REVIEWS

Richard Bodek and Joseph Kelly, editors. *Maroons and the Marooned: Runaways and Castaways in the Americas*, UP of Mississippi, 2020, 224 pages.

Maroons and the Marooned is a provocative study that juxtaposes the historical investigations of *marronage*—autonomous communities built by runaway Black slaves in the Americas – with the examinations of *maroonage*, a term used in the volume to refer to the experience of mostly White European castaways. The book contributes to the growing research on the long ignored and underappreciated phenomenon of maroon communities and shows its central significance in American history. The authors point to the usefulness of a comparative reading of marronage and robinsonade narratives. Both runaways and castaways constructed new, autonomous societies in the wilderness. Fugitive slaves claimed their freedom from bondage, and survivors also experienced new and radical freedom after the shipwrecks suspended all hierarchies and orders. At the same time, the editors underline that their comparative approach does not ignore the differences between the two phenomena, and they are aware that to equate them would "disrespect the legacy of people who suffered the worst kind of bound labor" (xvi).

In the first three chapters, historians discuss diverse maroon communities in the Americas. Drawing on archeological research, J. Brent Morris surveys different forms of maroon societies in the Great Dismal Swamp, the largest known location of such colonies in North America. The excavations have revealed evidence of a continuous, two-century presence of maroon settlements. The communities succeeded in avoiding surveillance and staying out of the public records. As a result, they are largely absent from dominant historical narratives. Morris contends that the aggregate population of the loosely joined maroon colonies in the region numbered at least several hundreds, perhaps even thousands. The most permanent settlements, located deep in the Great Dismal Swamp, were almost completely autonomous, and some of their inhabitants never came in contact with the outside world. The Civil War and abolition of slavery put an end to the maroon settlements in North America. In the next chapter, James O'Neil Spady revisits the historical narrative of the "Denmark Vesey Conspiracy" and argues that organizing resistance to slavery can be classified as psychic marronage, whereas secret slave ceremonies related to it constituted "brief physical marronages." The following chapter is a study of maroon communities in Latin America, which are much better documented than those on the US territory. Edward Shore claims that there still exist Black rural communities that descend from fugitive slaves, which have sought official legitimation of their land possession after emancipation.

The opening historical studies of maroons are followed by cultural and literary analyses of shipwreck narratives and their survivors. Steve Mentz, the author of *Shipwreck Modernity* (2015), argues that the maroonage paradigm—consisting of three stages: shock, immersion, and salvage—enables us to process the ultimate modern condition of uncertainty. In Bodek and Kelly's collection of essays, Mentz

offers an alternative history of Bermuda, which focuses on non-human forces such as the Gulf Stream, the coral reef, and tobacco, which shaped the colonialization of the islands. In the following chapters, Peter Sands, Simon Lewis, Claire Curtis, and Richard Bodek demonstrate that the condition of being marooned is a central trope in Transatlantic creative literature. The marooned characters live in utopian, dystopian, or postapocalyptic settings, and such figurations re-imagine and explore the meanings of the modern human condition and the democratic polity. The final chapter revises the narrative of North American colonial origins and argues that the 1609 Bermuda shipwreck is a much more usable cultural template than God's chosen nation's errand into the wilderness. Joseph Kelly contends that whereas the Puritan myth assumes that any change of the chosen people corrupts the sacred mission, shipwrecked castaways are necessarily transformed by their experience, which in turn shapes the communities they build. He suggests that the wreck of the *Sea Venture* in Bermuda is a more relevant history for contemporary US Americans. In 1609, the ship set for Jamestown was swept on the reefs surrounding the archipelago. Instead of continuing to Virginia, a part of the crew, mostly consisting of indentured servants, wanted to settle down on the tropical island and attempted to found what can be termed a maroon community. Kelly argues that "their experience produced the first instance of social contract theory in the English tradition," and thus the "original recorded instance of American democracy derived from marronage" (183). Kelly's chapter bridges the gap between the examinations of fugitives and castaways and makes a very persuasive case for the central yet largely unrecognized significance of both phenomena for American history.

Juxtaposing marronage and maroonage, Bodek and Kelly's study performs an interesting experiment in comparative analysis. The historical chapters of the volume—both those on the African American maroon communities and on the Bermuda shipwreck—form the most coherent and helpful part of the anthology. Literary studies are independently quite interesting, but the texts they discuss—spanning more than two centuries, several genres, and three continents—seem too diverse to enable any strong conclusions. Most imaginative literature discussed by the authors represents speculative genres featuring tropes such as time travel and post-apocalyptic reality. Although Richard Bodek does include Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, the volume would benefit from the inclusion of other Black speculative, Afrofuturistic, or utopian narratives. As most works discussed in the book represent novel and alternative societies, a comparative analysis of African American texts such as Martin Robison Delany's *Blake: or the Huts of America*, Sutton E. Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio*, Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood*, W. E. B. Du Bois's "The Comet" or more contemporary futuristic texts by authors such as Samuel R. Delany or Colson Whitehead would productively complement the project.

Overall, the volume constitutes a thought-provoking reading. It meaningfully contributes to the research on maroon communities in the Americas, and it demonstrates the significance of shipwreck narratives for contemporary culture. The authors and editors show how the communities that emerge from marronage/maroonage help us reimagine and rethink both the past and present of modern society.

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Halina Parafianowicz. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* [Great War. Good War. History and Memory of Americans]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2020, 195 pages.

The book titled *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* [Great War. Good War. History and Memory of Americans] by Halina Parafianowicz, though most of all the work of a historian, represents a cross-disciplinary approach. It obviously belongs to the rapidly developing realm of memory studies, a field drawing upon history as well as sociology, literary studies, arts and psychology. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* refers to U.S. participation in world wars and the country's cultures of memory with regard to these two major world conflicts in the twentieth century. As a historian, Professor Parafianowicz uses research tools typical for her discipline, yet she looks also into what is less obvious from a historical perspective, but perhaps even more important for contemporary times: how historical events are remembered and commemorated by the national community. She discusses the significance of memorialisation, sites of commemoration and other material displays, ideological disputes over history and memory, and erasures of memory.

The title of her book neatly summarizes the contents and presents its organization. It begins by examining memorialisation of World War I, known as the "Great War," and then turns to what the journalist and writer Studs Terkel coined the "Good War," that is, World War II. The book's seven chapters each deal with what Parafianowicz sees as the key areas of history and memory of the American involvement in the world wars: the historiography of World War I, ways of commemorating the "Great War" in the US, the same in Great Britain and other European countries, World War II and Franklin Delano Roosevelt in recent historiography, Pearl Harbor in American memory of the "Good War," internments of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the Hiroshima atom bomb attack in American history and memory. The book is designed to be read in its entirety, but each chapter is valuable in and of itself and will be clear without the others.

In the first part of the volume, Parafianowicz presents an extensive survey of World War I objects of memory and commemoration, that is, monuments, museums, street naming and art works constructed in diverse places across the US and in Europe. In the analysis of commemorative practices after World War I in America she supplies a great number of detailed examples, such as the story of the Argonne Cross at the Arlington Cemetery and Pershing's Crusades on page 53, or popular art works of Ernest Moore Viquesney on pages 54-56. The author systematically notes underrepresentation in commemoration during the interwar era: at that time the politics of memory highlighted the role of white soldiers while diminishing or ignoring the contribution of Afro-Americans and other minority groups. From the gender perspective, the Great War memory practice in the interwar period stressed white male heroism and ignored women's contribution to the war effort, placing women only in the roles of mourning wives and mothers.

The turn to the memories and commemorative practices connected with the Great War in Great Britain, France and other European countries somewhat breaks the unity of the book. However, by doing this the author provides a useful comparative

perspective. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* contains also a detailed survey of major, and in particular more recent publications, on the subject of both world wars, hence as such can be helpful in further reading or research on those topics.

Professor Parafianowicz devotes a separate chapter to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack became not only one of the most closely studied events in American history, but it also rose to the position of a key historical moment remembered by Americans, reverberating with special power in national memory and everyday usage. Parafianowicz thoroughly discusses the meaning of Pearl Harbor to American people. Numerous examples of references to Pearl Harbor in American public life from Professor Parafianowicz's book can be updated by an even more recent example from a statement by US Surgeon General Jerome Adams on April 5, 2020. He spoke of the approaching peak of coronavirus infections using the phrase "the next week is going to be the Pearl Harbor moment." Professor Parafianowicz suggests that intensive commemoration and mythologizing of Pearl Harbor has diminished the ambiguous nature of the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the point of nearly removing these events from public memory. She also notes the issue of racism as the factor contributing to the politics of remembrance of the US-Japanese conflict.

The chapter on the Japanese-American internment camps, sometimes called "relocation camps," provides thorough research into the subject. Parafianowicz takes care to show the painful effects of internments on Japanese-Americans through historical and non-fictional accounts by various members of the Nikkei community. The reader will learn from this chapter of the history of the infamous "evacuation" of American citizens of Japanese descent, in reality a forced removal and imprisonment, and about the conditions of life in the camps and the post-war consequences of these actions, including redress activity of the American government. This chapter may serve as an excellent guide to anyone interested in further reading on the subject. Despite the redress movement it is not clear how much the story of the treatment of the Japanese Americans has found its way into American public memory.

Another tragedy of World War II, the Holocaust, has been integrated in American public memory of the war through the activity of the Jewish American community, including the Holocaust survivors who emigrated to the United States, but also due to its sheer atrocity and the number of Jewish victims of the Nazi. The Holocaust became a part of American World War II activity against the German Nazi, though the direct involvement of the American forces in liberating concentration camps was limited. Halina Parafianowicz writes relatively little about the Holocaust in American historiography and memory (100-101), though she does mention the controversies around the attitude of American politicians, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and some leaders of the Jewish community to the on-going destruction of European Jews. Perhaps the Holocaust as such was not perceived by Halina Parafianowicz as a strictly American War memory. Yet the presence of the Holocaust memorials in the U.S. is noticeable, starting with The Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The important website Jewish Virtual Library lists fifty-nine Holocaust Museums and Memorials, while Wikipedia (regardless of its potential inaccuracy) mentions as many as eighty-seven. By comparison, the story of the American Japanese internment, when conducting

on-line search for commemoration sites, reveals a lot less. World War II Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, Arkansas, located in the area of one of the former incarceration sites, appears to be a rare exception. The commemoration of the fate of the Nikkei during World War II is a regional phenomenon, most of all visible in California, where Japanese Americans tended to live in mid-twentieth century.

Halina Parafianowicz addresses many perspectives and controversies around the atomic bomb attacks upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She shows the gradual shift in the evaluation of the attacks. Her detailed descriptions of politicised preparation of the exhibition "The Last Act of the Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II" in National Air and Space Museum in 1994 might ring a bell of similarity to the readers about attempts at appropriation of the history of World War II in museums in the Polish context. The involvement of the American public, especially the veterans, the media (including major newspapers and weeklies), members of the Congress and other politicians was so intense that in the end the project had to be given up. Professor Parafianowicz's book demonstrates the continued discrepancy in the perception of the atom bomb attack, and lack of deeper reflection on both American and Japanese sides. Her conclusion—which is also the final word for the whole book—is that there is a nearly complete erasure of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (as much as My Lai of the Vietnam War) from Americans' collective war memory. This statement, however, could also be a starting point of a debate on what constitutes American memory of wars in the twenty first century.

The book is carefully edited. The language used is natural, and certainly makes the reading of the scholarly text enjoyable. Typos or other errors are extremely rare, such as when the wrong use of words on page 119 results in the statement that Bill Clinton was one of the World War II veterans (which he obviously was not, having been born in 1946). The additional value for the reader is the excellent illustrative material for both parts of the book. These begin with seven pages of illustrations connected with World War I—war posters and photos of commemorative sites, and at the end there are nine pages of similar illustrative material related to World War II. Visuals in the book help in understanding the way war efforts affected American society, and how world wars entered public space and communal memory. *Great War. Good War. Historia i pamięć Amerykanów* contains one hundred sixteen pictures enriching the text. It is a book that should be valued by both the specialist and the general reader.

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Michał Choiński. *Southern Hyperboles: Metafigurative Strategies of Narration*. Louisiana State UP, 2020, 220 pages.

The United States South exists within the national and world imagination as a hyperbolic representation of the sins of a nation. It serves as the receptacle for the failings of the Unites States as a nation, and its artists have created under the specter of this image, working to exorcise the tension that exists within them because of this image or working to solidify it and make it harder to topple. In *Southern Hyperboles: Metafigurative Strategies of Narration*, Michał Choiński explores how a number of

white Southern writers use hyperbole to reckon with the South while at the same time reckoning with themselves and their positions. Choiński notes that he focuses on white writers, even though there are numerous African American writers he could discuss, because of they "were conditioned by a network of factors very different from those that contextualized... how African American authors construed their linguistic relationship with the region" (4). This concentration of white authors does not limit Choiński's study, and it paves the way to broaden the discussion of "metafigurative modes in fiction by non-white authors" (5).

For his study, Choiński focuses on canonical Southern white male and female authors from the early to mid-part of the twentieth century, looking at works by Katherine Ann Porter, William Faulkner, Lillian Smith, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, Tennessee Williams, Flannery O'Connor, and Harper Lee. By narrowing his focus to authors who wrote during this period, Choiński highlights the various ways that Southerners approached the region and themselves in their writing. These authors, as Choiński argues, the ways that they have internalized the "code" of the South and the internal conflict that arises from their attempts to adhere to this "code." This conflict leads them to the deployment of the hyperbolic within their work, a rhetorical move that illuminates the stark contrasts between the external and the internal and a move that verse into the grotesque as a way to expose the psychological effects that the internalized code has on individuals.

Choiński grounds his analysis in both rhetorical studies and Southern studies, situating it at an important intersection and drawing upon both fields to examine the "modes of cognition" at play within the authors' work (9). In this manner, Choiński uses these strains to explore the metaphors of hauntedness, fantasy, the grotesque, and to borrow a term from Tara McPherson, "cultural schizophrenia," that exist within the writing of these Southern authors. These metaphors delve into the depths of "a unique culture engineered by a powerful sense of decorum, one that is framed by a tense network of gender, social, racial, and intellectual prerogatives of the region (182). Hyperbole works, as Choiński argues, to rupture the inner tensions formed by the decorum and codes of conduct at the foundation of the South.

Looking at Katherine Anne Porter's Miranda cycle, Choiński unweaves the "obscure process of emancipation from the grip of decorum" within Porter's work (5). Concluding his chapter on Porter with an analysis of "The Grave," Choiński highlights the ways that Miranda "passes over the threshold of hyperbolic epiphany" and confronts the sexual tensions that exist under the auspices of Southern decorum (53). This confrontation arises later when Choiński looks at the work of Lillian Smith, specifically the sex/sin/segregation triptych that Smith dissects in *Killers of the Dream* and the figurative "umbilical cord" that she must sever in order to move past the weight of the South's "codes." Along with this unraveling, Smith, as well as authors such as Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin and William Faulkner, employ the metaphor of hauntedness and ghosts to come face to face with the past and move towards a greater self-awareness. To this end, Choiński looks at Du Pre Lumpkin's use of the "twilight zone" on *The Making of a Southerner* and Faulkner's "polyphony of voices" and "the figurative" in "Dry September" and "A Rose For Emily" that create within the stories a grotesque and haunted existence which informs his representation of the region (60, 61).

While the ghosts of the South's racist history, and its entanglement with sex and religion, inform the hyperbolic in Porter, Faulkner, Du Pre Lumpkin, and Smith, Choiński turns to the ways that Tennessee Williams uses hyperbole in his depiction of the ways that the "codes" surrounding white womanhood and the image of the Southern belle "collapse under mounting social tensions" in plays such as *Summer of Smoke* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The personal and the regional converge within Williams' plays, pulling from the haunted memories of his sister Rose and the strictures placed upon Southern women. This convergence leads to the "despondency of [Williams'] banished belles" who become grotesque "against the backdrop of social decorum, rendering them, in essence, hyperbolic" (184).

Choiński posits that Flannery O'Connor's hyperbole uses a "version of religious shock therapy" with grotesque characters and climactic deaths to bring about internal revelations (7). Looking at "A View from the Woods," "Greenleaf," and *The Violent Bear*, Choiński points out that ways that "violence and the revelatory experience become intertwined" within O'Connor's work, leading to a revelation of the internal spirit (137). Hyperbole works, in O'Connor, to bring the secular into confrontation with the religious in the hopes of illuminating the latter.

Concluding *Southern Hyperboles*, Choiński brings us back to the beginning by looking at the ways that Harper Lee provides "an interesting case study for the analysis of how the mechanisms that protected the southern decorum of prejudice and be represented" in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchmen* (7). Choiński argues that we should read lee's two novels together, looking at the ways that the characters use rituals and rhetoric to maintain their positions and uphold decorum. Choiński makes a point to highlight the fact that Lee's work is not a means towards self-emancipation in the vein of Smith or Porter; rather, Lee's novels serve as an exploration of the paradoxes of Southern propriety. Ultimately, Lee's books explore "the threat of the hyperbolic excess" (8).

Overall, Choiński's *Southern Hyperboles* is an important study, illuminating the rhetorical maneuvers and metafigurative language baked into the white Southern writers that he examines. Choiński does not claim to offer a definite discussion of a "rhetorical 'South'" (8). What he does do, though, is provide us with a way of looking at the "metaliterary patterns that often remain hidden but nonetheless govern the overall artistic rules of engagement" for the canonical authors that he looks at in *Southern Hyperboles* (2). In this manner, Choiński lays a solid foundation for future exploration of other Southern authors, as we look at some of the overarching rhetorical maneuvers, and specifically the hyperbolic metalanguage, that unifies them, linking them to a specific region.

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Mick Gidley. *The Grass Shall Grow: Helen Post Photographs the Native American West*. U of Nebraska P, 2020, 162 pages.

Mick Gidley is an emeritus professor of American literature and culture at the University of Leeds, known, among others, for his numerous publications related to American

photographers and photography, as well as to Native American history and culture. In some cases, those two areas of Gidley's interest merge: he wrote extensively on Edward S. Curits' *North American Indian* and his most recent publication, *The Grass Shall Grow. Helen Post Photographs the Native American West,* published in 2020 by the University of Nebraska Press, is devoted to another photographer who documented the lives of Native Americans, namely to Helen Post.

Helen M. Post (1907-1979), whose life, work, as well as the social and political context she worked in, Gidley reintroduces, took thousands of photographs of Native Americans in the reservations. Some of those photographs were used in Oliver La Farge's nonfiction book *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow. Indians Today*, published in 1940. She also created photographic illustrations for a novel addressed to young readers titled *Brave against the Enemy* (1944) written by Ann Clark, set on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation. Although Post's career as a photographer was short, her output deserves attention, as Gidley tries to prove, both for its informative and aesthetic value.

Gidley examines Post and the people she photographed in the cultural context of the period. He starts with a biographical chapter, introducing her family background and the most significant life experience (her training in Vienna and work for the U.S. Indian Service, among others), devoting the remaining three chapters to her work: the process of co-creating *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow,* the way she interacted with the Native people she photographed and the connections between her approach to photographing Native Americans and the policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He provides the social and political context of her work, devotes a significant amount of space to the people she cooperated with (most notably, to Oliver La Farge), but also discusses individual photographs, reproduced in the book. The publication includes 80 figures, most of which are photographs taken by Post.

What makes Gidley's publication particularly interesting for American studies scholars, is not so much the fact of drawing our attention to a photographer largely forgotten, but the whole New Deal context of her work he provides. Post's husband, Rudi Modley, worked for the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was involved in solving problems of erosion of Indian lands. His first appointment, in 1938, was the Navajo reservation in the Southwest. Post travelled with him and in that way her photographing of Native Americans started. Over a few years, she took several tours to photograph Native people in reservations located from southern Arizona to northern Montana, taking over four thousand photographs. A considerable number of the pictures were later on used to illustrate La Farge's book, being itself part of the New Deal publications.

Post's photographs are, first of all, informative. They document various aspects of reservation life: "governance, work, play, prayer, education, flora and fauna, medical provisions, and much else" (13). It comes as no surprise that Oliver La Farge decided to use them as illustrations for his 1940 read-and-see book *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow.* Gidley devotes an extensive chapter to the history of this publication, which appeared within the Face of America series of books edited by Edwin Rosskam. The book was aimed at documenting the lives of American Indians and included quotations from government reports, eyewitness accounts, sketches of

individual Native American men's and women's lives, and Post's photographs, selected from the material she gathered during the mentioned above visits to the Southwestern reservations. As Gidley stresses, the present value of the publication lies in the fact that it "points up mainstream American attitudes toward Native peoples and offers a condensation of a singular moment in relations between Native Americans and the U.S. government" (4).

Another project Post got involved in was *Brave against the Enemy*, a bilingual fact-based novel by Ann Clark, being a coming-of-age story of a Sioux boy, published in 1944 in English and Lakota. Twenty three photographs taken by Post were selected as illustrations, taken mostly at Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations. Gidley provides Post's own commentary on the process of preparing the material: "The task of guiding a group of characters to re-enact a fiction story, so that all the little details are correct, as well as to reproduce the main action of the story, gave me plenty of opportunity to exercise my conviction that photographs speak a forceful and realistic language" (53). The scenes captured in the photographs are in most cases reenacted scenes from everyday life (e.g. gathering straw in summer, tending animals in winter, talking to the elders, as it is a story of three generations, with the protagonist, Louie Hollow Horn, being a Lakota teenager), but they were all directed and staged. Nevertheless, they were taken on location and have a certain documentary value.

In the last chapter of his book, Gidley focuses on the New Deal context within which Post worked. He refers to the changes in the Native Americans' lives taking place after the Indian Reorganization Act had been passed in 1934. Post's photographs taken in the late 1930s in the reservations include situations which resulted from the introduction of the IRA. She photographed Native Americans voting, meetings of their tribal councils, as well as the introduction of public health services in the reservations, positively visualizing post-IRA health initiatives, like weighing children or the functioning of the Indian tuberculosis sanatorium in Winslow, Arizona. Post also portrayed officials and personnel of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in action, and photographed various forms of artistic expression of Native Americans, predominantly arts and crafts of Navajos.

Gidley keeps a contemporary perspective while discussing achievements of the Indian New Deal, documented in *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow.* He devotes a subchapter to the areas in which the plan failed. He talks about such problems as exacerbated divisions in reservations communities, poverty of the Blackfeet, partly documented by Post, or the disastrous stock reduction in Navajo lands imposed by the BIA. Post's photographs come in handy in this respect, presenting, for example, Navajo sheep on overgrazed land or documenting Howard Gorman, a leading member of the Navajo Tribal Council, talks with Navajo elders about stock reduction.

Gidley's book is sensitively written, as his publications on Edward Curtis are. He tries to present the circumstances of the photographer's work, reads her photographs carefully, and provides the readers with contextual explanations. Gidley devotes a long section to discussing Post's photographic practices, stressing that she cooperated with individuals, trying to help, where she could. When she was photographing ceremonies or sacred occasions, it seems that she tried to be nonintrusive. The photographs reflect the respect she held for the people. As Gidley sums it up: "Post's subjects… appear

to have offered themselves to the camera…. As viewers of the people in all these portraits… we feel the power of their presence" (81).

Summing up his considerations over Helen Post's work, Gidley expresses his regret that her output remains virtually unknown, despite being unrivaled in its extensiveness of documenting reservation life in the mid-twentieth century. As a reader, I am grateful to him for bringing Helen Post and her photographs back into the public realm, because by all means, they deserve it. As the author stresses, she "was committed to documentary photography," and, as she put it in an article quoted by Gidley, to "its democratic language, understood and appreciated by a widely diversified audience" (118). However, as we know, a diversified audience can provide diversified interpretations of various works of art, photographs included. Gidley's book gives us a chance to read and interpret Post's photographs for ourselves.

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Kacper Bartczak. *Materia i autokreacja. Dociekania w poetyce wielkościowej* [Matter and Self-Creation: Investigations in the Poetics of Plenitude]. Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2019, 317 pages.

Kacper Bartczak's latest essay collection, whose Polish title could be translated as *Matter and Self-Creation: Investigations in the Poetics of Plenitude,* apart from chapters on Cormac McCarthy, Witold Gombrowicz, John Ashbery, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Rae Armantrout, and Peter Gizzi (among others), includes also an account of the author's coming of age as a reader, thinker, and writer. It is an important personal introduction, offered "instead of an introduction," mapping memories of early reading experiences that have laid the foundations for the book's conceptual framework, some elements of which Bartczak's readers may trace back to his 2009 *Świat nie-scalony* (Biuro Literackie, Wrocław, also reviewed in *PJAS*).

Outlined in the preface and rooted in the notion of plenitude, it is a proposal to look at certain kinds of texts as a condition for recognizing our numerous and complex entanglements with matter (5). From such literature, or *poems of plenitude*, there emerge models of personhood and states of subjectivity intertwined with the environment of the text and the world, characterized by reciprocity and plasticity, mutually proliferating and allowing for an abundance of interactions and epiphanies. Acknowledging his own entanglement with the discussed material, Bartczak focuses on texts positioning themselves on the borders, animated by language but conscious of the body and subjectivity, partaking in the spaces and events they are concerned with, and far from being external to them (5)—think of Dickinson "pouring her words into the flesh of the world so that they also become flesh, capable of experiencing pain and ecstasy" (Bartczak 280),[1] the excesses of spring in Williams's "Spring and All" or Whitman and his catalogues that "draw in the matter of human interaction, embracing it, absorbing and transforming into a poem" (280). A poetic of plenitude tends to position "the literary text before theory" (10) insofar as the literary text is seen as anticipating

1 Here, Bartczak refers to Peter Gizzi's reading of Dickinson in "Correspondences of the Book," *A Poetics of Criticism*, edited by J. Spahr, M. Wallace et al., Leave Books, 1994, pp. 179-185.

its own theory, exerting certain pressures on the theoretical: Bartczak's introductory essay complements the preface with memories of some of the formative exposures to the "friction of the world, a spontaneous recognition of an authentic contact with the world" (14), whether in the form of Huck's discomfort with freshly starched clothes, glimmers of a larger void in Gombrowicz, or memories of skiing down the Beskid slopes and "the body transformed into a living text" (20), open to the openness of the world, reconfiguring the particles of text and matter into new correspondences and affinities springing from the mutual rereadings.

Bartczak positions himself, again, within the broadly conceived tradition of American pragmatism, with influences ranging from William James, John Dewey, Richard Rorty to Stanley Cavell, but views it, as James famously did reflecting on Papini, as a metaphorical hotel corridor[2], a passage "in the midst of our theories," and a positive shared space "from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers" (James 339). All of these thinkers can be linked to the poetic of plenitude as they recognize that the basic human condition, our recognition of our belonging to the material world, and of its multiplicity, triggers its plasticity, understood as an endless array of interactions, mutual transformations, and acts of signification between the thinker and the matter (6). This pragmatist perspective mentioned briefly in the preface, unites Bartczak's collection but it is not imposed in any way or suggested as the only key to unlock the following chapters which contain attentive and thoroughly convincing readings of some of the most interesting Polish and American authors. Texts found in *Matter and Self-Creation* had been published before, in various volumes and forms, but have been reworked since, some of them quite significantly, revealing now clearer outlines of the corridor in Bartczak's hotel.

Essays in the first part of the book investigate the dynamics of the literary colliding with the material, and the resulting acts of (auto)creation. Bartczak's reading of McCarthy's *The Road* and its desolations, juxtaposed with his studies of the desert and instances of interpretative excess in *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men*, leads to a reexamination of realism itself (with which *The Road* experiments in its attempt to present not a world that *is* but one that has ended). In the following chapters, devoted to Gombrowicz's *Cosmos, Kronos* and *Diary*—approached, as McCarthy's writing, as *systems of prose* to show that the processes at hand can be traced within the wider category of literature, not just poetry (8)—and the work of John Ashbery, Bartczak emphasizes the cross-pollinating reciprocity of form and life, as a result of which the author, his life and work become one "in an autocreative cycle" (130). The second part of *Matter and Self-Ccreation* explores the modernist sources of the poetic of plenitude, visiting the status of the object in Wallace Stevens, the pragmatism of William Carlos Williams's poetic and aesthetic—inextricable from the empirical tissue of the lived reality, finally, different visibilities of the voice and of poverty (or, put more broadly, disintegration or degradation) in Williams and Krzysztof Siwczyk, a contemporary Polish poet whose works "store traces, echoes or parallels of the phenomena that are at play in Williams" (185). Part three, searching for the poetic of plenitude in contemporary American writing, returns briefly to Williams in the chapter

2 For instance, in a conversation with Andrzej Frączysty, "Przybornik indywiduacji," *Mały Format* Feb. 2020, http://malyformat.com/2020/03/przybornik-indywiduacji/.

on Rae Armantrout but does so in order to highlight the difference in their treatment of the familiar and the local, discussing Armantrout's revision of Williams's minimalism and the resulting special kind of figurativeness that Bartczak conceptualizes as "a reversed metaphor or the inductive field" of poems whose own metabolism and critical agency are offered to the readers instead of the safe harbor of pristine commonness in Williams and the objectivists (227, 247). The work of the poem is also the subject of the penultimate chapter, looking at the imitations of life and threshold singing in Peter Gizzi, who takes up and rewrites the lessons found in Stevens, Dickinson and Whitman, and their engagements with the natural world, oscillating between nothingness and excess in the space of the song that itself becomes a form of life. *Matter and Self-Creation* concludes with a chapter tracing the developments in Bartczak's theoretical inquiries into the status and role of the poetic text. Audaciously argued and supplemented with the author's own poetic work, it charts the journey from the concept of the *poem as a speaking organism* (proposed in "Wiersze, które się zachowują" [Poems that act], *Świat nie scalony*, 2009) through the *poem as an environment* ("One cannot simply say one reads them. These are texts one participates in, and it is a participation in a rich and heterogenous environment the access to which is found precisely in the space of the poem"; 280), leading to the idea of the contemporary poem as *formal field of plenitude*, an "empty formal body" and an engaged "transducer" of energy and matter in a disintegrating world.

It is a beautiful book, and an unobtrusively useful one. Read separately, each chapter will provide a nuanced, erudite discussion of some of the most intriguing American authors of the last century. As a whole, *Matter and Self-Ccreation* offers a way of reading that may also become a way of being in or with the world "fatally irradiated by the spectacle" (Andrzej Sosnowski qtd. in Bartczak 282), and its increasingly dark plenitudes.

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Małgorzata Myk. *Upping the Ante of the Real: Speculative Poetics of Leslie Scalapino.* Peter Lang, 2019, 312 pages.

Poetry can be a philosophical exercise in a time of crisis, as shown by Małgorzata Myk's monograph on the work of Leslie Scalapino (1944-2010). The author has undertaken an ambitious task of exploring the radically experimental and generically heterogenous oeuvre of the American avant-garde poet, playwright, essayist, prose writer and artist, often associated with West Coast Language poets, but never really fitting this or any other grouping or critical label. The value of Myk's richly theoretical study lies not only in the comprehensiveness of her inquiry—which embraces Scalapino's prolific literary output as well as her numerous visual art projects—but,

above all, in the original interdisciplinary model of *speculative poetics*, proposed by the Lodz scholar, which allows for a new mapping of the poet's singular work. The model, based on a dialogic fusion of non-standard philosophies, including Catherine Malabou's materialist ontology, the radical materialism of Quentin Meillassoux, and new realism as proposed by François Laruelle and Maurizio Ferraris, remains sensitive to the idiosyncratic character of the poet's dictions and forms, matching the complexity of Scalapino's radical experimentation. The study, confronting, as the author herself admits, Scalapino's "elusive, intransigent poetic protocols" (7), illumines diverse trajectories of her artistic development, uncovering the speculative nature of her practices. The monograph taps into the most recent trend of transdisciplinary studies at the intersection of philosophy and poetry, including Anna Kałuża's *Splątane obiekty* (2019), Joan Retallack's *Poethical Wager* (2003), Kacper Bartczak's *Materia i autokreacja* (2019), and Lynn Keller's *Thinking Poetry* (2010), which demonstrate contemporary poetry's investigative and exploratory thrust, aimed at questioning and expanding the inherited epistemological, aesthetic, social as well as cultural paradigms. Poetry emerges from those interrogations as an activity of reading, thinking and experiencing—"a constructive preoccupation with what are unpredictable forms of life"—to borrow from Joan Retallack (1).

Scalapino certainly belongs to those philosophically inclined poets who stretch narrow paradigms of thought to imagine and probe realities and forms both of and beyond the known experience. In *Public World,* the poet observes that "writing is… an experiment of reality" (Scalapino 8) Considering her substantial output, which entails poetry, critical essays, experimental theatre pieces, various forms of fiction (e.g. mock detective and science fiction novels), inter-art collaborations, experimental autobiography, her practice has remained a considerable challenge for her critics. This is mostly owing to the generic interdiscursivity and instability of her works, their elusive and protean theoretical alliances, and their aesthetic and multi-modal eclecticism. The difficulty, as observed by Myk, lies also in the extreme disjunctiveness of her syntax, its oscillation between abstraction and referentiality, often to the point of communicative opacity, "radical formal transmutability" (7), and a wide range of 'actors', contexts, materials, media and textures within her work. In the special feature of *How2* devoted to her work, Laura Hinton aptly notes that Scalapino should be read at once as "an heir to American versions of surrealism; to the anti-institutional poetics of the Beats; to mystic American poets influenced by Asian philosophy" and that it is hard, if not counterproductive, to "make [her] restless text rest" ("Zither"). Interpreted nevertheless through the multiple lens of phenomenology, Marxist, feminist, life writing and poststructuralist theories, Scalapino's relentless and explosive experimentalism has both fascinated and resisted even her most diligent academic readers. Among the readings that foreground the philosophical and avant-garde contexts underlying her work there is Lagapa's essay on Scalapino's use of Zen Buddhist egoless philosophy (2006); Elizabeth Frost's study of the poet's affinities with feminist avant-garde experimentation after Gertrude Stein (1996); and Laura Hinton's investigation of freedom in the poet's autobiographical works (2004). And yet, until now, there had been no in-depth, comprehensively theorized, synthetic study of her oeuvre. Her multi-modal projects resisted comparative methodologies of intermedial

studies, while her continuously transmuting poetics defied unequivocal artistic groupings and trending theoretical labels. The poet herself admitted in an interview that her distortions of conventional forms and "violations of genres" are meant "to go past the category of analysis" and "create a different plateau of reality in the reader, so that you'd have some way of approaching the phenomena of what's going on out there that is different from what we've created before. Analysis isn't enough" (Anne Brewster, Interview with Scalapino, n.p.). Given the above, Myk's more sustained and theoretically innovative engagement is a pioneering, ambitious and significant contribution to the study of this avant-garde artist. The Polish scholar discusses Scalapino's transgressive imagination against a backdrop of rich historical and literary contexts related to the practice of American avant-garde, especially Objectivist, Neo-Objectivist and Language poetry, contemporary philosophy, Buddhist spirituality and visual art, not only boldly challenging the critical status quo, but also seeking new and more capacious ways to interpret her hybrid forms.

In her engaging polemic with Scalapino's critics, Myk convincingly contends that the inherited theoretical field and terminological apparatus of the poststructuralist generation, which have dominated research trends in experimental poetry studies, are insufficient to capture the non-figurative, speculative impulse in Scalapino's writing, which, as the author argues, "is based on creative inadequacy, materiality, and conceptual as well as linguistic inexhaustibility" (Myk, "Horyzonty" 137). Thus, Myk's attempt to update the critical topography as regards the poet's practice by relating it to more recent paradigmatic transformations and materialist turns constitutes a great value in the monograph. Using both synthetic and analytic perspectives, the critic argues persuasively that new materialist and speculative optics resonate with Scalapino's onto-epistemological conception of form. Myk contends that for the author of *way* poetry is "an experimental modality of realism" (Myk, *Upping* 7). The poet aims at a radical integration of thought and matter, and works to undo binary categorizations reinforced by poststructuralist discourses and their deconstructive ideologies, inviting a multi-layered new materialist reading of her projects. The notion of "speculative poetics" proposed by Myk sheds a new light on the poet's strategies and complex reconfigurations of reality, subjectivity, identity and social relations, providing a functional conceptual paradigm for the study of Scalapino's formal experiments. Myk's meticulous study, also embracing unpublished archival materials, brings out intertwined—material, semiotic and performative—aspects of Scalapino's multi-modal work, demonstrating that her poetics is not only a tool of experience, but also a mode of philosophical reflection and a form of experience itself.

The central question informing the study concerns Scalapino's preoccupation with definitions and conceptions of reality, along with attendant notions of essence, matter, identity, subjectivity, objectivity and thought. As shown by Myk, Scalapino's new materialist imagination works to transcend deconstructive aporias and negate sharp dualisms between the object and the subject, the individual and the world, word and image, rejecting also fragmentary, atomized visions of subjectivity, and shifting the focus from referentiality to the material dimension of being, language and thought.

To showcase the poet's life-long commitment to the evolution of form, Myk's monograph is divided into three thematic sections, each dealing with a

different experiment. The arrangement is chronological, following the development of Scalapino's artistic practices from the 1970s to her late works from the first decade of the 21st century. The composition covers the diverse and multi-generic body of her work, foregrounding the interrogative nature of the artist's experiments and reflecting her notion of art as an incessant process of creation and breakdown of forms, always in search of better, more receptive methods of understanding the complex entanglements of the mind and matter. Respectful of the transgressive and ever-evolving character of Scalapino's projects, the critic provides interesting points of entry into their interrelational, open-ended, metamorphic, multifaceted, and transgeneric forms. The overarching concept of Myk's approach is that of plasticity, adapted from the post-deconstructive philosophy of Catherine Malabou. As shown in the analyses, Malabou's ideas are useful for confronting Scalapino's critical intelligence, as the French philosopher insists on the significance of form, along with its spatial, temporal, neuronal and figural aspects, and opposes its dematerializations in contemporary thought. Malabou treats plasticity as a highly operative concept which implies at once a receptive material form, a structure, and its transformative movement and potential dislocation. Plasticity ends the polarization between form and content and defines a form as always open to other forms, inherently capable of metamorphosis, self-annihilation and reorganization (Malabou *The Future of Hegel*; *What Should We Do*). Redefining essence as contingent, unstable, differentiating and transgressive, plasticity, Malabou contends, "has become the form of our world" (*What Should We Do* 9). The French philosopher differentiates further between "plasticity" and "flexibility," emphasizing the positive, actively transformative overtone of the former and the negative, mechanical adaptability, utility and passivity implied by the latter (see Malabou's *Plastic Materialities*, 2015). Defined in those terms, plasticity resonates strongly with Scalapino's concept of poetry as an event—a malleable, ontologically unstable potentiality, open to the contingency of the phenomena, relational and subject to constant transmutation, self-engenderment and self-regulation. The concept dissolves the boundaries between the external and the internal, paving the way for the dispersion of subjectivity and questioning the autonomy of the subject. Fittingly applied to illumine Scalapino's poetic strategies and development, the concept informs and integrates various threads of Myk's engaging argument.

Throughout, Myk remains sensitive to the sensual, ethical, sociopolitical as well as aesthetic aspects of Scalapino's work. For example, in the chapter titled "The Erotic as (Non)Ground," the critic convincingly argues that eroticism, marginalized in the discourses of language poetry with which Scalapino is often linked, is an integral part of the poet's project. A tool of (self)knowledge, as shown by the scholar, the erotic also becomes a radically emancipatory form of writing which aims at dismantling patriarchal structures and discourses of domination and power. In her analyses, Myk builds intriguing convergences between eroticism, politics, and the space of the text, arguing that Scalapino's experiments restore the erotic to the social space and rehabilitate eros as a space of action and social engagement. The critic also problematizes the abstract, anti-figurative impulse in Scalapino's work, situating her minimalist, anti-narrative forms among gestures of protest against the representational abuses of literary language in confrontation with victims of suffering and social exclusion. Referring to

the ethical considerations of François Laruelle and Richard Rorty, Myk examines the radicalization of the poet's language, which constantly destabilizes the comfortable positions of the observer, revealing the inherent relationality of the objective gaze.

Myk's interrogations of Scalapino's intermedial practices are particularly rich in fresh findings and impressive in their interdisciplinary scope. Using the medium of photography in her photo-texts and installations, here exemplified by *Crowd and not evening or light* and *The Tango*, Scalapino probed the nature of the word-image relationship, looking into the limits of the illustrative and representational function of images, and proposing a tighter alliance between the photo-image and thought. The conceptual framework for Myk's analysis of those forms is Laruelle's radical non-philosophy, in particular his essay "The Concept of Non-Photography," in which the French philosopher postulates moving away from transcendence and its representational impulses towards immanent realism. As argued by Myk, the concept of non-photography, which Laruelle derives from non-philosophy, enables a non-hierarchical and anti-dualistic thinking about the word-image relationship that reveals extra-linguistic dimensions of experience. Myk employs the notion of non-photographic optics to highlight and nuance the theme of trauma, which runs through Scalapino's works, showing that the traumatic content resurfaces both in the dialogue and in the radical ruptures between images and words. In her reading of Scalapino's intermedial trilogy, which includes three texts from the 1990s—*The Return of Painting*, *The Pearl*, and *Orion*—Myk explores the poetics and politics of negativity, addressing the speculative potential of the discontinuous and primarily spatial form of the comic book. What Myk problematizes here are the new forms of subjectivity that emerge in the negative spaces of Scalapino's forms. While the analyses are firmly grounded in the micro-reading of the poet's texts, they lack an in-depth reflection on the nature of the medium, in particular the temporal-spatial paradigm of the comic book, which is the starting point for Scalapino's intergeneric experiments.

In the final section, Myk focuses on Scalapino's late texts—*Floats Horse-Floats or Horse-Flows* (2010) and *The Dihedrons Gazelle-Dihedrals Zoom* (2010)—which are aleatoric experiments, derived from the poet's interest in surrealism and neurolinguistics. The poems in those volumes are particularly challenging, due to their improvisational nature and the aleatory combinations of words and images. Myk confronts their opacity and surrealist imagery with an interpretative model based on Quentin Meillassoux's study of the relationship between randomness and necessity, and his postulated genre of extro-science fiction. Scalapino's aleatoric language, as shown by the critic, is capable of self-regulation and autopoietic activity, which complexifies the sensory texture of her diction and leads to an alignment of affect and intellect. The poet's revisionist approach to image is discussed here in juxtaposition with the representations of space in Joan Fontcuberta's photographic series *Landscapes Without Memory* and the film *Kekexili: Mountain Patrol* by Lu Chuan, which served as intermedial counterpoints for the poet.

Christopher Nealon notes that much of the most recent poetry "seem[s] to be written out of some set of conditions we are still struggling to name, conditions not quite matching the major accounts of the postmodern" (583–84). The erudite and intellectually provocative philosophical underpinnings of Myk's inquiry certainly

enrich our understanding of those conditions, showing furthermore that epistemology and experience are one and the same thing in Scalapino's radical investigations of reality.

Myk's study is an encounter of two acute critical minds—the poet's and that of her attentive and passionate critic—both engaged in "writing as a form of exchange" (Scalapino, Interview, n.p.). The only issue I have with this erudite and well researched inquiry is Myk's minimalist use of source texts. The chapters would have benefited from more generous references to Scalapino's texts and a closer reading of individual pieces, as the argument strikes me at times as too general. Some chapters are rather sparsely illustrated by examples, failing to give full justice to the non-representational, abstract, and multi-sensorial aspects of Scalapino's singular diction. Myk's chief aim is to show the parallels and intersections between Scalapino's philosophical orientation and materialist ontologies, and this is done very convincingly throughout the monograph; however, the dense philosophical and theoretical contexts sometimes overburden the analyses, allowing the conceptual apparatus to dominate the textual hermeneutics.

Those isolated problems do not diminish the pioneering value of this insightful and thought-provoking monograph. Situating Scalapino's work at the center of contemporary philosophical debates concerning the subject, the nature of existence, and reality, Myk's interdisciplinary approach offers intellectually rich insights into the plasticity of Scalapino's forms. The first book on the poet, *Upping the Ante of the Real* paves the way for future studies of Scalapino and avant-garde poetics.

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Łukasz Muniowski. *Three-Pointer! A 40-Year NBA History.* McFarland, 2020, 208 pages.

In early 2021, an NBA fan, who not only watches the games but also follows the news and reports on the developments in the greatest basketball league in the world, could come across headlines such as: "Golden State Warriors: Kelly Oubre is the worst 3-point shooter in the NBA"[1] or "The Utah Jazz just had the best 3-point shooting month in NBA history."[2] Basketball's beat writers' focus on this single aspect of players' and teams' basketball arsenal may seem obvious as the NBA is in the midst of the Golden Age of 3-point shooting. However, it has not always been so. It has taken the NBA decades to not only incorporate the 3-point shot but to actually utilize it in a manner the shot was meant to be—a *spectacular* and *tactically efficient* play. Muniowski's *Three-Pointer! A 40-Year NBA History* is a fascinating story of the evolution of the 3-point shot and the league where the shot is best utilized. The book is also much more.

Muniowski's book is a work of passion harnessed in intellectual approach and academic rigor which makes *Three-Pointer!* a not-for-everybody book, which is by no means criticism of the book. Muniowski's historical novel with limited dialogues, while filled with interesting narratives which include players's biographies and even anecdotes, may overwhelm some readers with abundance of statistical data and names of: players, coaches and executives; however, it is only a testament to author's meticulousness and broad knowledge of the subject matter. In his book, Muniowski blends the technical with the poetic when providing statistics and analysis on the mechanics of the 3-pointer or explaining why shooting percentage is a factor; he also paints narratives of rich and eventful life stories of the book's (numerous) protagonists, which provides the humanistic element to the analytical work.

Each of the chapters begins with a player (or a play) that contributed to the increase in importance of the 3-point shot and places the said player (or the play) in clearly outlined context, which results in each chapter having a distinct theme which reveals itself in the stories told by the author.

The Introduction*,* apart from the usual outline of the book, offers detailed explanation of what a 3-poitner is and how its introduction kick started the evolution of the game of basketball (mainly in the NBA, although other professional and semi-professional American basketball (mainly in the NBA, although other professional and semi-professional leagues, teams, and players are mentioned). Muniowski paints a

1 https://hoopshabit.com/2021/01/27/golden-state-warriors-kelly-oubre-3-point/?utm_source=flipboard&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=flipboard

2 https://www.deseret.com/sports/2021/2/1/22260626/the-utah-jazz-just-had-the-best-3-point-shooting-month-in-nba-history

historical background to how the 3-point line came into being and how it found its way into the NBA. The author also clearly defines what it takes and means to be a shooter in the game of basketball.

One way in which the Introduction foreshadows the content of the following chapters is by revealing an intricate network of connections between the players, coaches, and executives whom the book is, in fact, about. For example, the reader of *Three-Pointer!* will learn Steph Curry (Chapter X), who is a son of a great 3-point shooter, Dell Curry and is coached by a 1997 3-Point Contest winner, Steve Kerr (Chapter VII) will, by the time he retires as the greatest 3-oint shooter in NBA's history, overtake Ray Allen (Chapter IX), who still holds the record for most 3-pointers made and was one of the first members of Jordan (Chapter IV) Brand, played on a team coached by Chris Ford (Chapter I), who made NBA's first ever 3-point shot. While the connections drawn by Muniowski may sometimes seem forced and repetitive in the way the same names reappear throughout the text, the fact is that Muniowski reveals a certain, important truth about the NBA—it truly is the greatest league in the world as its players are an elite group of individuals selected from the best of the best. And, while many of them did not earn their place in the Basketball Hall of Fame, they were the unsung heroes of the evolution of the game and *Three-Pointer!* is a fitting tribute to their contributions.

The theme of Chapter I—"October 12, 1979: Chris Ford Makes the First Three-Pointer in League History"—is "It's a sport alright, but it's a spectator sport." In the chapter, Muniowski analyzes the impact different individuals had on the collegiate and professional basketball leagues in 1950s and 60s, among whom most prominent were George Mikan, who introduced the 3-point shot to the ABA; Howard A. Hobson—a basketball coach and theoretician, who was among the first to encourage players to adopt two-handed, long-distance shooting; Abe Saperstein, who gained fame as the manager of Harlem Globetrotters and introduced the 3-point line to the ABL in 1961; and Chris Ford, who shot the first recorded 3-pointer in the NBA.

In this chapter, Muniowski presents the long and uneasy way the 3-point shot had to go before it made it to the NBA in 1979. As one of many rule changes that have been introduced to the game of basketball, the introduction of 3-point line was the result of purely sports and marketing reasons. For example, the "goaltending" rule made the game fairer, and the "24-second clock" made it faster and more exciting. Analogically, Hobson advocated long-distance shots from tactical perspective, Saperstein saw the play as a marketing tool, which would attract more spectators. When the NBA adopted the 3-point line in 1979, it was, in fact, part of the league's strategy to restore its positive image and improve ratings. From the beginning the rules introduced to the game were of marketing value as their idea was to make basketball more of a spectator sport and make it more "exciting" to the audiences (and players as well). It seems that the philosophy of "faster, better, cheaper" introduced by NASA in 1990s had been employed by basketball managers already in the sixties. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Forrest Allen, Bill Sharman, Dennis Murphy, and Louie Dampier.

In Chapter II, "February 6, 1988: Larry Bird Reclaims the Title of the Three-Point King," Muniowski presents the first superstar who embraced the 3-point shot.

The player was Larry Bird, who was a phenomenal player and a superstar first, and a great 3-point shooter second. The detailed description of Bird's persona and accomplishments confirm author's claim that in order to be a great shooter, one needs to heave confidence in their shot, and no one was more confident in their shooting abilities than Larry Bird. The chapter about "Larry Legend" illustrates how sports legends come into being as a result of accomplishments and narratives surrounding them. Bird's 3-pointers work as narratives as their significance was not only from a competition standpoint (buzzer beaters!), but also because they were preceded by trash-talking which makes for great sports literature.

Bird's triumphs in the 3-Point Contest also signify the change of basketball culture in 1980s influenced by the growing impact of media and business. The first All-Star Game in 1951 was a marketing tool, so was the introduction of the three-point line in 1979, and so was the expansion of the All-Star Game into an All-Star Weekend featuring various events, most marketable of which have been the Slum Dunk Contest and the 3-Point Contest, in which Bird dominated. Not surprisingly, each of the highly mediated events during the All-Star Weekend is one featuring offensive basketball plays—no defense or hard-fought wins, as Walt Frazier complained, only the show and the spectacle. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Bill Laimbeer, Craig Ehlo, Craig Hodges, Dale Ellis, and Danny Ainge.

Chapter III—"March 23, 1991: Michael Adams Scores 54 Points with Particularly Ugly Shots"—epitomizes the main theme of the whole book: "Basketball is a team sport." Each sport has its stars and superstars, who are promoted by their leagues in order to sell tickets and make broadcast deals. It may be argued that no league has been more efficient in promoting its stars than the NBA—Kareem, Larry, Magic, MJ, Kobe, Lebron—no last names necessary. The media exposure of these "gods of basketball" ever since the "Geo Mikan vs. Knicks" marketing scheme (Chapter I) has resulted in a misapprehension that they were able to carry their teams on their shoulders and win championships by themselves. Obviously, this is not the case; in the long run of the NBA season followed by the Play-offs, any team's success depends on a number of factors, of which the role players' contributions may be the most significant one. By highlighting the career of Michael Adams, Muniowski demonstrates not only how 3-pointer helped players, who otherwise would have never made it to the NBA, flourish or at least contribute, but also glorifies basketball for what it is—a team sport. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Isiah Thomas (the other one), Terrell Brandon, Calvin Murphy, Bob Moe, 1980s Denver Nuggets, Shawn Marion, Matt Bonner, Derek Fisher, and Chris Jackson/Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf.

The theme of Chapter IV—"June 3, 1992: Michael Jordan Shrugs His Way to Another Memorable Performance"—is "The beauty of sports lies in its unpredictability." Whenever one goes to YouTube to search for greatest: plays, moments, or performances in the history of the NBA, one will almost certainly come across the clip of Michael Jordan shrugging his arms after making his sixth 3-pointer of the first half of Game 1 of 1992 NBA Finals. While "The Shrug" has been interpreted in various ways (including as display of arrogance and Jordan's way of saying "Well, I am the greatest"), the prevalent interpretation is that of Jordan's own surprise with

what he had just achieved. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Jordan's performance in the said game was unpredictable—Jordan had never been known for his outside shooting and yet, when it was necessary or challenged, he utilized the 3-point shot which made him a complete player. In the chapter, Muniowski demonstrates how the fact that NBA's biggest star embraced the 3-point shot validated the play, illustrates the importance of the competitive drive in the athlete's career, and provides examples of how unpredictable moments in NBA's history (Sam Bowie chosen over Jordan on 1984 NBA Draft, John Paxon's 3-pointer in Game 6 of 1993 Finals) make for some of its best narratives. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: John Paxon, Dan Majerle, Danny Ainge, Clyde Drexler, and Scottie Pippen.

While Chapter V—"May 7, 1995: Reggie Miller Scores Eight Points in Nine Seconds Against the Knicks"—provides fascinating sports narratives of the first true 3-point expert in Reggie Miller, the thrill of clutch plays and how "game recognizes game," the actual theme of the chapter is "Conflict." In Muniowski's account of the history of Indiana basketball, conflict has many faces. The story of Reggie Miller vs. the New York Knicks presents conflict between opposing teams as a reflection of tribal mentality of the fans of rivaling cities, which is an integral part of spectator sport and shows how despite the conflict, there is a place for displays of respect towards the foe. Muniowski himself pays due respect to Cheryl Miller (Reggie's sister), who was one of the reasons why WNBA came into being. However, the chapter also displays the darker side of conflict. The stories of Bobby Knight and Steve Alford reveal how deeply rooted racial division is in certain parts of the USA. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Steve Alford, Bobby Knight, Chuck Person, Scott Skiles, Cheryl Miller, Larry Brown, John Starks, and Mark Jackson.

By introducing the story of George McCloud in Chapter VI, "April 19, 1996: George McCloud Goes from Draft Bust to NBA Record Holder," Muniowski, on the one hand offers the theme of "from zero to hero" and the NBA's version of the American Dream. The McCloud narrative is probably the most dramatic one as it portrays the player's career and private life, which was marked by personal tragedies, reveal the triumph of the spirit, which was possible in large part due to chance when McCloud got his chance to shine only after another player was injured. On the other hand, Muniowski (again) demonstrates the marketing forces behind rule changes in the NBA (shortening the 3-point line distance) and how the change allowed certain players to leave their mark on the league's history (Majerle). The author also describes how celebrity journalism came into being and provides a nice throwback to the pop-culture of the 1990s. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Pat Riley, Dan Majerle, Detlef Schrempf, Steve Kerr, Dick Motta, 1990s Dallas Mavericks, Jason Kidd, and Dennis Scott.

The theme of Chapter VII, "February 8–9, 1997: Steve Kerr and Glen Rice Dominate the All-Star Weekend," is "NBA's alternate reality," in which a blue-eyed, blonde Steve Kerr, instead of enjoying the "white privilege," is an underdog and Glen Rice's athletic body is not seen as "threatening, black male one" but makes him a star. Both gentlemen were also gifted 3-point shooters. Muniowski also touches on the topic of the relativity of time. While Rice enjoyed his 15 minutes of fame in 1997 when his performance overshadowed Michael Jordan himself, who in the same All-Star Game

recorded the first triple-double in the game's history (Rice also had quite an impressive career in Charlotte—the team later owned by Jordan), Kerr will go down in history as possibly the central figure of the 3-point revolution due to his own 3-point shooting (a 3-Point Contest winner in 1997 and the most efficient shooter in NBA's history in terms of percent of the shots made) but also as the coach of the two most phenomenal 3-point shooters of the modern era (and possibly the league's history). The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Mark Price, Tim Legler, Phil Jackson, Steph Curry, Michael Jordan, Klay Thompson, and Latrell Sprewell.

In Chapter VIII, "May 26, 2002 Robert 'Big Shot Rob' Horry Strikes Again," Muniowski pays tribute to role players, of whom, according to the author, Robert Horry was the best one. Muniowski's claim was supported by Horry himself in February 2021, when (quite humorously) the seven-time NBA champion congratulated Tom Brady winning his seventh Super Bowl; Horry's praise of Brady came in a Tweet which used the "Spider-Man Pointing at Spider-Man" meme with both athletes' faces and their trophies photoshopped in, and featured the exclamation "Congratulations @TomBrady Welcome to the 7 Chip Club."[3] The fact that Horry won more championships than Michael Jordan is impressive; what is more impressive that those championships were, in some part, the result of Horry's clutch moments 3-pointers, which cemented the long distance shot's place as the strategic weapon in basketball and the narrative climax of great basketball stories. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Jeff Hornacek, Eddie Johnson, Matt Maloney, Brent Price, Kenny Smith, and 2002 Los Angeles Lakers and Sacramento Kings.

In Chapter IX, "February 18, 2006: Dirk Nowitzki Becomes the Tallest Three-Point Contest Winner Ever," Muniowski focuses on the theme of "NBA redefined." In the center of the chapter, the author places Dirk Nowitzki, who embodies two aspects of the sports and cultural change that took place in the NBA in 1990s and 2000s. One, Nowitzki is presented as one of the pioneering "big men" who played outside the 3-point line, and one of the most accomplished power-forwards who did not play in the paint. Two, Nowitzki, while not first in the long line of foreigners, who made it to the NBA, is considered possibly the greatest European player in the league's history. Muniowski uses Nowitzki's accomplishments to demonstrate how the 3-pointer evolved from a "circus shot" into every player's a must-have component of the offensive arsenal. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Kevin Love, Bob McAdoo, Holger Geschwindner, Michael Finley, Don Nelson, 1990s Golden State Warriors, Peja Stojakovic, Šarūnas Marčiulionis, Arvydas Sabonis, Drazen Petrovic, Detlef Schrempf, Sam Perkins, Steve Nash, and Mark Cuban.

The theme of Chapter X, "June 18, 2013: Ray Allen Makes the Most Famous Shot of His Career," is "Practice, practice, practice." In this most technical of all the chapters in the book, Muniowski presents an array of 3-point specialist that have emerged in the last decade of NBA's history, and how their preparation during practices translated into spectacular performances during games. The author also gives credit to coaches who either contributed to the evolution of the game of basketball by, for example, introducing small, shooting line-up (Spoelstra) or successfully adapted to the changing game, despite their personal dislike of the 3-point shot itself (Popovich).

3 https://twitter.com/RKHorry/status/1358788700545536002

In narrative terms, Muniowski take on Allen's career reveals the truthfulness of the sports saying that "Only the last shots/goals/fights/races/ are remembered by the fans." The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Gregg Popovich, Eric Spoelstra, 2013 Miami Heat, Rashard Lewis, Donyell Marshall, Kobe Bryant, Chris Ford, and 2008 Boston Celtics.

The theme of Chapter XI, "March 8, 2015: Steph Curry Proves That He Can Score from Anywhere on the Court," is "The step-back-three is the new dunk."[4] In the concluding chapter of his book, Muniowski portrays the present-day NBA where, after a decades long journey of changes in rules, mentalities, circumstances and technologies, the long-distance shot found its way into the hands of the greatest 3-point shooter ever—Stephen Curry. While Curry is an exceptional player in his own rights, he, together with his teammate, Klay Thompson, and their coach, Steve Kerr symbolize the strategic importance and the spectacular appeal of the 3-pointer in contemporary NBA. While the dunk still remains the most certain way of scoring points in basketball, Curry, and many before him made the three, the most devastating basketball maneuver. The chapter also features stories about the contributions of: Steve Kerr, Dell Curry, Kyle Korver, Klay Thompson, James Harden, and Daryl Morey.

Muniowski's *Three-Pointer!: A 40-Year NBA History* is many things. First and foremost, it is a thorough and detailed analysis of why basketball is played in modern NBA the way it is, and the impact of the 3-point shot has had on the sport's evolution. It is a fascinating historical account of the journey of a sports discipline of a global appeal since its conception in an YMCA gym in Springfield, Massachusetts. The book is also a narrative of unsung heroes, whom the history has either forgotten or may soon forget, and whose stories deserve to be told and their contributions should be remembered and acknowledged. There are the narratives of stars and legends in the book as well; nevertheless, in Muniowski's book, the Jordans and the Birds of the NBA this one time give the floor to the league's McClouds and Ellises. Apart from the stories of people, Muniowski paints a vivid landscape of dependencies, which have shaped the NBA over the years. The reader will find in this book the clashes of generations, the perennial tensions between conservatives and progressives, as well as the racial tensions which even the predominantly African American league has not escaped, the role of media and the factor of viewership as well as the tyranny of the dollar affecting the way the sport is played. Through the prism of the 3-point shot, Muniowski tells a story which exceeds the narratives of a sport and its athletes, it is a story of complex forces shaping the spectacle enjoyed by millions all over the world. The book is a compulsory reading for an avid fan and an academic studying the crossroads of sports, media, and business with politics, culture, race and even religion in the background.

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4 Fragment of Jamie Foxx's narration in a 2015 Under Armour TV commercial starring Steph Curry.

Behnam M. Fomeshi. *The Persian Whitman: Beyond a Literary Reception*. Leiden UP, 2019, 240 pages.

Behnam Fomeshi's *The Persian Whitman: Beyond a Literary Reception* proposes to provide a historical overview of the reception of Walt Whitman in Iran from the early twentieth century onward. It traces the transformation of "Whitman"—the American poet—to "whitman"—the global philosopher—via translation. Fomeshi reflects on how the American poetic form and concepts change in translation to mirror the cultural and political expectations of the Iranian society. The author knows Persian literature exceptionally well and he explains the literary Persian reception of Whitman at conceptual, stylistic, political, and cultural levels.

The Persian Whitman contemplates three aspects of the reception of Whitman: "critical reception," "creative reception," and reception through translation. The chapters are arranged more or less chronologically in the order that Whitman was published in Iran. The book is divided into nine chapters. The first three chapters focus on Whitman's life and poetry in the US and trace the political and cultural roots of his poetry and reception "at home." Particularly, Chapter 3, with its detailed explanation of American poetic style before and after American independence, sketches the nationalistic and democratic events parallel to which *Leaves of Grass* was composed. The remaining chapters concentrate on the "critical reception" of Whitman in the works of Nima Yooshij (ch. 5); the "creative reception" in the poetry of Parvin Etesami (ch. 6); and, an the overall reception of Whitman in translated texts and pictures (ch. 4, 7, 8, 9).

While the first three chapters exercise historical commentary, the first literary analysis of the book appears in Chapter 4. Introducing the first Persian translation of Whitman, the chapter puts forth a comparative analysis of Whitman's "Song of the Broad-Axe—Section V" (1867) and its Persian translation, "Shahr-e Bozorg" (the large/great city) (1922). It explains the differences between Whitman's poem and its translation based on the political context of the early twentieth century Iran. "Shahr-e Bozorg" depicts Whitman as a poet of "social order," "law," and "security" rather than a well-known singer of individuality. According to Fomeshi, the modification echoed Reza Shah's modernization project and the collective hope of the Iranian public for the establishment of law and order in the country. Moreover, Whitman's references to female individuality were removed in translation to avoid culturally sensitive topics such as female sexuality, traditional gender roles, or female activism.

Chapter 5 focuses on the relationship between the rise of Iranian literary modernism in the works of Nima Yooshij and Nima's familiarity with the Whitmanian project. This is mainly discussed through the analysis of Nima's innovative poetic style and blank verse. As we proceed, a second comparative analysis appears in Chapter 6, where Parvin Etesami's "Jula-yi Khuda" (God's weaver) (1935) is compared to Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider" (1868). In the light of Parvin's familiarity with American literature, the chapter discusses the character, poetic faculty, gender, and mystical tendency of the two spiders. Furthermore, a slightly feminist reading of Parvin as the first Iranian woman poet of the twentieth century is presented here through discussing her role in the formation of Iranian literary modernism.

Chapter 7 studies the role of the Iranian leftist intellectual Ehsan Tabari in the progression of literary modernism. In 1943, Tabari published his translation of two poems by Whitman with an introductory note in *Sukhan* literary journal. Tabari's introduction read like a manifesto for the Iranian poetic modernism. Poetry was no more "a kind of verbiage" at the service of "metrical rules and poetic forms," but it was there to put "the meaning at the climax." Juxtaposing Whitman's legacy with Nima's blank verse, Tabari envisaged Nima as an Iranian Whitman whose work challenged the conventional literary forms in favor of colloquialism and societal criticism.

The two final chapters discuss the visual and textual receptions of Whitman in post-1979 Iran. While deciding on book covers, Iranian publishers prefer the pictures of an old Whitman. Using a structuralist approach, Chapter 8 explains the reasons behind such a preference. Focusing on a binary understanding of youth versus old age, the chapter discusses the ageist taste of the Iranian audience in perceiving the pictures of a young Whitman as "repulsive," "sensual," and "ignorant," and the pictures of the old Whitman as "wise," "mature," and "Christ-like." Finally, Chapter 9 discusses the difficulties of translating Whitman in the post-revolutionary Iran and under governmental censorship. It brilliantly sketches the methods that the contemporary Iranian translators use in order to "indirectly" communicate Whitman's messages while keeping a loyalist appearance to pass the governmental control. Occupying a space between urbanism, progression, revolution, mysticism, and atheism, the Persian Whitman generally shows how foreign literature becomes an alternative means of expression in non-democratic societies.

The book ends with four appendices that include the author's notes, bibliography of sources, index of terms, and a useful chronological table that outlines the sociopolitical events of Iran parallel to the reception of Whitman.

Throughout the book, Fomeshi carefully maps the links and sequences of literary events to discuss the reception of Whitman. However, as one tries to situate the work in the overall scholarship, a few criticisms might arise. In his method of argument, there are instances where Fomeshi highlights a single reason for the emergence of a movement or a phenomenon (e.g. the projection of Nima upon Whitman as an origin of modernist Iranian poetry). My question concerns the certainty of such propositions. Perhaps, this is a pitfall of the somewhat reductionist methodology through which Persian literature has been historically studied. Another criticism is the absence of an inclusive discussion of American Transcendentalism as one of the origins of *Leaves of Grass*. For example, I was not totally convinced that Parvin's "mystical" spider was similar to Whitman's "transcendental" spider. Taking these into consideration, I highly recommend the reading of *The Persian Whitman*, for it is a unique contribution to Persian studies and reception scholarship.

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