REVIEWS

Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera. *After American Studies: Rethinking the Legacies of Transnational Exceptionalism*. New York: Routledge, 2018. 186 pages.

Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera, in his book *After American Studies*: *Rethinking the Legacies of Transnational Exceptionalism*, offers the readers a thought-provoking insight into cultural studies within the domain of the US political and cultural realities. He starts with a dedication in Spanish "Para Santiago." Though at first sight it may seem ambiguous whether the author devotes his opus to a particular person, in the course of the book one develops a gradually more grounded impression that this is Santiago from *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. This claim seems justified if we take several factors into account: the dedication is in Spanish, whereas the rest of the book (despite occasional insertions in Spanish) is in English; it coincides with Herlihy-Mera quoting Hemingway as having said, "I consider myself Cuban…. I do not want them to consider me a Yankee" (67). And since the protagonist was an American living in Cuba, he might be considered a trans-nationalist, crossing geographic borders, proclaiming his own way of life in striving against adversities, professing a unique form of religion that relied on transcending limitations and age. These aspects function as milestone points of reference for Herlihy-Mera.

The main intention of the book is to analyze how diverse facets of the US state machinery perpetuate dominant, frequently iterated, cultural canons that are to comprehensively shape hyphenated residents into a merged-together nation. In other words, the purpose is to pinpoint the factors that create the initial dichotomy of "us" vs. "them," and are geared towards the construction of a transnational and unifying "we." In Herlihy-Mera's view, this aims at forging an unhyphenated member of American society, bearing such traits as heterosexual monogamist living in a nuclear family, willingly partaking in capitalist and industrialized modes of life, and speaking English as a dominant language. The author imposes strong valuations on such a paradigm, calling it a "racist and racialized, politicized, and Eurocentric myth" (4). He sees this appropriation of geographical borders, the imposition of social and political status, enforced enculturation through domineering language and cultural practices as steps willingly taken to wield power of one dominant group over the others. What seems to elude Herlihy-Mera's attention here is the fact that this point might be treated as bearing traces of overgeneralization and one-sidedness, since one may get an impression that the groups of immigrants that came to the US and willingly subjected themselves to diverse forms of patriation (to use Herlihy-Mera's

term) were not taken into account. Though the author refers to patriation as "enforced enculturation," Samuel P. Huntington claims that immigrants "generally, *wanted* to be Americans" (188).

The unquestionable asset of this book is that it presents in a persuasive way a myriad of ways through which the US political and cultural machine tries to evoke patriation. A significant role in the process of patriation is played by public education. It is the sphere where individual identities are being shaped, thus when in the process of growing up one is exposed to the "officially" sanctioned language, myths, and traditions, supported with the authority of teachers and professors, one becomes susceptible to imposed, implicit and explicit operations. It is done in language and through language, which though not officially endorsed by the state, is English. What goes with it is the regulated celebration of festivities, commemoration of heroes and veneration of traditions that the hegemony of English brings along. It refers to social norms and regulations, such as authorized visa application procedures or visa waiver programs, or manifestations of public identification through frequent recitations of the most explicit act of civic belonging—the Pledge of Allegiance. It is also aptly done and strengthened through literary canons, whose function, among others, is to eradicate the hyphenation of diverse ethnic groups living in the US. What seems interesting here is the fact that sometimes non-English writers use a different paradigm for English than that of a dominant language, as noted by Herlihy-Mera; they let their protagonists use English as a language of prophesies of one's misfortunes and bad luck. If one juxtaposes this interpretation with that of English being a hegemonic language, one is tempted to think that it was not a coincidence that Herlihy-Mera chose English for his book.

Apart from the language, what is at play when it comes to binding diverse groups together, are the media and art. They both serve to perpetuate the collective myth of civil rights and strengthen unity among the groups, or weaken it, thus differentiating "us" from "them." They selectively show images that would substantiate the workings of the US political and cultural body, while at the same time eradicating or silencing those that would not fit in the pattern. In Herlihy-Mera's eyes, this form of "forced acculturation" is a manifestation of a soft form of violence imposed on minority groups by the majority.

Such a supposition must have inevitably led Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera to postulate the following: "It is time to unplug American (and other area) Studies from geographies, languages, citizenships, collectivities, cultures, and political molds, and their emancipations of already power" (150). He sees all the above mentioned aspects as confines imposed on the potential of one's full realization. If it is to come to fruition, one has to go beyond these limitations.

Herlihy-Mera believes that the category that still remains unscathed and thus may offer various tangible results of academic analysis, is the Age. Since it functions as a common denominator and a frequent reference point for diverse people, Herlihy-Mera claims that it could perform a similar function in cultural and American studies.

Groups, consisting of individuals coming to the US, could utilize it as an opportunity to create common identity. At the current stage of social, political, and cultural praxis the author's postulation seems highly progressive and groundbreaking. It seems to echo John Lennon's appeal from his famous song "Imagine"—there is no countries, no possessions, no religions—the only thing one is left with is one's imagination. And as it was with Lennon, so it is with Herlihy-Mera: though the world does not seem to be ready for such brave pronouncements yet, the book is worth reading for its wide scope of analysis and daring propositions heading into the future.

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David Parrish. *Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism in the British Atlantic World, 1688-1727*. Woodbridge and Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2017. 189 pages.

When Paul Kleber Monod praised the input of multidisciplinary Jacobite Studies into our understanding of the political and cultural makeup of the British Isles between 1688 and the mid-eighteenth century, he also called for further inquiry into a host of unexplored Jacobite topics ("A Restoration?"). While his list of blank spots was territorially restricted to the British Isles and the Jacobite diaspora on the European continent, David Parrish identified one more major gap and filled it with his recently published study on *Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism in the British Atlantic World*. He worked under the premise that the period 1688-1727 (the escape of James II Stuart to France, the invitation and coronation of William and Mary, three Jacobite rebellions and the reign of the first Hanoverian monarch) was not only eventful and stormy in Britain, but equally so in the British colonies in America. The review of the historiography of British and diasporic Jacobitism leads Parrish to the observation that no prior attempt has been made at integrating the local in-depth insights and advances of Jacobite Studies into a more comprehensive study of the British Atlantic political culture of the period, with all its heterogeneity, dynamism and complexity. Parrish's work aims at filling the void by making use of the existing scholarship and complimenting it with new evidence and interpretation.

Consequently, he argues a twofold thesis: 1) that the divisions and conflicts in the Metropolis reverberated in British colonial America to an extent not yet fully recognized in the early Atlantic historiography, and 2) that the colonial engagement

in the Jacobite disputes somewhat paradoxically acted as an integrating factor of the British transatlantic culture of the time. Starting with the definition of Jacobitism formulated earlier by Monod as "a subcultural element of a larger *English* political culture" (1), he broadens it for his purpose into "an important element in an eighteenth-century *British Atlantic* culture" (2, emphasis added). Hence, Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism function in the book not only as mere topics in a political history study but also, and more importantly, as instruments in the process of the cultural anglicisation of the British Atlantic.

Parrish organized his argument along the triangular relationship of Jacobitism, ecclesiastical politics and party politics, all intricately interwoven and spanning the British Atlantic political and cultural world of the period. He further assumes the operation of two equations within the triangle: 1) Jacobite=Tory=High Church of England and 2) anti-Jacobitism=Whig=Low Church of England and dissenting churches. In both equations, the element foregrounded by the author as chiefly responsible for the fluctuations of power and influence in the British Atlantic empire was the increased partisanship within the English Parliament after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 until about 1715, commonly known in historiography as the rage of party. The main axes of conflict were the Tories, opposing the violation of the Stuart divine right to the throne (Jacobitism), and the Whigs, supporting the Protestant succession (anti-Jacobitism). Mindful of the fact that crucial decisions concerning the American colonies were made by Parliament and its committees in London, Parrish traces the reiterations of the metropolitan party struggle in various parts of British colonial America.

The author divided the book into two parts. In Part I entitled "Context" he sensibly skips another detailed characterization of British party and ecclesiastical politics of the period, referring the reader to the existing vast scholarship. Instead, he deals with the transatlantic dynamics of actions and reactions, always meticulously highlighting the role of Jacobite and anti-Jacobite leanings in the maze of imperial politics. In the entire section, Parrish sticks to his triangular model, discussing each "arm" of the triangle in a separate chapter: party politics (Chapter 1), religious belief (Chapter 2), and the public sphere (Chapter 3). The section ends with a well-supported conclusion that Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism in the British Empire at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were hardly stabilizing factors. On the contrary, they served to perpetrate local conflicts in what was already "a patchwork of diverse religious, political, ethnic and economic cultures" (13) in the British Isles and the colonies alike.

Part II consists of three separate well-evidenced case studies, each an in-depth analysis of a different example of the trans-Atlantic power game organized around the Jacobite and anti-Jacobite controversy. Each case comes from a different mainland colonial territory: the South, mid-Atlantic and New England. While all are valuable and interesting for different reasons, probably the best read is Chapter 5 devoted to the stormy tenure of Robert Hunter as governor of New York and New Jersey in 1710-

19. Hunter's dramatic story of balancing the High Church Tory pressures with the resentment of local dissenting church communities, the party alterations in London with the religious and political networks in his colonial Assemblies, and his own political instincts with the ambitions of some activists, functions like a lens through which one can appreciate the web of interests behind the Jacobite/anti-Jacobite contention. All that plus Hunter's skill to build and maintain a network of influential adherents in England, as well as to use the available PR tools to deprecate his political antagonists, make his case perfect material for a historical political thriller.

Each case study is in fact a self-contained essay with its own contextual introduction and conclusions. It makes them more useful for selective study outside the context of the entire book for various purposes, for instance in teaching or in narrow research projects in regional colonial history. A less fortunate outcome of this structural decision is a somewhat tedious repetition in each case of the assumptions of the book laid out in the "Introduction" and partial duplication of the conclusions formulated in the contextual Chapters 1-3. However, one can understand the dilemma of a researcher trying to present ample archival evidence without compromising the lucidity of argumentation but at the same time not prepared to shelve the gem cases he dug out and reconstructed with professional finesse. If this was indeed the author's problem, then the two-part structure seems a good way round it, even at the cost of some redundancy.

Another important achievement of David Parrish is the adoption of the cultural history approach. He shows political, religious and communicative developments never losing sight of their interrelatedness in the best anthropological style of Geertzian "thick description" (Geertz 3-30). His methodological awareness is particularly evident in Chapter 3 devoted to the circulation of the Jacobean and anti-Jacobean discourses via institutional, extra-institutional, print and oral communication channels of the time. When analyzing stories relating to Jacobitism regularly printed in colonial newspapers, he comes close to the methodological postulate of Peter Mandler that "a cultural historian must have a mental map of the *entire field of representation* in which their texts sit and must have ways of communicating this map to the reader" (97). Parrish maps his field carefully by discussing the topicalisation of Jacobitism in colonial papers, news reprints from English newspapers next to reports on local Jacobitism and printing relevant letters from the readers. He draws examples of Jacobite content from pamphlets, religious sermons and almanachs and identifies Jacobite ideas encoded in fictional and symbolic forms.

After reading this deeply researched and tightly argued book, one may have a momentary impression that Jacobitism and its opposite were the decisive factors in the development of an eighteenth-century British Atlantic culture. Of course, Parrish never claims that much, yet does his best to demonstrate "their contemporary relevance in a wider geographical context than has previously been known" (4). The effect of his work is an excellent book that can be recommended to

anyone interested in the cultural processes of Britain's emerging American empire. Apart from breaking new grounds in Jacobite Studies, the book is likely to inspire a wide range of scholars in multiple fields of eighteenth-century American history: general and local, religious, intellectual, literary, media and communication and even biography. It is unlikely to gather dust on library shelves in near future.

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Susan Farrell. *Imagining Home: American War Fiction from Hemingway to 9/11*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2017. 223 pages.

In *Imagining Home: American War Fiction from Hemingway to 9/11* Susan Farrell aims to trace certain patterns of continuity in American war literature published between 1926 and 2007. The scholar argues that issues of war and gender have not been sufficiently addressed in the analyses of the selected iconic American writers' works. Consequently, she attempts to show "how ideas of home and the domestic specifically enter into canonical American war fiction from Hemingway up to the post-9/11 period" (8). The author, a professor of English at the College of Charleston, focuses in her research on American war literature, and has recently published critical companions to Kurt Vonnegut's and Tim O'Brien's life and work. She is also a founding member of the international Kurt Vonnegut Society. *Imagining Home* is composed of four chapters; the first three are dedicated to the works of Ernest Hemingway, Kurt Vonnegut, and Tim O'Brien, respectively, while the last one focuses on post-9/11 novels. It is true that much has been written about American First World War literature (beginning with Stanley Cooperman's now classic *World War I and the American Novel*), as well as post-Vietnam fiction and post-9/11 literature, and many separate studies have been dedicated to Hemingway, Vonnegut, and O'Brien. However, this is the first book that attempts to synthesize the American twentieth-century literary war tradition, paying special attention to gender and the verbalization of war trauma. Such a framework necessitates a selective approach and generates certain omissions, yet the author's argumentation is clear, logical, and consistent.

According to Farrell, the writers under consideration undermine gender

stereotypes, and thus blur the cliché borderline between war front and home front. As Susan Grayzel reminds us, the term home front began to be widely used during the First World War to separate the domestic sphere, associated with women, from the war zone, the core of masculine experience. Although this dichotomy is not novel, the 1914-1918 conflict "involved civilians in a way not found in any previous modern European war," therefore the idea of separate fronts was to protect the status quo and maintain social order at a moment of particularly threatening upheaval (Grayzel 11). Such a rigid distinction between the private and the public has also determined who has the right to be traumatized by war, and to tell the ensuing stories of horror. The denial of the actual interdependence of the two fronts has characterized discourses about later wars as well. By contrast, Farrell aims to demonstrate that the American writers under consideration have questioned the normative gender categories that posit women as wives/mothers, awaiting the return of the soldier at home, and men as warriors, engrossed in military matters, indifferent, or even hostile, to the lures of domesticity.

Imagining Home therefore approaches the war as a gendering activity that "draws upon pre-existing definitions of gender at the same time that it structures gender relations" (Higonnet et al. 4). In Farrell's opinion, when the writers under analysis depict the First and the Second World War, the Spanish Civil War, the Vietnam War and the post-9/11 War on Terror, they examine these conflicts from the vantage point of traditional gender expectations, yet at the same time they "imagine domestic spaces as alternatives to experiences on the front lines" (9). In the scholar's view, both Hemingway and Vonnegut construct male characters who desire to find shelter from the horrors of the front in intense domestic relationships. Breaking with Hemingway's reputation as an "ultramasculine scribe of war" (16), in her interpretation of *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Farrell demonstrates that his female characters are equally affected by war as the male ones. Analyzing *Mother Night*, *Cat's Cradle* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*, she also points out that Vonnegut is particularly suspicious of the traditional gender codes that posit war as a glamorous ritual of manhood, and the domestic as the innocent, boring, feminine space. O'Brien in turn illustrates, by various means, the porousness of the home front and the war zone. Farrell reexamines his *Going After Cacciato*, *The Things They Carried* and *In the Lake of the Woods* as literary attempts to make sense of the American experience in Vietnam by referring to inherited, classical notions of virtue, bravery, and heroism. Questioning feminist interpretations that read O'Brien's portraits of women as one-dimensional sexual objects, Farrell shows how the writer undermines traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and approaches with ambivalence the stereotypical fusion of military prowess with sexual conquest. Most importantly, in this perspective, war ceases to be "a forbidden zone" for women (Tylee 251), who are directly victimized by armed conflicts, and/or are not naively believed to be protected from knowledge about war atrocities. Farrell refers to a large body of criticism, in particular a substantial corpus of academic

studies of the selected authors' works. Yet, while she acknowledges the influence of Jennifer Haytock's inspiring book *At Home, At War: Domesticity and World War One in American Literature*, the omission of Brenda M. Boyle's insightful *Masculinity in Vietnam War Narratives: A Critical Study of Fiction, Films and Nonfiction Writings* is a bit disappointing.

The scholar also challenges the assumption that American fiction produced after 9/11 presents an unproblematic retreat into conservative values. Commenting on a number of post-9/11 novels, Richard Gray, for example, notices that "to begin imagining what it might feel like to survive the end of the world is not entirely resistant to the seductive pieties of home, hearth and family, and, related to them, the equally seductive myth of American exceptionalism" (17). The focus on the domestic thus deflates the national and international impact of the tragic events, and turns them into mundane, heart-renting melodramas (Gray 30). Yet, in Farrell's opinion, 9/11 literature inscribes itself within a tradition of American war writing which highlights the view of war atrocities as a result of the American way of life, rather than a historical aberration. Stressing the interdependency of the domestic and the front, American writers explore the inevitable contamination of the private sphere by political lies and war violence. Jonathan Safran Foer, for instance, in his *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, fuses the Allied bombing of Dresden in 1945 with the 2001 attack on World Trade Centre "to show that there are no safe home places in the midst of war" (13). According to Farrell, Foer's novel, together with Jess Walter's *The Zero* and Don De Lillo's *Falling Man*, all challenge the heroic discourse of protective masculinity. Deeply traumatized, their protagonists "long to rebuild a home, but find it impossible to do so, winding up in liminal or in-between places. The only home places available to them are partial and contingent, the private, domestic world always threatened by the public specter of war and violence" (185). Questioning the mythology of an innocent American nation that developed around 9/11, the three writers use "the myth of the Fall to complicate popular notions of innocence and experience, ignorance and knowledge, guilt and blame" (152).

Furthermore, Farrell opposes the widely held opinion that the 9/11 crisis generated a literature different from previous American fiction in its inability to verbalize terror. In her book she aims to demonstrate that the concern with testimony has been an important issue for American war writers in the past hundred years. To prove this point, in her analyses, Farrell focuses also on the relation between representation and traumatic reality. She highlights Hemingway's fundamental suspicion of language as artifice; in her view, his characters are incapable of putting their feelings into words, for they tend to believe that verbalization distorts real experience and language "is a simulated and incomplete reality" (17). In its emphasis on the potential of war stories to create community and initiate the process of recovery from trauma, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* provides a bridge between Hemingway's earlier novels and the search for testimony, characteristic of later twentieth-century writers.

As to Vonnegut and O'Brien, they both examine, in a postmodern perspective, the relativity of truth, yet while the former radically asserts the unreliability of language, the latter asks important questions about the healing potential of the stories we tell about the trauma of war. The importance of testimony, binding the community together or further alienating the traumatized individual, is central in Foer's, Walter's and Don De Lillo's novels. The dense web of intertextual allusions Farrell discovers between the iconic writers' fiction and post-9/11 literature is most interesting and intriguing.

However, although the scholar places her interpretations in a rigorously researched historical context, she does not refer extensively to the changing cultural background, particularly the shift from a modernist aesthetics to a postmodern one, which could illuminate the difference between Hemingway's distrust of language and Vonnegut's conviction that the narratives we share constitute our reality. The author claims that postmodern novels "embrace storytelling and elevate language as a means of shaping reality rather than diminishing it" (56). Such a positive conclusion is not convincing in the light of many postmodernists' tragic assertion that language pre-exists us, that we are imprisoned in language, and thus any meanings we produce are always unstable. The ethical turn of the 1980s, together with the development of trauma studies, would also account for O'Brien's interest in storytelling, and his characters' desperate efforts to communicate war atrocities. Although the author makes use of trauma theory, she very briefly refers to the now canonical works of Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub. Her interpretations of post-9/11 fiction would definitely benefit from later theoretical works, which approach trauma as part of our ideological construction, "the root of subjectivity and social order," carefully concealed under fantasies of completeness (Edkins 132). What is more, a biopolitical perspective would help expose the manipulations of sovereign power during the War on Terror, and thus highlight to what extent "American writing of the war [*is*] the war" (Matthews 217).

These shortcomings do not spoil the overall effect of Farrell's study. *Imagining Home* is an interesting and engaging reading—its most innovative aspect lies in the foregrounding of the continuities between American fiction inspired by the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, the Vietnam War, and the 9/11 conflict. Such a perspective offers a thought-provoking revision of classical American war novels and traditional academic categorizations. Moreover, in her study of the representation of gender in war literature Farrell shows how, by undermining traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity, American writers attempt to create, through story-telling, a sense of shared responsibility for war. *Imagining Home* thus alerts the twenty-first-century reader to the interdependence of the political and the personal, as well as the inevitable infection of the domestic by war terror.

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Ewa Barbara Łuczak, ed. *Ernest Hemingway*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskigo, 2017. 300 pages.

The latest volume in the series *Mistrzowie Literatury Amerykańskiej* (*Masters of American Literature*) has excellent timing. A look back at the works of Ernest Hemingway seems to go against the general chronology that the editors have had us accustomed to,[1] and is not the most obvious of choices. Ewa Barbara Łuczak, the editor of this volume, in her introduction suggests that the book is published in the

1 Including heretofore collections on Don DeLillo, Cormac McCarthy, Toni Morrison, the Beat Generation, the early postmodern novelists (Barth, Barthelme, Coover) and Native American authors (Momaday, Silko, Erdrich, Alexie, Visenor), the series has been established as a major Polish resource on postwar and contemporary American writers.

spirit of literary revisionism, in the best sense of the word. Its task is clear: to remove the layers of sediment that have covered Hemingway's statue over the decades. Upon reflection, the metaphor of the statue should be taken further in the case of this volume, because the novelist who achieved a statuesque position on the literary scene during his lifetime, has been denied a single monument. Instead, through the eyes of some of the finest American literature scholars in Poland, we discover a number of different, sometimes even slightly conflicting figures of the great modernist writer. Such an approach harbors ambiguity, the air of which dominates the volume and emphasizes a quality essential to all good literature.

As Ewa Łuczak observes, the last decades have not been kind to Hemingway. A white, conspicuously heterosexual man, handsome and athletic, an American rushing to the frontlines of every significant conflict of the twentieth century, is an easy target for major critical discourses. And so Hemingway has been deemed a misogynic racist with little consideration to the fact that despite his public image (true, self-sustained, maybe even kindled), he is, undisputedly, among the leading intellectuals of his generation, and in such cases, there is no room for oversimplification. One of the volume's striking merits is that whilst challenging this both simplistic and widespread image of Hemingway, it manages to accomplish its goals avoiding entirely the jargon that is the burden of so many academic publications.

The book is well timed also because it is in step with the current trends in literary studies; a gradual departure from the up-to-recently predominant poststructuralist approach, the book positions itself close to the author and not too far from his reader. Such a perspective is pluralistic, it entices an ongoing debate to replace once-and-for-all conclusions. The good timing has also to do with the current political situation on both sides of the Atlantic, as nationalisms rise in power the contemporary intellectual is forced to do something much against his nature: to take a stand. In Hemingway, a witness of and a participant in turbulent recent history, we will find a reflection of our own anxieties, and hopefully, something beyond.

The volume's chapters are arranged with a view to two different organizational principles: chronology and the variety of aspects in Hemingway's writing as a whole. Thus we both witness the author's development and his non-coherent complexity. And so the book opens with Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich's reading of some of the earliest stories by Hemingway with the focus on the theme of death, ever present in all of his writings. Death, apart from its obvious universal dimension, ushers a typically modernist problem that has been persistently resurfacing over the past century: authenticity. This elusive goal that Hemingway set for himself, the "one true sentence" (*A Movable Feast* 11) is to the contemporary reader something to long for. Tired of poststructuralist experiments, he will find Hemingway's stories almost refreshing in their lamentation over the loss of real art in exchange for showy trickery (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich 31). The scholar argues that, in Hemingway's eyes, culture is regressing as it loses touch with its roots (31), a stunningly accurate observation considering today's circumstances.

The theme of death carries on to the second chapter of the volume, Ewa Łuczak's study of eugenic discourse in one of Hemingway's less appreciated novels, *The Torrents of Spring*. From the perspective of eugenics, the scholar is able to show the young author's position in relation to a powerful cultural phenomenon legitimizing the racism of early-twentieth century American elites. The argument is nuanced and takes into consideration both Hemingway's open opposition to notions such as racial purity and biological determinism and his belief in the superiority of the white Anglo-Saxon male (38). Similar ambiguity runs through Justyna Włodarczyk's article on *Green Hills of Africa*, which in spite of its preoccupation with the theme of hunting, does not fail to discuss Hemingway's relationship with his African guides and porters accompanying him during shooting expeditions. With much critical distance Łuczak and Włodarczyk elaborate on the possible reasons for the widespread accusations of racism, all the while keeping the reader sensitive to a certain degree of historical relativism: actions today deemed as racist, in the first half of the twentieth century would have been perceived as quite the contrary, "acts of intellectual courage… challeng[ing] well-established authority," as Ewa Łuczak observes (55).[2]

Hemingway's relationships with women, also the subject of much simplification, is depicted with a similar challenging sense of ambiguity. The issue resurfaces in the volume a number of times, but is most comprehensively approached by Anna Pochmara and Zuzanna Ładyga, the former offering a reading of *Men Without Women*, the latter discussing *The Garden of Eden*. Anna Pochmara's title ("Bohaterowie w bezruchu" ["Motionless Heroes"[3]]) suggests that the goal here is to nuance popular convictions of the writer's misogyny. The chapter convincingly demonstrates that many of the so-called "heroes" in Hemingway's fiction are weak, passive and defeated, hardly heroes at all. Pochmara emphasizes the difference between these men and the image that is often identified with Hemingway himself, implying compellingly that in this case there is more truth in the fiction than in the myth. Among the three epigrams that precede the chapter we find the famous observation from Judith Fetterley claiming that Hemingway conveys the following message to the female readers of *Farewell to Arms*: "the only good woman is a dead one"[4] (Pochmara 75), but as the scholar is quick to notice, in the light of contemporary research, such radical, and therefore widely quoted, opinions are not entirely legitimate. A well-

2 All translations from Polish are mine.

3 Should the text ever be translated into English, I would suggest the title "Still Heroes," as it would do a wonderful job of conveying the ambiguity that Anna Pochmara is sensitive to. I decided to translate it in an unambiguous way for the needs of the present review because the original Polish title does not allow such a playful compound of contrasting meanings.

4 Pochmara translates the quote into Polish; the original words come from Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 71.

illuminated cultural backdrop of the early-twentieth century helps her do away with a rather simplistic view on gender relations in Hemingway's work.

Zuzanna Ładyga's reading of the posthumous *Garden of Eden* reaffirms and develops this nuanced depiction of sexuality and power. In the opening sentence she argues that the novel is a "radical departure from gender stereotypes" (255), and goes on to show that the modest reception in Poland has not made it possible to confront the book's subversive nature with the popular image of the author. As opposed to the works published during Hemingway's lifetime, Ładyga argues, the novel dismisses strictly biographical readings (257), and implicitly, we could also venture to claim, it questions such readings in relation to his earlier works. The reversal of gender roles and the final bitter triumph of the man undermines the image Hemingway never ceased to cultivate. The protagonist is victorious only because the rules of the contest are created by and for men, Hemingway seems to reflect in the privacy of his study, and so the man's accomplishment is worthless.

Two authors pay significant attention to the Polish reception of Hemingway: Mirosława Buchholtz and Paweł Jędrzejko. The former scholar offers a personal and touching memory of her grandfather as an introduction to the main object of her study. Roughly Hemingway's contemporary and an avid reader of his fiction, the man having been a witness and participant of the turbulent history of the twentieth century and inspires a reflection on the various, not exclusively literary, receptions of the famous *The Old Man and the Sea* by the generations that followed. As we move away from the printed page and towards the flickering screen, we are invited to think about the changing centers of gravity in the various adaptations, and thus also interpretations of Hemingway's timeless novella. The latter scholar also includes a significant visual element in his argument: for Paweł Jędrzejko Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* serves as the backdrop for making a surprising, yet compelling comparison between Ernest Hemingway and Tadeusz Borowski. The surprise, quite obviously, comes from the fact that for Hemingway the military conflict that shaped him as an artist was World War I, for Borowski it was World War II, but soon it becomes apparent that the argument is sound: the cultural implications of the Great War in the West of Europe are much more better suited to be compared with the trauma of the Holocaust, significantly more prominent in the culture of Eastern Europe.

The significance of World War I for Hemingway's fiction is depicted by Marek Paryż in his discussion of *A Farewell to Arms*. The chapter's perverse title ("Wojna jest prosta" ["War Is Simple"]) is an excellent reflection of the novel's, and, by extension, its author's deep ambivalence about this unprecedented conflict. In fact, nothing is simple when it comes to this novel: neither the disproportion between its literary merit and its cult status, nor the incoherent protagonist that will significantly impact much of Hemingway's future prose, not to mention the fractured foundations of Western culture the book is set upon. Frederic Henry, as Marek Paryż argues, is a character, whose "identity has been reset, in the sense that his personal history cannot be reconstructed" (108), and in that he heralds the profound axiological crisis born

from the embers of the Great War. His personal alienation becomes the alienation of the Western man, and war to him is expected to bring "purification" (112). Henry's lack of an ideology is a possible reason for his estrangement, and in this he becomes a product of his times. We know exactly what he eats and drinks, but we no access to what he thinks. The lost child he fathers is not truly lost, because it is never truly his, as Paryż demonstrates, and therefore Henry's barren soul comes to stand for the condition of Western culture, and to a degree, Hemingway himself. The conclusion arrives naturally, "*A Farewell to Arms* is open to interpretations that spite the writer's presumable intentions" (123), and in that Hemingway's art becomes greater than its creator.

The chapters by Alicja Piechucka (one) and Zbigniew Maszewski (two) support this conviction. Both of Maszewski's pieces are dedicated to Hemingway's posthumous publications; the first of which is a reflection on *A Moveable Feast*, the second on *Under Kilimanjaro*. The perspective for the discussion of Hemingway's Paris memoir is set masterfully; spanning from hunger to self-discipline, it helps us to get to the predominant dichotomy that drives Hemingway's literature of that time. The tension between need and restraint that the scholar is able to distill from the anecdotes and seeming trivialities of everyday life proves to be the source of the inexhaustible energy that Hemingway's readers were always drawn to, but were could rarely pinpoint. Much praise is also due to both chapters for comparing the various editions of the discussed works, a job that is both significant and nowadays also deficient, especially since not all of the editions are available to the Polish reader. In his study of *Under Kilimanjaro*'s process of publication Zbigniew Maszewski offers us facts both obscure and important, a quality quite rare in our world of informational overload.

Alicja Piechucka's chapter functions in much the same way. The scholar presents us with a nuanced depiction of the relationship between Ernest Hemingway, and his great literary rival, William Faulkner. The point of intersection for the two literary legacies is both relevant and surprising, even to those well versed in American modernist literature: the cinematic adaptation of Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* with the script by Faulkner.[5] The argument follows then the history of the text's screen versions carefully signaling the changing perspectives in connection with the shifts in the cultural backdrop. Piechucka offers us a much appreciated insight into the gradual changes in respect to addressing and processing Hemingway's legacy, an understanding that makes us more careful in forming conclusive opinions about the author's place amongst popular politics and entertainment.

Kamil Chrzczonowicz closes the volume and in a circular motion takes us back to the beginnings of Hemingway's writing, to the times before his literary debut as he sheds light on the author's sense of humor, a rather obscure trait of his character. Almost completely absent from Hemingway's published body of works, comical

5 From the chapter we learn that Faulkner was formally only to co-author of the script, but as Piechucka shows, his role in the creative process was decisive. The other script writer was Jules Furthman.

elements resurface both in the letters that he left behind, and in the memories of those who knew him in person. From this account we meet Hemingway as a man with lots of critical distance to himself, which should come as a surprise to those, who associate the writer with the public image he maintained.

I have decided to leave Ewa Barbara Łuczak's reflections on *For Whom the Bell Tolls* for last, because, to my mind, they convey the spirit of the entire book, and therefore should also conclude my reading the volume. Challenging Kurt Vonnegut's claim that Hemingway is not really an American writer, but rather an expatriate disconnected from the troubles of the United States of his day (173), the scholar attempts to show who Hemingway was by showing who he was not (173). Placing the novelist face to face with the "other," Łuczak is able to show a deep ambivalence not only of his novel, but of the man himself. A reading of his perhaps most famous work leads us to a rather perverse, but well grounded conclusion: the more *For Whom the Bell Toll*'s author demonstrated a cosmopolitan curiosity of the other, the more he implicitly appeared as the man Vonnegut refused to see in him.

The argument revolves around Robert Jordan, whose cosmopolitism seems to resemble Hemingway's own, and in the heart of this character, Łuczak manages to show an arresting inconsistency between what Jordan demonstrates consciously and what he feels, to a large extent, against himself. The internal conflict, as the scholar observes, is set against in an environment of no clear divisions: be they political, religious or moral. Hemingway appears in this context as a discerning maven of 1930s Spain who with much forethought guides us through the quicksand of once-and-for-all statements. Integrity is exposed as naïve, consistency of action turns out to be utopian. His downfall is of a different sort than that of Frederick Henry in Marek Paryż's argument. However, the trajectory that takes us from Henry to Jordan seems to be the same one that guided Hemingway himself in his reactions to the atrocities of the twentieth century: from nihilistic despair to a "tragic stoicism" (Ruland and Bradbury 304), a reluctant and doomed opposition in the face of the approaching Nazism.

Ewa Barbara Łuczak concludes her argument stating that "in one's struggle against… naiveté, dogma, ethnocentrism, national and cultural divisions, the reader can find a source of intellectual satisfaction" (193), and, as I would add, a sense of unimposing guidance. In a world where dogma is on the rise, *Ernest Hemingway* matters.

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Hillary L. Chute. *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016. 359 pages.

Hillary L. Chute is one of the leading scholars in the field of comics studies, renowned both for her insightful research and careful analysis of verbal-visual texts. Back in 2006, together with Marianne DeKoven, Chute edited a special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* devoted to the graphic narrative. In this way, she opened new perspectives for the study of comics and graphic novels, proving once and for all that the field of "comics studies" and comics itself should no longer only be associated with superheroes or related pop culture phenomena. Indeed, as Chute further demonstrated in her 2010 book entitled *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (Columbia University Press), contemporary comics is characterized by formal and semiotic complexity that allows it to express trauma and (family) crisis unlike any other medium. In her careful readings of the autobiographical works by contemporary female cartoonists, including Phoebe Gloeckner, Marjane Satrapi, Alison Bechdel, Lynda Barry, and Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Chute exemplified how the questions of the body, sexuality, memory, and history are represented through the interplay of words and images. Chute was also associate editor of Art Spiegelman's *MetaMaus* (Pantheon Books, 2011) and in 2014 she co-edited, together with Patrick Jagoda, a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* on comics and media, demonstrating that, although comics no longer needs to be defended as an art form in its own right, we are in need of insightful and ingenious criticism that will be able to explicate the hidden meanings behind verbal-visual tales.

Chute's 2016 book, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*, reprises the crucial aspects of her previous research in developing a complex multimedial critical framework for the study of graphic narratives. At the same time, *Disaster Drawn* also ventures into a largely uncharted territory of the rapidly developing genre of documentary, non-fiction, and historical comics. The book comprises an introduction, five chapters, and a coda, complete with numerous black-and-white and color reproductions. It should be noted that, as Chute explains in an introductory note on the figures, almost all reproduced images retain their original size. It may seem like an insignificant detail to a person outside the field but to a comics scholar this demonstrates that Chute recognizes, in her analysis, the importance of page layout and panel size, which constitute key aspects of "reading" comics that tend to be downplayed in some studies. *Disaster Drawn* encompasses a wealth of material, including the works by the legendary American cartoonists Robert Crumb and Art Spiegelman, but also the more contemporary, yet equally renowned, "founder" of comics journalism Joe Sacco, and the Japanese manga artist Keiji Nakazawa, thus extending the argument beyond the purely American context. Chute investigates what new perspectives the medium of comics opens when it comes to the representation of such historical and traumatic events as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the tragedy of the Holocaust, or the ethnic cleansing of the Yugoslav Wars.

As Chute explains in the introduction, tellingly titled "Seeing New," her interest in comics as a document and a testimony dates back to the publication of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. In this legendary work, cats and mice enacted the real events of World War II, sparkling a controversy over the clear-cut divisions, or more precisely lack thereof, between fiction and non-fiction. The scholar observes that even today, almost thirty years after *Maus* was first published, the general public tends to be distressed at "the notion of drawing (and its intendant abstractions) as possibly 'true' or 'nonfictional'—as opposed to writing, a system of communication seen to be more transparently true or accurate" (2). For Chute, however, the subjective, creative, and often metaphorical visual language of comics, as exemplified by *Maus*, does not disqualify the form from providing a historical account. Drawing a parallel between the form of comics as a collection of frames and the role of documentary texts as evidence, Chute asserts that "in its succession of replete frames, comics calls attention to itself… as evidence" (2). In other words, through its basic grammar, comics not only shows the past but also critically challenges the very notion of history.

More specifically, Chute proposes a twofold historical argument. For one, she interprets the rise of nonfiction comics in a direct relation to World War II, claiming that documentary graphic narratives, in their unique contemporary form and format, were created as a result of the trauma triggered by the events of 1939-1945. Comics such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus* or Keiji Nakazawa's *I saw It*, among other works, serve as primary examples of such a response. The second argument that Chute makes concerns the history of the form. Chute sees contemporary comics as part of a longer tradition of works that respond to the traumatic events of war and disaster, such as the seventeenth-century prints by the French artist Jacques Callot or the famous *Disasters of War* by Francisco Goya. The scholar thus asserts that graphic narratives, in their twofold documentary and critical capacity, "have the potential to be powerful precisely because they intervene against the culture of invisibility by taking… the risk of representation" (5). Chute argues that, as a medium that works with plural simultaneous images, i.e. the page that is composed of numerous smaller panels, comics provide a new way of representing trauma. Comics tackles the "unrepresentable" not through not-showing (silencing) but through visual excess and multi-perspectivity. According to Chute:

> while all media do the work of framing, comics manifests material frames—and the absences between them. It thereby literalizes on the page the work of framing and making, and also what framing excludes.… Comics offers attention to both to the creation of evidence and to what is outside the frame. It invokes visual efficacy *and* [original emphasis] limitation, creating dynamic texts inclined to express the layered horizon of history implied by 'documentary.' Stella Bruzzi suggests that documentaries are 'performative acts' and that a documentary is constituted by 'results of the collision between apparatus and subject.. The self-reflexive awareness of apparatus—drawing—is definitional to comics form. (17-18)

The forms of representation that comics, as a medium, is capable of are thus problematized in a very innovative perspective. The fact that comics is aware of mediation it involves does not constitute the key conclusion or the end point of Chute's study. The scholar takes a step further and actually *shows* the reader how through the visual style, metaphor, or format comics links ethics and vision.

Chapter One, entitled "Histories of Visual Witness," addresses in more detail the second historical claim made by Chute in relation to nonfiction comics. The scholar traces the trajectory of various nonfiction verbal-visual forms, discussing Callot, Goya, but also the works by Rembrandt and William Hogarth, and, eventually, the emergence of the professional artist-reporter in the nineteenth century. "Time, Space, and Picture Writing in Modern Comics," the second chapter in the study, maps the growth of European and American comics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, focusing on the formal and conceptual changes the form underwent during these crucial times. Chute discusses the influence of the nineteenth-century Swiss artist Rodolphe Töpffer, considered by many to be the "father of modern comics," the early-twentieth-century works of Winsor McCay, the "wordless woodcut novels" of Lynd Ward, and the illustrations by Henry Darger. She then moves on to investigate the influence of Harvey Kurtzman and his *Mad Comics*, juxtaposing the creative freedom of *Mad* with the limitations imposed by the Comics Code in the 1950s which prompted the rise of the underground comix. The two opening chapters do not really present any new findings and tend to repeat or summarize the developments already known to or discussed by other scholars in the field, especially as regards the history of comics presented in the second chapter, but they nevertheless provide a necessary theoretical and historical context for the non-specialist reader.

Indeed, it is in the final three chapters, devoted respectively to Keiji Nakazawa, Art Spiegelman, and Joe Sacco that *Disaster Drawn* truly presents its most compelling and original argument, asserting that the artists in question "invented nonfiction comics afresh" (6) in response to the world in which war became a global televised spectacle. Chute states that "a tradition of 'drawing to tell'" (6) revived by Nakazawa and Spiegelman, and later reinvented by Sacco, is meant to question and oppose the television image through its explicit testimonial (subjective, personal, and emotional) character.

Chute proposes to see the year 1972 as the key moment in the development of nonfiction comics dealing with the trauma of war. 1972 is the year in which two unique "visions" of World War II were published in the US and Japan respectively, namely Spiegelman's *Maus* and Nakazawa's *I Saw It: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima*. *Maus* constitutes a second-hand account, with Art Spiegelman relating the story of his father Vladek during the Holocaust, while *I Saw It* is essentially an eyewitness account of the destruction of Hiroshima in 1945. Different when it comes to witness status, yet related in their innovative pursuits, both titles mark for Chute a new era in the history of documentary comics. *Maus* and *I Saw It* dare to address the inexpressible, the traumatic, and the larger-than-life by means of a medium that had

been associated primarily with popular culture, adventure, or superheroes. As such, both works redefined comics and what it is capable of addressing and expressing for the next generations. Chute shows in her analysis that the works of Spiegelman and Nakazawa not only document but also visualize the trauma through unique visual idioms. Spiegelman famously adopts the animal metaphor in which Jews are presented as mice, Nazis as cats, Poles as pigs, and Americans as dogs etc. Nakazawa, in his own right, draws on the rich visual tradition of manga with its grotesque, "exaggerated," and sometimes even caricatured features. The real is thus juxtaposed with the drawn that does not purport to be "transparent." On the contrary, the (hand) drawn manifests its own artificiality. As Chute observes, "*I Saw It* and *Maus* are both narratives of terror that devolve on *images* [original emphasis original] of terror.… Motivated by the urgencies of re-visioning and re-seeing the war, comics sought to defamiliarize received images of history, and also to communicate, to circulate in the realms of the popular" (142).

The final chapter in the study is devoted to Joe Sacco and "comics journalism," a unique form of dealing with traumatic past and present. The name comics journalism does not only bring together the spheres of reporting and drawing, or drawing-as-reporting, but is also meant to emphasize the fact that this hybrid form is concurrently self-reflexive and documentary in character. As such, comics journalism is supposed to constitute a new whole that is something greater than just the sum of its parts. Comics journalism inspires reflexivity because, as Chute observes, drawing is never transparent and always conveys the mark of the artist. This open rejection of transparency and objectivity, in turn, gives rise to questions about history's discursive and constructed character. According to Chute, "[t]he medium of comics is always already self-conscious as an interpretative, and never purely mimetic, medium. Yet, this self-consciousness, crucially, exists together with the medium's confidence in its ability to traffic in expressing history" (198). The power of comics, Chute observes, lies in their ability to create "visual and verbal counter-archives to official histories" (205).

Sacco's non-fiction works, including *Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-1995* (2000), *The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo* (2003), *Palestine* (1992-1995), and *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009), are then analyzed in more detail. Interestingly enough, Chute chooses not to discuss Sacco's most recent publication, *The Great War* (2013), devoted to The Battle of the Somme which took place during World War I, though she briefly mentions it in the introductory part of Chapter Five. This omission is notable yet understandable when one takes into account the context of comics journalism emphasized by Chute at the beginning of the chapter. Besides, the thoroughness and insightfulness of Chute's analysis of her selected corpus more than makes up for this loss. The scholar examines all aspects of Sacco's visual idiom, including composition, aesthetics, color, and even the character of lines, which, in the field where many critics come from a purely literary background and often tend to focus more on the plot and less on the form and visual style of the comic book, is

something worthy of praise. The attention to detail also constitutes a meta-comment on the ethical, and not only aesthetical, character of Sacco's comics journalism. According to Chute, "the slowness of Sacco's comics [i.e. their visual density and saturation with details – M.O.] is both a mode of ethical awareness and an implicit critique of superficial news coverage" (201). This involvement in the story of others, made visible in its careful and meticulous visualization, constitutes the characteristic feature of Sacco's works.

It is thanks to such innovative contextualization, paired with attention to detail and visual erudition, that Chute's study impresses and does not simply repeat what has already been said on Sacco and his work in previous studies, such as *The Comics of Joe Sacco: Journalism in a Visual World* (2015) edited by Daniel Worden. Indeed, Chute employs an arsenal of theoretical tools, referencing Nicholas Mirzoeff, Edward Said, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Shoshana Felman, John Berger, and W.J.T. Mitchell, yet never in her analysis does she succumb to chaos or creates just a collage of quotations. On the contrary, Chute presents her own original view of Sacco's work, emphasizing that "graphic narratives make the roiling lines of history readable" (233), and she does so always in reference to concrete visual material that she illuminates for the reader in her careful investigation.

Disaster Drawn ends with a brief ten-page coda in which Chute comments on the contemporary issues the world of comics faces right now. As could be expected in view of recent events, the scholar addresses the *Charlie Hebdo* attack and other responses to visual representations of Islam, emphasizing the power of hand-drawn images in the era of digital recording. Chute also briefly comments on such innovative documentary graphic forms as Ari Folman's animation *Waltz with Bashir* (2008), devoted to the 1982 Lebanon War, or Phoebe Gloeckner's ongoing project *The Return of Maldoror,* in which the artist documents the murders of young women in the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez, asserting that "the comics medium has evolved as an instrument for commenting on and re-visioning experience and history" (265). Interesting as these examples are, they nevertheless leave the reader athirst for more detailed descriptions, especially in view of the fact that careful analysis constitutes the study's main strength.

This notwithstanding, *Disaster Drawn* is one of the first and certainly most insightful studies to contextualize and theorize non-fiction graphic narratives. Documentary and/or war-related comics are, on the one hand, viewed as part of a longer tradition of war prints, pamphlets, and caricatures, and, on the other, the form is analyzed in relation to the specificity of the medium. Chute's study is truly an engaging, enlightening and enjoyable read.

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Klaus Lösch, Heike Paul and Meike Zwingenberger, eds. *Critical Regionalism*. Publications of the Bavarian American Academy, Volume 18. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016. 216 pages.

Critical regionalism is a productive, relatively new method of analysis enacted in many areas of research, from architecture through cultural and social studies to art and literature. The concept of critical regionalism was introduced to the field of architecture by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis in 1981. In 1983, it was taken up by geographer Kenneth Frampton, who, in his influential essay "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," called for creating a (third) space in architecture where the universal (modernity, technology, civilization) is in dialogue with the local (the idiosyncratic, the particular) producing a new, enhanced experience of the world and hopefully "a resistant, identity-giving culture" (Frampton). Bringing the concept to the field of regional studies, Neil Campbell, in *The Rhizomatic West* (2008), applies it to the American West and postulates a redefinition of the region by looking at it not as an insulated, mythic, nation-consolidating, static and sentimental construct but as a vibrant, multi-faceted, "uncontained, problematic, contradictory… fluid, imaginative, transnational, global" (44-45) inclusive space. A similar, revisionist kind of regionalism is proposed with reference to Appalachia in Douglas Reichert Powell's *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape* (2007), where the author employs the methodology to search for ways to conceive of what is particular and local as implicated in a wider web of politics, culture and history. The publication of the Bavarian American Academy further illuminates the concept and dialogic character of critical regionalism as employed to a wide spectrum of areas of study.

Edited by Klaus Lösch, Heike Paul and Meike Zwingenberger, the volume *Critical Regionalism* is a collection of ten essays, which originated as key-note presentations and student papers from the Bavarian American Academy's Summer Schools of 2013, 2014 and 2015. The collection opens with an introduction by editors

Klaus Lösch and Heike Paul, who provide a short genealogy of critical regionalism as concept and method, then elaborate on its agenda placing it within the "more recent revisionist regionalist scholarship" (4). Interestingly, they self-consciously underscore that the Bavarian American Academy, seated in regional Germany and conducting a transatlantic, transnational dialogue, is itself a perfect epitome of a contact zone in the critical regionalist mode (7). The list of contributors to *Critical Regionalism* includes Tanja N. Aho, Birgit M. Bauridl, Carmen Brosig, Katharina Gerund, Cheryl Temple Herr, Amy Doherty Mohr, Miles Orvell, Rachael Price, Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Silvia Spitta. They apply the critical regionalist lens to a diverse array of cultural, historical, political, social and literary analyses.

In the first essay of the collection, Cheryl Temple Herr carries out a critical regionalist reading of James Fenimore Cooper's *Oak Openings* and Gene Stratton-Porter's *The Keeper of the Bees* with special focus on the conceptions of nature that appear in the two novels, as well as on bee hunting and keeping practices as they evolved into the present migratory bee keeping industry. Adopting an ecocritical stance, the author conducts a fascinating analysis of the ways humans (indigenous Americans) and non-human others have negotiated and built their environment long before European settlers arrived. Herr indicates that doing so is an act of intricate ecopoetics derived from an intimate acquaintance with immediate surroundings and dialogue, very much reminiscent of the critical regionalist plea articulated for architecture, which opposes universalizing, commercial and exploitative treatment of places.

Just like a comparative study of nineteenth-century historical romances may, according to Herr, reveal subsequent stages of bee keeping culture development across regions in the United States with accompanying factors impacting change, it is also possible to analyze ruins of previously purposeful structures to expose the various forces leading up to their decrepitude. Through analyzing the depiction of ruins in nineteenth-century American painting and twentieth- and twenty-first-century photography, Miles Orvell, in his essay, traces changes in the conceptions of civilization in relation to nature as they evolved into contemporary uncanny fascination with the destructive force of natural disasters.

Critical regionalism proves a creative tool of analysis when rethinking the region not as subordinated to and part of a nation-state made up of various localities that add up, so to speak, to the definition of national identity sealed within its borders. Two essays in the volume discuss the border and borderlands arguing for a change in perspective to a transnational one. Whereas Claudia Sadowski-Smith focuses on US-American borders with Canada and Mexico, Silvia Spitta zooms in on Tijuana and San Diego. Both aim to transform the perception of borders not as impermeable lines along which division, separation and exclusion takes place, but as spaces that are home to dialogic imagination, connection, multilingualism and transculturation. An emblematic example and embodiment of such a perspective is the Toy an-Horse, a wooden installation put up at the border crossing between United States and Mexico by artist ERRE Marcos Ramírez. The installation closely resembles the Trojan horse,

with two heads facing in opposite directions, reminiscent of the Roman god Janus. The work of art not only establishes dialogue between US-American and Mexican cultures but also connects the whole continent to ancient European mythologies.

Expanding the connection even further across the globe, Carmen Brosig makes a claim for a transnational region of solidarity between Chicano nationalist activists and Vietnamese guerillas ideologically united in the struggle against US American colonialism. Whereas the three essays mentioned above connect places physically within the conventional borders of the United States with places outside of them, the essay by Birgit M. Bauridl discusses a unique region situated altogether outside the US, namely in Bavaria, Germany. The connection with the United States is that Grafenwoehr has been a US military training area for over one hundred years. The essay looks closely at the region's singular local transnational character molded over the years by American soldiers with their families and German population alike. It examines in fascinating detail (enhanced by photography) how various diachronic and synchronic processes of cultural exchange have formed this culturally multi-layered terrain nicknamed by Germans and Americans "Graf."

The architects and the geographer who initially formulated the critical regionalist approach, together with its later advocates in other disciplines than architecture, underscore the particularities of local space as vital in constructing built environment that encompasses a multifarious array of cultural texts and human activity. Accordingly, the volume *Critical Regionalism* includes, apart from the areas of research already mentioned, critical regionalist analyses pertaining to a few other fields, namely feminist activism, literature and television. The essay by Katharina Gerund offers a discussion of second wave feminism as defined by its suspension between the global and the local, focusing on two figures: Betty Friedan and Robin Morgan. It also indicates pathways for further critical regionalist readings of feminist activism considering how the specifics of locality resonate with more global forces and trends.

The French phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard, in his *Poetics of Space*, formulates a claim that we are composed of the domestic spaces we have been brought up in and, conversely, we impact and create our immediate surroundings in a lifelong, perpetual exchange, as if spinning out the thread we have been sewn with back to the outside world. The environment one constructs thus becomes a domestic space for another. I find this idea very much in accord with the critical regionalist approach, where the accent is so strongly put on the unique local—be it a special slant of light, a topography or a cultural habitus, remaining in dialogue with universalizing and modernizing tendencies. But at the same time, the boundaries between the local and the global blur and converge as the global becomes a function of the domestic spun out by multitudinous participants. In the essay on Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, Amy Doherty Mohr finds exactly such a connection between the protagonist's domestic spaces in Nebraska and the war in Europe: the destructive character of Claude Wheeler's familial and marital homes is mirrored in the violence of continental war. Similarly, the personal relationships in Larry McMurtry's *The Last*

Picture Show, insightfully analyzed in the essay by Rachael Price, are as barren and exploitative as the landscape of Texas excessively drained for oil by global forces of capital and modernization. What's domestic is implicated in a larger web of politics, culture and history.

In looking for ways in which the academic project and methodology of critical regionalism could become more of a practice and bring about material change in geographically and culturally marginalized places, Douglas Reichert Powell calls for a pedagogy enacted at institutions of higher learning on the one hand, and dialogue between local participants of culture and intellectual elites on the other. Answering this call, in her article on the reality television show *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*, Tanja N. Aho, drawing on the concept of "low theory," uses online viewer responses to the series with an aim to "complicate academic approaches to representations of regionalism" (195) and expose readings that potentially participate in hegemonic discourses although apparently wishing to avoid them.

It seems that critical regionalism with its organic, "from the ground up" (Reichert Powell 26) approach proposes a fresh aesthetics of inclusion, interconnectedness, dialogue and exchange. Just like for fellow academics in Bavaria, who have put together this insightful and inspiring volume, the method appears to be significantly relevant also for scholars in American studies in Poland, as it opens a new perspective of looking at the United States by acknowledging the particulars of our own placedness. As scholars doing research on the culture, history and literature of a distant land from our own singular locality in Europe, we not only constitute a contact zone similar to the Bavarian American Academy's, but also have the opportunity to participate in a transnational multilingual conversation, and contribute our own vision imbued with the idiosyncriasies of our own place.

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