader (which necessarily entails the premise of the transparency of language) (Smith and Watson 155). The subject matter which is being related concerns an extremely intimate sphere of the speaking subject's life that needs nevertheless to be put into words whose meaning the reader should be able to fathom and relate to.

The fourth chapter of *Freedom* opens with the following meta-commentary, an illustration of several points I want to discuss further:

> The autobiographer, mindful of her reader and the loss he suffered, and mindful that a certain kind of voice would do well to fall silent in the face of life's increasing somberness, has been trying very hard to write these pages in first and second person. But she seems doomed, alas, as a writer, to be one of those jocks who refer to themselves in third person. Although she believes herself to be genuinely changed, and doing infinitely better than in the old days, and therefore worthy of a fresh hearing, she still can't bring herself to let go of a voice she found when she had nothing else to hold on to, even if it means that her reader throws this document straight into his old Macalester College wastebasket. (Ch. 4)

Despite her postulated awareness of the implications of the stylistic turn (in which she resorts to third-person narration, thus rendering her old self a fictional character), the protagonist finds herself actually unable to resign from the appeal and the comfort which the formula seems to offer. This holds true regardless of whether one interprets "the reader" to be Patty's husband to whose attention the text is dedicated, or the actual reader of Franzen's novel. In his foreword to the comprehensive anthology *The Ethics of Life Writing*, Paul John Eakin claims that the popularity and pervasiveness of formulas of self-narrativization via novelistic discourse are based on the assumption according to which the author/speaking subject is "*someone*, someone who has lived a valuable life, a value affirmed precisely by any life story's implicit claim that it is worth telling and hearing" (5, my italics); a similar argument is found in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's study of the history of autobiography criticism (116). Franzen reproduces this logic in writing explicitly that the autobiographer, more aware of herself than Patty used to be, wiser and more successful, considers herself "worthy of a fresh hearing" (Ch. 4). What is confirmed, therefore, is a premise fundamental for numerous autobiographies: that a sequence of events in a life should only be held as valid material for an autobiographical account once the speaking subject presents themselves as a more experienced, if not more accomplished person.

Freedom of Expression

Taken at face value (even considering the very title), the book presents itself as a multifaceted approach to what people do with their freedom when they are relatively well-off and living in an environment of neoliberal democracy, and how they make and then assess their choices in a world individualized to the extreme. In a passage which can be considered emblematic of the novel's message, the protagonist visits her estranged daughter in college and suddenly finds herself "falling into a depression that deepened precipitously" having "endured… an afternoon colloquium ('Performing Identity in a Multivalent World') attended by scores of other parents" (Ch. 3). To make matters worse, she is refused an easy reconciliation with the daughter who says goodbye to her "gazing with desolate self-control at the main college building, on an outside wall of which Patty had noticed a stone graven with words of wisdom from the Class of 1920: USE WELL THY FREEDOM" (Ch. 3). The inclusion of such a meaningful scene is an interesting take at *mise en abyme*, a stylistic trope with a long tradition which is too facile to be recognized by the reader and which, nevertheless, seems to constitute one of tools characteristic of the panoply of postmodernist aesthetics.

A less evident reading, yet relevant for the purpose of my argument, is one in which the notion of *freedom* should be seen in terms of a convention-forming condition for life writing. "In fashioning our identity narratives, relating our 'lifeplans'… we exercise that 'expressive freedom'" which constitutes "a defining mark of the modern individual," writes Eakin (5); it is even more so due to such writing's specificity as a future-oriented project. Hence, the concept of having the liberty in describing personal decisions seems inextricably linked to the basic values of individualism as it is understood in Western societies. At this point, a selection of founding conventions for life writing is worth mentioning in the context of Franzen's work: the coming-of-age novel, the conversion narrative, and the confession.

According to most discussions of the typology of the formation novel, also named the bildungsroman (understood generally as a Western type of narrative focused on the process of character formation, as opposed to the strict understanding of the term in which it represents a literary genre of German origin whose name should be spelled with a capital letter) (Iversen 11), this kind of narrative has its protagonists gain understanding on the basis of "important, identity-shaping life experiences," through which they are able to grasp a "whole, uncensored picture of what life and the world are like" and eventually embrace an "acceptance of the real" (Iversen 99). The experience which accounts for this kind of knowledge should ideally include various sorts of hardship and trouble, as "failure and loss are as important as learning" (Iversen 99).

In *Freedom*, the protagonist's specimen of life-writing is given the following title: "Mistakes Were Made: Autobiography of Patty Berglund by Patty Berglund (Composed at her Therapist's Suggestion)" (Ch. 1). The mere title suggests a reinvention, in terms of parody perhaps, of Enlightenment novels of education along with their longish, pompous titles; furthermore, the most significant events of the protagonist's life are of grave and traumatizing character: falling victim to rape, being deceived by a best friend, and a sudden end to a promising career in sports, among others. More important, however, is the fact that the word "mistake" is used in Patty's account with obsessive regularity: in fact, she sees herself as "a person who, by her own admission, made nothing but mistakes." In admitting at one point that "one mistake she hadn't made about herself was wanting to be a mother" (Ch. 4), she seems unable to refrain from using the word even to refer to personal success. She goes as far as to question her own powers of judgment by stating that "having made so many mistakes in her life, she has every reason to assume she's being unrealistic" (Ch. 4), etc.

This, then, is a reinvention of an assumption considered classic for autobiographical writing (whether it is consciously introduced by the author of *Freedom*,

or transplanted along with other tropes of the autobiographical formula, cannot be determined by readers, which in turn may account for how insidiously these characteristics seem transparent): the concept of a quality which should be crucial for "identity" and simultaneously refers to a need of constant development was introduced as early as in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings. In Paul De Man's view, "the direct correlative of *freedom*" is that "freedom is man's will to change, or what Rousseau somewhat misleadingly calls 'perfectibility'" (*Allegories* 140; my italics). De Man is quick to add that this misleading aspect of the notion is due to its possible application not only to the future as a prospect, but to the fact that it also works in retrospection (140), thus allowing for a variable assessment of individual actions taken by a thinking subject in their past. This, in turn, means that the significance and character of memories can be retroactively remodeled and "perfected," which emphasizes the inevitable fictionality of the autobiographic literary output.

In her narrative included in *Freedom*, Patty claims that it is only at the moment of enunciation that she has gained an understanding thanks to which she can grasp the significance of certain things, and that prior to that moment, she was mostly unaware of what she was really going through. The autobiographer recounts that "based on her inability to recall her state of consciousness in her first three years at college, the autobiographer suspects [Patty] simply didn't have a state of consciousness. She had the sensation of being awake but in fact she must have been sleepwalking" (Ch. 2). What the novel lacks is a definitive moment of awakening—such a turning point can be located either in Patty's collapse into depression, or in the act of Patty's composing her autobiography; or even—although this is chronologically out of keeping with "Mistakes Were Made"—in her life's subsequent collapse after her husband has found the file with her manuscript and, after reading it, promptly left her. However, the fact that she decides to formulate a narrative of her past life following a realization that she is at present a transformed individual can be associated with both the bildungsroman (due to the heterodiegetic methods of narration she chooses) and the conversion narrative.

There is no need to offer here an elaborate description of the role of the confession in autobiographical fiction, as it evidently lies at the root of all life writing, a speech act so essential that it actually "requires a consciousness of self 'peculiar to the Western man'" (Anderson 18).[4] A different aspect, however, is

4 The formula of confession dates back to the "first book-length autobiographical narrative," St. Augustine's *Confessions* (written ca. 397) which, interestingly, is simultaneously a conversion narrative in its literal sense (Smith and Watson 85). It is revived notably in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, of which Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson write:

more pertinent for this argument. In *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, edited by Smith and Watson, a chapter devoted to the confession accounts for the term's recent functioning as a "distinctive subgenre"; on the other hand, it is also emphasized that confessional elements can be found in any kind of literary production which aims at expressing "the essential nature, the truth of the self" (Felski 83). Additionally, Rita Felski argues that such writing simultaneously "confuses the boundaries between fiction and autobiography" (84), i.e., despite its aspirations at "deep" authenticity, it also aims at reclaiming this kind of authenticity by consciously embracing life-writing's inevitably fictitious elements, rather than denying or dissimulating their existence.

An essential trait of female or feminist confessional literature is to seek that effect via revealing details of one's life which are "most intimate and often traumatic" (Felski 83). In *Freedom*, of course, this is not the case in its literal sense, the book being a work of pure fiction. However, it may be argued that the author consciously resorted to the tactics of feminist confession by making his heroine a rape survivor and a depression patient, and by placing her in a situation where she has to write her autobiography to a therapeutic end. The final question one may ask is whether an author like Jonathan Franzen does not, in fact, usurp the supposed effects of such an unveiled, raw narration of the undisclosed personal voice, by accepting its logic.[5] This is not to say that the author of *Freedom* is, by any means, alone in pursuing such a practice—male authors incorporating the first-person perspective of a female subject have been far from rare in works of prose, which again accounts for a rather classic procedure of facilitated by the traditional novelistic discourse.

"[f]or some, Rousseau inaugurates modern autobiography, with his focus on childhood, his retrospective chronology, his radical individualism, and his antagonistic relationship with both his readers and the reader. For others, Rousseau's legacy… is a radical individualism that privileges the white male citizen", giving origin to "a suspect site of exclusionary practices" in life-writing (96). The feminist take is both imitative of and subversive towards the traditional understanding of confession.

5 A popular review in the book section of a widely-read magazine readily states that Franzen is a skilled writer in that he "also does women very well" (Miller); studies of autobiography criticism, on the other hand, point to the fact that while some feminist theories of representation (such as Felski's discussion of the poetics of feminist confession) embrace adherence to certain models in order to hit a familiar tone and thus gain a greater appeal, evoke empathy and solidarity, others in fact "problematized 'experience' as a transparent category of meaning", undermining it, and "critiqued the notion of a universalized 'woman'" (Smith and Watson 134).

More Conventions

Once we assume that the fictionalization of a story of one's own life is indeed an empowering act—as it endows the subject with a larger perspective and helps them achieve a therapeutic effect—the following question nevertheless arises: why does Patty feel that her life, once it is put in words, in fact reproduces a cliché?

> Where did the self-pity come from? The inordinate volume of it? By almost any standard, she led a luxurious life. She had all day every day to figure out some decent and satisfying way to live, and yet all she ever seemed to get for all her choices and all her freedom was more miserable. The autobiographer is almost forced to the conclusion that she pitied herself for being so free. (Ch. 3)

The suggestion that Patty actually feels better when she thinks of herself as a protagonist in a narrative, can be seen as an instance of mimetic desire. A concept introduced and developed in René Girard's seminal essay, the mimetic desire of the "triangular" type refers to the desire for an idea. In Girard's argument, one never chooses an object of desire for the actual value it holds for the subject, but gratification can merely be desired when it is embraced by another person: the only possible emanation of the object's appeal is through an intermediary (Buvik 294). It is also in the process of digesting literary works that individuals accept the needs and values transferred via text as their own, to subsequently incorporate them in their lives.[6]

It may be argued, therefore, that where mimetic desire manifests itself most vividly, it also constitutes one of the fundamental reasons of autofictional literature's emergence: the need to see one's own life in terms which we have appropriated from literary production. Although Girard's concept finds additional reference in the triangular nature of the relationship between the three protagonists of *Freedom* who seem incessantly entangled in relations of envy and admiration, more important is the fact that it is through her writing, and thus by distancing herself from her actual self—as though by a division of her personality—that Patty (or the autobiographer) actually gains access to the domain of how situations from her life could be described. This, then, results not in an account by and about the person who she truly believes herself to be, but rather a story of what she imagines her life to be like in terms of representational methods and style. The

6 It is important to stress that what is actually at stake is not necessarily the object itself (although that may also be the case) but rather the notion thereof, a projection of one's status being elevated. This understanding may not coincide with standard reading of Girard's argument, but is crucial for the way mimetic desire functions in and via literature, and concerns the distribution of our desire to be framed in literary discourse.

essence of the problem does not in fact concern indicating a role model on whose life-writing Patty Berglund bases the fashioning of her own narrative and her own desire, but in that she adopts the split in her narration between "the autobiographer" as a speaking subject and "Patty" the protagonist.[7] Moreover, she aligns herself with the former instance in order to be able to frame the events of her life in a way that she has internalized via literary forms.

This shaping of the self which proceeds by projection is referred to by Girard as one of the many kinds of bovarysm (Buvik 294): to follow the classical (if somewhat general) definition of bovarysm as a certain mental disposition, it is best explained as the incessant desire to be that which one is not (Buvik 189),[8] and reimagining oneself as such. This is particularly problematic when confronted with the realities of life which radically differ from those towards which one aspires. In Jacques Rancière's much-quoted argument, Emma Bovary has to die in Flaubert's novel, or rather "be killed" by her maker, because she confuses the domain of life with that of literature. Emma spends her days reading (bad) books and cannot stop herself from developing a false image of both her social and personal condition; not only does she fill her mind with passages of novelistic discourse, in her delusion she "positively wants [fiction and life] to merge into one another" (Rancière 235). It should perhaps also be noted here that, according to Jonathan Franzen's views as a literary critic, it is also via the recognition of the protagonists' desire that we as readers should appreciate their efforts ("Rooting Interest" 63)—for example, Patty's investment into the project of her life writing. This is problematic in a case where these efforts are portrayed as directed towards imitating a narrative model, a fashioning of a "fiction of the self." The matter of readerly investment of sympathy will be discussed in more detail further in the article.

Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is an inevitable reference for Franzen's rendering of his protagonist's story also because the second great theme of the French masterpiece, along with that of false ideas which we cannot help but form about ourselves by imitating others' discourse, is the monotony of everyday life. In a fragment which reads like a surprisingly faithful rendition of Flaubertian description, we learn that, just like Emma, Patty Berglund has the following impression as to quotidian existence: "Time passed in a peculiar manner which the autobiographer, with her now rather abundant experience of murdered afternoons,

7 The naming of the protagonist with the author's (the real life person's) first name is one of the features of the autobiographical novel (this is the case of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and Harry Mathews' *My Life in CIA*, to cite two very different examples).

8 Per Buvik's essay is an explicative companion study included in the work of Jules De Gaultier who originally coined the term of "bovarysm."

is able to identify as depressive (at once interminable and sickeningly swift; chockfull second-to-second, devoid of content hour-by-hour)" (Ch. 2). Although Patty's low self-esteem once pushed her to seek approval in becoming a competitive sportsperson, she eventually settles down as a housewife with plenty of free time, takes to drinking, and so summarizes her daily activity: "I spend my life jumping out of my skin with frustration at myself" ("Enough Already"). The notion of freedom appears dichotomous in that it necessarily entails the problem of boredom. Franzen's approach differs from Flaubert's in that, instead of only describing her states of mind via free indirect discourse, the former author endows his heroine with a voice of her own to express those sensations in "her own" discourse.

If masterpieces of psychological realism are alluded to in Franzen's novel, an important question regarding generic conventions should be asked: whether life-writing itself as a set of conventions involves unavoidable traps. Again, Eakin's treatment of ethical controversy proves useful—this time Jonathan Franzen's example is quoted explicitly by Eakin when the conventions of autobiographical account are presented as all-encompassing. Invited to participate in a television program, the writer was filmed visiting his hometown in such a way as to best fit the needs of a biographical footage, and soon found it impossible to escape "being forced into reductive molds for identity and life story" (Eakin 13). Unwilling to allow such a reduction of the narrative of his own self, Franzen later took his revenge by retelling the story of the filming along with elements of an autobiographical account in an essay published in *The New Yorker* (14). However, what may seem like an act of regaining control over narration concerning the events of one's own life, proves in fact to be a manifestation of power that is only illusory, as the writer "has in effect exchanged one conventional life story scene… for another standard feature of autobiographical narrative" (14). Thus, trying to avoid one cliché-ridden narrative structure, the writer inevitably falls into another, because "the essay, for all its 'counterstory' color, tells a familiar story after all" (14). "We are more involved in 'dominant frames of interpretation' than we like to think," Eakin concludes (14).

Linda Hutcheon's discussion of parody proves useful when applied in this context: the critic defines parody to be, among others, "the critical quotation of preformed literary language with comic effect" (41) and paraphrases Michel Butor's opinion that any element transplanted into another work of literature is necessarily "a kind parody because of its 'transconceptualization'" (41). In this totalizing logic, the parody effect seems indeed quite impossible to avoid as one attempts to render the story of one's life with the use of elements which are in fact but borrowings from within an immeasurable body of existing texts.

Dispersion of Identification

When we attempt at deducing a coherent logic which underlies Jonathan Franzen's narrative tactics in terms of possible approaches to mixing autobiography and fiction, a paradox can be observed. The way for readerly reception Franzen advocates is one in which the author's personality should be inferred from the tissue of the text, and the author of *Freedom* declares himself actually "convinced that a fiction writer's oeuvre is a mirror of the writer's character" ("Rooting Interest" 60). And yet, in a lecture explaining his own personal approach to writing, the author emphasizes the need to keep in mind that "the greater the autobiographical content of a fiction writer's work, the *smaller* its superficial resemblance to the writer's actual life. The deeper the writer digs for meaning, the more the random particulars of the writer's life become *impediments*" ("Jonathan Franzen: The Path to Freedom," original italics). In so stating, Franzen in fact provides one possible definition of how autofiction differs from autobiography *sensu stricto* (that the personal and autobiographical elements are necessarily dispersed throughout the otherwise fictional content, a thread in the text's tissue).

When asked about the importance of the personal dimension of prose during the interview for the Forum Book Club in May 2011, the author of *Freedom* eagerly states that "fiction that isn't autobiographical in some deep way is usually not worth reading," precisely because such literary production entails the author's fallacy of "not having any stake in the game as a writer" (Interview). However, this "deep way" in which the autobiographical element should manifest itself has a very specific sense. According to Franzen, the lives of real people, extraordinary though they may be, are nevertheless invariably poor in stories which could figure as "good, interesting, meaningful" as the latter narratives "don't actually grow on trees *in one's own life*, stories that have some potential for meaning—you need to invent" (Interview, my emphasis). Therefore, the personal experience that has a part in creating a fictitious account is limited to the author's emotional commitment similar to that usually experienced by the reader. Franzen claims to have tried to render his latest novel more autobiographical in that particular, if counter-intuitive, sense of double investment: "I invented more," he states, "but also drew more from myself in a much more direct way for the forming of characters than I ever had before" (Interview).

Aware of the unorthodox nature of the concept he proposes, the author recurs to a tactics of escaping the need of justification, referring to notions which can be subsumed under umbrella terms of "common touch" or "common sense." The affective turn based on these creates an illusion of universal justification of the characters' description, so that the readers find themselves confined within a framework of questions of the generalizing type: "Finally, don't we all do these

things? Aren't we all like this?" One measure which reinforces this general appeal of Franzen's prose is a tendency to introduce phrases which appear to be in fact maxims of wisdom and can be read as inciting the reader's complicity. Although the author resorts to such phrases mainly in essays while commenting upon his own aesthetic choices, traces of them can also be observed in *Freedom*, e.g.: "the autobiographer is mindful of how dull it is to read about someone else's drinking, but sometimes it's pertinent to the story" (Ch. 2).

Additionally, the book owes much of its popular appeal to the construction of characters: according to Franzen, it is partly the traits of his own character with which he endows his heroes (Interview), but other qualities can be perhaps referred to as consciously foregrounded, relatively universal (that is, pervasive in a limited, yet ample class or social structure) features that individuals tend to share: a tactics which seems helpful in this stylistic maneuver, is the rather evident typification of the characters. The personalities of *Freedom*'s characters can be expressed through label-like definitions: there is a depressive-competitive mother, a frustrated gentleman, a womanizer artist, a neoliberal shrewd youth. This is not to say that these specific types are widely encountered in fiction; on the contrary, it is rather the choice of the tactics operating on types which evokes a classic realist mode of representation.[9] It should be also noted here that although types are part of fiction's domain, they also "migrate freely back and forth across the line between fiction and nonfiction" (Porter Abbott 136). Even though resorting to types is both common and tempting because "one of the advantages of writing according to type is its efficiency" (Porter Abbott 139), its principle possibly stands in contradiction to the claims of truthfulness and authenticity of the unique self which wants to express itself in autobiographical form.

In chapters where it is not Patty Berglund by whom the story is being told (but by her husband Walter, or her lover Richard, or her son Joey, yet another important character), the heterodiegetic and omniscient external narrator speaks on behalf of the person on whom the particular chapter is focalized. Moreover, their problems and concerns are depicted as concerning values held by simply

9 An evident point of reference is Honoré de Balzac's *The Human Comedy*, a project of an all-encompassing work which aimed at representing "a history of the human heart" (as stated in the Preface to the series) via description of various facets of human character and ways of life. The French author's plan was to "draw up an 'inventory' of the vices, virtues, passions, events, and types that constitute the society as a whole" (Morris 60). Curiously enough, in Franzen's opinion "expecting a novel to bear the weight of our whole disturbed society—to help solve our contemporary problems" constitutes "a peculiarly American delusion" (Franzen 1996, 49). He himself is willing to settle for a realism that strikes a familiar chord to his readers: "To write sentences of such authenticity that refuge can be taken in them: isn't this enough? Isn't it a lot?" (49).

everyone, the novel's themes being love, rejection, loneliness, meaninglessness of one's role in society as well as in other people's lives, to name just a few. What ultimately results from the use of the above mentioned elements in *Freedom* is a phenomenon of rather exceptional character: a dispersion of identification with multiple characters. One may have the impression that Franzen's message is the following: the author is reflected in all of his protagonists, as are in some way his readers; it is as though the writer's veiled but pervading argument proposed that, in effect, *we are all the same*. In this way, Franzen's recent fiction could be seen to invite a quite different sense in which autofiction can be conceived, as well as a new interpretative approach towards questions of its impact.

Disruption of Affective Dynamics

In the light of the above observations, it should come as no surprise that the author of *Freedom* recognizes the element of sympathy as crucial and universal for the readerly assessment of a literary work. "Without sympathy, whether for the writer or for the fictional characters, a work of fiction has a very hard time mattering," Franzen writes in an essay devoted precisely to that problem ("Rooting Interest" 60).

An element which may seem surprising, therefore, can be observed in Franzen's prose and should be perhaps best termed the avoidance, or disruption, of affective dynamics. The questions of empathy, of what the readers feel towards the characters of the novel, cannot be rightly addressed here because, although socially conditioned, they remain a matter of purely personal reception. However, what should be noted in the case of *Freedom* is the not quite tangible tone of sarcasm in description (its presence is argued in reviews to be perceptible despite the clearly distinguishable techniques of point of view and free indirect discourse, and is thus hard to pinpoint in specific moments of the novel to cite here). This hint of sarcasm may elicit in the readers a particular kind of satisfaction,[10] however, as one reviewer puts it, "the [narrator's] voice wavers a little here—it's partly Patty, smart but not well-educated, given to gauche mock-jollities... and partly someone else, a sly, writerly writer rather than a would-be writer and analysand" (Miller).

Who can the readers of *Freedom* sympathize with, then? As mentioned before, Jonathan Franzen's opinion is that sympathy is inevitably evoked when the

10 This is equally a question of reception, its effects are therefore not to be judged easily, although the popular response indicates that many readers presumably fell for this mode and found it indeed amusing, which may have contributed to the book's popularity (Miller).

aspirations of a character are described, and it is so exclusively because that person is depicted as aspiring towards a certain goal. If desire (as understood by Girard) operates on the principle of imitation, then readers necessarily reproduce the logic of desiring the same goals as the characters upon internalizing those characters' models. But given the fact that it may indeed seem hard not to adopt the sarcastic distance of a perspective inferred from the novel's narrative style, the readers might of course find it impossible to develop their own affective investment, tempted instead to take that not-so-benign dispersed narrative mood for transparent. Classic novelistic ploys such as free indirect speech, focalization and point of view techniques help to strengthen this dissimulation. Considering all these features, it may be argued that the author generally proceeds by a deliberate tactics of ambivalence.

The Comic Novel

Franzen's use of selected generic categories—the confession, the bildungsroman, and the conversion narrative—has already been discussed, along with the question of character typification: all of these account for Franzen's approach to the conventions of realist prose. The views represented by the author himself are to a large extent indistinguishable from the conventions he utilizes; it remains to be examined, however, how his policies work in non-textual reality—although the analysis will inevitably be far from exhaustive.

Following Ben Marcus' brief but rather accurate definition of realist writing, a writer can only be considered a realist if he has "foregrounded the consciousness of characters... and livestocked those characters in a recognizable setting," and has depicted these elements in a language not blatantly experimental (Marcus 41). Almost six hundred pages long, *Freedom* devotes much attention to both psychological and external realities of its characters in detailed descriptions. The events of the characters' lives, although seemingly objectively portrayed, are nevertheless arranged in a certain arbitrary hierarchy of importance. The claim of authenticity and inclusiveness of various aspects of experience which the book derives from autobiographical conventions proves to be merely a rhetorical device.

Freedom exemplifies a recent tendency to return to linear, classic narrative structures, and thus makes Franzen one of the most famous representatives of the New Realist movement (Marcus 42). According to the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Writers and Their Work*, Franzen's writing—and *Freedom* is no exception—falls within the category of novels which "typically depict characters seemingly at the mercy of their surroundings, vainly hoping to find meaning in who they are and what they do" (Hamilton and Jones 32). The experimental

qualities (such as fragmentation, non-linearity, and most of all, linguistic innovation or recourse to elements of poetic prose) seem less present in the novel also when compared with the writer's previous works, and only vaguely manifest themselves as a "watered-down experimentalism" (Miller).

The problem, however, lies in the after-postmodern character of the variety of literature that presupposes an awareness of literary conventions and their manipulation. In order to be able to avoid the kind of harsh criticism similar to what Ben Marcus has faced, critics have perhaps yet to develop an inevitably elaborate theory of an after-postmodern, ironic mode of new literature created for the sake of amusement. In one of still rather infrequent critical discussions of Franzen's fiction we read that his novels "are built on an opposition between postmodernism and more traditional fiction that is stubbornly unresolved in each novel… the proportions between conventional-story-telling-*entertainment* and postmodern-game-playing shift in each work" (Burn 49, my italics). It may be argued that, in the case of *Freedom*, contrary perhaps to Franzen's first novels, this equilibrium shifts toward the former element.

Franzen has repeatedly pronounced his views on literature's duties, assuming the position of a spokeman of sorts for the common reader (Marcus 43). It is, however, not necessarily a return to fossilized literary forms that he advocates, but in fact, a new kind of writing which does not keep up the pretense of experiment, focusing on the entertaining aspect instead: he speaks therefore in favor of a simple readerly pleasure as opposed to the sublime *jouissance* evoked by complex artistic works. What Jonathan Franzen advocates, therefore, is "approachable literature" of the sort which would embrace the "commercial prospects of the literary industry" (Marcus 45).

The Writer's Profile

The risk that an author like Franzen takes by accepting that point of departure—i.e., that, while never abandoning the assumptions of producing "serious fiction" (Marcus 46), his objective is quite clearly readability—seems to concern the status of the writer. It seems, however, that despite the audiences' proposed yearning for the "next, or first, or last Great American Novel" (Miller), it is not the validity of the myth of the (American) poet, along with his educational mission and the assumption of access to a reality beyond, that is at stake, but the necessity to be perceived in a new way, as described by Joe Moran in his study of "literary celebrity."

In Moran's understanding of the concept, the texts written by an author influence his or her real-life persona and vice versa, as they "form part of literary

celebrity itself, precisely because it is created symbolically through literary and cultural texts" (154). The one challenge a writer faces in this context is of course that of enhancing the popularity of a media personality while simultaneously preserving an aura of cultural refinement—in other words, to have an unwavering audience consisting of both critics and readers. In Franzen's case, the formula seems to have worked very well, given the attention and fame he has enjoyed in the last years: he has adjusted quite easily to what Moran calls the "climate of bestsellerdom" (155). More importantly, the popularization of a "'meet the author' culture" (149) that results from such an approach is one in which writers become subject to the fictionalization of their own personae, i.e. an additional dimension is produced in which they become characters in a new discourse operating between literary fiction and celebrity myth-making. Franzen's claim that he shares certain features with his protagonists gains new significance in the light of his merging of the autobiographical with the imaginary, and further complicates the already complex issue of autofiction.

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Paweł Marcinkiewicz

John Ashbery's *Quick Question* and Its Forms of Inventiveness

Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of John Ashbery's recent poetry is its inventiveness: each of his volumes published in the last decade seems to surpass the scope of his earlier books, subtly redefining generic boundaries and undoing formal constrictions. As a result, each Ashbery collection evokes for the reader a feeling of a new and distinct poetic voice. This is visible already in *Your Name Here* (2000), introducing snippy lyrics ("This Room," "Avenue Mozart," or "Stanzas Before Time"), so different from the vast landscapes of Ashbery's preceding collection, *Girls on the Run* (1999). The later volumes, *As Umbrellas Follow Rain* (2001) and *Chinese Whispers* (2002), while still experimenting with the form of the short lyric, hit a more humorous note, which bears a striking resemblance to the nineteenth-century English nonsense poet, Edward Lear.[1] *Where Shall I Wander* (2005) exercises a seemingly more accessible lyricism, but the volume also features several longer prose poems, such as "Coma Bernices," "From China to Peru," or the eponymous "Where Shall I Wander," whose novelty consists in a peculiar time perspective, where the future is seen retroactively as a form of the past. Finally, *A Worldly Country* (2007) and *Planisphere* (2009) seem to formulate their most significant meanings on the level of language units, including trite expressions and clichés, which work similarly to the Wittgensteinian linguistic paradigms, expressing a collective experience rooted in the cultural and social spheres. Such poems as "Attabled with the Spinning Years" and "He Who Loves and Runs Away" do not employ traditional tropes, but they demonstrate how people actually use language in reference to certain problems, for example the global financial crisis of 2008.[2]

1 Several critics have recently linked the pitch of Ashbery's late poems with Lear. For example, Stephen Burt makes an interesting observation: "Ashbery quotes Lear repeatedly… Like Lear, [he] tries to make his most formally intricate poems feel like games, or like jokes" (5).

2 For more detail see my book-length study of Ashbery's poetry, *'Colored Alphabets' Flutter': John Ashbery and the Twentieth-Century American Avant-Gardes* (217–241).

Quick Question—Ashbery's latest collection published in December 2012—offers the reader a wide spectrum of styles and tones, merging realistic poetics, indirectly pursuing its social agendas ("Quick Question," "This Economy"), with the dream-like poetics of Delmore Schwartz and Randall Jarrell ("In Dreams I Kiss Your Hand, Madame," "Homeless Heart"). Many poems use the typical Ashberian close-knit linguistic space, whose final aim is to propel words to high semantic speeds and collide them. The book's dedication to Jane Freilicher is an important interpretative clue. The renowned painter and Ashbery's lifelong friend, Freilicher illustrated the poet's debut collection, the twenty-eight-page pamphlet *Turandot and Other Poems*, published by the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1953. Jane Freilicher was arguably the most important influence in Ashbery's early period, both as a friend and an artist. *Reported Sightings*, a collection of the poet's art criticism, features a penetrating essay about Freilicher, where he seems to be adverting to his own artistic strategies. Ashbery calls Freilicher's realism "tentative" in the sense that her canvases contrast suave facture with worked-over passages that unblushingly reveal the effort behind their making (242). Moreover, different objects in her paintings are presented with different degrees of verisimilitude, in a congeries of inconsistent painterly conventions, creating a compilation of seeing perspectives. The outcome is "rumpled realism," proving that "the real is not only what one sees but also a result of how one sees it—inattentively, inaccurately perhaps, but nevertheless that is how it is coming through to us" (242). Similarly, the composite style of Ashbery's most recent poems does not simply present the world, but it gives a concise history of contemporary poetry, with no implication that one way of writing is better than another.

At first glance, *Quick Question* seems to continue the mode of writing introduced in *A Worldly Country* and *Planishpere*. In the contemporary American vernacular, the elegantly concise alliteration "quick question" is a close relative of "stupid question" or "rhetorical question." "Quick question" itself can be an extensive tirade, and it often requires a long answer. As a title of a poetry collection, "quick question" creates a very complex set of relations between the author of the text and the reader. Most importantly, it is not clear whether the quick question is addressed to the author or to the reader. On the one hand, "quick question" implies that the author timidly asks his audience for a brief moment of attention; on the other, the illocution might intimate that the author requires of his audience an answer that is due to him. Additionally, "quick question" has a broader cultural resonance, alluding to talk-show journalism or wild consumerism. The fact that we are living increasingly in a "quick question" culture with a minimal attention span for the Other severely limits our understanding of arts and literature, whose major value is based, as Derek Attridge puts it, on "hold[ing] out the possibility of a repeated encounter with alterity" (28).

As it were, the very title of Ashbery's collection—colloquial and casual as any Wittgensteinian language game—provokes serious queries about the role of poetry and artistic creativity. If a work of art is just a quick question, can it be original and significant? Furthermore, can it be a humanizing event that broadens the reader's mind, enlarges his or her sympathies, and undermines ideological assumptions? Ashbery's book seems to clear out these doubts. The prevailing form of *Quick Question* is still that of a brief lyric (only two poems—"A Voice from Fireplace" and "False Report"—extend onto three pages), which dominates in the poet's late phase, but poetic substance is significantly different in its rendering and tone from *Planisphere* or *A Worldly Country*. What Roger Gilbert defines as the Ashberian "gaiety of language"[3]—which includes ludic playfulness based on overloaded cadences of camp, with clownish idioms and caricatured metaphors—gives way to, as Les Kay puts it, "flickers… of religiosity," bringing out the timbre of "suffering and sacrifice" (par. 5). In a word, *Quick Question* is not the kind of a vintage Ashbery book that such critics as Harold Bloom or Marjorie Perloff championed half a century ago, but the volume speaks in a vitally new voice, which baffles new readers, old fans, and critics.

First, *Quick Question*'s novelty consists in the volume's structure: differently than in several of Ashbery's earlier collections, which take their titles from their final texts—*Where Shall I Wander*, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* or *A Wave*—the eponymous poem of the volume is not placed at the end of the book, but it comes right after the opening poem, "Words to That Effect." This may deprive the volume of a sense of direction since the eponymous poem no longer serves as a recapitulation of the book's narrative possibilities and major tropes.[4] It seems that, in *Quick Question*, disorienting the reader is a game plan that helps the poet reevaluate his artistic procedures. Second, the volume's style—although still unmistakably Ashberian in its unstable pronouns, disjunctive syntax, and fuzzy references—has a perceptibly new quality, especially if we compare it to the stylistic profusion of Ashbery's volumes from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, sparkling with nods to the great poets of the past. For example, "Fantasia," which closes the 1977 *Houseboat Days*, was based on the anonymous sixteenth-century ballad "The Nut Brown Maid"; the 1987 *April Galleons* was based on an intricate

3 I am referring here to Gilbert's seminal essay "Ludic Eloquence: On John Ashbery's Recent Poetry" (199).

4 According to John Emil Vincent, from *April Galleons* (1987) onward, Ashbery's poetry started to evolve towards a new compositional plan, each project depending more on the unit of the book to produce its final effect (5). This phase ended with *Chinese Whispers* (2002), where the titles of individual poems resist being assembled into a larger design and the title of the whole volume does not work as a banner for a book project (163).

network of literary allusions and tropes—from the eponymous Eliotean "April," to the biblical "lepers," who "avoid these eyes, the old eyes of love" in the final poem (*Collected Poems* 885); the 1990 *Flow Chart*'s climax was a double sestina, whose teleutons were borrowed from Swinburne's "The Complaint of Lisa." In the above masterpieces, much of Ashbery's glamor came from the quality of his language—his lyric sleight of hand, splendidly crafted figures of speech, and overall stylistic elegance, which often broke into Wordsworthian sublimity.

Quick Question belongs to a different poetic genre. In the last decade, Ashbery significantly reduced the literary dimension of his poems, diluting aestheticizing lyricism in the clatter and chatter of his speakers. The everyday vernacular was always an important ingredient in Ashbery's poetry, but lately—as James Rother observes—the Ashbery poem is "not only packed to the gills with talk, its gills are stuffed to bursting with all the overbuilt subdivisions of yatter-table talk, shop talk, small talk, talk about talk" (22). Moreover, as if searching for semantic density, Ashbery savors the buddy-like atmosphere of his poems with diverging technical jargons and sociolects—from the journalistic newspeak, through the economic lingo, to the underworld slang. This tendency to record different varieties of language, which is performed with a slightly limited control of the aesthetic superego, could be seen already in *Your Name Here*; however, *Quick Question* is Ashbery's most daring withdrawal from the traditional literary discourse. If so many of the poet's recent texts are puzzling for the reader, it is because Ashbery has gradually abandoned the idea of stylistic finesse and formal excellence as the basis of poetic craft, and instead he now conceives of poetry as an endless, self-generating linguistic continuum to be freely entered and sampled.

Quick Question consists of sixty-three poems whose imagery seems to be limited to the landscape of the American small town and the street talk of its parochial people. There is a sense of a vague temporal movement onwards in the volume. The starting point is the past of the 1910s and 20s, evoked by a slightly archaic diction ("Dry-eyed from weeping I consent/to the stratagems that brought us here" ["In a Lonely Place," 21]) and vocabulary ("rascal," "pince-nez," "Cuba libre"), and references to the chamber music by Anton Arensky or the opera by Igor Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress*, with the libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman. Additionally, the anteriority of the opening poems is stressed by the predominance of the past tense. The middle section of the book faces the present, induced primarily by the titles of the poems, serving as catchwords, including "Absent Agenda," "This Economy," and "False Report." Moreover, the economic jargon elicits politically hot topics, such as the global financial crisis. For example, "Etudes Second Series" makes an emotionally loaded statement in the mode of a rally talk: "Where once lack had been, now/was embarrassment of riches. The riches themselves/were embarrassed for what they had brought us"

(54). Here the speaker assumes the position of a victim, which he tries to impose on the reader by the use of the pronoun "us," playing the language game of the sensational media. Finally, the poems that conclude Ashbery's collection—"Postlude and Prequel" and "[Untitled]"—evoke the future, and they contain the strongest transcendental resonances.

It seems that *Quick Question*'s most intriguing meaning is produced by the fusion of its gloomy metaphysical undertones with small-town crudeness. The small town air engulfs the reader already in the opening poem of the volume, "Words to That Effect":

> The drive down was smooth
> but after we arrived things started to go haywire,
> first one thing and then another. The days
> scudded past like tumbleweed, slow then fast,
> then slow again. The sky was sweet and plain.
> You remember how still it was then,
> a season putting its arms into a coat and staying unwrapped
> for a long, a little time.
>
> It was during the week we talked about deforestation.
> How sad that everything has to change,
> yet what a relief, too! Otherwise we'd only have
> looking forward to look forward to.…
>
> We'd walked a little way in our shoes.
> I was sure you'd remember how it had been
> the other time, before the messenger came to your door
> and seemed to want to peer in and size up the place.
> So each evening became a forbidden morning
> of thunder and curdled milk, though the invoices
> got forwarded and birds settled on the periphery. (1–2)

The poem reveals a striking similarity to "Vetiver," which opened *April Galleons* ("Ages passed slowly, like a load of hay, / As the flowers recited their lines" [*Collected Poems* 811]), providing a typically Ashberian conversational space sustained by a historical reverie. "Vetiver" dealt with a collective loss on the broadest scale, expressing the ambitions of the volume. "Words to That Effect," conversely, demonstrates the poet's self-parodying temperament, exposing the hollowness of small-town existence.

The first stanza works as a reminder of the poem's historiographic potential. As John Shoptaw points out, Ashbery's early collections often contained poems developing a "psycho-historical argument": for example, *The Tennis Court Oath* featured "The Suspended Life," "Our Youth," "The Lozenges," and "A Last World,"

all of which expressed doubts about the grounds of historical metanarratives and the necessity of history, echoing Eliot's "Burnt Norton" (70). At first, "Words to That Effect" resumes this mode of writing, starting with the speaker's account of his life in a new place, which presumably has a broader significance for the present. However, this significance is never revealed, and the slightly eerie story, encrusted with gaudy descriptions of nature ("the sky was sweet and plain," "birds settled on the periphery"), gives the reader little purchase on meaning. It remains unclear why it was so "still" then (and why should the addressee remember it?) or what exactly happened when the speaker states that "things started to go haywire, / first one thing then another"? Interestingly, the above expression was coined between 1900 and 1905, about the time when *Quick Question*'s poetic pageant begins.

The central part of the stanza is the imagistic metaphor of scudding tumbleweed, representing the passage of time. Obviously, tumbleweed is a pop culture cliché appropriated from the Western film genre, where it emphasized the desolation of a place or character, but it was also used for comic effect to mark the "tumbleweed moment" of awkward silence. And perhaps reaching such a moment is Ashbery's most important goal in the poem: the beginning of the next stanza marks the first of the poem's shifts: the campy "sweetness" of the sky is deflated with the dry matter-of-factness of the statement: "It was during the week we talked about deforestation," which poetically sinks under the burden of its hopelessly technical ultimate word. The next couplet of the fragment seems to mock "Vetiver's" sublimity, jokily admitting the inevitability of human fate: "How sad that everything has to change, / yet what a relief, too!" The comic strain of the stanza culminates in the following pun in the spirit of Edward Lear: "Otherwise we'd only have/ looking forward to look forward to." Thus the serious assumptions promised by the mode of the historical reverie budding in the first stanza are relocated into the sphere of the Ashberian goofiness, where—in Roger Gilbert's parlance—"saying" gets subordinated to "playing," producing a purely decorative tapestry of stylistic permutations, interspersed with poetic "noodling and doodling" (200).

This is where many poems in *Planisphere* stopped, for example "Default Mode," which battered the reader with its anaphora "They were living in America" until its final line, "They were living in America the same old the same old" (*Planisphere* 18); or "FX," which used rhymes and multiplied archaisms to produce an extremely rich sound palette: "O rats the scholar's rags… / illuminate far tracks" (*Planisphere* 30). "Words to That Effect" takes us somewhere else: the last stanza of the poem renounces quippish riffs and describes trivial facts of everyday life, celebrating their banality, but also highlighting their overwhelming character: "We'd walked a little way in our shoes" is perfectly non-poetic, and yet it possesses the eeriness of the dream-ridden landscape, surreal in spirit (who walks without shoes and why walking without shoes is important?), which emerges in the poem's closing

gesture. The final image of the messenger coming to the addressee's door to "peer in and size up the place" has a menacing undertone: either a death messenger or a debt collector changes the addressee's life completely, bringing in the feeling of permanent fear. Although the "invoices" still get "forwarded," daily existence becomes a nightmare, threatened with "thunders." More importantly, "Words to That Effect" does not construe any hermeneutics of the past, but instead it tests various "effects" that the poetic composition has on the reader

Later in the collection, the eccentric juxtaposition of bland provinciality rendered in non-poetic language with pseudo-prophetic profundities becomes *Quick Question*'s leading stylistic motif. Colloquial speech markers abound, from Ashbery's favorite OK's ("Oh it's OK, actually" ["The Allegations," 9]), through inversions ("Off you go then" ["A Voice from the Fireplace," 17]), to dialectal contractions ("Somethin' o' that, I says" ["Recent History," 13]). However, the feeling of everydayness is most often produced by conversational ease. "Cross Island" starts inconspicuously, with a question asked to an addressee: "You've probably done this already/and if not, where's the sympathy?" (7). We are in the midst of a conversation, yet unable to recognize the speakers, which is typical of Ashbery, who has always sought to produce poetic density by means of pronouns. Yet the commonplace close-up does not serve as grounds for a desultory leap—like in the poet's previous collections—but instead we are led further into quotidian clumsiness: "[You've probably] scratched the frozen surface one time/too many, pulled away from the mirror/like a tractor-trailer backing up/in a snowstorm" (7). The fragment is unusual in its persistent non-literariness, with the final simile masterfully anchored in provincial life. In the poem's final section, an eschatological overtone dominates: "Like you already said, / finders are keepers only for a time. / Time marches on. Depart Misery" (8). Here—like in many other poems in the volume—the vague profundities of a small-town man express metaphysical fears that are shared by Ashbery's readers. The next poem in the volume, "The Allegations" uses a similar device, trying to produce a poetic effect, as it were, out of nothing: its minutiae of place and time again hint at a life in a distant province, while its pseudo-apocalyptic ending provides the reader with a clumsy leap to the semi-visionary level of the poem:

> A really helpful hotel bandit stopped me
> on the stair, the staff having already fled.
> The reaction shot was a no-brainer. Try to feel your ear,
> you'll see. The music continues to unroll
> in the empty corridor. Why we sold the porch
> is another ending. We're all at odds here.
> It'll come true for you in Kansas City, Iowa. (10)

In the final section, the anti-lyric concreteness overwhelms the reader: the narration becomes a list of disparate experiences, with no particular focus, until the culminating point of the final line. Kansas City, Iowa, is a purely imaginary place, yet its name sounds convincing enough to win it the title of the capital of the American backcountry. The fact that the speaker's addressee is going to visit this place gives the poem's ending the aura of an eerie afterworld, which resonates with apocalyptic associations.

The small-town apocalypse lurks in the theme of decay, which—as Les Kay points out—reappears throughout the book (par. 5). The eponymous poem, "Quick Question," uses Christian imagery to present the fallen state of America's spiritual life: "Some angels / seemed to teeter on the wooden fence. / Were we all they knew? // Or are we part of their mind-cleansing/ritual, necessary and discardable?" (3). "Auburn-Tinted Fences" produces in the reader a similar conviction that the contemporary world is doomed, perceiving life as a struggle with the forces of evil: "No one knows the extent of the forces arrayed against us, / nor how many of them there are. // We are descended from a long line of sages, for whom it is / a point of honor not to know the quantities of things" (45). The speaker's inability to estimate the quantities of things elicits the motif of the so-called Great Recession, which is a part of the present-day American apocalypse. Further in the poem, several details suggest an impoverished and broken existence: "When I think of the / motley we wore sometimes, I get all jizzed up, just for the sake of things" (46).

Similarly, "Iphigenia in Sodus" projects the vistas of social decay and disintegration, with the poem's particulars denoting an abandoned town: "the doors sagged, the window frames/had disappeared a long time ago into the murk/of this age" (97). The immediate extratextual reference is the town near Rochester, NY, where Ashbery was born on his parents' fruit farm and where he spent his childhood. The poem recontextualizes the Eurypidean myth, and the resulting metalepsis becomes a means of transition to Ashbery's biographical (and poetic) youth.[5] According to Harold Bloom, metalepsis is a "representation set against time," which transforms the "later into the earlier" (103). Accordingly, like Iphigenia, whom Agamemnon ordered to kill as a sacrifice to allow his ships to sail to Troy, the poet's would-be life in a provincial town becomes a sacrifice made

5 Characteristically, the New York School poets borrowed genres and tropes from high modernism, striving against burnout and repetitiveness pervading poetry in the post-war era. Extending Harold Bloom's metaphor of a post-Enlightenment crisis lyric, we could say that their metaleptic recycling of historical forms was their *clinamen*, which is latecomer's swerving from his poetic fathers.

to allow his later success as a poet in New York. However, the speaker is conscious that the poem is not an extension of the myth, but serves as a projection of his individual experience into the realm of aesthetic values: "Why does that name [Iphigenia in Sodus] sound so familiar? / If I were you I shouldn't worry, or ask. // But—isn't that collusion? / Well, yes, technically it is, // but we are a long way from truth here" (96). Thus the discrepancy between art's "colluding" practices and the truth undermines Ashbery's historiographic aspirations, and the return to the town—and to the language—of the poet's youth takes the form of a depersonalized and ambiguous vision: "Seen now, she pivots frantically / near where we—they—arrive to consult the oracle // making small talk the while, about whose / elections need shortening // …before chopping them down" (96).

The concoction of psycho-historical divagations and small-town apocalyptic predestination sounds most convincing in "This Economy," which shows the devastating effect that the indifference toward economic facts may have on an individual:

> In all my years as a pedestrian
> serving juice to guests, it never occurred to me
> thoughtfully to imagine how a radish feels.
> She merely arrived. Half-turning
> in the demented twilight, one feels a
> sour empathy with all that went before.
> That, needless to say, was how we elaborated
> ourselves staggering across tracts:
> Somewhere in America there is a naked person.
>
> Somewhere in America adoring legions blush
> in the sunset, crimson madder, and madder still.
> Somewhere in America someone is trying to figure out
> how to pay for this, bouncing a ball
> off a wooden strut. Somewhere
> in America the lonely enchanted eye each other
> on a bus. It goes down Woodrow Wilson Avenue.
> Somewhere in America it says you must die, you know too much. (47)

In the hilarious opening of the poem, the speaker presents himself as an employee in a restaurant or a similar service—although "pedestrian serving juice to guests" is rather ambiguous as the name of an occupation—and he blames himself for ignoring the intricate structures of the American economy. To "imagine" how a "radish feels" implies understanding the long line of operations which bring it to the market, involving dozens of people, from the farmer growing the radish, through the shop assistants selling it, to the customer served by a waiter and eating

it at a restaurant table. There is a Whitmanian potential in the poem's opening gesture, manifesting itself in the longing for the clear-cut world of "Song of the Banner at Daybreak," where the speaker celebrates the values of manual labor and capitalist initiative: "I see the farmers working…. I see mechanics working, I see buildings everywhere founded, going up, or finish'd…. I see the stores, depots, of Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans…. I see the countless profit, the busy gatherings, earn'd wages" (*The Complete Poems* 313). The Ashbery speaker is not even sure what his occupation is: his career has consisted of "staggering across tracts" and the "sour empathy" he feels with "all that went before" results from the remorse of a person who suddenly realizes he is dispossessed.

"Somewhere in America"—the anaphora, which ends the first section of the poem and recurs four times in the second one—first sounds like a laugh line and only later shows its dismal significance. "Somewhere in America there is a naked person" contains the adversarial rebelliousness of the Beats, and it tries to create a politically responsive poetic space, suggesting a number of senses, from poverty and homelessness to old age and disease. "Somewhere in America adoring legions blush / in the sunset, crimson madder, and madder still" apparently develops in the same mode, but has a more metaphorical meaning, suggesting the collective frenzy of a religious gathering, a political rally, or a rock concert. The name of the lively red color "crimson madder" comes from "madder"—the climbing plant *rubia tinctorum*—and it puns on "madder"—meaning "more mad"—in the phrase "madder still," which yet can refer to the color. Thus the second anaphora brings into the poem semantic density and ambiguity, which problematize the blunt directness of political spiel, emerging from the implied critique of Americanness inherent in "somewhere in America."

The next anaphoric unit brings up economic issues straightforwardly in an incredibly dense utterance, using an image taken from amateur sports, which functions like a cultural cliché: "Somewhere in America someone is trying to figure out / how to pay for this, bouncing a ball / off a wooden strut." Bouncing a ball—usually of a wall—is a fun activity popular among children, but here the phrase produces a surreal effect: a lonely person tries to make major economic decisions while being involved in a childish game. Moreover, there is a sense of powerlessness here: "strut" means a pompous gait or bearing, which is still audible in the phrase "a wooden strut," vaguely suggesting an inability to move or act properly. On top of that, the anaphora recalls the idiom "to bounce some ideas off someone," which means to test someone's opinions on something. In the context of the poem, the phrase suggests a vain effort or useless attempt.

The next anaphora suddenly veers from the poem's major themes into a burst of Frank O'Hara lyricism: "Somewhere / in America the lonely enchanted eye each other / on a bus. It goes down Woodrow Wilson Avenue." The last

sentence—referring to the name of the twenty-eighth President of the United States—expresses a nostalgic longing for the pristine Americanness of the first decades of the twentieth century, with clear-cut moral distinctions and visions of a prosperous future. The poem's closing gesture, "Somewhere in America it says you must die, you know too much," is a combination of a gangster-film black-humor laugh line and a bleak augury divined by a prophet. The brutal finality of the statement contradicts the pastoral aesthetics lurking in the poem: the speaker's voice is disillusioned, because his existence is nearing the limit of "too much." Therein lies the gist of his discontent with American celebratory culture, which the final statement rejects. The "too much" is also signaled by the length of the line, which far exceeds all previous lines, generating a graphic message as if the text were not only meant to be read, but also seen.

Yet the Ashbery poem does not simply make corny propositional claims: like many poems in *Planisphere*, "This Economy" serves as a collective witness to the transformations of American culture, analogous to the Wittgensteinian linguistic paradigm, based on particular idioms or catchphrases and expressing the experience shared by millions of Americans. As Marjorie Perloff reminds us in *Wittgenstein's Ladder*, the language game is not a genre or a particular form of discourse, but a "paradigm," which is a "set of sentences selected from the language we actually use" (60). Furthermore, the social structure involved in a game implies that there is no unique "I," as subjectivity always depends on a historically rooted language. Moreover, such oppositions as signifier/signified are irrelevant because language is not contiguous to anything else and as such has none of the fundamentals that the structuralists would have wished to impose on it. However, "This Economy" is not just a pile-up of linguistic *objets trouvés*, depending solely on the element of chance. On the contrary, like Ashbery's other great poems, it manages to preserve its beauty and integrity exactly by the "logic of strange position,"[6] activating—as David Herd has it— a "heavy opposition between competing poetic languages" (40). On the one hand, the poem uses the everyday vernacular varnished with naturalistic close-ups; on the other, it exhibits the surreal incongruity of a dream-work. Both poetics are combined in a furthered capacity to relate, which—as As David Bergman puts it—helps the poet to "perfect his technique of becoming another" (xvii-xviii).

Here—coming back to the initial statement made in this paper—we touch on the very gist of Ashberian inventiveness. According to Charles Altieri, style deals with "irreducibly concrete differences" that require the reader to adjust his or her

6 I am quoting here the most celebrated poem from Ashbery's early phase, "La livre est sur la table," closing the poet's debut collection *Some Trees*: "All beauty, resonance, integrity, / Exist by deprivation or logic / Of strange position" (*Collected Poems* 38).

emotional register to accommodate them: "[s]tyle is a matter of life, not only of art, and life is a matter of learning to adapt over time to many things which show how crude our frameworks are" (184). The power of Ashbery's style is its capacity to elicit in the reader forms of engagement that allow one to take a fresh look at American language and culture. If inventiveness, in Derek Attridge's terms, is the author-induced opening of the reader's perception of alterity, then the greatest advantage of Ashbery's inventiveness is its non-violent character, which becomes clear when we compare *Quick Question* with the far more radical experiments of the post-language poets. Ashbery's mundane landscapes of provincial America take hold of vast cultural and literary traditions, which enable the reader to safely enter the realm of otherness. This stance has an ethical dimension: the Ashbery poem develops the reader's appreciation of the canon and—giving a stimulus to co-author its meaning—it serves as a vehicle for individual freedom beyond that canon. Finally, *Quick Question* proves that the most fertile resources of literature are contained in its opposition—in the coarse and contaminated language that we use every day.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Zbigniew Maszewski

"It Is Beautiful Country Jim": The Art of Ernest Hemingway's Letters

Sandra Spanier, Robert W. Trogdon, eds. *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway. Volume 1: 1907–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 431 pages.
Sandra Spanier, Albert J. DeFazio III, Robert W. Trogdon, eds. *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway. Volume 2: 1923–1925*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 519 pages.

Long before Huck Finn writes to Miss Watson and, having put the letter in the book he is "making," decides not to send it, he and Jim find shelter from a summer storm in a cavern, a good, homelike place in the elevated part of the island. They build a fire, "spread the blankets inside for a carpet," eat their dinner, put their "things handy" at the back of the cavern and, distanced safely from the burdens of the past and the uncertainties of the future, witness a spectacle of sound and light unfolding outside. It begins "to thunder and lighten," to rain and to blow; and then it gets dark, "all blue-black outside, and lovely," and in the thickening rain the trees look "dim and spider-webby," and the blasts of the wind growing more and more furious "bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves" and "set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild";

> and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—*fst*! it was as bright as glory, and you'd have a little glimpse of treetops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards farther than you could see before, dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful

> crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling, down the sky towards the underside of the world, like rolling empty barrels down-stairs—where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.
> 'Jim, this is nice,' I says. 'I wouldn't want to be nowhere else but here.' (Twain 48–49)

Huck's words are addressed as much to Jim, whose role in the scene is to provide the existential conditions for the actual experience to be interiorized and communicated ("Well, you wouldn't 'a' ben here 'f it hadn't 'a' ben for Jim"; 49) as to the readers of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* who find in these words confirmation of the pleasurable experience they get from following the patterns of the description condensed in the space of a single paragraph, all the literary "things handy," helping Huck make the scene come alive in the reader's imagination. "Here" and "now" we may appreciate sharing a sense of satisfaction with the author comfortably hidden behind the text, who by saying "Jim, this is nice" means also "Reader, this is good writing."

Ernest Hemingway enjoyed, studied, praised and occasionally followed Twain's strategies. In Chapter XII of *The Sun Also Rises*, for example, Jake and Bill pack their lunch, bottles of wine and fishing gear, and start on their long hike towards the Irati River. Unlike in Huck's account of the storm, the arrangement of descriptive elements in Jake's text traces movement through a serene, sun-shot, almost idyllic landscape, which lets the haunting shapes of earlier memories sink deep into the background in the same way that Nick's good places in "Big Two-Hearted River" do. Like Huck's, Jake's literary rendering of the scene depends for its effect of immediacy and intensity on evocative cumulative linearity, sequences of well-measured miniature pictorial revelations of specific weather and landscape features. The fields Jake and Bill walk across are "rolling and grassy and the grass [is] short from the sheep grazing;" from the elevation above Burguete they can see "white houses and red roofs, and the white road with the truck going along it and the dust rising," and then they enter a beech wood with "the thick trunks of old beeches and the sunlight [coming] through the leaves in light patches on the grass," and, back to the narrative-nourishing imagery from the beginning of the hike, it is "smooth grass, very green and fresh, and the big gray trees well spaced as though it were a park." We are not surprised to read: "'This is country,' Bill said" (116–117). Which is to say: to the extent that he succeeds in capturing the essence of the country he comes to know first-handedly, to the extent that he succeeds in getting the feeling of the country as he first experienced it (made "very green and fresh" in Hemingway's characteristic well spaced handwriting), the writer will know that the text he has written has its own life, independent of the writer, following the same natural laws that the country he writes about does. It then simply *is*, and there may be no simpler way of acknowledging it

than by saying "This is country," which also acknowledges the reader's readiness to identify with the text and appreciate its mastery, be its source dark or sun-lit.

In 1924 Hemingway sent a letter to Gertude Stein and Alice B. Toklas in which he wrote about his efforts "to do the country like Cezanne" in "Big Two-Hearted River:" "nothing happens and the country is swell, I made it all up, so I see it all and part of it comes out the way it ought to" (*The Letters*, *Vol. 2*, 141). In the same year he wrote to Edward J. O'Brien, who was among the first readers to recognize the quality of his writing: "It is much better than anything I've done. What I have been doing is trying to do country so you don't remember the words after you read it but actually have the country" (*Vol.* 2, 154); and in 1925, two months before the story was published in *This Quarter*, he wrote to his father, whose literary judgment he wanted to trust as much as he could trust his knowledge of hunting and fishing: "The river in it is really the Fox above Seney. It is a story I think you will like…. You see I'm trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across—not to just depict life—or criticize it—but to actually make it alive. So than when you have read something by me you actually experience the thing" (*Vol. 2*, 285–286). Hemingway—the writer and the reader—always remained loyal to his early definition of a literary work's endurance; its echoes can be heard as late as in his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech in which the writer's pride and pleasure in receiving the Prize is hidden behind the representative mask of "each writer who knows the great writers who did not receive the Prize" (Baker 805) and who should act rather by writing than pretend to act by speaking about it.

Readers who take a somewhat nostalgic interest in trademark features of such declarative statements and who "never lose confidence in the firm" (Hotchner 205) would welcome the Hemingway Letters Project which, begun in 2002, has so far produced two volumes and already anticipates, in some 20 years' time, the need for "Additional Letters" to appear in the last volume of the series. Now that the ethical and legal complications resulting from Hemingway's clearly stated, bank deposited 1958 directive prohibiting the publications of any of his letters seem to have long been out of the way, the risk involved in this ambitious undertaking concerns the informative and the aesthetic value of the voluminous contents. There are many good reasons for Hemingway not wanting unauthorized readers to receive the letters he sent, not to mention those he wrote, kept copies of as his custom was, and did not send. The reasons the General Editor, Sandra Spanier, gives most emphatically for making the collective effort to get all of Hemingway's known surviving letters published are: spontaneity and urgency communicated by individual letters and "a running eyewitness history of his time" (*Vol. 2*, xxvi) communicated in the totality of the definitive collection. The Hemingway Letter Project is estimated to contain over 6000 letters addressed to over 1,900 recipients

and obtained from some 250 sources in and outside of the United States. In the two volumes already published, the annotations, the "wordage" of which often considerably exceeds the "wordage" of the letters themselves, provide detailed information about people, places, books, incidents, activities, directly or indirectly relating to Hemingway, [no longer?] a private man and a public man, a man of letters and a man of action, and they are mostly illuminating and necessary. On rare occasions, as for example when explaining the meanings of "Norman Blood," "The Nobel Prize," "*Auto da Fe*," or of "*Allemagne*," "*allez*," "*argent*" (Hemingway's "masterage" of the French language), they tend to appear naïve and redundant. *En masse*, the annotations constitute a most impressive component of the Hemingway Letters Project, and if, at times, they look overwhelmingly tedious and abundant on the page, one should not forget that Hemingway himself is painstakingly scrupulous in making sure his addressees know exactly what he means, whether he writes to Madame Gelle, explaining to her how to explain to the housekeeper of the 74 rue Cardinal Lemoine the fact that without her being notified Donald Ogden Steward can stay in their apartment while he and Hadley are away from Paris (*Vol. 2*, 17–19); or to Dorothy Connable, explaining how to play roulette and make money getting "satisfaction of knowing that you are playing it well" (*Vol. 1*, 223–225); or to William B. Smith, explaining how to live well in Paris and in Spain (bartending, bootblacking, bullfighting) (*Vol. 2*, 251–252); or to Ernest Walsh, explaining how to do the little magazine editorial work well (*Vol. 2*, 297–299); or to Horace Liveright, explaining how essential it is that no single alterations of any word as it is in the text Hemingway sends ("an organism") be made ("I'm sure you and Mr T. S. Smith understand this") (*Vol. 2,* 295). Hemingway likes to have exact numbers. He measures his claims for military glory in terms of his distance from the front line, the distance he covered carrying an Italian soldier, himself badly wounded, the number of the wounds he received ("227 little devils," the actual sizes and shapes of the two shell fragments drawn in the letter; *Vol. 1*; 131–132), the number of days he will spend in hospital recuperating; he measures his fishing expertise in terms of numbers, lengths and weights of fish he caught and he measures the solidity of his position as a writer, fortifying gradually, by keeping the word count of his writing and the record of the money ("seeds") he gets for the published texts. Numbers are provided and meant to be enjoyed in letters to other great writers whom in the early years Hemingway came to know and whose appreciation he sought: Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Francis Scott Fitzgerald.

Published in 2011, Volume 1 of *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway* covers the years 1907–1922, and it opens with the text of a postcard the 8 year-old Ernest sent his "papa" informing him that he "saw a mother duck with seven little babies" and inquiring "how big is my corn?" (*Vol. 1*, 3) Volume 2, which came out in

2013, covers the years 1923–1925 and closes with a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald including the news of Hemingway rewriting *The Sun Also Rises* and of the welcome opportunity to move to Scribner's on account of Liveright's rejection to publish *The Torrents of Spring*, the book which, as he lets Fitzgerald know at the end of the letter, "has 5.000 more words than Don [Ogden Steward's] Parody Outline of History" (*Vol. 2*, 461).

Because so many letters have been collected, over 80 per cent of them not published earlier, and because they are so richly annotated, the pleasure of reading Hemingway's correspondence may partly consist in there being no need to read them in conjunction with any of Hemingway's known biographies, or, as a matter of fact, with much prior knowledge of the developments in Hemingway's life and legend. The letters themselves create an exhaustive and colorful autobiography, "with some stretchers" as Twain's Huck would say, the first two volumes documenting, first-handedly and with unwavering enthusiasm, Hemingway's growth as a man and as a writer. Like a diary, letters are a medium privileged in making the lines of self-disclosure and the lines of self-mythologization converge, just as they benefit from making the actual experience in need of being spontaneously expressed and the literary expression in need of being properly controlled meet. Hemingway's letters, of the periods already covered in the two published volumes and of the periods to be covered in the future, provide an unstable mirror of "the way it was," but they are invariably of high intensity and of high interest because while living in proximity of the changing historical, political, cultural narratives they remain closely related to the unchanging standards of Hemingway's narrative art. In the letters collected Hemingway mentions many authors, both contemporary and "dead considerable long time," to use Huck's famous phrase again, as helpful in his apprenticeship. Among these the name of Mark Twain never appears, although, or because, the thematic and formal features of Twain's prose constitute such a significant undercurrent in Hemingway's early fictional texts and in his letters. One may be tempted to associate the "coming of age" motif emerging in Hemingway's letters with the change of perspective from that of the adventurous, always-fun-to-be-with romancer, Tom Sawyer, to a much more original, much more independent and serious writer you would like to shake hands with, Huck Finn. The regressive path, however, is always left wide open: "Jesus Christ some time I'd like to grow up," Hemingway writes to Fitzgerald in *Volume 2* (445). Some references to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are conventionally used in the role playing game of a young man half-heartedly refusing to accept family expectations and family responsibilities. A week before his seventeenth birthday Hemingway writes to his friend, Emily Goetzmann: "Just think how pleased My family would be if they would civilize me and inculcate a taste for Math and a distaste for Fishing" (*Vol. 1*, 34). Three months before Ernest and

Hadley Richardson get married in Horton Bay, he sends a photograph to Grace Quinlan, his high-school acquaintance, and writes: "Look civilizeder than you ever knew me? Huh? Been terrifically civilized for about twelve months now, and it's darned near ruined a man" (*Vol. 1*, 303). Eventually, things turn out not to be so bad, since, as Hemingway informs the Family, Hadley repeatedly demonstrates her fitness and passion for outdoor activities—"perfect coordination," "zest for things and a sense of style" (*Vol. 2*, 26), the very Huck-like qualities which may well be seen as the Hemingway collected letters' claim to their unity of effect. Hemingway seems actually to be enjoying Twain's language when he tells Grace to "pick [him] a prelate" as he himself could not "lay hold" of Bishop Tuttle from St. Louis (in Hemingway's letters frequently spelled as Sin Louis): "Remember when selecting this Priest that he's gotta be able to read and be dignified. Dignity's what we're going to pay this here prelate for, we don't want no evangelist that's liable to shout out, 'Praise be the Lord" and start rolling on the floor during a critical part of the ceremony" (*Vol. 1*, 303). In an earlier letter Hemingway writes Quinlan:

> Then Kate [Smith; since 1929 John Dos Passos's wife] and I went to the catholic church and burnt a candle and I prayed for all the things I want and I won't ever get and we came out in a very fine mood and very shortly after to reward me the Lord sent me Adventure with a touch of Romance.
> It was a very small adventure but it was unexpected and for a moment thrilling and I was glad that I had burned the candle. (*Vol. 1*, 244)

Such fragments read like an acknowledgment of the Hemingway-Twain [with a touch of Sherwood Anderson] familial relationships at its most entertaining.

In the experience of the world Twain's Huck and young Hemingway share, there is a much appreciated mixture of intuition and clear-sightedness, romanticism and pragmatism which allows both to communicate the sense of a place so effectively because the same qualities allow them first to identify with that place, as it were naturally. In his boundless curiosity about new territories Hemingway is always ready "allez somewhere, I haven't any idea where. Perhaps Kansas City—perhaps Poland" (*Vol. 1*, 206), but most willingly "to flash out onto the streams" (*Vol. 1*, 295). With the exception of Canada and more and more clearly his family home in Oak Park, Illinois, when job and family duties keep him away from fishing or hunting places, wherever he goes and sends letters from, Hemingway feels at home and wanting "to be nowhere else but here." In a 1919 letter to James Gamble there is a description of "a great place to laze around and swim and fish when you want to." "It is beautiful country Jim," he writes of the rivers and the woods of Michigan (*Vol. 1*, 183). And after he leaves America, his letters from Europe are studded with exclamatory evocations of the only places "fit for a male to

live in" where you can enjoy fishing, climbing, walking in the country, walking in the good parts of cities, riding in mountain trains, bobsledding, skiing, bullfighting.

Before some of the letters begin to be touched with a sense of their losing touch with the recuperative, energy-giving powers of the country (prognostic of the disillusionments of "Soldier's Home"), the Great War is also the Great Adventure: "Having a wonderful time!!! Had a baptism of fire my first day here" (*Vol. 1*, 112). Even when the places young Hemingway wants to be part of become the places where he wants to see others and himself in combat and where, like many others, he gets wounded (the patterned, dreamy riverscapes turning chaotic, insomniac warscapes of the Piave), the war in his letters is associated with beneficial experience. As he explains later to Scott Fitzgerald, if it doesn't kill them, the war proves good for the writers' education since it "groups the maximum of material and speeds up the action and brings out all sorts of stuff that normally you have to wait a lifetime to get" (*Vol. 2*, 446).

A sense of a good place is a pervasive motif in Hemingway's letters and so is, inseparable from it, his sense of good reading and good writing, including the art of making letters effective, condensed, fast-moving, vigorous. Every now and then we can hear Hemingway complaining about his tendency to put his own person in the foreground, his failure to omit, wherever it is not necessary in the letter, the self-intrusive "perpendicular pro-noun" (*Vol. 2*, 88) This is of particular interest from the point of view of Hemingway's judgment of his own fictional work, the judgment which he willingly offers to his recipients. As early as in 1919 in a letter to his sister Ursula, behind the many "I"s there is already an indication of Hemingway's awareness of the significance of his work, revealed to him with the clarity of his perception of good places: "You know sometimes I really do think that I will be a heller of a good writer some day. Every once in a while I knock off a yarn that is so bludy good I can't figure how I ever wrote it" (*Vol. 1*, 217). With time, as the numbers of letter recipients and of words written have considerably increased, one notices in Hemingway's letters a tendency for a shift of focus from "I"-Hemingway to Hemingway's "story," Hemingway's "book," the change which allows the text to stand in a much more distanced, more impersonal relationship, the text to be viewed like the good country and like the works of other good writers, with which it shares affinities while being fully self-contained and self-sufficient. There is a Romantic touch to such a view despite Hemingway's declaration that in trying to do the Cezanne country, one must see it "all complete all the time" without having "a romantic feeling about it" (*Vol. 2*, 385). But it is exactly this Romantic feeling about completion, perfection, autonomy in his art that protects from mere egotism Hemingway's statements about feeling good after having written "damned good" stories, having written a "swell" novel "with no autobiography and no complaints" (*Vol. 2*, 385), having

written "the funniest book I've read since Joseph Andrews" (*Vol. 2*, 422), having written a good letter without too many "I"s. Such instances of celebrating the work for its own sake, as if the writer was its first reader rather than its author, are numerous in Hemingway's letters and they would keep good company with the statements of other modernist writers who expressed their interest in the Romantic tradition (William Faulkner and Thomas Mann, to mention only the two who did receive the Prize).

In his letters, Hemingway's zest for words, rooted in his capacity for observing and listening, the zest matching Huckleberry Finn's, allows him to shift his narrative moods, ingeniously attune various forms of his typical speech writing to the demands of the situation and the expectations of the reader, assume different masks, play with the language for the sake of playing with it, developing his own slang and using phonetic spelling, or for the sake of manipulating it in his favor, even if only to win some admiration for his Tom Sawyer-like skill of "throw[ing] in some style." For Hemingway language is an adventure, controlled but "genuwind." From the elevation of the Alps, for example, Hemingway directs an enthusiastic call to William B. Smith: "Jo Esus boid what country" (*Vol. 2,* 215), and he modulates his voice in a letter to Katherine Smith which makes us remember the last nostalgic pages of *A Moveable Feast*: "It is so beautiful here that it hurts in a numb sort of way all the time, only when you are wit somebody you are lovers wit the beauty gets to be jost sort of tremendous happiness" (*Vol. 1*, 325). Different narrative styles are used in letting friends know about misadventures a "male" may have at such altitudes: Hemingway tells the co-editor of the *Little Review*, Jane Heap, of having suffered from a frostbite where "he could least afford to freeze" and he begins a letter to "Boid" with: "Ever had the penis froze Smith?" (*Vol. 2*, 271, 256).

There are passages in the letters which are evidently stylized in accordance with Hemingway's knowledge of the literary standards and mannerisms of his pen-friends and which also provide illuminating examples of Hemingway practicing his métier, seeking anecdotal themes to be developed in his yarns and calculating the methods of giving them literary multi-dimensions. Hemingway is not just rehearsing but truly practicing his art when he writes to different readers of the avalanche that killed four skiers and the priest not letting the church bells be rung, of Sam Cardinella being hanged in a chair and not knowing what was happening, of the girl telephoning in a booth, talking cheerfully and weeping at the same time, of the sounds, the smells and the movement in the bullring, of the Piave after the war, clear and blue with a cement barge drawn by horses, of traveling in a night train compartment, watching the moonlit countryside and opening the window as fast as the French keep closing it. In the letters to Ezra Pound from that early period, behind the gossip-indulging, language-showing off

extravaganza of telling the "dirt," giving the "dope," one finds a source of information about imagistic techniques and the impact these had on Hemingway yarn patterns. Hemingway is learning, with gratitude and with ironic distance, from the older masters: Sherwood Anderson, when he writes that "There is a deathly, tired silence you can't get anywhere else except in a railway compartment at the end of a long drive" (*Vol. 1,* 314), and from Gertrude Stein, when he describes to her a mountain trek with Hadley and Chink, at the end of the trip the party drinking, sleeping on the grass, then walking home "in the cool of the evening with our feet feeling very far off and unrelated and yet moving at terrific speed" (*Vol. 1*, 345–346).

It feels good and a little uncanny to have the two volumes of *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway* and to wait for the others to come, eventually in such a long time from the "here" and the "now" they celebrate. Sandra Spanier calls the letters "the last great unexplored frontier of Hemingway studies" (*Vol. 1*, xii). The attractiveness of the first two volumes lies in the possibility that the last frontier may actually be the point of departure for getting to know Hemingway's work, that the project has the freshness and greenness of landscapes which an aged writer will one day conjure up with the magic of "The Last Good Country."

Knowing of the above, and knowing how different were the origins, the shapes and the qualities of the paper Hemingway used to write his letters on and how sensitive he was to the nuances of editorial art, one may only wish there was something less mechanical about the way the text is laid out on the page, the paper itself not so contrastively white but rather retaining some of the warm afternoon sunlight texture of Scribner's early editions of Hemingway's work.

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REVIEWS

Peter Pope and Shannon Lewis-Simpson, eds. *Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Transience and Permanence in New Found Lands*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013. 353 pages.

Archeology is an academic discipline which is very rarely presented on the pages of the *Polish Journal for American Studies*, but *Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Transience and Permanence in New Found Lands*, carefully edited by Peter Pope and Shannon Lewis-Simpson, a volume of thirty one papers and the product of the 2010 conference of the Society for Post-Medieval Archeology at St John's, Newfoundland, should be a fascinating material for perusal by both historians of Early America and any Americanists, even those only remotely interested in the beginnings of European presence in the "new-found lands" in the West.

The papers in the volume challenge some major themes of early American history, which even today is dominated by the discourses of European expansionism and the underlying belief in the unstoppable progress of European colonization, and paint a much more complicated picture of the early stages of the planting of European colonies in America. A majority of the articles, written by archeologists from the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, and Austria, explore the population mobility and stability in the early European communities in the New World, paying attention to the factors which allowed some of the colonies to survive, while many others failed to become permanent settlements.

The papers are short, lucid and superbly informative. The volume has been painstakingly prepared for publication and has an impressive layout. It is replete with illustrations, text figures, maps and tables, which visualize both the sites discussed in the essays and the artifacts under investigation, deepen the analyses and assist the reader in following the arguments of the authors. The scholars, in general, avoid the use of the disciplinary jargon, presenting the results of the fascinating fieldwork carried out in different locations in the North Atlantic area, ranging from the Turks and Caicos islands to Newfoundland, with a paper by Mark Brisbane exploring also the medieval English ventures in Northwestern Russia and another by James Lyttleton devoted to the colonization of Ireland. These two papers belong to the first part of the book, "Old World Context." The book has seven more thematic sections: "Atlantic Expansion," "Colonial Memory,"

"Pots and Provenance: People and Places," "The Birth of Virginia," "Permanence and Transience in Newfoundland," "Ferryland, Maryland and Ireland: The Calverts and Other Colonial Patrons," and "Inuit and Europeans in Labrador."

As the format of this review makes it is impossible to discuss all the articles in this volume, attention should perhaps be paid to those which are devoted to the topics of greater relevance for the interdisciplinary community of Americanists. For example, two papers devoted to the beginnings of Virginia deal with the ill-fated Walter Ralegh's colony at Roanoke. Eric Klingelhofer and Nicholas Luccketti report on the current state of archeological research on Roanoke Island, while Beverley A. Straube discusses the significance of the artifacts recently discovered both on Roanoke Island and in James Fort, the first English settlements in America. The section is completed by a study by Carter C. Hudgins, who offers a reassessment of the motifs of the early inhabitants in Jamestown: his analysis of the copper artifacts found in that location suggests that they were more interested in mining and trade in minerals than permanent settlement.

The remarkable section on colonial memory contains an article by Audrey Horning, which presents the results of the excavations on a site in Northern Ireland and discusses the issue of the erasure of some painful aspects of the English colonization of the area from Irish public memory. The two other papers in this section deal with nineteenth-century settlements in North America. Jeff Oliver studies the significance of forest clearance and landscape change for the early settlements in British Columbia, while Giovanna Vitelli ponders about the relationship between early tourism and the ideological constructions of seafaring communities in Maine.

The section which will probably attract most attention, entitled "Atlantic Expansion," contains five little gems of historical research. Peter E. Pope offers compelling arguments that one of the causes for the success and permanence of some European colonies in America in the beginning of the seventeenth century could be the beginning of the consumer revolution and the spread of domestic goods, which not only improved the quality of life, but also, being linked with status, "facilitated construction of a micro social world" (45). Paula Marcoux discusses the significance of bread consumption for early colonists, looking at archeological and documentary evidence for the construction of field ovens in the early settlements. Steven R. Pendery and Hannah E. C. Koon suggest new methods of osteological and biochemical analysis of skeletal remains from the sites of early colonies to assess the impact that scurvy had on their demographics. The development of maritime culture in St Lawrence Valley is the topic brilliantly discussed by Brad Loewen.

The book does not provide a uniform, general survey of the archeological study of the early modern expansion of Europe, but offers a wide selection of

recent work on the Anglo-Saxon colonialism, based on the fieldwork carried out both in the well-known settlements, such as Jamestown and St Mary's City, and on the sites where the presence of settlers was only transient or temporary, as in the fishing stations of Newfoundland (the paper by William Gilbert), the islands in the North Atlantic (Natascha Mehler and Mark Gardiner discuss the English and Hasbeatic Trade in this area), and in the Caribbean (Neil Kennedy on salt raiking). The research on which the articles are based concerns mostly European migrations, but there are also papers which deal with contacts with Native Americans, more specifically Inuits (the papers in section 7, by Peter Ramsden, Lisa Rankin, Greg Mitchell, Eliza Brandy, and Amelia Fay).

Exploring Atlantic Transitions, by concentrating on the details of the colonial existence often neglected in general historical studies of colonization, reconstructs individual and personal experience of migration and settlement by ordinary people, painting a complex picture of the processes underlying the colonial ventures and pointing to factors often neglected in historical studies, which archeology helps to bring to light. The characteristic feature of many of the articles is that they ask new questions and suggest new lines of investigation, proving that the interdisciplinary alliance of archeology, history, and cultural studies can lead to path-breaking results.

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Susan Hardman Moore. *Abandoning America: Life-Stories from Early New England*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013. 412 pages.

In this book, Susan Hardman Moore remains faithful to her interest in early New England return migration demonstrated in *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (2007), her first major study on the topic. Essentially, *Abandoning America* is an extended documentary supplement to the first book. The author makes her goal clear from the beginning: she intends to present the "lives of around six hundred individuals" who emigrated to New England in the first half of the seventeenth century and subsequently "returned to England before the Restoration of Charles II in 1660" (1). Although her New England covers mostly the larger colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Haven, some individuals from the smaller settlements of Plymouth, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Maine are also included. She acknowledges the burgeoning transatlantic historiography dealing with the movement of settlers out of early New England and the important contributions of David Cressy, Andrew Delbanco, Philip Gura,

Alison Games and a few others to this subfield of study. Yet she observes that none of them presents the historical subjects from the perspective of religious history and that, on the whole, they tend to rely on well-documented stories of spectacular rebels and elite members, important but not necessarily representative. Hardman Moore fills the gap by offering "a new resource" that extends "the body of knowledge far beyond the small cohort of people who have appeared in the literature so far" (16).

The book falls outside the standard parameters of historiographical analysis in form as well as in content. It is divided into two asymmetrical sections. The first, "Introduction" of merely 27 pages, is composed of nine concise sections. A good part of it draws on the conclusions of her *Pilgrims*, as indicated by numerous references to that book in the footnotes. It begins with an explanation of the main purpose of the work and sketches briefly the political and religious context for the Puritan migrations on both sides of the English Atlantic. Readers who prefer more graphic presentations of historical facts may consult a useful parallel timeline for New England and England covering the study period between 1620 and 1662 (xxi-xxviii). The longest section II offers a typology of the return migrants, the factors determining their decision, and the variety of reasons they presented to their communities in order to justify leaving America. In section V, probably in delayed response to the criticism voiced elsewhere of the lack of even approximate numerical estimates of the scale of the outflow from New England in her first book (Peterson 4), Hardman Moore makes a remarkable effort to supply such tentative calculations. The outcome is most interesting, if not astonishing: the proportion of settlers who left was one in six to one in four in general, while for the group of Harvard College graduates and students the ratio was almost one in two. In section VI the author discusses the value of the biographies she collected in the volume for a more nuanced interpretation of the role of religion in the early modern English culture on both sides of the Atlantic.

The main bulk of the volume (31–378) consists of a collection of about 600 stories of individual lives reconstructed by Hardman Moore from thousands of dispersed sources researched in the archives and libraries of New England and England. Their protagonists share one crucial experience: emigration from England to New England and a subsequent return, permanent or temporary. The bulk of the retrieved life-stories are those of settlers who decided to leave New England permanently between 1640 and 1660. They vary in length from a few lines to a few pages and differ in detail according to what the extant sources have allowed to establish. As promised, Hardman Moore includes not only the colonial elite members and religious dissidents but also ordinary servants, craftsmen, and apprentices. A small proportion are the life-stories of women—daughters, wives

and widows, who in various ways depended on the migration decisions of their men or made their own. Thus, the biographies chronicle a whole range of the migrants' experience and recover the experience of early New Englanders that has been ignored.

To the main cohort of the identified 1640–1660 Puritan migrants, Hardman Moore added two special subgroups and collected them in separate appendices. In Appendix 1, she assembled forty cases of individuals who went back to England for a variety of reasons before 1640, often very soon after setting foot in New England. The author isolated them as exceptions to the prevailing tide of migrants travelling to New England to escape Laudian anti-Calvinist policies. Some never intended to settle permanently in America; others were disillusioned by life in the New World; several were deported or escaped arrest and law suits. Appendix 2 contains documentary biographies of fifty men and women who travelled to and fro across the Atlantic several times in 1640–1660 for business, political and personal purposes. Hardman Moore rightly observes that in the times of limited and slow cross-Atlantic communication, such persons delivered written messages and told their own stories about the current situation in England, and thus their role as facilitators of return migration to the motherland must not be underestimated.

Life-stories in the main part and in the appendices are arranged alphabetically. When justified by the content and location of the available documentary data, spouses and siblings are listed and reported in one entry. Each biographical entry is fully annotated. In reconstructing settlers' lives, Hardman Moore makes maximum use of documentary evidence while keeping her own narrative insertions to the necessary minimum. She often allows her historical subjects to speak in their own voice by weaving fragments from their letters, diaries and other recorded utterances into the biographies. The fragments have evidently been selected to reflect the religious experiences, feelings, dilemmas and confusion of their authors. The abbreviations placed in parentheses after many names in the stories refer the reader to relevant standard biographical dictionaries, edited historical documents, manuscript collections and online databases, and are all explained in a separate section at the beginning of the book (x-xv). Helpful cross-references are provided in the shape of asterisks marking those individuals within a particular biography who have their own entries elsewhere in the volume. Researchers in early American history and genealogists alike will appreciate a list of sources—printed, manuscript and online—provided for each individual biography, welcome shortcuts in pursuing further historical investigations and in exploring family's ancestry.

The book's intended audience is very broad indeed. It will profit students of trans-Atlantic mobility who want to understand better individual incentives behind

the emergence of a colonial empire in America. Richly documented, the volume will serve as a valuable resource for students of Anglo-American religious and cultural history. History instructors at school and academic levels will find in it a wealth of illustrative material for teaching religious, family and economic history of seventeenth-century New England and England in the Atlantic perspective. A broader non-academic audience is likely to be attracted to it by fascinating insights into the world of values, feelings, dilemmas and the vicissitudes of very real people living unusual lives almost four hundred years ago. For all those reasons, *Abandoning America* deserves a place on reference shelves of academic, school and public libraries.

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Mita Banerjee. *Color Me White: Naturalism/Naturalization in American Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. 484 pages.

In her recent study, Mita Banerjee analyzes the intersection of canonical works of American naturalism and the contemporary naturalization debate. At the turn of the twentieth century, due to unprecedented numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants and radically increased ethnic diversity, American courts considered numerous naturalization and race prerequisite cases, and their decisions revealed the tenuous character of whiteness as a racial category. Banerjee refers to these legal narratives to enrich her readings of seminal naturalistic novels. She traces the parallel between "legal impressionism" and the impressionism of the literary naturalism (3–14), convincingly arguing for the racial character of the color code in the naturalistic tradition. Methodologically, she both appropriates and reverses the logic of the Critical Race Theory. She highlights the textual character of legal documents and reads literature as law, trying to determine if a given work naturalizes its characters or, to the contrary, revokes their citizenship.

Banerjee points to the deep preoccupation of American naturalism with "borderline white" characters, non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans of different ethnicities, and to the simultaneous absence of black, Asian, or Native American characters from the texts (132, 144, 202). She claims that this tendency underscores the salient relation between naturalism and naturalization, since the novels feature only the characters that are naturalizable. In the first chapters of the study, she also juxtaposes naturalistic representations of univocally white characters with the depictions of ethnically marked whites and argues that aesthetically pure whiteness is represented as dynamic and variable, liable to blush or get tanned, whereas off-whiteness is unchangeable, and its particular shades suggest inherent traits, e.g. the Irish red triggers associations with alcoholism and aggression.

Most of the following chapters examine novels that depict different non-Anglo-Saxon ethnicities: many canonical works of naturalism such as Stephen Crane's *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Frank Norris's *The Pit* and *McTeague*, Theodor Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt* and a local color fiction text, Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*. In her analysis, Banerjee points to the dominant representational strategy of contrasting different ethnicities in order to whiten and naturalize one group "on the back" of another, which can be traced in most of the examined texts with the notable exception of Dreiser's narratives. She also explores the parallel between the perspective of the naturalistic narrator and the gaze of the social reformer: both inspect the private sphere of working-class homes from a privileged viewpoint. Under such a gaze, the "unholy sink" of Mary Murphy in *Maggie* becomes the evidence that she cannot be naturalized or defined as white, and the black teeth of a German midwife in *The Jungle* indicate her non-whiteness more persuasively than the color of her skin. Both in the public discourse of the day and in naturalistic narratives, the alarm over immigrants' lack of hygiene is expressed as a threat of contagion, indirectly galvanizing the fear of miscegenation. Such eugenic anxiety over "the gene pool of the nation" frequently coincides with naturalistic depictions of procreation that juxtapose white sterility and repulsive off-white overabundant fertility. As Banerjee demonstrates, the racially-charged discourse of cleanliness is closely related to the professionalization of medicine, which in turn intersects with the naturalization debate, with the desire for standardization as the driving force behind both. Hence, not only does the naturalistic narration mimic health inspection and diagnose the character as fit or unfit for citizenship, but also representations of immigrant medical practices are marginalized and contrasted with professionalized modern medicine.

Banerjee's study is an original and valuable contribution to whiteness studies, spanning many naturalistic classics and numerous extra-literary discourses such as law, medical history, and anthropology. She manages to synthesize a number

of insights about American society and literature at the turn of the twentieth century. At this dynamic time, the USA went through a series of identity crises and panics, brought about by rapid urbanization, the rise of corporate economy, massive waves of immigration, emancipation of African Americans, and the end of the frontier. Examining these processes and their connection to the realm of literature, Banerjee focuses on the racial category of whiteness, yet she also demonstrates how complexly it intersects with class, nationality, religion, sexuality, and gender.

The sweeping proportions of the study, however, translate into some short-comings. Examining works of literature as if they were court cases does highlight naturalism's preoccupation with naturalization; however, at some points it seems to limit the interpretative possibilities to the question: "Is the character naturalized by the narrative or not?" This problem could be remedied with references to the already available readings of the analyzed texts. Unfortunately, Banerjee's research on American naturalism seems to be based mostly on Winfried Fluck's detailed essay from a history of American literature, and it largely neglects book-length studies of the subject (Donald Pizer, Alan Trachtenberg, Donna Campbell, Jennifer Fleissner, or Walter Benn Michaels, to mention just the most influential authors). Positioning her reading in the context of the existent research would enhance the analyses of the canonical novels and additionally help Banerjee forge a stronger link between naturalism and local color fiction. Also regarding research, several long quotations from Wikipedia might strike a more conservative reader as falling short of academic standards. As for the structure, the main line of argument in the study would not suffer if the chapter on the race-change of Rudolph Valentino, very interesting on its own, was published as a separate piece. Finally, the editing of the book could be slightly improved by providing an index, by adding the illustrations of analyzed images, and by supplying English translations of quite extensive quotations from German sources.

Despite these weaknesses, *Color Me White* manages to shed new light on the canonical works of American naturalism, and it excellently conceptualizes the complex intersections between race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion in fin-de-siècle America, demonstrating the relational, arbitrary, and regionally variable character of these categories. Written in a very logical and comprehensible way, it can be recommended to students and scholars interested in whiteness studies and American literary canon.

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Julia Faisst. *Cultures of Emancipation: Photography, Race, and Modern American Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012. 247 pages.

As the title of the publication suggests, its aim is very ambitious: Julia Faisst attempts to discuss modernity, which she defines after Louis Mennard as the nineteenth-century period of industrialization of image making when "mimesis becomes a social power," along with the aesthetics of the photographic medium, the history of the concept of race, the political notion of emancipation, and the genealogy of modernist literature. This is certainly a multi-disciplinary task, worthy of a mutli-volume study, but Faisst nevertheless is determined to handle it on her own in a 247-page-long book.

Cultures of Emancipation begins with a thesis about the relation between photography and identity, with special emphasis on the political aspect of visual representation. The author claims that nineteenth-century photographic portraiture marks the beginning of what she calls "identity fluidity" (17), echoed since then in various modes of self-fashioning through images. The fluidity of identities is the locus of the emancipatory potential of photographic images. If Faisst had anchored this part of her argument in the context of the trope of fluidity in modernist aesthetics and turn-of-the-century philosophy, as well in the recent work of Judith Butler about the politics of "framing" as the crucial aspect of making and reading photography, it would certainly gain theoretical depth and political rational. Instead, Faisst prefers to rely on more conservative sources, e.g. John Berger's 1982 *Another Way of Telling*, and to base her interpretations in claims such as "capturing character is one of the major aims of photography" (20). Well, is it? The very notion of "capture" received so much theoretical interest that today it is almost inappropriate to make statements of this kind. Faisst also writes that a photograph "can be captivating, even liberating, as well as disciplining, if not imprisoning" (20). In response to such claims, Butler could answer: but what about the context outside and beyond the frame, and how does the context reframe the frame? Similarly, Jacques Rancière, who has written extensively on photography in the context of the aesthetic, representational, and ethical regimes, would have a lot to say about Faisst's claim that the key "attribute" of early twentieth-century photography is individuality. Simply put, Faisst relies on definitions and concepts that have long been challenged in contemporary criticism of visual culture. The fact that Faisst uses these concepts to discuss the subject of race does not redeem them as correct and sufficiently accurate.

Cultures of Emanicipation examines how writers from Frederick Douglass to Gertrude Stein (they are: Harold Frederic, Henry James, Jean Toomer, Charles Chestnutt) use visual strategies of photography "to gain political and aesthetic emancipation" (22). In line with Rancière's analysis of modernist claims to

artistic emancipation, however, one could argue against Faisst that although her timeline of political uses of photography is correct, her interpretation of the modernist manipulation of the visual medium is outdated, as the emancipatory gestures of the modernists, when read through the prism of the economic status of art at the beginning of the twentieth century, appear as desperate spectacles of self-fashioning that mask the sad reality of the loss of artistic freedom in the world governed by the laws of the market (Rancière). Which is to say, their emancipatory function is purely declarative but lacking power. The fact that Faisst does not even acknowledge Rancière's notion of aesthetic regime or his *Emancipated Spectator* might be disturbing for those readers who, like myself, expect from contemporary publications a thorough and up-to-date bibliographical *quaerenda*.

No less troubling is Faisst's assertion that *Cultures of Emancipation* is the first full-length study on the relation between photography and literature that "goes beyond the simple reproduction of the self in fiction" (23). What about Carol Schloss's *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer, 1840–1940,* or *Literature and Photography Interactions, 1840–1990: A Critical Anthology* edited by Jane Rabb (which actually are Faisst's references)? What about Linda Rugg's 1997 *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography* (which is not)? If anyone of those authors links photography to the notion of reproduced selfhood, Faisst would be the closest choice. And proclamations about the "pivotal role of photography in modernist literature"—even if you dub the trend "photographization"—are as illuminating and scholarly valid as statement about the pivotal role of film, war or the telegraph.

In the first chapter, devoted to Douglass's self-fashioning through photographic images, Faisst refers to the democratic symbolism of the photographic medium (41) to argue, through the analysis of pictures from *Life* and Eyerman's famous 1850 framed daguerreotype portrait of Frederick Douglass as well as Douglass's texts, that photography was "an adjunct to his speeches and writing" (37). The diachronic study of frontpieces from Douglass's autobiographies proves his passage from a respectable slave to a distinguished statesman; however, the analysis offers no comparison to the romantic aesthetics of those stylizations, which seems necessary to complete the historical depth of the study. On the other hand, an interesting point is made about Douglass's creation of a "mixed-genre" of visual and verbal elements (55)—an observation which can be a good starting point for the study of the evolution of the genre up to contemporary photo-blog phenomenon.

The second chapter is said to be about Harold Frederic and Henry James—the writer intrigued by the technologies and commercialization of representation—but it tends to focus almost exclusively on Harold Frederic's "Marsena." Albeit

acknowledging James's novels, the chapter features no mention of "The Real Thing" which is one of James's most outspoken commentaries on the commercialization of portraiture. Following this brief study of proto-modernist literature, there comes the chapter on Gertrude Stein, Man Ray and the usage of photographic medium to "explore artistic identity" (122). In this section, Ray's photographs are interpreted as attempts to mute Stein's literary self by amplifying the painterly character of the photographs, while Stein is presented as using these techniques against their grain, in order to emancipate her literary self from photographic prison, by theatrical exaggeration of their formality in non-referential but self-reflective literary style of "continuous presence" of the figure of the writer (126; 142). The length of Stein's phrases mimics the time of exposure, emulating the work of the photographic apparatus. In a like fashion, Ray's solarization technique is mirrored in Stein's poetics of negativity, through which she achieves her artistic sovereignty. Or, to put it in Faisst's language: Stein's "photo-essay demonstrates that we can know humanity once more: through the deeply human being Stein is. If we think about Stein in relation to the question of evacuated subjectivity… this question must be answered in the affirmative. For Stein, the post-sovereign subject that seems to be emptied of all self-determination and democratic potential is yet plastic" (170).

The last chapter entitled "Shadow Archive" promises to deal with lynching photography. The topic is highly relevant to the study attempting to capture changes in the development of photographic ethics across centuries, but the style of Faisst's argument slips from register to register at time becoming dangerously moralistic. This is Faisst introducting Sontag's ideas on photography: "[i]n *On Photography*, the book that ensures the author's legacy like no other"; "[i]n *Regarding the Pain of Others*, the last book she published before her own untimely death" (172). The dogmatic tone gains momentum with every page of the chapter, with photographs being "monstrous" "appalling" and "bewildering" and Jean Toomer's language, the exposure to which is "enthralling" (194), is an "uncontaminated" and "beautiful" "vehicle of substance" (189). If there is any topic with respect to which the critic should resist doctrinaire political correctness it is definitely torture photography. Faisst does not seem to realize that, thus providing us with a work which is a recommended read for all instructors of academic writing in search of material for teaching how not to write.

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Birte Christ. *Modern Domestic Fiction: Popular Feminism, Mass-Market Magazines, and Middle-Class Culture, 1905–1925*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. 370 pages.

This impressive, detailed and meticulously researched monograph explores an uncharted territory (well, almost uncharted): women's popular fiction, published in the US between 1905 and 1920. Until recently, the focus of academic analysis of women's popular fiction was the domestic novel, also referred to as the sentimental novel, published, as agreed upon by most critics, in the period usually delimited by the years 1820–1870. Most women's literature courses move on from the domestic novel of the mid-nineteenth century directly to the realist fiction of the serious turn-of-the-century writers: Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton. One can sometimes expect a cursory nod to the local colorists, particularly if they were from New England, like Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman. Popular fiction and popular women's culture since the 1920s has also received its share of critical attention from feminist scholars; here one should mention, for example, Janice Radway's work on the romance and Tania Modleski's writings on Harlequin novels and soap operas. Yet there is hardly ever any questioning of what happens to the immensely popular female bestsellers of the 1850s, produced by the "damned mob of scribbling women" which Hawthorne famously ridiculed. Popular women's fiction seems to disappear off the radar of critical attention after the Civil War. Birte Christ changes this state of affairs and shows how the sentimental tradition evolved as it entered the twentieth century.

The texts analyzed in the volume are the successors of the nineteenth-century domestic tradition and Christ methodically shows how they are inspired by, and how they "modernize" the "plot-lines, characters, concerns, aesthetics, and audience" (8) of their predecessors. Christ takes as a starting point Nina Baym's reading of domestic fiction from her early *Woman's Fiction* (1978), according to which such novels should be read as basically protest literature; protest against contemptuous and trivializing views of women. They not only took women seriously but also empowered them by positing them as active agents in the shaping of their lives, even if they were not allowed to step out of the domestic sphere. According to Baym's arguments, these texts made domesticity bearable and offered strategies for resistance. Jane Tompkins makes a similar arguments in *Sensational Designs*, where she develops the concept of "cultural work." It is true that particularly Baym's reading has been challenged by more contemporary critics, some of whom point out that reading life stories of heroines of the early domestic novels (*Wide, Wide World*, *Lamplighter*) as lessons in female independence requires mental calisthenics and pointed to the political dimension of the readings offered by early feminist

scholars as purposely applying the category of "transgression" as the primary tool of analysis (cf. Noble).

Yet Baym's argument, originally made in relation to fiction from the period 1820–1870, seems to actually hold water much better when applied to the popular fiction of the period Christ is discussing. Not only are the plots of the novels openly welcoming of female independence but the careful analysis of the biographies of the writers (Dorothy Canfield, Zona Gale and Inez Haynes Irwin)—Christ openly admits here to be analyzing these novels through the assumption of authorial intentionality—reveal that these were women who held strong feminist convictions and who deliberately chose to work through popular aesthetics, precisely because they were interested in a reaching and educating a mass middle-class audience (19). Christ theorizes that even though in their own lives the female writers rejected tradition, for example by abstaining from childbearing and/or marriage, the choices made by the protagonists of their novels are much less radical, possibly not to alienate the audience. The popular novels analyzed by Christ differed from nineteenth-century domestic fiction in their emphasis on the later period of the heroine's life (often marriage and motherhood), as opposed to adolescence and closure with marriage in the earlier texts. The texts show the consequences of particular decisions made within the domestic sphere from, as Christ argues, a feminist position. Christ insists that the work of all three writers analyzed contains within itself a strong didactic component. In other words, they all attempted to purposely convey a message of empowerment and advocate for specific choices within the domestic lifestyle

The (often serialized) novels analyzed by Christ can also be seen as forming a certain "missing link" between the sentimental tradition of the nineteenth century and Hollywood's domestic melodramas of the 1930s and 1940s. Many feminist scholars (Kaplan, Gledhill) trace the roots of the "women's weepie" to the domestic novel. Christ sees modern domestic fiction as performing cultural work on its readers "by employing the intertwined aesthetic modes of sentimentalism and melodrama" (26). Not only does this seem, almost at first glance, like a legitimate assumption but Christ also proves her thesis very methodically by showing how the texts expected from the reader the capacity to read "relationally." She opens the books by a comparison of a 1916 commercial for the Globe-Wernicke bookcase, published in a popular women's magazine and compares it with Zona Gale's domestic novel *A Daughter of the Morning*. This juxtaposition stresses that the reading of popular middle-class literature was a domestic pursuit in itself and that "the home and its values of connectedness and community are at the heart of modern middle-class literature" (317).

Christ's approach is most certainly a cultural approach and in a way this seems to be the only drawback of the analysis, but only if one thinks of the work of

cultural criticism as already a thing of the past. True, most of the groundbreaking cultural scholarship on women's popular culture was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s but there clearly still exists a need for this kind of reading as long as one can still locate gaps in what this type of critical discourse has discussed. Christ identifies one such gap in scholarship on women's popular writing and sets off to fill it in. She does this both gracefully and diligently and deserves the greatest applause both for the effort and for the style in which she achieves her goal.

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Florian Freitag. *The Farm Novel in North America: Genre and Nation in the United States, English Canada and French Canada, 1845–1945*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2013. 364 pages.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, farming, in its modern-day, North American form of industrial agribusiness, gets understandably little attention from fiction writers. Agribusiness seems devoid of artistic potential. As a system whose essence is control—of plant, animal and soil fertility, crop production, and mechanized labor input—it does not yield easily to the imaginative processing that thrives on human drama, passions, and the surprises of fate and nature. If contemporary American writers turn to farming as their subject, it is either to dramatize in their novels the struggle for survival of the anachronistic traditional family farm (Wendell Berry, Barbara Kingsolver, Jane Smiley), or to document in a nonfictional format their own exploits as gentle(wo)men/weekend/city farmers

who grow organic food or keep chickens for their own use. Both categories of writing—with the exception of Wendell Berry's essays on "culture and agriculture"—are peripheral tributaries of American literature's mainstream and, outside of agrarian and environmentalist circles, contribute marginally, if at all, to the national debates.

But things used to be very different. Between late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, the farm novel—that is, the novel set on a farm and concerned with farming as an occupation and lifestyle—enjoyed a remarkable popularity both with writers and reading audiences. As a genre, it not only gave expression to the experience of a substantial segment of North American population (in 1910, in the United States alone, farmers accounted for 30 percent of the national work force), but also contributed to articulating and fostering national ideologies and mythologies, while at the same time reflecting, sometimes critically, on their content. Inevitably, farm novels contributed as well to defining the place of land in the national sense of identity. This story of the farm novel as an agent of "nationaliz[ing] agricultural practices and spacializ[ing] national self-conceptions" becomes the subject of Florian Freitag's 350-page study, *The Farm Novel in North America,* published by Camden House.

Freitag assumes a comparative perspective in his book: instead of exploring farm novels, as they have often been explored, through the prism of the pastoral, or in their national/regional specificity, he makes his subject all three national literatures of North America, i.e. French Canadian, English Canadian and American, to reflect on how different historical circumstances and different national ideologies impinged on novelistic representations of a set of basically similar North American farming experiences—of homesteading, agricultural success, changes brought about by technological progress, environmental crises, competition with non-farming lifestyles, and the gradual loss of farming's economic significance. This transnational perspective allows the author to discern on the one hand the inevitable parallels in how the three national literatures represent farming life, but on the other, to bring out the differences between their visions of the rural world, the differences that have little to do with the actual experience of confronting specific agricultural, social, or environmental problems, but a lot to do with the ideological contexts in which the books were written. As Freitag writes, his goal is to "de-emphasize… the category of the pastoral… highlighting the genre's engagement with historiographical discourses and national self-conceptions instead" (12).

The farm novel enjoyed its heyday between 1880 and 1940, yet Freiteg sees its sources or "prototypes" in three older texts, one for each national/cultural group. In Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's "History of Andrew, the Hebridean" (1782), Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852/1871), and Patrice Lacombe's *La*

terre paternelle (1846), all of the national characteristics of the North American farm novel of the future are already discernible. Crèvecoeur tells the story of a frontier farmer's success; Moodie introduces the theme of "control and order" that need to be imposed on the wilderness; in Lacombe's book, the paternal farm is presented as a site and synonym of French Canadian identity and resistance against English encroachments. Under the pressure of changing socio-political and cultural circumstances, these proto-stories would be with time revised in detail, reworked and even challenged, and yet the ideological framework which they introduced continued to structure the imaginations of writers for decades to come.

It is the French Canadian farm novel that is presented in the study as most persistently adhering over the years to the ideology and ideals first expressed in *La terre paternelle*. Unil mid-twentieth century, when the farm and farmers finally disappear from Quebec fiction, the subsistence farm, owned for generations by one family, appears in French Canadian novels as a synonym and guarantee of French identity and as a stronghold of resistance against all forces threatening the survival of French Canadians in a world dominated by the English. These forces include Protestantism, materialism, liberalism and their epitome, the cities, that lure the young away from the farm, but also the wilderness, historically always a tempting alternative left to the less sedentary French Canadian spirits. The ones that let themselves be lured to live the life of *couriers de bois,* or to test their hand at business, or to marry an Englishman or American, almost as a rule eventually return home as prodigal sons or disobedient daughters to be pardoned and to resume their national mission of sustaining the French identity and traditions. Even those few texts that seem to reject the pattern, e.g. Claude-Henri Grignon's *Un homme et son péché* (1933), are seen by Freitag as only supporting through a negative argument the French Candian ideology of agriculturalism—that is, the belief that the traditional family farm and farming are means of cultural survival.

English Canadian farm novels, on the other hand, communicate the original English settlers' preoccupation with "Order and Control." They present the settler-farmer as an agent of civilized improvement, understood as replacing the bush's "disorder" with the straight lines of the furrows, of roadlessness with roads. This controlling impulse extends also onto the human nature which always threatens the barely established order through unregulated sexuality or through other human passions, such as greed or envy. What is especially noteworthy about English Canadian farm novels, however, is that the most mature of them (as opposed to the English Canadian category of rural idylls) distance themselves from this national obsession with control, featuring characters who either break out of or sabotage such "rage for order" (Martha Ostenso's *Wild*

Geese, 1925) or, if they embrace it, eventually face doubts about what they have accomplished (Frederick Philip Grove's *Fruits of the Earth*, 1933). Moreover, English Canadian authors distinguish themselves by trying, rather stoically, to make sense in their novels of the dramatic changes which took place in agriculture in the first decades of the twentieth century—mechanization and depopulation—and that were soon to obliterate the old-time, heroic style of North American farming. Thus, in English Canadian farm fiction agriculture is gradually reconceptualized as food production for the world, which in the wartime period becomes also as service to the nation and a patriotic duty (R. J. C. Stead's *Grain*, 1926).

As for the American farm novel, its tone was set by Crèvecoeur. His small, independent farmer, the true American, blessed with the opportunities of the frontier which allowed him to pursue his American dream of progress and success, was to be resurrected in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many novelistic characters, the most memorable being Alexandra Bergson from Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* (1913). However, American authors' vision of farm life darkened with time; first, the naturalists challenged the Jeffersonian myth of the farmer's independence, showing him not only at the mercy of nature (which in itself, Freitag argues, was no news in the farm novel, concerned as it had always been with lives determined by the environment), but also of the intangible forces of the market and capital. Then the Depression and the Dust Bowl shook the very foundations of the mythology, dispossessing the small farmer of the land and thus of the tool with which he could carve his better future. And yet, though humbled by their new knowledge, mid-twentieth century American novelists retained faith in the farmer, in his love of land and independence, in his hard-to-break spirit, and his ability to cooperate in the face of crisis. No book expresses better this allegiance to the national ideal of the farmer than Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* of which Freiteg writes: "[it] can be categorized not only as a typical American novel—it depicts after all 'an exodus from a blighted land (Oklahoma) to a promised land (California)'—but also as a typical American *farm* novel: ultimately the Joads are driven by their dream of home ownership and material success as settlers in California" (244).

Freitag's study brings into sharp focus the significance of the farm novel as a genre which helped to both shape and give voice to the consciousness of the three national/cultural groups. The book also makes it almost shockingly clear how these three groups, too often insufficiently distinguished one from the others from the transatlantic perspective, differ fundamentally in their responses to and interpretations of a similar experience. Farming the land can mean very different things to people who labor under different political and ideological exigencies. It can mean a patriotic obligation, it can mean

a civilizing mission, or it can mean translating the national dream into individual success.

Freitag divides his attention evenly among the three literatures, resisting the temptation to overemphasize the American over the Canadian, and especially over the French Canadian material. French Canadian farm novels, it should be stressed, get a fair share of space in this English-language study. They are also quoted in the original, even when English translations are available, which should probably be interpreted as a gesture of cultural respect and academic good manners. This being the case, one thing seems strikingly absent in this very culture-sensitive critique: an explanation of why the author has chosen to altogether ignore the Mexican farm fiction. The absence of any explanation (if not of chapters on Mexican literature) is all the more surprising since he acknowledges sympathetically in his "Introduction" the frequent Canadian complaint about being marginalized in North American comparative studies. So when one reads that the study "take[s] into account farm novels *from all over* North America" (8), one cannot help wondering about his reasons for the exclusion of Mexicans. Is it because Mexican writers did not produce farm novels in the author's understanding of the term? Or is it because these are so different in their concerns that the elegant symmetry of *The Farm Novel* as it discusses the three national literatures would have suffered? Or would including Mexicans bloat the book to an unreasonable size? Or maybe the author prefers to view the Mexican culture as part of South rather than North America? Whatever the reason, a word of explanation would disarm potential criticism of the author's decision, while at the same time simply satisfying the curiosity of the reader unfamiliar with transnational studies protocols.

But what is not there is less important than what is. *The Farm Novel* is a richly informative and extensively researched book that brings into discussion not only American and Canadian, but also German scholarship. At the same time, it is one of those critical studies which open vistas for further exploration. Freitag brings back to critical awareness many completely forgotten novels, such as e.g. Eleanor Gates's *The Plow Woman* (1906), Horace Kramer's *Marginal Land* (1939), Mary Austin's *The Ford* (1917), Louis Bromfield's *The Farm* (1933) or J.Cannon's *Red Dust* (1928)—the list is dozens of titles long—which, for one thing, beg to be reread today and reconsidered from the ecocritical perspective. In the epilogue to his book, he outlines more work yet to be done by mentioning several names of writers who continued to write farm novels in the second half of the twentieth century. In his study he also offers revisionistic readings of several canonical texts to reflect upon, most notably Frank Norris's *The Octopus* (whose ending he interprets as much more of a piece with the book's message than it is usually believed to be) and proposes original perspectives on the relationship

between the farm novel and naturalism ("the phrase 'a naturalistic farm novel' is threatened to become mere pleonasm"; 112) or on the farm epic as literary response to the end of the old-style agrarian way of life in North America. Thus, he leaves readers with a weighty agenda for their future reading and thinking. Yet what the book should be praised for in the first place is the precious reminder it offers to anglophone and francophone Canadianists, as well as to all Americanists—that without taking into account the two other national/cultural groups' responses to the continent, their understanding of North America remains incomplete.

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Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich. *Memory and Neighborhood: Poles and Poland in Jewish American Fiction after World War Two*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013. 170 pages.

When asked about images of Poles in American literature most critics and better informed readers would mention Stanley Kowalski from Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire* and Sophie Zawistowska from William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*. There are, however, more images and, which is not surprising, most of them, especially in the years after WWII can be found in works by Jewish American authors. Not many studies have been done on this topic. One can mention parts of Thomas Gladsky's study *Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature* (1992), encompassing a very large body of works, and more recently Danusha Goska's *Bieganski. The Brute Polak Stereotype: Its Role in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture* (2011).

While the first one, in spite of some drawbacks, is a good and balanced source, the other leaves much to be desired. Therefore the new book by Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich should be welcome as a new addition. The author made an enormous effort and put under scrutiny more that seventy books by Jewish American authors, discussing them in three main parts entitled: "Collective Portrait," "Memory" and "Other Traces." The first part discusses Polish anti-Semitism, the portrayal of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations in America; the second deals with images of Poland, predominantly as a land of hostility and death resulting mainly from the stigma of the Holocaust; and the last one with various motifs, including references to well-known Poles and Polish Jews, objects associated with

Poland, Polish names and contacts with contemporary Poland. Among the authors and books discussed are both classic works by well-known masters of American literature, including Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth and Cynthia Ozick, popular and slightly forgotten authors like Leon Uris, Leslie Epstein, or Edward Lewis Wallant, and a new generation of authors, including Tova Reich or Steve Stern. On account of some Polish motifs Aleksandrowicz-Pędich even included authors with Jewish roots and their works rarely presented as "Jewish," e.g. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*.

The book is relatively well-balanced and the author tries to be objective, although from time to time she expresses directly or indirectly her regret that the image of Poles and Poland is far from laudatory. She is also worried what happens if one of those books is used as the only source of information, especially by an "unsophisticated reader," and states that "the reader can only hope here that some *licentia poetica* applies both to 'obnoxious Jews' and 'every other single Pole' being an anti-Semite" (39). Such comments seem redundant, as it is fairly obvious that most authors take advantage of poetic license and one can hardly expect from fiction to serve as a faithful and objective representation of historical reality. Belles-letters and especially popular fiction favor exaggerated characters.

It is a great pity that the author has not referred to some earlier studies on images of Poles in Yiddish literature, especially on Isaac Bashevis Singer. She rightly does not include Singer's works in her analysis because he wrote originally in Yiddish (although English versions of his works are treated as second originals and further translations into most languages, including Polish and Hebrew, have been done on the basis of the English versions), but the truth is Bashevis had a great influence on generations of Jewish American authors, especially of the middle and younger generation, and influenced their imagination and style. Additionally, if not via Bashevis, some authors, especially of the older generations, absorbed their images of Poland and Poles from earlier Yiddish literature and culture. The most important types are those of *porets* (landowner) and *poyer* (peasant). The first one is usually an ambivalent figure, violent and arrogant, but can also serve as a protector of Jews in crucial moments, and the other usually negative: brutish and primitive. Contrary to those male portraits, female figures are often idealized, whether they are noblewomen or peasants, and they are often presented as mediators between two antagonistic communities, devoted to Jewish protagonists, sometimes even converting to Judaism. Their idealization encompasses also their physical appearance of an attractive high-cheeked blue-eyed blonde. One can find similar portraits of Polish women in Jewish American literature, or even American literature in general. Styron's Sophie fits very well into such a portrait.

It is also a pity that the author did not give enough attention to Leon Uris's novel *Mila 18*, one of the most popular books by this controversial writer, whom Aleksandrowicz-Pędich rightly criticizes for a highly exaggerated portrait of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations as well as for historical errors. However, this particular novel is especially important as it served for a few decades as the most representative portrait of the Warsaw ghetto in American literature and it contains a number of Polish characters, including the idealized portrait of a beautiful and altruistic Polish woman Gabriela Rak devoted to the heroic Jewish protagonist Andrei Androfsky (modeled on the leader of the Jewish Combat Organization Mordechai Anielewicz).

The motif of representation of Poles appears throughout the whole book although the main focus is in Chapter 1 in subchapters "Unpleasant Polish Types" and "Other Poles." This discussion would be clearer if the author used some other distinguishing criteria, such as gender or social status, which are of major importance in this respect.

The best parts of the book are those where the author presents a more in-depth analysis of selected works, e.g. in the subchapter "The Jew and the Polish Inheritance," where she refers to Lillian S. Kremer's and Hana Wirth-Nesher's publications and partly engages in a polemic with them. The most problematic are fragments where she presents a kind of registry of motifs, sometimes in a rather haphazard manner: not every single mention of Poles or Poland in a work is worthy of critical attention. It seems that she tried do record every single case and this surfeit of detail sometimes blurs a more general image.

Occasionally the author as if tried to correct the works she discusses. For instance she states that the character of a Polish cleaner, named Wadja, in Saul Bellow's last novel *Ravelstein* is "unnecessary for the plot" (45). It would be better to express such an opinion in a more careful manner, the more so, that soon after this statement she comes up with a fairly detailed analysis which shows the opposite: that the relationship between the protagonist and his Polish servant is fairly important.

Unfortunately the book is not devoid of factual errors. The Cossack uprising took place in 1648–1649, and not in the eighteenth century (s. 76–77).

It is not true that Chełm figures as the town of fools both in Jewish and Polish folklore. This is specific only for Jewish folklore and serves as a very good example of different cultural topographies. The same places in Poland create different associations in Polish versus Jewish/Yiddish tradition (e.g. Kock, Góra Kalwaria/Ger, Warka). Present Polish inhabitants of Chełm have learnt only recently, due to the wave of interest in Jewish topics in post-Communist Poland, that their hometown evokes such associations.

Joanna Rostropowicz-Clark is not a fictitious figure but a scholar and writer portrayed by Philip Roth (and she in turn portrayed him in one of her works).

It is not quite true that Julian Stryjkowski deals "primarily with the dilemma of the assimilated Polish-Jewish intellectual for whom the tragic memory of a lost culture and a realization of his own Jewishness collides with his commitment to the new Poland" (10). This is correct in reference to Adolf Rudnicki or Artur Sandauer, but not Stryjkowski, and, besides, this does not have anything to do with the end of Yiddish culture in Poland, because none of them ever wrote or intended to write in Yiddish. The author repeats this claim after Thomas Gladsky, who, however, is not an expert in the field of Polish-Jewish or Yiddish literature and makes some errors himself. It would have been better to refer to ample Polish literature on the topic.

Sloppy editing resulted in a number of typos and errors in names in both the main text and index, e.g. Teresa Tuszyńska instead of Agata Tuszyńska (Teresa was a model and actress, Agata is a writer and journalist), Dominic Lacapra instead of Dominick LaCapra, John Paul the Second instead of John Paul II, Byran Cheyette, instead of Bryan, Shoa instead of Shoah etc. It is also a pity that the index does not include titles of works discussed.

The author should have put more emphasis on the historical context and the time when particular works were written. Such events as the pogrom in Kielce of July 1946 or the so-called anti-Zionist, and in fact anti-Semitic, campaign of March 1968, had a lasting impact on representations of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations in the West. If post-war impressions change this rather gloomy picture for a better one, it is the question of recent years, not the whole post-war period as the author claims (131).

On the other hand, perhaps it is good that the author seemed not to fully realize the difficulties she faced while attempting such a study, which requires, next to expertise in American literature, some acquaintance with Yiddish and Polish literature, sociology (the issue of stereotypes) and history, because she might have not written the book. As it is, both the very controversial study by Danusha Goska and the not-free from errors and simplifications study by Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich encourage discussion, and might stimulate further research on this complex, difficult and insufficiently explored to date topic.

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Tadeusz Pióro. *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism*. Warsaw: Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw, 2013. 244 pages.

In the course of a conversation we had last year, a fellow specialist in American poetry and poet in his own right referred to Tadeusz Pióro as "an authority on O'Hara and Ashbery" as well as a "good, interesting" poet. The other phrases my colleague used to describe Pióro's literary stature were "formally advanced" and "somewhat similar to the New York School." The epithets I have just quoted strike a chord with one familiar with Pióro's monograph on the author of *Lunch Poems*, published shortly before the above-mentioned talk took place. The Frank O'Hara who emerges from Pióro's study is intriguing as both man and poet, and the experimental, ever-challenging character of his *œuvre* is brought to the fore. Pióro is careful—and, in my view, rightly so—not to overdose on biographical references; he does, nevertheless, manage to place O'Hara in the context of his association, both human and literary, with John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch or Barbara Guest as well as—or perhaps first and foremost—with the leading visual artists of the day. While the literary and artistic luminaries of mid-twentieth-century New York and the socio-aesthetic context of the city at large are not ignored, it is O'Hara's poetic output that Pióro focuses on.

The Norton Anthology of American Literature points out that "O"Hara's example encouraged other poets—John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler" (Baym 2: 2647) and that his "bravado was a rallying point for these writers outside the more traditional and historically conscious modernism of Pound and Eliot" (Baym 2: 2647). Both statements could serve as epigraphs to Pióro's study, in which the framework of modernism is also the point of departure, as the very title of the monograph, *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism*, demonstrates. The expression "ends of modernism" serves as the title of the study's first chapter as well, followed by two more, "Modernism and the Avant-Garde" and "Reading Frank O'Hara." In the introduction to the book, Pióro explains that the word "ends" is meant to signify "closure or demise as well as intentions or goals" (30). He also specifies that "[t]hroughout this book, references to Modernism denote primarily its avant-garde and experimental aspects, while the term High Modernism appears in reference to works and authors academically canonized in America during O'Hara's lifetime" (39) with "Vladimir Mayakovsky or Antonin Artaud fall[ing] under the former rubric" (39) and Eliot coming under the heading of High Modernism. The former two are chosen from among European modernists, and with good reason, since both resurface, to a greater or lesser degree, in O'Hara's work and views on poetry. While in his study Pióro does not undertake comparative analysis as such—with the exception of a poem by Mayakovsky set against an O'Hara poem—and concentrates on the American poet, he does attempt to put him in a

larger literary and aesthetic context. Pióro's book confirms my view that virtually every discussion of Anglo-American modernist, or indeed modern, poetry inevitably harks back to French symbolism. Consequently, references to Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud recur throughout the text, as do interesting observations on the affinities between their respective visions and O'Hara's poetics.

As anyone familiar with the basic biographical details of O'Hara's life knows, the poet of "Biotherm" had strong professional and personal connections with New York's vibrant art scene in the 1950s and 1960s. An employee at the Museum of Modern Art, he was an art critic as well as the promoter and personal friend of several exponents of Abstract Expressionism. To quote the Norton Anthology again, "this was more than a way of making a living; it was also making a life" (Baym 2: 2646). Reminding us that Marjorie Perloff calls O'Hara a "poet among painters" (15), Pióro's monograph suggests it was a way of making poetry as well, since it was the American poet's ambition to do in his own medium what the American abstractionists did in painting. In consequence, readers and exegetes of O'Hara can hardly afford to ignore references to the visual arts while examining his poetry: as Pióro points out, "the High Modernist aesthetic of painters such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock was crucial to his development as a poet" (39–40), which is why "both the poetic and the painterly 'idioms' should be considered in assessing O'Hara's position within, and beyond, Modernism" (40). Importantly, however, Pióro does not stop his analysis of the analogies between O'Hara's poetry and the visual arts at the achievements of Jackson Pollock and his fellow Action Painters. He extends his "painterly" reading of O'Hara to encompass Andy Warhol, an artist who was to the second half of the twentieth century what Pollock was to the mid-twentieth-century art scene. Pióro thus sees the American poet's *œuvre* as suspended between the achievements of the two greatest American painters of the last century.

Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism presents the poet in question as a representative of "the last avant-garde" (29), a term Pióro borrows from David Lehman. Stressing O'Hara's individualistic approach, conspicuous in, *inter alia*, his "anti-manifestoes," the author of the monograph looks at the poetry he examines in terms of its avant-gardist and experimental dimension. Rimbaud's poetic vision, marked by his search for "a new poetic language" (61), becomes a springboard for what Pióro terms "the rhetoric of excess" (61), aimed at hiding "overwhelmingly powerful and painful emotions" (64) and taking poetic shape in O'Hara's (anti-)elegies. The "poets from Rimbaud's lineage" (81) who must be considered relevant to the American poet include Mayakovsky, whose lyric is compared to one of O'Hara's. This, in turn, leads Pióro to examine O'Hara's "construction of subjectivity" (83), which, equivocally enough, is also its "destruction" (83), in the closing section of Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, the author scrutinizes the links between the notions of boredom, newness and the avant-garde, as well as those between heroism and avant-gardism in both art and life. Looking into O'Hara's writings on Pollock, the monographer argues that the real subject of the texts in question is as much the painter as the poet himself. Pióro also points out O'Hara's sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* visual artists such as Pollock or de Kooning. While Abstract Expressionism, whose modernist character is emphasized in the monograph, may seem an inevitable point of reference when it comes to O'Hara, the realism-based Pop Art and its pope, Warhol, typically seen as a reaction against the former art movement and, as Pióro reminds us, provoking O'Hara's initial skepticism as well as hostile reactions on the part of Abstract Expressionists themselves, may be less so. The monographer shows how the phenomena central to Pop Art and popular culture, such as consumerism, mechanical reproduction and spiritual death, are relevant to O'Hara's poetry, rounding off the chapter with a section on O'Hara's use of register typical of films, television or comic strips which inscribe themselves into Warholian "pastiche, or repetition" (158).

As its title suggests, Chapter Three is concerned with various ways of reading the poet of *Second Avenue*. In Pióro's own words, the aim of the chapter—as well as, I believe, of the study in its entirety—is "to expose the resistance of O'Hara's poems to critical approaches that privilege poetic artifice over mimetic realism, or vice versa" (163), though, admittedly, "[s]triking a balance between the two within the bounds of a single reading is very hard indeed, perhaps even self-defeating in a rhetorical sense" (163). The inevitable conclusion is that O'Hara's poetry invites "readings, which cannot be integrative" (189), but are likely to be "multiple" (189). This explains why Pióro takes the opportunity to return to some of the poems dealt with earlier in the monograph. He also embarks upon an extensive and absorbing reading of "Biotherm," a poem important for both biographical and artistic reasons. Struggling with what he calls O'Hara's "resistance to interpretations" (200), the monographer awakens us to the impossibility of applying certain set interpretive habits to the American poet's work: "one of his points, I suspect, is for us to stay in the dark, to abandon the hope of finding an answer to this riddle, the kind of hope that even today rewards scholars solving the riddles of *Ulysses* or the *Cantos*. In other words," Pióro concludes, "he's trying to impose another mode of reading, distinct from the one his generation was developing to tackle the most resistant works of High Modernism" (181–82).

In the opening paragraph of his book, Pióro notes that despite "grow[ing] consistently, the number of critical works on O'Hara's poetry remains relatively modest" (11). This alone would suffice to make his study a worthwhile project. However, Pióro's monograph is valuable in more than one respect. The readers are made to realize that O'Hara's is a poetry that makes great demands on their

readiness to be actively involved in the hermeneutic process, which—in this particular case—is also that of construction and reconstruction: the only certainty they are left with is that of the instability and experimentalism which mark the poet's work, full of linguistic and structural complexities, at times gravitating towards "[r]eferential uncertainty" (151), abstraction or non-referentiality. What is made clear in *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism* is that the only plausible critical attitude to the poetic work under discussion is a pluralistic one: more than one method of approaching and interpreting O'Hara is necessary, the word "interpreting" often being used for want of a more satisfactory one. Not only does Pióro offer extensive readings of O'Hara's major poems and sometimes challenge earlier readings of the poems in question, he also refers to or at least touches upon several aspects of the poet's *œuvre* which may inspire fellow scholars to pursue critical vistas which either, so to speak, hover in the background in *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism* or are so gripping that they offer seemingly infinite opportunities for the researcher, O'Hara's "painterly" connection being a case in point. The role of the media, analogies between Baudelaire's Paris and O'Hara's take on "modern metropolitan culture" (100) exemplified by New York, queer readings of O'Hara's poems, his use of camp aesthetics or corporeality are also some of the interesting possibilities opened up to readers, students and scholars by a multilevel poet whose work, in the words of Lytle Shaw quoted by Pióro, keeps revealing "strange and compelling qualities" (201).

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Izabella Kimak. *Bicultural Bodies: A Study of South Asian American Literature*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013. 144 pages.

A century or two ago, bodies, cultures, and places seemed almost inextricably entwined, but the more people migrated across the globe to settle on distant continents, the more apparent it became that there is no inevitable correlation between racially marked bodies and cultures. Since the 1940s, and ever more forcefully since the 1980s, scholars across the social sciences and the humanities

have been saying that race is a cipher—a socially constructed category that has no predictive value where human intellectual, moral, and physical potential is concerned. If race is a cipher that reveals little about our innate capacities and habits, then organizing bodies of literature and criticism around Asian bodies might seem counterproductive. Indeed some, like the Chinese American postmodern writer David Wong Louie, consider such groupings pernicious and ghettoizing: "it's like putting us in the Chinese laundries" *(qtd. in Cheung 201)*. If the aim of antiracist scholarship is to de-emphasize the significance of race, then why make it central?

An answer to this question can be found in Izabella Kimak's study *Bicultural Bodies*. The significance of race may be a figment of the American cultural imaginary but because so many believe it to be real, and act as if it were real, race has far-reaching material consequences. Americans of South Asian descent learned this in the aftermath of the 2011 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Ostensibly these events had nothing to do with South Asians, but because of their physical resemblance to Arabs, they became "objects of suspicion, racial profiling, and hate crimes" (Kimak 129). Far from being obsolete, race becomes more salient in the United States whenever this country enters into geopolitical conflicts or hits on hard times. Another group that has repeatedly borne the brunt of racially-motivated changes of sentiment is the Japanese American minority. Barred from citizenship as the "Yellow Peril" in the early twentieth century, incarcerated in 1942 following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, barely tolerated in the 1950s, rehabilitated and touted a "Model Minority" in the 1960s, and then vilified again in the 1980s when Japanese imports were blamed for the American auto industry's downsizing. The 1982 murder of Chinese American engineer Vincent Chin by angry white auto workers who misidentified him as Japanese, testifies to the material consequences of race. Racialization in the United States is thus one factor that organizes writers and critics around the racially-defined category "Asian American."[1]

Immigration is another. The drama of the interracial and intercultural encounter is replayed again and again in the individual lives of immigrants of all races. On arrival in the United States, immigrants learn that the American society is stratified

1 An ostensibly more enlightened approach used by David Coward in his 2006 study *Trailing Clouds: Immigrant Fiction in Contemporary America* was to disregard the politics of race and focus on the dominant tropes and formal elements in the fiction of immigrants from across the globe, including Saul Bellow, Eva Hoffman, Bharati Mukherjee, and Jamaica Kincaid. While this approach is not without merit, it allows Cowart to downplay the significance of racial difference, and to cast immigrant writers as staunch defenders of the United States as the land of liberty, in contrast to their "unlivable" homelands.

not just by class but also by race. Europeans discover upon landing that they are white and that certain privileges accrue to their new-found whiteness. Asians, in turn, find themselves slotted into a middle ground between black and white, and interpellated into preexisting racial conflicts. Such experiences lend themselves to literary dramatization in plots of encounter, friction, acculturation, political radicalization, or acquiescence. And since the United States opens and closes its doors to immigrants from specific countries at different historical moments, plots of first encounter tend to come in batches. *Bicultural Bodies* covers fiction by South Asian Americans produced since the mid-1970s, a period marked by the rapid growth of the South Asian minority, from less than 300,000 in 1970 to over 3,000,000 in 2010.

Though the title does not reveal this fact, *Bicultural Bodies* is not only organized around race and culture but also around gender: it is a study of literature by women, perhaps because a distinctive tradition of South Asian feminist writing has emerged that overshadows the handful of male-authored texts.[2] The fact that the body and sexuality are central within this tradition makes for a thematically coherent monograph. As Kimak points out, male South Asian immigrants often slip more or less automatically into their gender role outside the home because Asian and American cultures are patriarchal and the male breadwinner role is common to both. While the men might suffer indignities and exploitation as immigrants and people of color, their masculinity is relatively secure. Meanwhile, many South Asian women's experience in the United States is often marked by dissonance because unless they come from the westernized elites, they are treated by the diasporic communities as carriers of cultural tradition and required to resist acculturation. Exposure to western models of femininity, coupled with the obligation to resist them, can be a source of anguish and conflict—experiences that lend themselves particularly well to literary dramatization, whether the outcome is greater personal autonomy or (in)voluntary confinement to the home and the ethnic ghetto.

In choosing to study stories by and about Asian immigrant and second-generation women writers Kimak does, in a sense, set off down a well-trodden path. Many feminist and ethnic studies scholars before her have explored the race/gender nexus, particularly the loyalty conflict experienced by women of color, whose desire for personal autonomy turns them against their fathers, brothers,

2 A similar gender asymmetry has been observed among African American authors. The fact that "there are "proportionately more women writing books, and more books which appeal to the female reader" means that boys and men lose interest in literature, since it rarely reflects their experience (Staples 176). Not feeling interpellated by literature, they are also much less likely to become writers themselves.

and husbands. Charged with sexism, the men become even more vulnerable to racist oppression. The fiction of Alice Walker and Maxine Hong Kingston, among others, has been discussed within this framework, one of the most influential texts being King-Kok Cheung's "The Woman Warrior and the Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose Between Feminism and Heroism?" (1990). But Kimak turns her attention to a number of themes and phenomena passed over by her predecessors, most of whose analyses appeared before the conscious turn towards aesthetics ushered in by *Form and Transformation in Asian American Literature* by Zhou Xiaojing and Samina Najmi (2005). Equipped with the standard tools of feminist and postcolonial criticism, Kimak also carries with her the magnifying glass of narratology which allows her to examine a wide range of formal devices used by the South Asian women writers. By paying equal attention to politics and aesthetics, Kimak succeeds in reading against the grain of earlier criticism. In several instances she offers revisionist interpretations, for instance by showing that what was previously taken at face value is actually the view of a naïve narrator.

Another theoretical lens that makes Kimak's study of South Asian American literature refreshing is her use of posthumanist perspectives on the body as well as corporeal feminism grounded in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz and Judith Butler (25). Relying on these theories, Kimak goes beyond the more conventional readings that focus on the body as a signifier of racial and sexual difference, to consider the body as an autonomous agent (57, 62–63), a repository of non-cerebral knowledge and memory (58), as well as a site of mute resistance (95). But what seems to interest Kimak the most are the complex ways in which South Asian women react to being trained and retrained to perform culturally assigned roles. The roles that are foregrounded in the three analytical chapters of *Bicultural Bodies* are those of object of male desire, lover, wife, and mother. In South Asian American fiction women's bodies and sexuality are presented in a myriad ways: from the external perspectives of white and brown men, as well as from the perspectives of the female characters themselves; as sites of subjugation but also as sources of agency.

Citing Rajini Srikanth, Kimak explains that in South Asian immigrant communities men have sought to fully domesticate and control the woman's body in reaction against the lack of control they experience in the world outside the home (69). In the "contact zones" between cultures, bodily experiences such as premarital, marital, and extramarital sex, cross-racial sex, rape, pregnancy, infertility, artificial insemination, and childbirth have unstable meanings. Such epistemological instability poses a challenge for both writers and critics. As the fiction examined in *Bicultural Bodies* suggests, women find ways to contest—and occasionally accommodate to—the traditional model of gender relations.

Kimak offers ample textual evidence of such contestation and accommodation. (A story illustrative of the accommodation strategy she chooses not to examine is Divakaruni's "Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs," in which an Indian immigrant wife consents to seclusion and occasional physical abuse because she strongly empathizes with her husband, a car mechanic whose working life is a series of humiliations. When the wife is lured outside her apartment by a college-educated niece who naively wants to liberate her from the domestic confinement, the two women are attacked by a group of white boys and forced to flee home. Thus the husband's insistence on keeping his wife secluded turns out to be motivated by his concern for her safety in the rough neighborhood, as much as by his desire to assert patriarchal power.)

What is particularly useful about Kimak's study is the way it incorporates and speaks to existing criticism. Undaunted by its sheer volume, Kimak does a thorough job of reviewing what is out there and acknowledging the useful insights. She is at her best when she challenges hasty, unsubstantiated, or reductionist claims. This approach allows her to recuperate some of Mukherjee's and Divakaruni's most maligned works and to give them a second chance without dismissing their problematic aspects too lightly. Earlier critics accused these writers of complicity with Western orientalists, deploring the recurrent plots in which Asian women are liberated from the shackles of Indian patriarchal culture through exposure to American norms and values. Kimak manages to complicate the picture by looking at the entire corpus of these writers' works rather than at single novels or short stories, which has been the standard practice. This is a generous approach, one that allows for the evolution of a writer's position, and for the ironic potential of texts like Mukherjee's *Jasmine* that were previously read too literally. "Exoticized bodies," she points out, "may... be used to critique the American society for making it difficult for immigrant Others to belong and forcing them to resort to any means they have at their disposal, including the attractiveness of their bodies, to assert a place for themselves in the United States" (42). Moreover, by looking at texts that feature Indian male orientalists, Kimak is able to show that the exoticization of the Indian woman's body is a function of male social/economic advantage rather than of race.

The corpus of South Asian American women's literature discussed in *Bicultural Bodies* is representative rather than chosen tendentiously to support a narrow claim. Kimak examines the work of such established authors as Mukherjee, Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, and Jhumpa Lahiri, as well as that of lesser-known writers—Amulya Malladi, Ginu Kamani, Meera Nair, and Sheila Abdullah. The goal of each reading is to elucidate the literary text and point out its often contradictory meanings. Although travel, displacement, marginalization, acculturation, the formation of female subjectivity, and the sexual body's resistance to cultural

norms are familiar themes in Asian American criticism, Kimak tackles them anew with confidence and insight, producing a very readable, carefully constructed, and elegantly written study.

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Grzegorz Maziarczyk. *The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English*. Lublin: KUL Publishers, 2013. 316 pages.

The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English investigates the increasingly vibrant field of the history of the book, with a special focus on the supposedly transparent elements of book design and their role in producing meaning, including typeface, layout and the physical form of the book as object. As Maziarczyk points out in the opening lines of his study, the book in Western culture has come to be regarded as "the default medium for the novel" (9), thus downplaying the codex's significance as a vessel of meaning. It was perhaps only with the advent of e-books and other non-material forms of literary production that typographical features ceased to be regarded as de-semiotised structures, especially in the field of narrative fiction. Indeed, many studies have been devoted to the discussion of typographical elements in avant-garde and visual poetry, yet the domain of contemporary fiction, defined by the author somewhat broadly as "novels published since the 1960s" (10), remains, to a degree, an uncharted territory. What is especially valuable in this study is exactly the exclusive interest on contemporary fiction. Maziarczyk develops a compelling line of inquiry, discussing the works of B. S. Johnson, Raymond Federman and William H. Gass alongside those of Mark Z. Danielewski, Steve Tomasula, Graham Rawle and Jonathan

Safran Foer. Considering the broad perspective adopted, it is not surprising that the author draws on a number of different theoretical frameworks in building his argument, integrating concepts derived from narratology, multimodal discourse analysis, semiotics, and studies devoted to materiality of the text. The overall result is a comprehensive view of the evolution of typographical experiments in English fiction over almost half a century.

Maziarczyk begins by establishing the theoretical foundations for his inquiry. As has been mentioned, considering the scope of the undertaking, the tools assembled stem from various methodological fields. Chapter One begins with a brief discussion of print-centered studies of the novel, which admittedly did not ascribe typographical elements with semiotic significance, albeit established an understanding of the novel as inextricably linked with writing technology and print. Indeed, "the rise of the novel" has been specifically connected to the invention of print, thus positioning the novel in direct opposition to oral transmission and establishing it as a print-based construct. At this stage, Maziarczyk effectively argues that the connection between print and the novel, though strong and undeniable, have not been acknowledged thoroughly, avoiding the question of how print as medium may be considered meaningful. "The technological blind spot in the supposedly universal classical models of narrative, based primarily on examples adduced from narrative fiction," the author (18–19) points out, "is their failure to acknowledge the possible impact of print on its constitutive elements, purely verbal as they may be."

The discussion subsequently moves to the notion of the medium in narratology and traces the evolution of the term from its understanding confined to purely verbal narratives towards a broader view involving transmedial and multimodal matters. Going beyond the traditional, albeit misleading, understanding of the medium involving both language as a semiotic system and print as technology, Maziarczyk opts for a different theoretical designation, defining the medium as purely material and introducing the notion of the mode to deal with the sign system. Such a distinction marks a step towards the premises of multimodal narratology, which postulates that storytelling entails the use of numerous semiotic channels, verbal means being only one of many among them.

This shift allows for the recognition of multimodality of printed materials, where linguistic, graphic and spatial devices all contribute to the creation of meaning and the verbal is as important as the non-verbal. The material, however, is not disregarded for the sake of the semiotic, the double focus of Maziarczyk's study being the acknowledgment of the importance of print as a mode of expression in combination with the physicality of the book, which, in turn, is characterized as a hybrid text. Thus, the multimodal novel acts as a general term, comprising in itself the subcategory of a hybrid text which reintroduces the semiotic importance

of the visual and the material. Although this distinction may be regarded subtle, not to say secondary for the reader unfamiliar with the book and digital media studies, it actually helps resolve a significant theoretical conflict: the coexistence and the importance attached to the semiotic means both verbal and non-verbal with a simultaneous focus on the materiality of the text.

The author closes the theoretical part with an identification of three basic levels of textual materiality, also understood as a semiotic mode, in printed fiction. These are respectively typography, layout and the codex. They might be playing different roles in the production of textual meaning, metareferential, iconic and narrative, with Maziarczyk emphasizing the fact that the semiotization of textual materiality is "a strategy whereby a narrative can be constructed" (48), taking its rightful (as the author convincingly demonstrates) place among other postmodern narrative techniques.

The second chapter discusses the first significant level of textual materiality, typography, with respect to three novels exploiting its semiotic potential: Douglas Coupland's *JPod* (2006), Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (1995) and Graham Rawle's Woman's World (2005). As Maziarczyk emphasizes, the choice of texts was informed by typographical experiments present in the novels, which in all cases was further complemented by other non-verbal modes, heightening typography's semiotic potential. Before moving on to the crucial part of his analysis, however, the author devotes some critical attention to the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the description and interpretation of various typefaces.

Indeed, while a general assumption that typography is endowed with meaning is by all means legitimate, it is at the threshold of an in-depth analysis of a text that one needs to determine what exactly lies at the semiotic core of letters, their arrangement and design. Is it about their shape, color, size or orientation? Is the use of one of the above enough to produce meaning or is the combination of different factors of crucial importance here? Lastly, how does one avoid the pitfalls of arbitrariness? It is only too straightforward to ascribe subjective value to letters (e.g. italics stand for "personal", bold for solid, and capital letters mark the increase in volume). Maziarczyk acknowledges the inherent problematic of his object of study and approaches it from a different perspective.

The author emphasizes that the recognition of typography as a meaning-carrying unit is determined by the context and the departure from the established requirement of uniformity (i.e. consistent use of a single typeface throughout the text). "Thus, whether or not typographic variation is a significant element of a particular novel," Maziarczyk states (56), "depends on its extensiveness and/or subversion of conventional typographic patterns." The three novels selected and discussed in an ascending order of typographic experimentation

involved exemplify precisely this systematic variation and its contribution to narrative functions.

The analyses are well grounded and insightful, demonstrating how typography is able to render various voices and modes of writing. In *JPod* variations in typography correspond to the polyphony of speech genres and to the difference between narrative and non-narrative sections. Welsh, on the other hand, marks changes in narrative perspective by means of changing typefaces: the three levels on which the protagonist's consciousness functions is represented by shifts in typography. The materiality of the text truly begins to "speak" and signal the shifting psychological states of a character. The last novel to be discussed, a typographic experiment unique in its scope and execution, a collage of cut-out words and phrases, explores typographic variation as a representation of the narrator-character's complex identity. Thus, Maziarczyk convincingly argues that textual materiality constitutes an important part of contemporary fiction, both mainstream and non-mainstream.

In the third chapter, the author discusses the meaning of the page layout, observing that, just as in the case of the letters, no comprehensive semiotic model can be established here. The typeface performs certain essential functions in the printed text, both pointing to a given text's generic classification and ensuring the clarity of structure by dividing the text into units. The author mentions "invisible" typography of novels—typography that is conventional to a point where it is not noticed by the reader. However, the focus of this chapter lies on the novels straying from the highly conventionalized layout, such as Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* (2007), J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) or Raymond Federman's *Double or Nothing* (1976). In the first text, the graphemes are used to construct a shark which reappears throughout the novel in changing forms. By visualizing the conceptual shark, Hall changes the role of printed words, which become both carry verbal meaning and are a visual unit at the same time. Despite the fact that Saussurean division into the signified and the signifier is blurred here, the shark is materialized only within the domain of the fictive universe. As the author sees it, the shark becomes "an iconic super-signifier" (98).

The latter section investigates the meaning behind the lack of graphemes. The blank page with its empty space is used in such a way as to constitute a crucial part of the signifying system. Using Wolf's terms, the author explains the difference between the blanks that serve the role of borders of the texts, and those that visually manifest themselves through the empty or partially empty pages and it are semiotised. This intentional use if empty spaces is discussed on the examples of B. S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal* (1971) and Ronald Sukenick's *Long Talking Bad Conditions Blues* (1978).

The author continues his analysis of the page layout with the discussion of novels that through the typography undermine the linearity of the text. Both examples used here, J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) and B. S. Johnson's *Albert Angelo* (1964) correspond with McHale's idea of "split texts", that is texts that run in parallel. In the case of *Albert Angelo*, the arrangement of the text into columns can be viewed as an attempt of narrating two processes—internal and external—happening at one time. The use of two columns results in the constant switching between the two texts, as the reader cannot possibly read both narrations at once. At the same time, B. S. Johnson seems to encourage the reader to process the columns simultaneously, as the comparison between the two texts creates the meaning. In J. M. Coetzee's Diary of a Bad Year, the page is divided into three sections with the use of horizontal lines. The texts here do not belong to one genre, representing fiction and non-fiction at the same time. Co-existence of these forms seems to destabilize the ontological status of the book, as it cannot be clearly classified in one clear-cut category. The typography here emphasizes the book's hybrid and experimental form, posing valid questions about the nature of reality and fiction.

The fourth chapter takes into consideration the book as an object, as it analyses novels in which the materiality of the book transcends its conventional role and becomes an element creating the meaning of the text. The author distinguishes between two levels of involving the physical format of the book into the process of the text's interpretation. In the first one, the book is a static object that conveys a certain message; in the other, the book's format results in a dynamic interaction with the reader, forcing them to constantly flip through the pages or turn the book upside down to decipher some parts of the text, thus drawing attention to the book's materiality. Maziarczyk uses the word *performative* to describe these books that force the reader to transcend the regular act of reading and thus semiotize the physicality of a book. The examples chosen for this chapter are arranged, as the author points out, to mark the journey towards novels that manifest their physicality through performative interaction between the reader and the book.

The first example is Raymond Federman *The Voice in the Closet/ La Voix dans le Cabinet de Debarras* (1979), which combines the text in English back-to-back with the French version. Originally published in a non-standard, square format, the text follows extremely strict page layout, in which every page consists of an equal number of lines, which in turn consist of an even number of characters. These constriction are to mirror the split identity of the author and the trauma that cannot be vocalized. The following example, Mark Z. Danielewski's *Only Revolutions* (2006) consists of two back-to-back texts which meet in the middle, and it has two front covers. This unconventional format of the book forces the reader to keep turning the book around, inevitably drawing attention to the physicality of it.

B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969) abandons the traditional format of a book completely, as it is unbound and placed in a box. Not only does this foreground the material form of the text, but it also rejects any linearity whatsoever as it is the reader has to establish the order in which to read given elements.

In the final chapter, Maziarczyk focuses on the books that combine the experimental elements already discussed with the use of other semiotic resources, such as photos. The graphic elements are blended into the text creating "total books", where the visual elements cannot be interpreted separately from the text as they become a part of it. Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) includes numerous elements, creating a multimodal formation that seems to wish to compete with the dynamic electronic media. The novel about a house becomes a house—a mystical labyrinth of clashing narrations, academic digressions, and metareferentiality. Steve Tomasula in his *VAS* (2004) explores the connection between the body and the book, and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) involves multiple media to better convey the post-WTC world and its inadequate means of communication. In these novels, as the author claims, the graphic elements serve a more significant role than simply illustrating the fictive universe. They rather tend to undermine the stories, and to foreground the materiality of the book to draw attention to the artificiality of mimetic representation.

Maziarczyk's *The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English* traces the development of experimentation with form. As the author discusses most contemporary fictive endeavors alongside novels marking the beginning of postmodernist experimentation with form in the sixties and seventies, this study is an insightful analysis of the changing attitude to the semiotics of materiality. The book is logically organized and well-informed. The only drawback of the study is that only one illustration of each novel is included.

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Carmen Birkle and Johanna Heil, eds. *Communicating Disease: Cultural Representations of American Medicine*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. 465 pages.

The immensely popular "Literature, Arts, and Medicine Database," created in 1993 at New York University School of Medicine, was designed to provide scholars, educators, students and patients with resources in the field of "medical humanities" which, according to the founders, "include an interdisciplinary field of humanities

(literature, philosophy, ethics, history and religion), social science (anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology), and the arts (literature, theater, film, and visual arts)" (http://medhum.med.nyu.edu). The database was not, however, the first to attest to the interdisciplinary connections between medicine and the humanities. These connections were brought to light with the introduction of humanities programs in medical school curricula, the rise of literature and medicine as an academic discipline in 1972 when Joanne Trautmann started teaching literature at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, the works of Rita Charon in narrative medicine and the founding of the academic journal *Literature and Medicine* at John Hopkins University (Hawkins and McEntyre 3–4).

Carmen Birkle and Johanna Heil's collection, *Communicating Disease: Cultural Representations of American Medicine*, provides an excellent example of how medicine and the humanities meet to produce innovative discourses and insightful comments which effectively challenge reductive dichotomies between the humanities and natural sciences, with the position of privilege often allocated to the latter. In an attempt to draw attention to the interdisciplinary underpinnings of the discipline, the editors have selected texts that consciously address the question of how medicine and literature/cultural studies comment on the same phenomena and how their discourses complement rather than exclude each other. In the words of Birke and Heil, the aim of this volume is to show "that literature and other cultural products do not stage gigantic monologues addressed to one in particular, but rather offer the opportunity for dialogue between the humanities and the natural sciences, between literary studies and medicine as two sides of the same life-science coin" (xvii-xviii).

The collection is divided into four sections, each addressing various aspects of the "interfaces of literature and medicine," emphasizing different positions of gaze: those of the doctors as well as those of the patients. The first part, entitled, "Negotiating Medical Practice," reveals the multifaceted nature of medicine and its involvement in such diverse agendas as ethnic and class issues as well as globalization. For instance, Marcel Hartwig in "'Some with their fear th' Infection bring, And only shun the Doctor's Skill': Medical Practice and the Paper War during Boston's Smallpox Epidemic of 1721," traces the birth of knowledge about inoculation against smallpox that took place at the intersection of two professions, physicians and clergymen, and consequently the evolution of the discourses used by its opponents and supporters (Cotton Mather among them). A brilliant example of an interdisciplinary reading bringing together literary studies, medicine and postcolonial studies is offered by Stephanie Browner, author of *Profound Science and Elegant Literature: Imagining Doctors in Nineteenth-Century America* (2005), in her chapter titled "Resocializing Literature and Medicine: Poverty, Health, and Medical Science in Postcolonial Literature." Analyzing two recent novels, Aravind

Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995), Browner calls for a resocialization of medicine, which remains blind to the fact that the suffering of those who live in extreme poverty is often preventable, thus emphasizing the ethical dimension of medical practices. In the analyzed texts, medicine participates in the socioeconomic structures that generate power and wealth and consistently deprive the poor of access to decent health care.

The prevailing motif of section two, entitled "Subverting the Medical Profession," is gender and subversive interventions into typical portraits of physicians as they were painted when the profession was taking shape in the nineteenth century. The essays offered in this part, Carla Bittel's "A Literary Physician? The Paris Writings of Mary Putnam Jacobi," Antje Dallmann's "'Doctors Are Never Mistaken': Doctor Romances and Re-Negotiations of the *Nature* of Marriage in Late Nineteenth-Century America," Kirsten Twelbeck's "How Far Could They Go? Imprisoned Nurses, Unsexed Angels, and the Transformation of True Womanhood in Civil War America" and Katja Schmieder's "'Do Not Cross'—TV Women Doctors Trespassing on Male Territory," all tell stories of women who enter the (forbidden) spaces—medical universities, examination rooms, hospitals, morgues—entirely dominated by men and how they invade and conquer these spaces on their own terms, significantly redefining the terms of medical practice.

The third section, "Transmitting Disease," takes up the theme of communicating disease and concepts such as the mobility of diseases, infections, epidemics and plagues, their effects on individuals, communities and entire nations as well as their ideological implications. While the first three contributors, Imke Kimpel, Ingrid Gessner and Astrid Haas, concentrate on literary responses to these issues, Rüdiger Kunow, in "The Biology of Community: Contagious Diseases, Old Age, Biotech, and Cultural Studies," discusses the case of Mary Mallon, known as Typhoid Mary, and demonstrates how the topic of contagion can be expanded to comment on the "biotechnicalization" of human life and the production of "failed bodies."

The final section looks into the healing potential of narratives. Narratives dealing with personal experiences of pain, illness, grief and death are now well-established as separate literary genres and valued in patient-doctor communication. The essays in this section draw attention to the complexity of the language which attempts to deal with trauma, its metaphorical nature and, not surprisingly, its limitations when faced with the task of expressing unspeakable pain. The contributors re-examine such classic texts as Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* and George Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* (all in Christine Marks's contribution) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (Anna

Thiemann, Peter Schneck) but also offer insightful analyses of more recent texts such as Siri Hustvedt's *The Shaking Woman or a History of My Nerves* (Anna Thiemann), Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker* (Johanna Heil, Birgit Däwes), John Banville's *The Sea* and Richard B. Wright's *October* (Anca-Raluca Radu).

The closing essay in the collection, Dietrich von Engelhardt's "The World of Medicine in the Medium of Literature: Structures, Dimensions, Perspectives," serves as an apt conclusion for the entire collection. Engelhardt, as a medical historian, demonstrates medicine's long history of involvement with literature as well as its transnational character which in turn draws attention to the two fields' common interests in the changing context of globalized cultures.

Many of the remaining essays are no less interesting but the extensive scope of the project does not allow for a detailed presentation here of each of the discussed aspects of how medicine and literature interact to produce interesting dialogues. *Communicating Disease* is indeed an eclectic collection (which, contrary to what its title suggests, does include texts centered on British culture) whose aim is not only to demonstrate the diversity of cultural representations of American medicine but, moreover, to define the premises on which the two fields meet and interact. The collection is strongly recommended for those who already see medicine and literature in dialogue as well as for those eager to adopt the new perspective.

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Ewa Antoszek, Katarzyna Czerwiec-Dykiel, and Izabella Kimak, eds. *Inne bębny: różnica i niezgoda w literaturze i kulturze amerykańskiej* (Different Drums: Rebellion and Resistance in American Literature and Culture). Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2013. 199 pages.

Inne bębny: różnica i niezgoda w literaturze i kulturze amerykańskiej is a collection of essays by Polish scholars which explore a broadly understood theme of rebellion and resistance in contemporary American literature and culture. The first part of the title refers directly to Henry David Thoreau's classic—*Walden, or*

Life in the Woods (1854). In his open critique of materialism and conformism of nineteenth-century America, Thoreau encouraged his fellow citizens to follow the sound of different drums, that is, not to be afraid to think and act critically in order to contest the reality that surrounded them. In so doing, Thoreau, argue the editors, became a precursor of a tradition of rebelling against oppression curtailing the individual's sense of freedom. Exploring literature, film, music and art, the articles in the collection point to the role of the rhetoric of rebellion and resistance in the shaping of contemporary American culture. Each of the critical analyses is an exploration of an artistically manifested rebellion as well as of the oppressive forces against which the artists revolt.

The first group of articles focuses on twentieth-century canonical works in the field of literature and cinema, exposing their previously overlooked transgressive potential. The section opens with Małgorzata Rutkowska's analysis of the motif of travel as a form of rebellion in Henry Miller's *Colossus of Maroussi*, Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* and Paul Theroux's *The Mosquito Coast*. As Rutkowska explains, the journeys which the protagonists of the novels undergo serve as a critique and rejection of America and its fundamental values. Portrayed as a nest of corruption, America is juxtaposed with " new spiritual centers" (Miller's Greece, Bowles' Moroccan Sahara and Theroux's Honduras), which the protagonists head for. Movement is understood by Rutkowska as the antithesis of the seemingly safe and stable life in America which stands for spiritual and cultural stagnation. Thus, travel becomes a symbol of rebirth and of gaining a new sense of self. However, while in *Colossus of Maroussi* the journey leads to Miller's moral and spiritual awakening, the other two novels end in the protagonists' death in a foreign, "exotic" country. For Rutkowska, the self-destructive life journeys may be treated symbolically as the fate of "white" America unable to understand and accept the Other as inherent part of its own culture.

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis employs feminist criticism to examine dining and cooking rituals as the strategies of asserting gender and sexual identity in Fannie Flagg's famous novel, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, as well as in its cinematic adaptation. Run by the main protagonists, Idgie Threadgoode and Ruth Jamison, the Whistle Stop café is seen by the critic as an ambiguous place where gender and sexual norms are transgressed, challenging the socially accepted order in the southern American community in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, the café, or more importantly, its kitchen, remains a place culturally designated for women, where they are to perform their expected subservient roles as mothers and housewives. On the other hand, it becomes a source of Idgie's and Ruth's financial empowerment and a center of their developing, ambiguous partnership. Niewiadomska-Flis argues that the rituals connected with preparing and consuming food are not only manifestations of an intimate bond between

the two women, but they can also be interpreted as acts of performing their homoerotic desires. Thus seen from a new perspective, the café is perceived by the critic as a site of resistance and radical openness. It is a place where the two females challenge the patriarchal, heteronormative system in the American South of the 1930s.

Beata Zawadka's article on the 1950s filmic oeuvre of Douglas Sirk is an impressive examination of the transgressive potential of the director's melodramas: *All I Desire*, *Magnificient Obsession*, *All the Heavens Allows*, *Written on the Wind* and *Imitation of Life*. Considered by Sirk's contemporaries as classical Hollywood "tearjerkers," the films are now critically acclaimed for their incisive, social critique of the conformist life of the upper middle class America of the 1950s. As Zawadka argues, the key to de/en/coding Sirk's "impossible stories" lies in the understanding of their intended theatralization which relieves the classical Hollywood genre from its formal and ideological constraints. Sirk's experience as a theater director as well as his interests in painting had an unquestionable impact on his productions. Consequently, his kitschy, pathos and action-filled melodramas become highly stylized cinematographic "performances" of life. By stressing his works' performative character, Sirk simultaneously liberates his narratives from the necessity to depict the world realistically. In doing so, the director challenges the genre as a mode of cultural production, pointing to its "imperialism" in creating a "real" vision of life. In Sirkian "impossible stories" the fatalism of the characters' lives is always overcome by the classical Hollywood happy ending. As Zawadka aptly argues, this strategy is in fact used by Sirk to reveal Hollywood's power to create and sell an illusion of life.

The subsequent section of the book comprises in-depth analyses of the theme of rebellion manifested through/in art and experimental writing. In "Living Pictures in the Works of Stephen King," Zofia Kolbuszewska examines the reasons behind King's employment of the trope of the living picture in his story "The Road Virus Heads North" and novel *Rose Madder.* As the critic claims, King uses this particular trope to manifest his doubt in the cultural status of horror and to stress his own ambiguous position between high and low culture. This ambiguity is manifested by the writer's status as a widely recognized classic and an author of popular bestsellers. Kolbuszewska's analysis of King's use of the living picture as a means of addressing the question of the Other in American culture is particularly interesting. Drawing on the Gothic convention, ekphratic discourse and the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, the critic interprets the living picture as a manifestation of the uncanny which questions the socially established and accepted order. Thus used in King's texts, the living pictures reveal growing, deep anxieties in contemporary American culture, arising from the inevitable confrontations with a broadly understood Otherness.

Paweł Frelik's article "Paul Laffoley: Science Fiction Art in Search of Utopia" is an insight into the work of the artist of the fantastic, probing the reasons for his marginal position in the world of art as well as his insufficient recognition in science fiction cultures. On the one hand, Laffoley's outsider position can be attributed to the artist's persistent rejection of any form of categorization of his art. Yet, more importantly, it is his combining art with belief that raises major questions among audiences approaching his work critically. Deciphering the utopian vision of humanity encoded in Laffoley's work, Frelik points to alchemy, occultism and transcendentalism as major influences on the artist's philosophy. This spiritualistic aspect, together with Laffoley's openly declared belief in extraterrestrial life, leave audiences perplexed. As Frelik stresses, for Laffoley, his work is first of all a visionary project which documents and contributes to the enhancement of the humanity's development through the evolution of consciousness. Consequently, his ambiguous work challenges not only critical approaches towards science fiction literature and art but also gives opportunity to rethink modern understanding of art in general.

Equally interesting is Julia Nikiel's critical overview of bizarro, a controversial literary movement which emerged in the 1990s. As the critic states, in the most general terms, bizarro is a radical response to the broadly accepted literary and linguistic *savoir-vivre*. According to the movement's leaders, Carlton Mellick III, Kevin Donihe and Kevin Dole II, previously established literary traditions limit the artist's self-expression and the ways in which reality can be described. Although bizarro has already gained a large number of readership, it remains relatively little known in the academia. The reason for that, argues Nikiel, is bizarro's inherent "weirdness" celebrated by the writers. Contesting the limitations of literary realism, bizarro artists draw on science-fiction, fantasy and horror to create absurd, dreamlike visions of the world. Pointing to the movement's use of obscene, violent and sacrilegious content, Nikiel claims that this strategy aims at challenging the constraints of literary "good taste" and the terror of political correctness. Although offensive and nonsensical, bizarro is perceived by Nikiel as a movement successfully reflecting and commenting on the state of contemporary American popular culture.

A lot of attention is given in the collection to the theme of rebellion and resistance in contemporary ethnic American literature and culture. A very interesting contribution to this section is Mateusz Durczak's examination of a controversial dispute over the use of the word "nigger" within the African American community. Although the use of the "N-word" by white Americans has officially become a legal crime, the word remains popular within the African American hip hop community. As Durczak states, the official requests made by the African American establishment to ban completely the use of the racial

slur revealed a serious split within the African American community. Attacked by the community's leaders for ignorant and disrespectful use of the word and for propagating it as a means of financial profits, the hip hop community not only refused to comply with such demands but accused the elite of the lack of understanding for the ordinary "black street." For this group, claim the hip hop artists, the word has received a new, positive and empowering meaning. Durczak's important analysis not only addresses the complexity of the problem of language as a tool of both oppression and liberation, but it also points to a much larger dilemma that ethnic American artists and writers are exploring nowadays; namely, the generational conflict concerning the understanding of ethnic American identity (both communal and individual) as well as freedom of artistic expression.

This problem is also explored in the article by one of the co-editors of the book, Izabella Kimak, in which she focuses on South Asian American women writing. Kimak's analysis of selected works by Jhumpa Lahiri, a well-acclaimed second-generation writer, and those written by first-generation authors, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Bharati Mukherjee, points to a conflict that stems from the writers' serious differences in the understanding of the South Asian immigrant experience. It is especially vivid in their portrayals of India and America. As Kimak stresses, while the first generation writers tend to see the two places in terms of binary opposition, with South Asia depicted as a site of constraint and America as a symbol of liberation, the second-generation writers openly refuse to follow this model, considering it as an oversimplification. Lahiri's gradual distancing herself from "ethnic" themes and her literary exploration of commonly shared human experience should be read as an explicit statement about her work. Not only does she refuse to follow the path of her literary predecessors, but also refuses to carry the burden of an ethnic writer "representing her people." Lahiri's claim for freedom of artistic expression is undoubtedly one of many ethnic voices emerging on the literary scene, pointing to a new phase in contemporary ethnic American literature. Junot Diaz's novel *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, analyzed by Karolina Majkowska, can serve as such an example. Pointing to the novel's intertextuality, various literary and cultural references, series of original footnotes and a multitude of foreign words and phrases, Majkowska describes Diaz's work as a voice from the periphery challenging both western and Dominican literary traditions. Revolting against the reductive classifications of ethnic American literature, based on the center-periphery dichotomy, Diaz is undoubtedly an important voice in contemporary American literary canon.

For the readers interested in Latino–American female writing, Grażyna Zygadło's and Maja Sobotka's articles should be of particular interest. Zygadło examines Chicana artists' use of their lesbianism as a political statement in their struggle

against gender and sexual oppression. Analyzing the works of such accomplished writers as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga and Susan Castillo, the critic explores lesbian Chicanas' double stigmatization. Not only do they struggle against the dominant society's sexism and homophobia but they are also outcast in their own ethnic communities. Their writing becomes therefore both a political tool used to publically speak about the situation of the queer in America as well as a means of open celebration of the female body and the self. Maja Sobotka analyzes the "poetry of rebellion" by Puerto Rican author Luz María Umpierre. As Sobotka aptly observes, Umpierre's entire work is a manifestation of her life-long activism against racism, sexism and homophobia. An openly declared lesbian, promoting her theory of homocriticism, Umpierre has fallen victim to various forms of prejudice which she addresses in her poetry. Consequently, language becomes Umpierre's tool used to shape and express her critique. Original in style and provocative in content, Umpierre's poetry is a documentation of her struggle against the forces silencing her voice and of her constant affirmation of herself, her lesbianism and of womanhood at large.

Inne bębny is by no means a project that aims at exhausting the theme of rebellion and resistance in American literature and culture. Its goal is rather to show various faces of rebellion depending on the time, context and the medium used by the artist discussing it. Analyzing the examples of artistic revolts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the collection also shows how various socio-political and cultural changes have affected America's understanding of freedom. This is clearly demonstrated in the articles devoted to ethnic American artists. The ethnic writers' work is the best example of how, from a tool of oppression and domination, language has become a means of personal and communal liberation.

Exploring the complexity of the above mentioned themes, *Inne bębny* is undoubtedly an important addition to the field of American studies in Poland. The fact that the collection is written in Polish makes it useful not only for Polish scholars working in the areas of research explored by the contributors, but also to a wider, not necessarily academic readership interested in American studies. While most of the analyzed works are generally known to Polish Americanists, there is still a significant portion of material which might be new to a non-academic audience. In this respect, articles by Kimak, Frelik, Nikiel, or Sobotka are of unquestionable value. Moreover, theoretical backgrounds against which individual analyses are conducted provide useful information on the most recent developments in literary and cultural theories. Zofia Kolbuszewska's critical analysis of Stephen King's employment of living pictures and Beata Zawadka's examination of Douglas Sirk's melodramas can serve as good examples.

Overall, *Inne bębny* is a well-edited and harmoniously balanced work. Even though the quality of some of the articles in this eclectic, multifaceted collection is sometimes uneven, each one of them is of great academic merit, offering new perspectives on contemporary American literature and culture. An insightful examination and meditation on the American tradition of rebellion and resistance, *Inne bębny* is ultimately a careful and mature reflection on America's ongoing quest for freedom.

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Buelens, Gert, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, eds. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. London: Routledge, 2014. 200 pages.

Trauma theory has become a prominent discourse in American literary and cultural studies since the early 1990s and the publication of Shoshona Felman and Dori Laub's influencial work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* which has creatively integrated the Holocaust studies, psychoanalysis and deconstruction in order to conceptualize witnessing, memory and testimony of trauma in literature, film and medical science. In addition, Cathy Caruth's seminal edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory,* which was followed by her own influencial work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History,* have laid the groundwork for the practice of interdisciplinary trauma studies. These innovative texts have inspired explosion of interest in trauma theory and criticism which still shows no signs of abating. The interdisciplinary focus of the new field has been continuously expanded by numerous scholars from diverse disciplines such as medical science in Judith Lewis Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, history studies in Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, literary criticism in Laurie Vickroy's *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* as well as cultural studies in E. Ann Kaplan's *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. Initially, a number of American research projects associated with Yale University, trauma studies have soon expanded to include also studies of European contexts. English-language European trauma studies such Jane Kilby's *Violence and the Cultural Politics of Trauma* and Roger Luckhurst's *The Trauma Question* have also helped to problematize theoretical issues arising with accumulated body of knowledge and practice concerning fast-growing trauma studies in the new geographic locations. This predominantly Euro-American

approach of trauma theory to literature and culture with its primary focus on two iconic historical traumas of the Holocaust and the 9/11 terrorist attack has recently become challenged and redefined as more global concerns have gained attention of contemporary trauma theoreticians and critics. Attempts to broaden and reconceptualize the scope and framework of trauma discourse to include African, Asian and Australian perspectives have already been made within the study of one medium by E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang in *Trauma and Cinema: Cross Cultural Explorations* (2004).

Similar but more comprehensive major theoretical and thematic reformulation of discourse on trauma is also undertaken in a new compelling collection of essays titled progressively *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism* edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone. The study published this year, theorizes literary and cultural representations of more recent late twentieth and early twenty- first century collective traumas in the increasingly globalized world. This theoretical volume advances a project of further dialogizing and pluralizing of not only Euro-American but also postcolonial traumas. By dividing *The Future of Trauma Theory* thematically into two parts focusing first on the situated examples of history and culture and then exploring politics and subjectivity its editors by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, accomplished trauma scholars, clearly stated their primary concerns and constructed a logical book structure. Two introductory texts and ten inspiring essays charter new territories and concepts associated with the recent collective traumas historically situated in such diverse locations as Angola, Australia, Cambodia, Lebanon, South Africa, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The substantial contributions to the volume are written by the major international scholars in trauma theory and criticism representing many research disciplines such as critical theory, contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary studies, international politics, history departments, Holocaust, memory and genocide studies.

The volume opens with a fascinating Preface by Michael Rothberg, an accomplished scholar of Holocaust and memory studies, who, in this way, is credited for providing a ground-breaking example for the new trauma paradigm showing how Holocaust memory and postcolonial studies can be productively combined in his *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009). In his thought-provoking introductory text to *The Future of Trauma Theory* Rothberg tests the limits of classical trauma theory by drawing attention to new conceptualizations of "systemic non-spectacular violence" associated with the exploitative conditions of workers in globalized economy or cumulative, devastating effects of climate change, which have been so far less frequently analyzed within the framework of trauma studies than more dramatic "event-centered accounts of

violence" (XV). Such new areas, concepts and connections are productively explored throughout the individual chapters of this ambitious future-oriented collection.

The first, more extensive part of the study, is titled "History and Culture" and comprises six stimulating essays by contributors from both American and European universities. The first two essays in the Part I "Knowledge, "afterwardsness" and the future of trauma theory" and "Fascism and the sacred: sites of inquiry after (or along with) trauma" are authored by the two expert Holocaust studies scholars respectively, Robert Eaglestone and Dominick LaCapra, offering original insights into representations of the Holocaust from the new vantage points provided by the less canonical texts of trauma studies.

In contrast to two previous essays, Stef Craps, a specialist in postcolonial and trauma literature, critiques classic trauma theory for its largely unfulfilled promise of creating ethical communal engagement through listening to another's traumatic history, and he proposes in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age" to move beyond Euro-American aesthetic and thematic focus in order to explore more diverse representations of trauma in their distinct local contexts and forms. He illustrates his argument with a detailed examination of Aminatta Forn's critically acclaimed novel, *The Memory of Love* published in 2010, to provide an example of "more inclusive, materialist and politicized form of trauma theory" (51). Craps underscores the contrast evoked in Forn's novel between the local consequences of the long civil war in Sierra Leone and ambivalence about efficacy of Euro-American therapeutic trauma models such as famous "talking cure" brought by the outsider, a British psychologist. Craps eloquently observes that Forn's silences in the novel effectively undermine the universality of Euro-American model narrative therapy.

Also Nouri Ghana's contribution "Trauma ties: Chiasmus and community in Lebanese civil war literature" challenges the readers of trauma theory to explore cultural differences in forms and effects of local violence in the regional literary texts. She specifically examines Elias Khoury's experimental novel, *City Gates,* published in 1981 and draws attention to haunting evocation of mourning in this postmodern Arabic text devoid of emotional and narrative closure. Ghana carefully lists a number of tropes such as chiasmus, metonymy, repetition which Khoury uses to simultaneously express and occlude the impact of trauma on the survivor. She emphasizes that the function of the central figure in the novel, a traumatized stranger, is to convey vulnerability of ineffectual agency and fragmented subjectivity but also to create new bonds within the post-traumatic community. Although Ghana is aware that the text she has chosen as her case study may be testing the limits of a reader used to European modes of expression, she still considers the effort required to enter the realm of Lebanese civil war literature a valuable experience promising more polyphonic future trauma research.

In one of the most accomplished and inspiring essays in this significant collection, titled "Affect, body, place: Trauma theory in the world," Anaya Johanara Kabir undertakes the mixed media approach to her consideration of the dynamic connectedness of affect, body and locality in the transnational trauma theory. Invoking the trope of unrequited love and self-annihilation in a Taliban poem at the beginning of her essay, Kabir suggests that to be emotionally and culturally proficient in Islamicate regions the readers from other cultural backgrounds should be willing to interrogate such Sufi-inspired concepts and complex traumas of postcolonial subjectivities. In her attempt to overcome the limits of Euro-American trauma theory and fill in its gaps with forward-looking projects in disparate settings, Kabir undertakes examination of textual and non-narrative, performative examples from culturally distinct regions of south-east Asia, Southern Africa, and contact zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan. One of Kabir's examples, which challenges the paradigm of Euro-American trauma studies, is a non-narrative spatial arrangement of the Phnom Penh's Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum commemorating the atrocities perpetrated by Khmer Rouge regime headed by Pol Pot, which traumatized Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Although museum appears to be a classic site of memory as theorized by Pierre Nora, Kabir argues that it is far from exemplifying one of the "dominant and dominated" sites, as conceptualized by Nora (67). Instead, by collapsing features of two types of commemoration in the same space, namely as secular building of national memory situated next to a place focused on commercial activity but named "Bodhi, after sacred site of Budda's enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, and supplemented by a Buddist altar introducing "commemoration-as-healing," Tuol Sleng constitutes a dinstinctly local affective and performative model of trauma witnessing and testimony which blurs the boundaries between reality and representation, official history and interactive affective involvement (68). Another, equally performative example of distinct non-Eurocentric expression of trauma, which Kabir discusses in "Affect, Body, Place" foregrounds body and affect in the Angolan electronic music-dance complex, kuduro. 'Kuduristas,' Angolan performers of kuduro, combine art and trauma to reconnect traumatized collective subjectivities through their body movements which evoke simultaneously suffering and joy. As Kabir perceptively observes, Kuduro's regenerating effect is closely attached to the local frames of reference and cannot be easily compared to European electronic dances. Still, Kabir envisions kuduro as becoming in future a part of broader "kinetic histories" of Black Transatlantic realm of dance, music and trauma partially described by Paul Gilroy with respect to jazz and hip hop music (71). Referring to Michael Rothberg's influencial notion of "multidirectional memory," which conceptualizes multiple but complementary modes of memoralization of traumatic experiences, Kabir proposes to expand non-Eurocentric trauma theory by making vibrant interconnectedness of affect,

body and place central to post-traumatic recovery and re-establishment of shattered communal connections exercising "resources of the body to re-embed itself in place" and "affect world" (73).

Following Sigmund Freud's biological account of traumatization in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and Judith Butler's response to 9/11 in *Precarious Life,* Sam Durrant, an expert of postcolonial literature, traces the trajectory of critical engagement with individual corporeal vulnerability and collective traumas in his essay "Undoing sovereignty: Towards a theory of critical mourning." By using insights from Marxist theory Durrant proposes to theorize critique of postcolonial mourning in an attempt to upset connections between practice of mourning and property claims. In order to achieve this aim, Durrant discusses a critique of memorialization of Irish Famine, reexamines Horkheimer's and Adorno's reading of *The Oddyssey* focusing on its unsuccessful attempts to account for and contain the traces of violence during re-establishment of community and the cycle of post-apartheid poems about recovery of corporeality and rejection of reconciliation in the aftermath of Truth and Reconciliation Commission written by the South African poet, Ingrid de Kok.

The second, much shorter, part of *The Future of Trauma Theory* titled "Politics and subjectivity" highlights the traumas caused by the state and political subjection. In the title featuring a memorable quote from the poem by the refugee detained in western Australian immigration detention camp near Woomera "'That which you are denying us': Refugees, rights and writing in Arendt," Lyndsey Stonebridge convincingly argues that the discourse of denial of human rights invoked by Arendt in her analysis of the impact of Holocaust and her 17-years of being "stateless" is comparable to the current situation of detained refugees and their testimonial writing and for these reasons it should be acknowledged by the future trauma theory. In Stonebridge's essay, like in Kabir's contribution, body also features prominently, this time in its traumatized form of Australian refugee's lips sutured in an act of silent protest. In contrast, Jenny Edkins' text "Time, Personhood, Politics" theorizes the philosophical concept of "trauma time" which can be used in political analysis as a means to defy sovereign power and its connection to linear time. Drawing on Georgio Agamben's and Eric Santner's notions of time and personhood, Edkins, who specializes in international politics, suggests that escape from oppression by sovereign power leads, paradoxically, not from but rather to the ordinary time and relinquishing the fantasy of exceptionality. Similarly to Edkins, Pieter Vermeulen evaluates the sovereign power's policing of wounded subjectivity in "The Biopolitics of trauma." Vermeulen claims that such traumatic events as 9/11 and efforts aimed at revenge and prevention of similar suffering helped to perpetuate vicious circle of violence. Drawing insights form Jenny Edkins, that work of trauma scholars has effects comparable to other

social actions, and the paradigm represented by the functioning of our immune system in contact with alterity, Vermeulen emphasizes that trauma studies with its affinity to work of memory can perform the role of an immunitary system which resists repetition or escalation of life-threatening violence. Finally, in the last essay " Future shock: Science fiction and the trauma paradigm" Roger Luckhurst, the author of impressive outline of trauma studies and its centrality to many contemporary cultural concepts and practices, *The Trauma Question* published in 2008, boldly declares that future trauma criticism should go beyond the study of aporias in modernist texts and instead should redirect its attention to new radically reconceptualized visions of trauma neurology and post-human visions of trauma evoked in "hard Science Fiction."

In summary, *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a rich, valuable and stimulating contribution to recent interdisciplinary research on literary and cultural criticism in which trauma studies have continued to play a major role. However, in their persistent effort to make trauma studies more inclusive of non-Euro-American topics and contributors, the editors *The Future of Trauma Theory* focused primarily on collective traumas as discussed by predominantly male contributors. It should be noted that only three out of twelve contributions to this collection are written by the women researchers. Furthermore, feminist and gender studies scholarship which was instrumental, not only for the rise, but also the later development of the trauma studies has been relegated in *The Future of Trauma Theory* to one reference in a section entitled rather pejoratively "the empire of trauma" and a perfunctory footnote acknowledging a borrowing (49).

While I agree with Stef Craps, who argues in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age" that Euro-American trauma theory requires more diverse, global contexts to consider collective as well as individual consequences of traumatic racist or otherwise oppressive systems, I would like to emphasize that those systems have produced not only numerous military and economic conflicts, which his essay and other contributions in the collection consider, but also high rates of gender-based physical and sexual violence. Multimedia global projects such as protest dance action "One Billion Rising to End Violence Against Women," initiated in 2013 after a series of gang rapes in India by Eve Ensler, a renowned playwright and performer, and continued by transnational activists in 200 countries in 2014, testify to the rising public awareness of the interdependence of gender stereotyping and traumas of physical and sexual violations acknowledged by many trauma researchers I referred to in the opening of this review (e.g. Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth and Laurie Vickroy). However, this significant omission in the otherwise comprehensive volume, can be remedied by a new more intersectional analysis of the role played by race, class and gender in trauma-inflicting systems of oppressions.

In conclusion, *The Future of Trauma Theory* constitutes a ground-breaking theoretical contribution to the field of contemporary literary and cultural trauma studies and it testifies both to the current productivity and future potential of trauma research by outlining several directions in which it can be developed. The contemporary and global focus of the collection pluralizes, politicizes and opens trauma theory to innovative forms of testimonies, witnessing and conceptions of recovery. Importantly, it also establishes new grounds for connections between trauma studies and postcolonial studies. The collection is also a valuable source for its theoretical gaps as they too pose new challenges to the trauma paradigm by raising important questions and stimulating further discussion in this quickly-developing field. Since neither feminist nor gender studies perspectives, which have been central to both emergence and recognition of trauma studies, have been discussed in this collection in depth, it remains for the future scholars to undertake a yet more inclusive analysis of intersections of, not only racial, and economic, but also gender-based contexts of traumatic experience and its literary and cultural (re)presentations. In general, both the new trajectories outlined in the study as well as its silences can prove stimulating for an ongoing engagement of literary and cultural studies in which trauma theory holds an important place. *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a must for researchers of contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary and cultural studies as well as for scholars from the departments of the history, memory and politics who are interested in the cutting-edge theoretical framework of trauma studies and the invigorating visions of its future aspirations.

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Kacper Bartczak and Małgorzata Myk, eds. *Theory that Matters: What Practice After Theory*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. 315 pages.

Kacper Bartczak and Małgorzata Myk's co-edited volume *Theory that Matters: What Practice After Theory* is divided into four parts: "Theory-Continuations," "Practices-Literature," "Practices-Film/Media," and "External Practices-Mixed Media." The first part consists of reflections about theory in general, explications of specific theoretical works, as well as polemical developments and contributions. The second and third parts consist of theory-heavy interpretations of texts; some essays examine texts which include much theoretical discussion, so the texts are presented as theoretical writings. The essays in the fourth part discuss external history of literary theory, that is they all seem to deal with reception and sociology of academic and artistic endeavors. As a whole, the book could be described as a report on the current state of knowledge in literary theory.

With some exceptions, the selection of authors and themes is limited to "theory" as it is understood at departments of English or American studies (which is perhaps a handy circular definition of the word "theory"). At the same time, the book reflects the sense of suspicion and irony about such notion of literary theory. Many authors, especially in the first part of the book, reflect on how "theory" can be (and has been) understood as a relatively closed body of writing shaped by relatively few star-professors (as in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's well known anthology), at a few leading universities in the United Kingdom and in the United States. This seems to be problematic, given the fact that so many essays condemn various forms of dominance, hegemony, and globalization: why

is struggle against hegemony so centralized? Is theory only written in English? Can the subaltern speak (and "get published") without quoting from fashionable names? Is French theory American? What theory is being developed now in India, China, Middle-Eastern or African countries? In my opinion, any such arrogant question is a harbinger of the end, or of an absolute change, a revolution, which might be vital for future relevance of literary theory, or of humanities for that matter. The collection contains a number of essays that explore such questions, as well as a number of exercises in perpetuation of the theoretical canon, and this tension seems to be the current and undercurrent of the book.

The first essay, by Tadeusz Sławek, is a reflection on functions of theory: it introduces the themes of the end of the world, constitutes a sort of therapeutic speech that goes on until it forgets its meaning, and a position of absolute distance from the world of meaning and force. One cannot but think of Jones Very, a theologian, philologist, and poet, who allegedly told his college class to flee to the woods (for the end is nigh), which they allegedly did; that was theory in action, and taken seriously. Are students and critics, today, prepared to take theory seriously, too? The essay seems to be a flowery Jeremiad cross-pollinated by fairy tale, and its subversive, religious impulse is illustrated with fantastic imagery from Edgar Allan Poe, Jonathan Swift, and Hans Christian Andersen.

Other essays in the first section, similarly, reflect on functions of theory, or on its historical development and contemporary state of the art. Thus, Leszek Drong proposes "Theory for Theory's Sake," which reflects the apparent emancipation of theory and its elevation to the "central and transcendental signified." The author proposes Stanley Fish's recent notion of academizing, which is "converting real-life issues into objects of intellectual inquiry" as the desired product of theory. The third essay, by Tymon Adamczewski, discusses "the critical aftermath" and is basically a brief history of theory. Agata Preiss-Smith revises "the political in what is now invariably called theory" and proposes Chela Sandoval's appropriation of Barthes's definition of myth. The fifth essay, by Tomasz Dobrogoszcz, is an informed historical discussion of the use of psychoanalysis in postcolonial theory, beginning with Franz Fannon's psychiatry, and ending with discussion of sources of psychoanalytical terminology in Homi Bhabha's work. In the next essay, Sumit Chakrabathy provides an explication of Bhabha's reflection on postcolonial identity. Wojciech Majka, in his astute and conceptually dense contribution, proposes a way out of the homelessness of man, from Descartes, through Kant, Rorty, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, to acceptance of suffering as cognitive perspective on being. The final essay, by David Waterman, proposes a "zero theory," which is a subversive and questioning form of social engagement.

The second section is called "Practices: Literature," and it is a set of innovative, theory-heavy interpretations, and several critical discussions of texts as theory.

The first essay, by Antoine Cazé, is a model example, in that it discusses similarities between Rancière's remarks on aesthetics of democracy, and the poetical procedures of collective authorship in American LANGUAGE poetry. The following two essays, by Tomasz Basiuk and by Agnieszka Miksza, both reflect on life-writing, and the theoretical considerations in and about autobiographies and their relation to fiction. Both authors seem particularly interested in fragments of self-reflection in life-writing, comparing them to self-reflection and self-definition in life. Wit Pietrzak provides a similar discussion of Paul Celan's poetic and moral appeal to Martin Heidegger, discussing the text as theoretical debate and as object of theory (Bloom, Rorty) at the same time; the reflection is further illustrated with an very rich collection of references to T. S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Wallace Stevens, John Ashberry, and John Banville. Somewhat similarly, Grzegorz Czemiel discusses Ciaran Carson's poetry as an essay on epistemology. Difficulties in classification of American nonfiction as an emerging genre are discussed in the essay by Olga Nesmelova and Zhanna Konovalova, who focus on the nonfiction authors' comments about their genre (including Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and Tom Wolfe). In the last essay in this section, Aleksandra Bubiło discusses Samuel R. Delaney's pornographic texts, providing a comprehensive review of theories of pornography.

The third section is similar to the second, only it focuses on films and media. Marek M. Wojtaszek confronts the plight of *The Soloist* (a schizophrenic homeless musician genius) with various theoreticians who treated schizophrenia as topic (Laing), or applied it as intellectual concept to analysis of something else (Deleuze and Guattari). Katarzyna Poloczek addresses the anti-theory backlash, concurrent with the anti-feminist backlash in America, and discusses three films as examples. Nina Czarnecka-Pałka provides ways of saving psychoanalytical film theory for feminism; like Poloczek, and several others in the book, Czarnecka-Pałka addresses the contemporary negative attitude towards theory. Finally, Robert Westerfelhaus discusses a reality show, *Queer Eye*, and various contradictory critical reactions to it, and how those reactions apply various theoretical tools; the author presents the variety of contradicting views as a blossoming, good state of theory.

The last section, "External Practices," is not simply about mixed media, but more about situations which blur the traditional (or commonsensical, or naive) relation between theory as tool, its object as raw material, and life as external given to be represented by texts and theory. Thus, there are essays about life as theory, or theory materialized as artistic practice, or texts using theory as imagery etc. The first essay, by Rod Stoneman, ostensibly deals with the history of film and television theory, but it really is an autobiography of a person whose professional life was shaped by theoretical developments. Mark Tardi's essay, undoubtedly the most unusual one in the collection, combines objectified pieces of poetry and

theory by various authors, poets, theoreticians, and, if the readers are to take his word, by Facebook users (most language comes from Thalia Field's poetry collection from 2000, *Point and Line*). Tardi presents a collage, with "prompts" from Thalia's poems, which really look like prompts, separated by square brackets, and asking for an input from the reader. Other prompts are taken from a Facebook survey. Tardi's essay neatly corresponds to Tadeusz Sławek's discussion of theory as deliberate erosion of meaning, and exploration of unpredictable sweet nothings. The final essay, by Kacper Bartczak, describes a poet's reading of literary theory, with various possibilities, as source of language and imagery, as framework, or as source of "useful experimental inspirations." This argument is developed in the subsequent series of interviews with Polish poets, about their reception of literary theory. The poets are Julia Fiedorczuk, Maciej Melecki, Joanna Mueller, and Krzysztof Siwczyk.

The book presents a state of a certain idea of theory, which went beyond literary criticism, beyond rhetorics, beyond philosophy, and which, with the post-modern and post-structuralist turn, reached unprecedented, glittering peaks of reflection on language, thought, and writing. These peaks, as many essays suggest, seem now to be receding into the past. Many essays talk self-consciously about theory's demise; theory seems to be in quest for a rationale not for itself, but for its continuing demise. More optimistic versions also seem to be quite desperate by implicitly proclaiming that anything goes. There is also a pronounced note of fear, in some essays, that students, and subsequent generations of critics and teachers, will simply forget the whole thing, or an important segment of it. Which brings me to the most disturbing theoretical question for me—the question of teaching. By numbers, it can be assumed that most people who read theory today are undergraduate students; they are usually forced to read it, and they often hate it. Testing and failing undergraduate students on this is an ugly and dirty sin that many theoreticians commit, daily and about everywhere. Teaching is to theory what upbringing is to family; apart from family bliss, there are cases of family violence, implicit threats, dependency disorders, miseducation, and failing parents. Students are theory's children. No author mentions this huge captive audience that theory has, year after year, at universities and colleges.

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ISSN 1733-9154