REVIEWS

Text Matters. A Journal of Literature, Theory and Culture 1 (2011). Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2011.

Text Matters is a brand new, English-language journal which has just appeared on the Polish academic scene. It deserves notice from readers of *The Polish Journal for American Studies* not only because of the content of its first volume, but also as a serious publication with an impressive international advisory board—in other words, as yet another publishing opportunity for scholars working in the fields of American literature and culture. The first issue of *Text Matters* appeared in 2011, the second issue is on its way. The journal is an ambitious project conceived of in the Institute of English Studies at the University of Łódz and prepared in cooperation with the Department of Editing of the Polish Institute. According to the statement of intent written by the editor-in-chief, Dorota Filipczak,

> the journal… seeks to engage in contemporary debates in the humanities by inviting contributors from literary and cultural studies intersecting with literary theory, gender studies, history, philosophy, and religion. The journal focuses on textual realities, but contributions related to art, music, film and media studies addressing the text are also invited. (front cover flap)

By outlining so widely and inclusively the range of potential contributions to the publication, the editors not only throw open its doors to scholars from a wide variety of disciplines, but also demonstrate their awareness of the undeniable fact that English and American Studies departments and programs in Poland (as elsewhere in the world) have within the last thirty years greatly expanded their range of interest and gone interdisciplinary, producing in effect the kind of scholarship that eludes traditional rigid classifications. Here is a journal, then, that welcomes contributions across disciplines as well as across geographical and cultural boundaries, from scholars working in English, Irish, Canadian, Australian and American studies, in history, even in theology.

To prevent a complete thematic miscellany of contributions, the editors of *Text Matters* organize each issue around a topic. In no. 1, 2011, this topic, "Women and Authori-

ty," is explored by over a dozen contributors, including two philosophers and one theologian, in addition to literary scholars. This main section, almost surprisingly unified in focus, is followed by a section labeled more inclusively (if not all-inclusively) "Word/Image/Sound" and presenting articles on a wide variety of subjects, from the place of religion in contemporary art to dance as a tool of subversion. Closing the book-size volume (over 300 pages in all) come reviews and two interviews, one with the Australian aboriginal writer, Jared Thomas, the other with the English theologian, Alison Jasper, whose article also appears in the volume.

In the most general terms, the section on "women and authority" comprises commentaries on various relations between the two, exploring the culturally-sanctioned denial of authority to women, women's submissive or rebellious attitudes to authority, women's sense of their own authority and their efforts to assert it. The article by Pamela Sue Anderson, propitiously chosen to open the volume, sets the tone for the discussion by addressing the problem of women's marginalization by the western philosophical tradition. She writes about the implications of Kant's imagery in *Critique of Pure Reason* ("the island of understanding," "the land of truth," "the stormy sea of uncertainty") upon women's "negative education" (11) which has inhibited their ability to think critically and with confidence. Another text by Anderson, a book-length study entitled *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, informs the argument in Dorota Filipczak's article devoted to the Canadian novelist Jane Urquhart, whose women protagonists, by venturing beyond the confines of the Kantian "island of understanding," discover their power and thus assert their authority. In an admirably balanced and carefully phrased essay, Alison Jasper, in turn, takes issue with the generalizing habit of feminist criticism to view all women as victims of male normativity, to the unintended effect of de-emphasizing the accomplishments of those women who did find ways, courage and strength to be independent and original, even in the most untoward context of Christian theology and practice. Jasper's example is Michèle Roberts, the English novelist, discussed as a singular theological and literary genius—in Julia Kristeva's understanding of the concept—who has pursued a unique understanding of God on her own, non-androcentric terms. Interspersed with articles exploring several novelistic and poetic polemics with women-marginalizing cultures (Katarzyna Poloczek's study of the Irish poet Mary Dorcey's lesbian poetic manifesto; Małgorzata Myk's article about Virginia Woolf's Rhoda in *The Waves* as a character whose conflicting sense of selfhood makes her "an astute critic of gendered reality"; 106), one finds analyses of texts which explicitly deny women not only authority, but also agency and the ability to control their own lives. And so Agnieszka Łowczanin writes of the complete disempowerment of Laurence Sterne's Mrs. Shandy, contrasting his novel's experimental spirit with the "fossilized" (44) perception of wom-

en it endorses, while Joanna Kazik takes a look at some late medieval and early modern English texts in which humor becomes a means of exerting control over and dominating women.

Does anything like a cumulative message emerge from the thirteen articles collected in the "Women and Authority" section? Collectively they reiterate, articulating in fine detail, the by now well known fact that women have been denied authority by core philosophical, mythological and literary texts of western culture and that for generations some women at least have questioned, resisted and artistically sabotaged the androcentric order. Less predictably, the contributors to *Text Matters* more or less directly point out that the Herculean cultural project of the past two centuries of restoring dignity and authority to women remains light years away from successful completion. Despite the cooperative effort of feminist activists, philosophers and theologians, generations of women artists have learned that the androcentric culture yields its strongholds (including those in academia) only grudgingly and only to reclaim them at the first opportunity. This fact is expressed most poignantly in the article by Alex Ramon, who reflects on his personal experience of repeatedly coming under censure for being a male critic writing about a female writer, Carol Shields. Ramon exposes the persistence in the scholarly world of thinly-veiled prejudices and reports the denigration and patronization of scholars who transgress certain tacit understandings and hierarchies of value. He observes: "Writing about women's writing seems to require justification for the male critic, but for the female critic writing about male authors it appears that fewer questions are asked" (173). This retrograde tendency in the academia to stick with (or revert to) gender- or race-based thinking (only women critics, we hear now and then, can do full justice to women's fiction, only Native American scholars understand Native American texts) has its parallel, Ramon claims, in the anti-feminist backlash observable in the larger world of popular culture which seems to be re-embracing old ideas of gender segregation and gender identification. His diagnosis of the responsibilities this new cultural turn imposes on critics and theoreticians of culture could be read as a justification of the entire "Women and Authority" section in *Text Matters*. He writes: "I would concur, that, as popular discourse on identity categories grows increasingly divisive, we require both literary and theoretical texts that provide a counter-narrative, allowing male and female readers more room for movement between gender and other identity positions" (174).

In the "Word/Image/Sound" section two articles deserve special mention. One, by Paul Tiessen, is an intertextual reflection on some essential discrepancies between how the Canadian writer, Rudy Wiebe, has represented the same Mennonite environment of Depression-era Canada in two of his books, published nearly fifty years apart from one

another—his 1962 novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, and his 2006 memoir, *of this earth*. These discrepancies, sometimes astonishing, are highlighted by Tiessen not only to propose a re-reading of the writer's first novel, but also to reflect on the factors—historical, literary, and personal—which account for the change in his treatment of the subject. Another noteworthy contribution is Katarzyna Ojrzyńska's "One Mad Hornpipe: Dance as a Tool of Subversion in Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*." This study of a blind female character who dances her protest against patriarchal control over her body and fate could just as well have been placed in the "Women and Authority" section. Yet the amount of space the author devotes to the roles and meanings of dance in Irish culture and history as well as the symbolism of dancing in the play explains the editorial choice to emphasize these other aspects of Ojrzyńska's concerns.

For an Americanist, the first issue of *Text Matters* offers relatively little in terms of direct commentary on topics specifically American. There are two reviews, one by Agnieszka Salska, the other by Grzegorz Kość, of recent Polish publications on American literature. The only full length essay devoted to matters American is Małgorzata Poks's discussion involving Denise Levertov's nature poetry of "caressive sight", which, the author argues, allows us to view the poet as a "romantic modernist" (147), one who overcomes modernist spiritual skepticism to seek spiritual implications in natural beauty. For nearly all other contributors to the volume, the frame of reference is either British or Canadian. Even so, their reliance on and engagement with contemporary theory, especially feminist criticism, becomes a meeting ground on which those working in American studies cannot fail to spot parallel preoccupations, ideological continuities or counterpropositions, and nooks for potentially fruitful comparative exploration. Another such meeting ground is suggested by the interview with the Nukunu writer, Jared Thomas. Rich in information about the Aboriginal literary scene in Australia, the interview also illustrates the soundness of the fundamental assumptions of postcolonial studies—the commonality of colonial practices the world over and the similarity of fates suffered by the colonized, many of whom, including Australian Aborigines, do not even see themselves as living in a postcolonial era. Moreover, Thomas's remarks on the situation of contemporary Aboriginal writers and their responsibilities as spokespeople for their tribal groups bring out numerous correspondences between their predicament and the problems faced by ethnic, especially Native American, authors in the United States.

One last thing about *Text Matters* that by all means deserves mentioning is its graphic design. It is not only exceptionally elegant, but also clear and reader-friendly. The conspicuously set-off article titles and abstracts (the latter being longer and therefore more informative than the customary 500-word synopses), the pleasantly legible table of contents, the large page numbers, unconventionally placed, with an evident aesthetic intent,

on margins half way down the page—all of these taken together give this publication a distinct and attractive look, communicating on the visual level the journal editors' ambition to make a difference.

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Glenda R. Carpio and Werner Sollors, eds., *African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges*. Special Issue of *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 55.4 (2010). 232 pages.

African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges, a special issue of the journal of the German Association for American Studies, guest edited by Glenda R. Carpio and Werner Sollors, offers a stimulating combination of literary texts and critical contributions by leading African American studies scholars from the United States and Germany. The temporal and thematic scope of the publication ranges from the Harlem Renaissance to contemporary performance poetry. The articles address many significant issues in the most recent African American studies debates, such as the transnational paradigm and "the end of African American literature."

The issue opens with five short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, reprinted for the first time since their appearance in black magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. This section is remarkably attractive to any Harlem Renaissance scholar not only because of the previous scarce availability of the material but also because the short stories challenge the most common classification of Hurston as a folk-inspired artist, whose texts represent black communities in the American South. The works published in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* are all set in the Northern urban context and mostly deal with the problem of the Great Migration and the dichotomies of rural/urban and private/public. They are preoccupied with the influence of migration on black gender relations, which is especially visible in multiple representations of naïve sugar daddies, mulatto gold-diggers, and rough Southern women. Most stories are written in an experimental style that combines the biblical verse, the folk vernacular, and the black urban idiom, which was later developed and perfected in Hurston's masterpiece, *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. The text "Back Room" stands out from the other reprinted works and Hurston's output in general, since it represents the dilemmas of an urban, upper-class emancipated black woman and is written in standard English and traditional interior monologue. The stories are accompanied by useful introductions by Glenda R. Carpio, Werner Sollors, and M. Genevieve West, as well as by two previously unpublished Hurston

letters, introduced by Carla Cappetti. Interestingly, this part of the issue is concluded with an essay by Jamaica Kinkaid, who daringly admits that she has "never liked her writing" and criticizes Hurston's representations as limited in their humanity and unchangeable (600).

The following section continues with a focus on Hurston, moves to the Harlem Renaissance in general, and ends with an essay on Richard Wright. Daphne Brooks introduces a less known pursuit of Hurston, that is her recorded singing performances, which she produced as an anthropologist doing her research in the South. Brooks argues that through these recordings, Hurston undermines the hegemonic boundaries between the researcher and the object of study, outsider and insider, performer and listener, individual and community, as well as folklore and modernity, and she "illuminates the critical instrumentality of sonic black womanhood" (624). In the subsequent essay, Frank Mehring analyzes the work of Winold Reiss, an important German presence in the Harlem Renaissance, whose illustrations were used by Alain Locke in his seminal anthology *The New Negro* (1925). The text focuses on Reiss's three-month stay in Mexico in 1920 and the way it developed his interest in non-European cultures and racial representations. The following article, by Ernest Julius Mitchell II, continues the focus on the Harlem Renaissance. Mitchell discusses different names that were used to refer to the outburst of black artistic creativity in the 1920s and 1930s, especially the shift from the original "(New) Negro Renaissance" to "Harlem Renaissance," popularized in the 1960s. He claims that the change of the name also translated itself into a change in the understanding of the phenomenon: from the international, interracial, and intergenerational project envisioned by Locke to the black only movement in the 1920s in Harlem, which ended in failure. The section ends with an essay exploring the intertextual connection between Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* and social psychiatrist Fredric Wertham's novel *Dark Legend*. Contrary to the common assumption about Wright's postwar shift from the social to the psychological orientation, Stephan Kuhl's reading reveals the interdependence of the personal and the environmental in Wright's later fiction.

The issue concludes with an especially interesting section that presents "New Directions and New Challenges" in African American studies. In the first article, George Hutchinson interrogates the concept of transnationalism and the black diaspora as used in contemporary American studies and argues that the elision of the nation-state has frequently been too idealistic and myopic. He also claims that the transnational paradigm has been decisively shaped by American understandings of black identity, such as the one-drop rule, which resulted in the exclusion of other experiences and codifications of race. Hutchinson's discussion is illustrated with a wide range of examples of black transnationalism, ranging from Caribbean blacks and Afromestizos to Afro-Deutsch

identity. In the following text, Jeffrey Ferguson challenges another dominant African American studies concept, the blues. He contests the attempts to use the blues aesthetic as the grounding paradigm for reading African American cultural tradition. Ferguson briefly outlines the history of the blues, its significance and uses by African American artists and scholars, and argues that the contradictory meanings and over-generalized definitions of the blues preclude its effectiveness as a single explanatory paradigm for the black tradition. He concludes with a reference to the recent controversial publication by Kenneth W. Warren, *What Was African American Literature?* (2011), which has provocatively begun the debate about "the end African American literature." Also George Blaustein's essay alludes to and embraces Warren's iconoclastic thesis, which is illustrated in his text with an analysis of Paul Beatty's satirical fiction. Warren himself has also contributed to the issue with a short essay that justifies his audacious thesis. He claims that African American literature was a concept determined by the logic of the Jim Crow regime and was meant as a vehicle of racial uplift. In post-Civil Rights America, it has lost its legitimacy and cannot be anymore the basis of representation for such an increasingly class-divided group as black Americans. Warren's claim is one of the most radical voices that contributes to a larger social debate about the post-racial character of American society that began with the Barack Obama campaign and to the recently renewed academic discussion of racial representation, a need for which has been articulated for example in Gene Andrew Jarrett's "The Problem of African American Literature" (2007). The section ends with a personal essay by Ishmael Reed, which indirectly challenges Warren's thesis. Reed traces back the origins of Black Studies, claims that "the phasing out of Ethnic Studies is a huge step backwards in American intellectual life" (753), and hence, implicitly disputes the claim about the end of African American literature. Whereas many critics perceive the election of the black president as a milestone towards a post-racial society, Reed argues that it led to a powerful backlash, most visibly embodied by the Tea Party movement.

African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges is a noteworthy combination of literary texts, personal essays, and scholarly analyses, which outline and address the most current issues, dilemmas, and questions in the field of African American studies. Its first part will be of special relevance to the scholars interested in the Harlem Renaissance, whereas the concluding section, which presents the new directions in the field, is a must-read for any researcher of American culture. Thanks to a number of essays that contain transatlantic perspectives and intertextual readings, the issue will be especially interesting for European Americanists.

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Bucholtz Mirosława. *Henry James i sztuka auto/biografii* [Henry James and the Art of Auto/Biography]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011.

If it is true that we live in the age of auto/biography, as some contemporary critics claim (Everett 6-10), then it appears that there is no better exponent of a present intellectual and cultural turn towards life-writing genres than the great Henry James. In the last decade of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century, one witnessed an unprecedented convergence of attention on the Master who became the subject of three major biographies (by F. Kaplan, L. Gordon and S.M. Novick), dozens of critical studies (by E. Haralson and W. Graham, among others), as well as at least five novels (including C. Tóibín's *The Master* and D. Lodge's *Author, Author*), one novella (C. Ozick's *Dictation*), and two short-stories ("The Master at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1914-1916" by J.C. Oates and "Silence" by C. Tóibín). A revival of interest in James as the man of flesh and blood (and—one needs to acknowledge the fact—the meanders of Henry James's flesh have been found particularly irresistible to biographers and novelists of all provenances) has been accompanied by a renaissance of enthusiasm for James's literary legacy—not only in the English-speaking countries, where his position among both critics and readers has long been assured, but in other parts of the world as well. Suffice it to say that in 2011 one saw the publication of first (*sic!*) translations of *The Golden Bowel* and *The Wings of the Dove* into Polish, the latter being listed among the best books published last year by the editors of, for example, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Książki* quarterly (Kurkiewicz, "15 najlepszych" 62).

Undoubtedly, such a proliferation of Henry James's "versionings" should stimulate researchers' interest and encourage their scholarly pursuits in the field—especially those who have devoted a significant part of their academic career to the study of the Master's life and work. Hence, it does not come as a surprise that Mirosława Buchholtz, Poland's most eminent James scholar and a professor at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, has turned her attention to Henry James as both a subject and an object of various auto/biographical endeavours, which inhabit the ever-intersecting realms of fiction and non-fiction. Her findings are now available to the Polish readership in the form of a study entitled *Henry James i sztuka auto/biografii*. The book, which can well be read as a companion to the many lives of Henry James that have emerged over the past decades, addresses two interdependent and intertwined phenomena, namely Henry James's life and work. And, one needs to admit, it approaches the issue with a profound knowledge of (and love for) its subject.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Mirosława Buchholtz's book—brimming with precision, intellectual discipline, compendiousness, and stylistic brilliance—is nothing

short of a success. It deserves to be hailed as an essential read that any student or consumer of James's works should be encouraged to consult—indisputably, hers is the best academic work on James ever to have been published in Poland. However, *Henry James i sztuka auto/biografii* also stands out as a breakthrough study and an invaluable contribution to contemporary literary studies in Poland. Regardless of their language orientation, Polish academics have not held auto/biographical writing in high esteem and often locate (if at all) life-writing at the margins of both literary and critical activities. Mirosława Buchholtz makes a strong case for life-writing and for its centrality in contemporary critical discourse, and, in my opinion, succeeds like no one has before her. One should be grateful to the scholar and her publishers for making such an important study of present perspectives on auto/biographical writing available to the Polish audience (academics but general readership as well, due to the lucidity of Buchholtz's argument).

Henry James i sztuka auto/biografii consists of four chapters followed by extremely helpful annexes which, for example, provide one with a comprehensive list of Polish translations of James's novels and short-stories. Chapter One entitled "Studia auto/biograficzne" [Autob/biographical studies] discusses the phenomenon of life-writing. Mirosława Buchholtz's research is detailed, meticulous and, frankly, impeccable. She does not limit her inquiry to simple recapitulation of the most important concepts and theoretical models which have been operating in the field of life-writing (from S.T. Coleridge and L. Strachey, via P. Lejeune and J. Lacan, to J. Watson, S. Smith and G.T. Couser). She also presents Polish contribution to the debate on subjectivity and its representation (the studies on "autofiction" by R. Lubas-Bartoszyńska and J. Lis, as well as the volume on biography edited by R. Kasperowicz and E. Wolicka)—a commendable act as the contribution in question is relatively humble and not easily accessible (unlike English or French sources). A proof of Mirosława Buchholtz's profound understanding of her subject is manifested in her insistence on the use of one slashed word, i.e. auto/biography. She abandons an awkward term prevailing in the Polish academia, i.e. "literatura dokumentu osobistego" [literature of personal document] in favour of "auto/biography," and rightly so, since her proposition does not only reflect a tension between biography and autobiography, but it also emphasises the dialectic and genre-bending characteristics of any instance of life-narrative, generally considered a borderline and threshold phenomenon. One should note that Buchholtz refuses to outline past and present debates concerned with the reality of life-writing only. On the contrary, whenever possible, she provides her readers with extended commentary as well as her own observations and interpretations—most laudable, perhaps, in the formulation of "p/akt biograficzny" [biographical p/act] and "u/mowa biograficzna" (the latter inspired

by her reading of Lacan and considering "mowa" [speech] to be inhabiting the realm of the Other [*l'Autre*]).

The following three chapters offer an essential read to anyone interested in both the work and life of Henry James. Chapter Two, tellingly entitled "Wszyscy biografowie Jamesa" [All of James's biographers], offers an account of *all* (literally) kinds of biographical endeavors that have been concerned with Henry James and his life. Mirosława Buchholtz's research is, once again, all-embracing and exhaustive, as she does not limit her inquiry to the investigation of biographies only, but, in line with the dominant life-writing paradigms, she welcomes and reports on different versions of Henry James as constructed by, for example, his contemporaries (through reminiscences of family and friends), literary and cultural critics, editors of his letters, notebooks, and, finally, novelists that, in recent years, have shown such enthusiasm for portraying the Master in their biographical novels, novellas and short-stories. Buchholtz never simply recounts their claims or speculations, but each time responds to them with a discerning judgement and vast knowledge (manifested, for example, in her reading of limitations of Novick's two-volume biography of James). Buchholtz's search for Henry James (and her truly dialogical model of that search) continues in Chapters Three and Four. The former discusses the Master through the prism of his attempts at both biography and autobiography (James's biographies of Nathaniel Hawthorne and William Wetmore Story as well as three volumes of his autobiography, among others). She focuses, in particular, on the questions of self-projection (biographical act as an attempt at autobiography), self-invention and incompatibility of James's auto/biographical acts with pacts that one is expected to "sign," e.g. with the subjects' relatives or readers.

However, Mirosława Buchholtz's truly masterly command of her subject reaches its peak in the last chapter of her study which, in a thoroughly original manner, offers a close scrutiny of visual representations of James. Once again, one cannot but admire the comprehensiveness of Mirosława Buchholtz's enterprise, as she analyses an impressive number of photographs, paintings, engravings, sculptures and cartoons showing Henry James or, to put it more accurately, Henry Jameses. Most importantly, she never misses the central aspect of her study, namely the ambivalence between the subject and object of knowledge. Diverse forms of art and visual representations of the Master are, again, consistently seen as a joint effort of the photographer and his or her model; hence, providing a perfect illustration of the major concern addressed by life-narrative.

John Carlos Rowe concluded his introduction to *The Other Henry James* with hailing multiple Henry Jameses in the following way:

> The Jameses we discover in his place are anxious, conflicted, marginal, sometimes ashamed of themselves, utterly at odds, it would seem with the royal 'we' that James assumed in his last deathbed dictations, slipping in and out of Napoleonic delusions. The new Henry Jameses are instead full of life and interest, not only in their times, but for our own, which as we begin to understand it continues to wind its way back to its early modern origins as it unfurls into our new century. (xii)

Miroslawa Buchholtz could not have possibly paid a greater tribute to her subject than by refusing to imprison Henry James in any of the existing versions of the Master. Her study is, indeed, populated by numerous Henry Jameses, however, none of them is claimed to be definitive or conclusive. By leaving a space for creative imagination and inviting herself as well as her readers to the act of individual re-creation of Henry James, she triumphantly transforms her book and elevates it from a purely academic study into a true work of auto/biography—the art of negotiation.

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Gordon M. Poole, ed., *A Hundred Years After: New Light on Francis Marion Crawford*. Sorrento: Franco Di Mauro Editore, 2011. 286 pages.

Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909) was one of the most popular as much as prolific American writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Born and raised in Italy—a son of the American sculptor Thomas Crawford—and educated in England and the United States, he was an epitome of social prominence and a true cosmopolitan. In 1886 he decided to settle down in Italy and took residence at a beautiful villa called Sant' Agnello in the town of Sorrento near Naples. By that time, he had already written six novels; their success encouraged Crawford to stay in the literary profession. His life away from the U.S. did not weaken his ties with the country and its people, as Crawford often traveled to Boston, New York and other American cities to promote his new books. The occasions for such literary trips were, indeed, numerous because for Crawford pro-

ducing two volumes of prose a year was something of a professional routine. However, prolific writers are often looked at with suspicion, and critics tend to believe that, in literary writing, the quantity can easily spoil the quality. In any case, the very voluminousness of Crawford's output can be one of the reasons why the writer's work sank into a relative oblivion after his death. Even though his prose is quite varied in terms of themes and genres, nowadays Crawford is chiefly remembered for his horror stories, a handful of which regularly appears in anthologies of this genre. Hopefully, this state of things will change in the near future, as the ongoing debate over the shape of the American literary canon and the growing significance of Transatlantic contexts in the field of American studies stimulate interest in authors like Crawford. A centennial volume entitled *A Hundred Years After: New Light of Francis Marion Crawford*, edited by Gordon M. Poole, possibly anticipates a forthcoming reappraisal of the writer. This collection of nine essays devoted to Crawford's life and work as well as to the artistic achievements of other members of his family was published under the auspices of the F. Marion Crawford Center for Research and Study in Sorrento.

The first part of the volume includes four essays on Crawford's literary art and begins, very suitably, with Richard Ambrosini's discussion of the writer's exclusion from the Anglo-American literary canon. In the critic's view, the main factor behind it is the predominance of modernist criticism in the first half of the twentieth century. Namely, modernist critics treated the works of pre-modernist and modernist authors like Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf as models indicating how to assess literary value. Crawford himself said that his novels served a completely different purpose than James's "ethical studies," as he appreciatively called them. He believed that the value of fiction depended, in a big degree, on its marketable qualities and that romantic sensationalism was an asset rather than a drawback. In fact, in his 1893 critical essay *The Novel: What It Is*, Crawford described himself as a "novelist who belongs to the romantic persuasion" (31). Ambrosini points out that Crawford was not the only late-nineteenth-century writer to take such a view of fiction and, for example, he agreed on crucial literary issues with Robert Louis Stevenson. Therefore, the critic postulates that a possible strategy for recovering Crawford's work for the Anglo-American canon can consist in placing it more firmly in the context of the contemporary literary production which was much more varied than modernist critics were later willing to admit. Ludovico Isoldo extends the presentation of Crawford's ideas of literary writing by contrasting them with William Dean Howells's views as formulated in his most important and influential critical essays: *Criticism and Fiction* and *Novel-Writing and Novel Reading*. The critic claims that the essential difference between the former's "romantic" model of the novel and the latter's "realistic" model is more political than esthetic. Craw-

ford accused Howells of using fiction as a vehicle for promoting his own ideological position; in general, he believed that a manipulative use of the novel as an ideological tool was a serious threat to the status of the genre. Howells completely disagreed with Crawford's accusations; however, even if the Italian-born writer's assessment of the American literary authority was exaggerated, he deserves credit for his defense of literature's autonomy. The remaining two articles in the first part of the collection deal with much more specific subjects: Patricia S. Hageman explores Crawford's unpublished play *Evelyn Hastings*, arguing for the author's reappraisal as a playwright; whereas Taeko Kitahara analyzes the patterns of narrative construction in Crawford's stories of the supernatural.

The authors of the essays in the second part of the volume take up different aspects of Crawford's biography; interestingly enough, two essays out of three touch upon the writer's relations with women. Thus, Alessandra Contenti examines Crawford's correspondence with Vittoria Colonna, a young woman from the Italian noble class, and describes the nature of their friendship. She sees their letters, above all, as a "chronicle of infatuation" (88). In turn, Jane H. Pease presents a brief record of Crawford's acquaintance with several women and ponders how his preference for female rather than male company may have influenced his writing. According to the critic, Crawford, who believed that novels transmuted the author's experience into fiction, wanted to endow his female characters with the qualities of the women he knew, but he faced a major problem of how this was to be accomplished within the frames of the literary formulas on which he relied. Pease traces an evolution of Crawford's treatment of female characters that reflects his perception of the women from his circle: his earlier novels focus on male protagonists, his later works gradually introduce ambivalent secondary female characters, and finally, some of his last books directly address such subjects as marriage and divorce and construct a presumed female perspective. The third paper, by John Charles Moran, presents the history of Crawford's correspondence with Father Daniel E. Hudson, an editor of a minor Catholic journal in Indiana. What began as an occasional exchange of letters entailed a continuing correspondence and a growing mutual appreciation to the point that after Crawford's death Hudson was the one to receive a letter from the widow with her account of the writer's last moments. The third part of the volume contains two essays about the artistic achievements of Crawford's close relatives: Richard Dalby looks at the forgotten writings by Mrs. Hugh Fraser, or Mary Crawford—Francis Marin's sister—and Daniela Daniele offers a reappraisal of Thomas Crawford sculpture work.

A Hundred Years After presents an interesting, but still relatively unknown, chapter in the history of Transatlantic literary and, more broadly, cultural relations. What is of spe-

cial significance about this volume is that some contributors try to attune Crawford criticism to the current tendencies in literary studies. The essays that read his novels through the lens of gender studies or in the light of the politics of canon formation can help attract the attention of critics who work on related subjects, but so far have overlooked Crawford. Three outstanding contributions to the volume—admittedly the essays by Ambrosini, Isoldo and Pease—establish the standards of contemporary Crawford scholarship. *A Hundred Years After* is a volume of conference proceedings and suffers from a sort of incoherence typical of such publications, so a more systematic critical presentation of Crawford's writings is now in order. The book is a bilingual edition, and all papers have English and Italian versions.

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Miriam B. Mandel, ed., *Hemingway and Africa*. New York: Camden House, 2011. xxvii + 398 pages.

Among the manifold fields of scholarship that link Hemingway's restless life with his literary output are his numerous travels to and sojourns in various parts of the world which sparked his creative talent, notably Italy, France, Spain, the Gulf Stream, and East African regions. Whereas the presence of the European countries in his novels, short stories and nonfiction has been subjected to multifaceted studies, Africa, Cuba and the Gulf Stream have generated scant scholarship. Mark Ott presented the pivotal significance of the latter two areas in Hemingway's life and writing in *A Sea of Change: Ernest Hemingway and the Gulf Stream* (2008). In her "Introduction" to *Hemingway and Africa*, Miriam B. Mandel notes that "Africa is still an understudied area in Hemingway" (31); however, she unduly states: "This book is only a beginning" (32). Actually, Linda Welshimer Wagner and Kelli A. Larson's reference guides to Hemingway, published in 1977 and 1990, respectively, and Kelli A. Larson's "On Safari with Hemingway: Tracking the Most Recent Scholarship" included in the book under review reveal that *Hemingway and Africa* is not a "beginning," though, undoubtedly, so far, the best account of the subject. It contains eleven undertakings, arranged in four sections providing a fresh reading of Hemingway's biographies and African-anchored fiction mostly based on his posthumously published *The Garden of Eden* (1986), *True at First Light* (1999), and *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005). Miriam B. Mandel precedes the sections with factual material: a calendar of "Hemingway's African Narratives" published during his lifetime and posthumously (xvii-xix), and a record of six unpublished writings amounting to eighteen

handwritten and typed pages, now in the JFK Library (xix-xx). Most of the essays, in various degrees, penetrate the underwater part of Hemingway's "iceberg" theory he first defined in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), confirmed and rounded out in an interview with George Plimpton (*Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*. Second series, 1968): "The iceberg theory of writing is also a theory of reading, one that seeks to engage readers in a creative kind of reading" (248).

In her "Introduction" (1-37), Miriam B. Mandel explores Hemingway's peripatetic life as a *conditio sine qua non* of his writing, demonstrating that all his habitations were "away-from-home places." She argues, not convincingly for some critics, that Africa denoted for Hemingway freedom from all the constraints imposed by the traditional idea of "home." She fails to mention, however, that safari offered him the opportunity to follow his passion: hunting, just as did the Gulf Stream for his passion of fishing. None of the European countries he repeatedly traveled to rendered such opportunities.

The first section, "Knowing What Hemingway Knew," consists of three contributions, two of them documentary texts, the third one an essay. "Hemingway's Reading in Natural History, Hunting, Fishing, and Africa" (41-84) presents an impressive bibliography of 623 publications compiled by Miriam B. Mandel and Jeremiah M. Kitunda. It reveals his profound interest in the eponymous topics, testifying to his intellectual mind. Symptomatically, on the frontispiece of the book the publisher placed a photograph of Hemingway reading during a walk on his second safari (August 1953-March 1954). The scholars admit that the list is incomplete and declare that "[w]e can never know all that Hemingway read on any subject" (44).

In the alliterative subtitle "Ernest Hemingway on Safari: The Game and the Guns" (85-121), Silvio Calabi briefly recounts Hemingway's evolution of his hunting ethos, defending him against critics who regard him a senseless killer of animals, a conventional sportsman, and a "top-shelf trophy" hunter; he allots thirty pages to Hemingway's study and use of hunting weapons and ammunition indispensable in safari. Calabi's contribution will be appreciated by sports and professional hunters.

Jeremiah M. Kitunda, the author of the essay (122-148), calls us to remember that Hemingway liked killing game, claiming he killed "cleanly—his sense of killing as another dunghill" (133), thus justifying the subtitle of his contribution: "Ernest Hemingway's Farcical Adoration of Africa." Among the contributors to the collection, Kitunda is the only one who knows several African languages, being familiar with African legends, folklore and epigrams such as the one that opens the long title of his article: "'Love is a dunghill.... And I'm the cock that gets on it to crow'" (This is Harry's statement in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"), Kitunda succinctly presents the meaning of the writer's comic attitude to Africa: the farce in Hemingway's African writings affects "love, sex, and

power relationships" (137); it does not apply to the landscapes which he romanticizes. For the narrator, whom Kitunda identifies as Hemingway, Africa is a place of recreation, a retreat from industrialized Europe, and, above all, a better place for writing; at the same time, he grumbles over Europe's destructive impact on the environment and the indigenous population. Of all the authors of the collection, Kitunda draws us closest to the multifarious presence of Africa in Hemingway's writings, though his study attends mostly to *Green Hills of Africa*.

Four papers make up the second section "Approaches to Reading." In "Canonical Readings: Baudelaire's Subtext in Hemingway's African Narratives" (151-175), Beatriz Penas Ibáñez presents the creative phases in his literary career animated by his safaris. She reads Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden* and *Under Kilimanjaro* in the light of his iceberg metaphor and identifies the novels as postmodern fiction inspired by Baudelaire's aesthetics "of lies and makeup."

In "Tracking the Elephant: David's African Childhood in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden* (176-198), Suzanne del Gizzo censures the prevailing gender analysis of the novel. She polemicizes with critics who view it as a "gender battlefield," and directs readers' attention to the importance of David Bourne's childhood experiences for his writing as an adult who "attempt[s] to recover a childlike vision of the world which he associates with Africa" (191), notably an elephant hunt and its impact on him. By viewing David Bourne as the *porte parole* of Hemingway, the reader comes to understand his opposition to hunting elephants.

Chikako Tanimoto presents her reading of the unpublished text of the novel in "An Elephant in the Garden: Hemingway's Africa in *The Garden of Eden* Manuscript*"* (199-211). She criticizes Tom Jenks's "editorial intrusions" in the manuscript of the novel, distorting the real meaning of Africa in Hemingway's life and work. As early as in *Green Hills of Africa,* published in 1935, Hemingway writes of Africa as "home," yet *The Garden of Eden* " shows that a pure Africa does not exist in the world Hemingway depicts" (206).

In "Between Ngàje Ngài [House of God] and Kilimanjaro: A Rortian Reading of Hemingway's African Encounters" (212-235), Frank Mehring combines Rortian reading with ecocriticism to reprove Harry of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and other Hemingway characters (and implicitly Hemingway) for their cultural indifference to Africa in the 1930s. By analyzing the story's noteworthy flashbacks, Mehring reads it as "an artistic confession" (224) and dismantles Hemingway's ambition of finding regeneration in Africa. He also claims to "liberate the text from the familiar accusation brought against Hemingway: that he brings an ethnocentric, white racist, and male chauvinist perspective to his characters" (229) (implicitly and paradoxically Hemingway's views of Africa in the 1930s) accusing them of their "cultural incuriosity" (215).

Section three "On Religion and Death" begins with Philip H. Melling's "Memorial Landscapes: Hemingway's Search for Indian Roots" (239-272). Of all articles in the volume Melling's is the most complex piece, albeit he deals mostly with *Under Kilimanjaro*, perceiving the nameless narrator as Hemingway, confirmed by the presence of Mary, his wife. Melling points out that Hemingway "held many versions of Africa" (242). In *Under Kilimanjaro* he embraces Africa "wholeheartedly" (256), becomes a member of the Wakamba tribe, follows its rituals to the point of self-mutilation. Melling describes how the rituals were similar to those practiced by Native Americans, as Hemingway makes Africa a part of his Michigan childhood related in the Nick Adams stories, which "offers him entry to a tribal landscape and a personal atonement for the sins of his nation" (263). Melling also explores the hunt motif pointing to its spiritual meaning in contrast to the hunt in *Green Hills of Africa*. In *Under Kilimanjaro* the hunt attains a nearly transcendental meaning. Melling should be credited for his criticism of Hemingway's ducking politics, for ignoring Kenya's aspirations to independence, for his silent acceptance of the destruction of African culture (266), already mentioned in *Green Hills of Africa*.

In "Hemingway's African Book of Revelations: Dawning of a 'New Religion' in *Under Kilimanjaro*" (273-298), Erik G. R. Nakjavani dives deeper into the underwater part of the iceberg than does Philip H. Melling to explore the religious motif. The quasi-fictional narrator perceives Africa as the ancestral home of the human species (279). He opens up his senses to its natural world and embraces it with a childlike imagination and love Nakjavani identifies with *agape*—"the natural world as sentient and sacral" (282). The narrator "tells us that his 'new religion' is coincident with that of some Indian tribes of North America" (295). Nakjavani also refers to the narrator's art, revoking Hemingway's Nobel Prize acceptance speech in which he identifies himself as "an alchemist of the art of language." The alchemy enables the narrator to transform nonfiction into fiction and reverse its direction at will (287). Philip Melling and Erik Nakjavani refrain from dealing with Hemingway's religion comprehensively, thus omitting his disposition to Catholicism lately discussed by H. R. Stoneback in "Pilgrimage Variations: Hemingway's Sacred Landscapes" (*Religion and Literature* 35. 2-3: 49-65), annotated by Kelli A. Larson in the book presently reviewed (365).

In "Barking at Death: Hemingway, Africa, and the Stages of Dying" (299-319), James Plath, co-author of *Remembering Ernest Hemingway* (1999), a collection of interviews, discusses Hemingway's treatment of death in his African fiction, notably "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," about which he once remarked: "[I] never wrote so directly about myself as in that story" (A. E. Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway,* 1983). To recall: he wrote the story after his first safari during which he faced death as a result of dysentery. Twenty years

later, during the second safari, he again confronted death due to two plane crashes. Paradoxically, all three confrontations with death magnified Hemingway's passion for life and writing if only "to make enough money so that I can go back to Africa" (310). Plath discusses death in his writings as a process of five stages, following Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's "seminal" work, *On Death and Dying* (1969), yet cryptically notes that he was "in rebellion against death" throughout most of his life (312).

The last section, "What Others Have Said" (about Hemingway's Africa, of course), contains only Kelli A. Larson's bibliography with cognitive annotations, "On Safari with Hemingway: Tracking the Most Recent Scholarship" (323-383). It continues her *Ernest Hemingway: A Reference Guide* (1990) down to 2010, summarizing 227 publications out of which over forty discuss *The Garden of Eden,* nearly thirty *True at First Light*, and fourteen *Under Kilimanjaro*, starting from 2006.

To sum up: Miriam B. Mandel's book reveals successful attempts at penetrating Hemingway's multilayered works, consciously or not, following his invitation extended to George Plimpton and, by implication, to all readers: "Read anything I write for the pleasure of reading it. Whatever else you find will be the measure of what you brought to the reading....[I write] to be read by the eye and no explanation or dissertations should be necessary. You can be sure that there is much more there than will be read at any first reading" (*Writers at Work. The Paris Review Interviews*. Second Series, 229-30).

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Brygida Gasztold, *Negotiating Home and Identity in Early 20th-Century Jewish-American Narratives*. Koszalin: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Politechniki Koszalińskiej, 2011. 170 pages.

Brygida Gasztold's book *Negotiating Home and Identity in Early 20th-Century Jewish-American Narratives* has a somewhat misleading title. What one gets from this book is, first and foremost, an excellent portrait of the Lower East Side, as the author herself admits in the Conclusion. The panoramic portrayal of this Jewish ghetto in New York at the beginning of the twentieth century, seen through the eyes of several Jewish-American authors with differing personal, political and artistic agendas, is the great value of Brygida Gasztold's book and the prime reason why it should be recommended. Hence, ignore the vague title, and read the book to learn what the Lower East Side was like. And appreciate its being a well written, effortless read.

The ease of reading does not preclude its scholarly value. The author has designed her study to include the key elements of the literary scene relevant to the topic of the social and ethnic situation of the Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe who settled in New York at the turn of the twentieth century. That ethnic tensions awaited the "huddled masses" is no surprise, but overt anti-Semitism of respected writers, such as Henry James and Theodore Dreiser, may come as a lesser known story of the growth of American pluralistic society, in which intellectuals might have been expected to carry the beacons of tolerance and enlightenment. The two most infamous anti-Semites of twentieth-century American letters remain Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, but Brygida Gasztold's book reminds us that these two grew out of a more broadly held attitude of the American educated classes.

Negotiating Home and Identity discusses in detail *The Melting Pot*, a play that everybody has heard of, but frequently knows little about. The play is put into the broad context of the trope of the melting pot in American culture prior to Zangwill's play. The detailed analysis of the text reveals ideological principles that governed its various nuances.

The chapter on Mary Antin shows how early immigrants believed the assimilation possible through English language acquisition. This concept today is seen as somewhat naïve, as language is clearly no longer a sufficient vehicle for complete assimilation. Cynthia Ozick questions this in *The Puttermesser Papers* when she has her heroine, whose English is not only that of a native speaker, but "standardized by the drilling of fanatical teachers, elocutionary missionaries" (Ozick 7), create a female golem in order to succeed in the same New York several decades later. It is fascinating to follow Mary Antin's enthusiastic trust in the strength of the assimilative process, when she easily "substitutes her Jewish religious heritage with a new-born patriotism comparing George Washington to David" (71). Naturally, Mary Antin, in her time, benefited tremendously from the shift to equal opportunities for both sexes, gained *en route* from the *shtetl* in East Europe to the admittedly patriarchal, but still comparatively much more progressive, New York. For Ozick's Jewish heroine in the late twentieth century Big Apple, gender equality becomes a real gain, but peculiarly illusory.

The discussion of Mary Antin's prose shows very well the healing power of autobiographical narrative to overcome the trauma of acculturation. The part of the book devoted to Abraham Cahan, focusing on his disillusionment with the Promised Land, serves well as a counterpoint to Antin's story of Paradise Gained. Cahan's biography in itself constitutes an interesting reflection of the history of an East European Jewish immigrant in America in the twentieth century. The analysis of his main novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky,* explores in depth the complexities of the process of assimilation—the immigrants' anxieties, the burden of the past, the sense of personal loss against the success of the public self, altogether the ambivalent nature of Americanization.

The next chapter of *Negotiating Home and Identity* focuses on yet another female author, Anzia Yezierska, born in a *shtetl* near Warsaw, who was to become "an authentic voice of the tenements" (106). Yezierska is interesting not only because of her literary output, but also due to her biography, including a romance with the famous educator John Dewey, in which relationship she saw "a 'harmonizing' of two cultures: the Jewish and the American" (106). Yezierska's work, somewhat forgotten for a number of years, was rediscovered by feminist critics, who saw in her not only an author of immigrant narratives, but also a creator of female characters capable of finding strength to rebel against patriarchal structures (in this case the traditional Jewish ones, inherited with the European cultural baggage) and recreating themselves in mainstream American culture, thus becoming heiresses "of the Emersonian tradition of self-reliance" (109).

The chapter on Yezierska reminds the reader that Brygida Gasztold primarily uses for her analysis the categories of race, class and gender. The discussion of Yezierska's *Bread Givers* reflects the deprivations of immigrant existence, while the way this Jewish author—and Brygida Gasztold in the discussion of her work—focuses on food, is a harbinger of the current recognition of food (and foodways in a more general sense) as an important sphere of life, strongly reflective of gender-power relations: this is evident in such milestone works as Carole Counihan's *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power* and the proliferation of research on the subject. There is certainly room for more analysis of Yezierska's work in this direction.

The inclusion of the chapter on Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money* completes a broad panorama of diversity in early twentieth-century Jewish-American fiction, here focusing on class struggle, with Gold creating a paradigm of the proletarian novel. The class struggle rhetoric used by Gold was later ridiculed by writers such as Max Apple in his *Zip: A Novel of the Left and the Right* (1978). Gold's gender bias or, indeed, his conservative attitude to women in proletarian narratives (or in the leftist movements in general) is very well indicated. One might only add here that this seems to be a permanent feature of the political left, judging by how few women it brings into public life.

The analysis of Gold's *Jews Without Money* adds to the diversity of perspectives on the picture of the Lower East Side, which Brygida Gasztold's book delightfully provides. The rejection of the American hell, as depicted by Gold, is supplemented by idealized memories of East European meadows and forests and happy *shtetl* life. The Jewish community in America is shown by Gold in its full diversity: old animosities with Christian neighbors, conflicts within the Jewish communities, a wide spectrum of Jewish religious groups. Perhaps the most interesting part here is the transformation of Gold's protagonist's identity from his East-European self to a more adequate American one in order to undertake the struggle to free the working class from capitalist injustice:

"Mikey, who is to a large degree secularized and assimilated, further transforms the image of the Jewish Messiah into Buffalo Bill, an epitome of the Native American's fright against the oppression of the United States' government" (147).

The title of the book indicates identity as one of the author's main concerns. It seems that Jewish identity is analyzed here almost exclusively in the context of ethnicity (broadly understood as the Yiddish language, culture and religious observance) versus assimilation (use of English and abandoning the old ways, whatever this might mean). The diversity of Jewish identities is not fully evident. Michael Gold's fiction indicates this diversity, also presenting Jewish characters who were ignoring Jewishness, since their identity was primarily based on the principles of class system and social exclusion as common to all capitalist societies. Jewish identity, even without the extremity of the Marxist stand, remains a highly complicated issue, reflected only partially in Brygida Gasztold's book. But the choice of early twentieth-century narratives which focused on the experiences of assimilation justifies this bias.

The book closes with the Conclusion, which, among other things, anticipates the reader's questions, for instance concerning the absence of other ethnic groups in her discussion, or why the writers in question employed the poetics of realism in their fiction though modernism was just around the corner.

Having already praised the book for its accessible style, I would add that it is quite carefully edited. There are occasional inaccuracies, such as misplaced commas or identifying Abraham Cahan's birth, on the same page, once in 1866, and then in 1860 (85). Neither is it clear to me why Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* is given, along with other titles, as an example of a novel in which the protagonist is seeking social advancement through inter-marriage (21). However, generally, the book has been accorded proper editorial care.

It should be kept in mind that, by focusing on the Lower East Side story, Brygida Gasztold is reminding us of the common heritage of Poles and Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in America from the same part of the Old World. Among the outstanding sites on the Lower East Side there are, for instance, the Bialystoker Synagogue and Bialystoker Home for the Aged at No. 228 East Broadway. Other geographical or semantic echoes of the shared past and locality could be found, both in the reality of the present Lower East Side and in the narratives which Brygida Gasztold brings to life in her book. *Negotiating Home and Identity* is a contribution to American Studies in Poland that is certainly worth attention.

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David Sanders, *A Divided Poet: Robert Frost, North of Boston, and the Drama of Disappearance*. Rochester: Camden House, 2011. 162 pages.

Few know that Robert Frost stole the expression "north of Boston" from a real estate advertisement in the *Boston Globe*. North of Boston were properties for sale, moribund farms marketed to rich urbanites who—though agents of modernization themselves—nostalgically began to crave country cottages where they could, in the poet's own words, "run wild in the summer—a little wild." The title of Frost's 1914 volume then perfectly reflects what the well-known Frost scholar David Sanders astutely calls the "drama of disappearance"—that is, independent farmers increasingly on the defensive and yielding to expanding mass-production and mass-marketing industries, agricultural and others. The economic analysis of Frost's region—Derry, New Hampshire—at the turn of the century is one of many highlights of Sanders's book. He shows the decline of independent farming and the correlated rise of industries, shoe manufacturing in particular. He also points to the rise of huge agricultural businesses, such as the Hood Farm, with extensive distribution networks and large urban customer bases. Significantly, Boston entrepreneurs with considerable managerial skills developed these enterprises from retail businesses rather than from farms (9–13). The marginalized world of independent farmers was the realm where the poet found himself and from which he knew he had to escape.

Now, we all remember that Frost sold the Derry farm when he could freely dispose of it and in 1912 went to England to make a name for himself on the wider literary scene. The two years from 1913 to 1914 brought two volumes of poetry, the second of which in particular, *North of Boston*, made him famous across the English-speaking world. This much is common knowledge, but we hardly ever give thought to what David Sanders chose for his subject—the emotional toll this move took on the poet. As Sanders shows, for "at least [the next] thirty years" of his career, Frost was troubled by the moral significance of his act—he wrote an aesthetically innovative book of portraits of his New Hampshire friends and neighbors with the purpose of advancing in the world without them, leaving them to their misery. Having *used* them as his poetic material, he abandoned them to their losing fight against growing marginalization and impoverishment. For years he was pained by the choice he made then, between, on the one hand, his loyalty to his little world which he thought was his inheritance and which for a time had nourished him and, on the other, his economic and literary success. Though *North of Boston* can be read as a generous tribute to the passing way of life in New England, an eloquent and sorrowful elegy to people who were crushed by the Gilded Age, Frost felt a continuous discomfort at this appropriation. His guilt at the betrayal of his people repeat-

edly resurfaces in this and subsequent volumes, and to some extent is the driving force of much of his poetic work.

To return to the title *North of Boston* one last time, it also shows the poet internally "divided." In a well-known review of the volume, Ezra Pound wrote that Frost was "honestly fond" of his people, that the poet had never "turned aside to make fun of" his Derry neighbors except for brief "spells of irritation" with them. Here Sanders's reading is far more engaged and engaging: he shows that in fact Frost was, ambiguously, both *of* the north-of-Boston people, insisting that the world pay greater attention to them, and already detached from them, looking at them as would Boston investors at any anachronism.

Sanders traces the subtlest indications of this uneasiness in a dozen rich examples of "disloyalty, insensitivity, and alienation," in "suspicions or suggestions of exploitation or betrayal, theft or trespass" (18). For my part, I was reminded of the sociologist in Frost's little-known play *The Guardeen*: professor Tom Titcombe delegates his student (and then follows him) to a village where Titcombe grew up for the purpose of gathering data for a "social study" of the community. Charles, one of the locals, attacks Titcombe in a manner that Frost half-expected from his Derry friend Carl Burrell: "But you're writing [a book] now and that's what you're round here for listening to gossip and luring this innocent young dustyrhodes [sic] scholar [the student] to help you rake up stories about us. Don't try to squirm out of it" (Frost 621).

As Sanders argues, the poet's guilt was partly mitigated by Frost's recognition that his defection from his milieu inscribes itself into the natural competition and universal scramble for survival (34). Indeed, after the publication of *North of Boston*, in a letter to his friend, Frost made a striking remark: "All I ask now is to be allowed to live" (Parini 157). It is hard to determine what precisely Frost meant by that: did he fear that his memory of his Derry friends whom he had betrayed would—as Sanders shows it did—now mar his conscience and effectively dog his "life"? Or did he, more atavistically, think that his New Hampshire folk might now be fully justified to go after him and kill him for his betrayal? Most likely—and this is Sanders's other suggestion—with the newly achieved literary prominence, Frost was, in the first place, greatly relieved that his family's survival was now feasible."What [Frost] does to gain recognition as a poet," the critic writes, "may be as necessary as anything in nature, where creatures live in constant competition, frequently at another's expense" (55). Sanders's perspective casts a new light on such nature poems as "A Leaf Treader", with the couplet:

> But it was no reason I had to go because they had to go.
> Now up my knee to keep on top of another year of snow.

Inasmuch as this is Frost's disguised description of treading on his Derry neighbors as if they were stepping stones, his act of disloyalty seems as unavoidable and natural as the change of seasons. In any case, the poet never shrank from the realization that he would be treated likewise—trampled underfoot by subsequent generations.

The example of "A Leaf Treader" shows that Sanders's perspective proves very useful for generating new readings of poems that have come to seem blandly familiar. He offers, for instance, an outstanding interpretation of "A Hundred Collars" as two parallel portraits, of Doctor Magoon and Lafe, warning Frost that in pursuit of a big-time career one could be set apart from the people that "constituted his poetic source" (49–50). It is not only the snobby Magoon, then, who illustrates Sanders's theme (many of us will remember Magoon's superiority when confronted with the ordinary folk he used to play with as a child). At bottom, Lafe, too, is a "double-dyed" spy gathering local intelligence for the enemy of his class. Sanders's new paradigm effectively opens up other poems as well. Where others see in "New Hampshire" smart-alecky cynicism and turn their noses up at such a reductive mode, the author shrewdly finds torturous evasions and impervious self-assertions noisily seeking to muffle his pangs of conscience.

A Divided Poet is written with a remarkable clarity and elegance. One is genuinely charmed by broad swaths of lucid and eloquent prose, carefully laying out its case. Sanders patiently uncovers, one by one, the sedimentary layers of meaning and sentiment. The argument slowly but irresistibly gathers force and gains in persuasion.

The critic looks at the wide frame of Frost's psychic division, but reads closely with equal deftness and can identify the "divided poet" in the dual tone of a mere remark or aside. That is where the greatest pleasure of Sanders's text lies. He is discriminating about his examples and never tires us with too many of them. However, every time he close-reads we have a rare pleasure of true insight. Well-known lines and passages disclose, strikingly, his theme: they become true "luminous details" encompassing all the vectors of the poet's moral imagination.

Now, with the origins of Frost's major theme of loyalty laid out so precisely and extensively, we may be well positioned to move on to a related subject that, I think, still waits to be explored. Though Frost's concern with loyalty *is*—as Sanders has argued—rooted in his betrayal of 1914 and it has left an indelible mark on *North of Boston*, the interest seems to have outgrown its beginnings. Not only haunted by the memory of his defection, Frost went on to study, carefully, such milestones of loyalty theory as William Blackstone's theory of treason, Kant's notion of impartial morality, and Josiah Royce's "loyalty to loyalty." He did so not only because he tried to come to terms with his inner "division," but also because he saw these notions as very helpful in fashioning his later politics, morality, and even his poetics.

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Kristen Case, *American Pragmatism and Poetic Practice: Crosscurrents from Emerson to Susan Howe*. Rochester: Camden House, 2011. xv + 160 pages.

American pragmatism is a vexing phenomenon. An indigenous American philosophy, ushering in the professionalization of the secular American intellectual life at the end of the nineteenth century, its roots may be convincingly traced to the eighteenth-century transformation of the Calvinist doctrine. On the other hand, besides the affinity to this religious lineage, pragmatism has been named a most poetic of philosophies, and rightly so, given the inescapably large debt that the classical pragmatists owe to Emerson. Deeply diverse at its genetic stem, affected by the Edwardsian reformulation of faith as experience and Emerson's continuous vacillation between Platonism and materialism, resilient to changes of intellectual fashions, significantly and successfully combining areas of linguistics, psychology, philosophy, religion and aesthetics, pragmatism truly is a most poetic of philosophies, and an illuminating companion, or context, in which to place developments in American poetry, from Emerson all the way down to post-LANGUAGE poets.

No wonder then that, periodically and with shifting perspective, American poetry critics have been reaching for pragmatist themes and analogies to read poets. A work that in many ways broke ground in this area continues to be Richard Poirier's *Poetry and Pragmatism* (1992), which becomes a reference point for numerous later studies in tracking down the complex relations and affinities that American modernist poets reveal with respect to Emerson's thought. Poirier's book is an important indication of the peculiar feature of Emerson's text, which is later going to be so intriguing to philosophers like James and to the whole Emersonian line of twentieth-century American poets: writing is a work-process of thought in the language. Hence, since it is a process, vagueness and instability are inherent in all creation in thinking and writing. This is the challenge of the mutability of truth that, as Poirer shows, is taken up by James in his pragmatist reformulations of this venerable philosophical notion. Combined with Emerson's adjacent insistence on the necessity of form, this constant tension between

making and dissolution, shapes emerging and shapes vanishing, the Emersonian and Jamesian pragmatist insights become the daily writing experiences for Frost, Stevens, and Stein.

This line of argument about poetry's living confirmation/realization of the ideas formulated by philosophers is continued and developed by many subsequent scholars. Jonathan Levine reformulates the process-oriented aesthetic as the poetics of "transition" and focuses on Stevens as its primary exponent.[1] Stevens also seems the central character in the biggest, most comprehensive of these studies, namely Joan Richardson's overwhelming *Natural History of Pragmatism* (2007). Expanding on Poirier and making use of her expert familiarity with the entirety of Stevens's problematic, Richardson reaches back to Edwards in order to document the ages-spanning continuity of the American thinking of linguistic malleability as the crucial emotional and cognitive power that shapes the so-called human reality beyond the mere division into the realms of spirit and matter. This line, in which James is the key pragmatist voice, is crowned in Richardson in the poets', notably Stevens's and Stein's, unique aesthetic formula that proves a valid counterpart to insights of twentieth-century science into the shifty and dynamic process at the subatomic level of the material world.

Another theme in this critical debate stresses the importance of Dewey's attention to material processes of work in the immediate environment of the subject. Here, among the younger critics, Michael Magee's study, bringing together Dewey and Emerson in the notion of "democratic symbolic action", is arguing for the vast political efficacy of the pragmatist aesthetics detected at work in avant-garde poets and black artists such as O'Hara, Baraka, and Ellison.[2] Poets beyond modernity, like O'Hara and Ashbery, are also discussed in the near pragmatist, post-Emersonian contexts by Andrew Epstein, who investigates how the volatile, transitive self described by pragmatists features within the unstable space of poetic rivalry and friendship extending between the texts of O'Hara and Ashbery.[3]

Kristen Case's recent book study, *American Pragmatism and Poetic Practice*, is an attempt to bring together the various strands of pragmatist-poetic themes and affinities. On the one hand, following Poirier and Richardson, Case returns to the rich cluster of continuations between Emerson and James, including James's difference with Peirce, the nominal founder of pragmatism. On the other hand, however, she is also able to make

[1] In a study called *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, and American Literary Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
[2] See Michael Magee, *Emancipating Pragmatism: Emerson, Jazz, and Experimental Writing* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004).
[3] Andrew Epstein, *Beautiful Enemies: Friendship and Postwar American Poetry* (New York: Oxfrord University Press, 2006).

a move in the direction of Dewey. The result is an interesting and so far unregistered mixture of the discussed poetic styles, a lineage and network of relations that starts with Frost and Moore, skips Stevens, and veers into the more materialistic orientation of Dewey-related poetics of Williams. From that juncture on, the way is paved for other fruitful pairings, vitally expanding the list of poets discussed in connection with pragmatism: Case matches Olson with Thoreau, to show the Gloucester poet as an Emersonian continuator of Williams toward an environmental poetics, and finishes her study by returning to James, whose notions of plurality and relationality she sees as active, with a full array of their consequences, in the texts of Susan Howe. These pairings bear witness to the vast potential for recontextualization inherent in the connections between pragmatism and poetry. The connections seem natural, almost programmed by the very genealogy of the philosophical motifs and poetic developments. Based on them, Case formulates the main thesis of her study: the major strains of American poetry stem from the same family of questions that intrigued the Emersonian thinkers of classical pragmatism—Peirce, James, and Dewey—which makes poetry a text that runs a parallel commentary, a continuation, of epistemologically oriented inquiry conducted in writing conceived of as a process.

The departure point employed by Case shows her debt to the scholarship of Poirier and Richardson. We travel back, again, to the very fruitful discrepancy and fissure that fertilizes the text of Emerson. Caught between his neo-Platonist inclinations and his instinct for the actual, Emerson, more than Edwards treated at length by Richardson, is responsible for the ongoing tension in the midst of pragmatist thought—the tension between looking to things local, material, close at hand, and keeping some more abstract, remote, ideal reference points in view. This bipolarity, boiling in the exuberant excessiveness of Emerson's textual melting pots, is then seen as the major cause of difference between James and Peirce. The former, with his understanding of truth as something that "happens to an idea" when it clashes with the indeterminacies of the everyday, will be responsible, along with Dewey, for the American poets' interest in the material relations of the ordinary realm. The latter, with his insistence on keeping a distant, more transcendent end of inquiry always in view, will speak to mentalities, such as Frost's, who would rather curb the impulse of, or faith in, human-sponsored growth, unconstrained by any external bounds. It is this introduction of the Emersonian tension between James and Peirce, and the resulting list of poet-philosopher pairings, that stands behind Case's thesis. The poets not only continue; they often expand the epistemological inquiry of the classical pragmatists.

After this theoretical ground laid down by the introductory chapter, the author moves on to show how the actual-transcendental tension is profitably alive in the poetry of Ma-

rianne Moore, who is here seen as a poetic continuator of Emerson's split metaphysical alliances. Moore's famous attentiveness to the actual material detail is seen to thrive and receive its special flavor because of her ability not to lose the more ideal outposts from view. Also, seen next to Moore's verse, Emerson emerges as a founder and expositor of all those twentieth-century movements in the humanities that understood writing as a nearly uncontrollable element of its own momentum, in which the writer accepts a rhythm between his or her points formulated and then quickly dissolved. It is this rhythm that informs James's notion of truth, Peirce's sense of the necessity of form against chaos, to be then found in Frost, and Moore's ability to show her material findings in the typically American light of, as Stanley Cavell would say, the "uncanniness of the ordinary." Moore may thus be the first among twentieth-century American masters of stunning conjunctions between the abstract and the actual, Stevens being next, and Ashbery, whom by the way Case never mentions, crowning this lineage.

The most conservative motifs in the diverse family of pragmatist approaches, conservative in the area of aesthetics, epistemology, and politics, are found with Case's next pairing. She sees interesting parallels between Charles Sanders Peirce's vision of inquiry as a prolonged communal construction of meaning against the Darwinian background of chaotic forces and Frost's insistence on the necessity of form, his poetics of the "momentary stay against confusion." Peirce and Frost, although diverting on points of politics, inhabit a similar world in which the human cognitive functions are the only mainstay against the elementary abyss of chaos and conflict. Each philosophical inquiry and each poem, as "evolving structures of thought and language," are arrangements of sense against swampy groundlessness. And yet, unlike some more radical continuators of James who would like the world "as such," that is the world independent of human intervention, to be "well-lost" once and for all[4], Case reminds us how both Peirce and Frost insisted that, despite the crucial role of human inquiry, it must always be seen against the hypothesis of a transcendent layer of "objective reality," an area that must be posited as independent of the epistemological activity for it to be possible in the first place. This vacillation between the idea of abysmal chaos beneath human reality and the wish to base the human inquiry on something that is "nothing human," is perhaps the main cause for the quality of evasiveness found in both Peirce and Frost. Especially Frost constructs a difficult, many-layered epistemology that will keep escaping all easy categorization.

[4] I am referring to Richard Rorty's seminal text "The World Well-Lost." See his *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

It seems, however, that the heart of Case's argument is found in the next two chapters. One of them describes the development of a specific environmental poetic, found in Williams's reformulation of Dewey's program for the reinvention of philosophy. Williams reformulates Dewey's theses into a poetics of embodied knowledge. This will lead to Olson's poetics of the "kinetic aesthetics" of the poem as environment, discussed in the next chapter. First, Williams, whose views are found in confluence with Dewey's, goes further than the philosopher in his experimentalism toward a poetic of the actual. In doing so, Williams establishes a certain dichotomy of the poetic strategy that is going to be present with later American poetries of the objectivist provenience. He will want the poem to expose the material presence of its very linguistic substance (the "word itself"), while at the same time making present the objects themselves. Both words and objects are supposed to stand alone, freed from the invading and obliterating film of symbolic thinking. Whether this strategy of trying to attain to certain entities "alone," or "in themselves," can be successful at all, or whether it aligns well with pragmatism, is one of the doubts I will address below. Whatever the case may be, however, Olson's continuation of this doubled attention—to language and to the matter of the world—leads to the concept of the poem as an active participation in one's immediate surroundings, a participation that is also a construction of an environment. This accords well with Dewey's formula of inquiry as an activity changing both the subject and the object.

In Olson, Williams's formula of "no ideas but in things" is changed into the practice of the poem as an environment, one that brings forth the material, historical, and geographical actuality of the poet's place and lets him re-find himself in it. The text "asks to be inhabited." The companion text here is, fittingly, Thoreau's proto-environmental and proto-ethnographic writing that shows the impact of the environment on the human. One of the key issues at this point, poignant especially for Thoreau, but reverberating equally clearly in Olson, is the question of the possibility if the dissolution of the human into the non-human element of the environment. Case seems to waver on this point. While admitting, with Olson, that the poem as an inhabitable environment is a measure by which the human will be redefined and re-found in its interaction with the environment, she seems also to be leaning toward the idea that the act may let come fully to the fore an element of the non-human. On the one hand, she expresses reservation about the idea of Thoreau's "abandoning the human"; on the other, she agrees with critics who speak of the non-human as a presence. It would seem that perhaps a pragmatist approach should find ways to bypass the split into the human and the non-human in a manner more decisive than Case's. The thought of the possible receding back into the non-human, which did indeed lure Thoreau at some passages of, say, *Walden,* is a result of the unsolved Emersonian-Thoreauvian romantic dilemma of feeling oneself at once alien from and

part of nature, a burden that it should be the role of pragmatism, as a corrective inheritor of Romanticism, to dispel.

Finally, Case's book makes a leap toward the very contemporary poetics of Susan Howe. This demanding post-LANGUAGE poet is discussed in the context of James's insistence that ours is a world of pluralistic and plastic relationality, in which entities never have their meanings on their own (the very notion of an entity on its own, as a stable reality, becomes suspect with James), and in which there is an ongoing reciprocity between matters of fact and the human description of them, which always is fed back into facts to change them. James's lasting achievement is raising relation itself to the role of a world building element that should be treated on a par with the idea of substance. That it had not been so treated is an act of suppression and exclusion, which is clearly seen in the undervaluing of certain grammatical structures. Thus, James rediscovers a world of active relations and dynamisms that we may sense or get access to if, among other strategies of course, we start to attend more carefully to the so far underrated parts of speech, such as conjunctions or pronouns, which far from being insignificant auxiliaries, are the very motors of experience, bespeaking of its malleable modalities. This message, already employed by Gertrude Stein, and discussed in relation to her poetics, receives a new, clearly politicized formula in the poetry of Susan Howe.

Howe's text is, according to Case, a radical realization of James's poetics of relationality. Her writing is said to show what writing might be if we digested fully the Jamesian message of the centrality of relations as the real objects of experience. But in her treatment of relationality, to attend to relations is to discover the historico-political exclusions that spatter American history. Relationality recovers whole systems of silences and deliberate blanks as the necessary underpinnings of all constructedness of narrative, history, and voice. Thus, when Howe makes her visits to the archives of venerable American universities, she proliferates their systems as an agent of the repressed voices, recalling the whole traditions and lineages of these marginalizations. Running back to the antinomian debates that troubled the Puritan orthodoxy, they also include Dickinson, whose stuttering poetic is now seen in the light of its oppositionality toward the authoritarian order of her day, finally to present Howe herself, who is found inescapably in her text, as she is related to those past voices.

Case's parings and explorations are fresh, imaginative, dynamic and provocative, even if they continue the themes that have been opened up by other critics. The book presents a fruitful personal approach that, when employed properly, is always an asset in discussing poetry. There are, however, two or three problems with the study that I would like to address in conclusion, hopefully for the sake of a fruitful discussion. First, I sense a certain leanness of the volume. In some cases one wishes for the discussion to go on

for a little longer and reach a little deeper. Howe, to give one example, is an extremely demanding poet. Her texts should not be approached solely through the mediating means of theoretical formulas. In short, the chapter on Howe seems undernourished as far as the presence of the poetic text itself goes. As it is, some of the formulations concerning the correspondence between Jamesian relationality and Howe's text seem true and right but might suffer from an air of critical banality. That "all histories are the products of human construction and imagination" is hardly any news in the contemporary humanities, and the originality of Case's own discussion of Howe in the light of James deserves something deeper and more inquisitive.

Finally, there are certain problems at the heart of the objectivist-materialist poetics of Williams and Olson that could be better addressed if the discussion were pushed beyond the epistemologies of the classical pragmatists. It might help to look into the post-Quinean linguistics of Rorty and Davidson to find distance to Williams's and Olson's rather pale and unconvincing hopes for things standing "on their own," being themselves in space, as Williams would like to have them, or of getting words to mean "not a single thing the least more than what it does mean," to give Olson's formulation called upon by Case. It is Rorty's Davidsonian continuation of James's and Dewey's message of relationality that should help us divert from the metaphors of either words or things standing on their own. With this reformulation we might as well see the environmental poem decisively NOT as a place in which the non-human becomes present, but one in which the human becomes a primary context for enlivening the merely dead matter. The poem is an environment, by all means, but it is a created place, one that has not been there before. This environment is something new and unique—not a revelation of a material essence that preceded it in the spatial, temporal or ontological order. This approach, if we agree with it, rules out "the non-human."

Such construction, however, would require us to reconsider the relation between the poetic utterance and the construction of individual subjectivity. Poems as environments, even though possibly inhabited by many, are unique habitats. No two poetic responses to one physical environment will ever be the same after all. To be one with the environment will mean the emergence of different textual selves in the case of each next "environmental" poem, unless we want to end up with the idea that there is an essence to the environmental stimulus that calls for one and the same response in the instance of each interaction. Since it would be non-pragmatist to say so, we are always left with the notion of the individual and the separate—there are thousands of inhabitants of the geographical environs of Gloucester—there is only one body of Olson's text.

The problem is, of course, that American poetic criticism finds it very hard to speak of poetry as a construction of individuality nowadays. The difficulty is responsible for

one of the differences between James and Howe, for example, that Case does not seem to address. While James, a meliorist optimist, always sees the immersion in networks of relation as a strategy employed for the sake of a specific life—a life of choices that expands and acquires an individual shape—Howe is a poet of radical removal of all such constructedness of individuality. Her relationalism might well have more to do with Derrida's activation of negativity than with the pragmatism of James. Pragmatism, both classical and contemporary, has always seen aesthetic action as creating specific, individual, self-developed human entities—not expressions of pre-given subjectivities, but their emergence and evolution through the poem (or, more generally, through intelligent action in the world). A pragmatist outlook should be challenged by the radical departure from any such idea of the construction of subjectivity in poets such as, for instance, Susan Howe. However, in reversal, this poetics could be challenged by pragmatism.

With all these remarks, it remains to be said that Case's is a sensitive and imaginative study, responsive to the vast potentiality of aesthetic and poetic commentary inherent in the midst of pragmatism, which has always been, and continues to be, a strongly Emersonian, poetic philosophy. It is an ambitious and useful attempt to fuse the various strands of the discussions of pragmatist poetics and to open up new connections. I have enjoyed and learned a lot from it.

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Ewa Barbara Luczak, *How Their Living Outside America Affected Five African American Authors: Towards a Theory of Expatriate Literature*. Preface by Richard Yarborough. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010. 250 pages.

The French poet Guillaume Apollinaire has said that one must travel far to know one's home (*Il faut voyager loin pour connâitre sa maison)*, and the Argentine writer Julio Cortázar has said that the writer is like the snail; he carries his home on his back (*El escritor es como el caracol; lleva su casa a cuestas)*. These two statements aptly introduce Ewa Barbara Luczak's book that makes a fine contribution to comparative literary studies and to international studies of American and European literary relations and influences. This book on African American writers in Europe during the 1960s is a stunning achievement for the well-traveled scholar and a tribute to the Institute of English [and American] Studies at the University of Warsaw, where she teaches.

In his Preface, Richard Yarborough provides an excellent context for African American expatriate literature and the arts. This splendid book, as Yarborough concludes, "is

a scholarly achievement of no small order." Besides the 1960s focus of the book, these writers—James Baldwin, William Gardner Smith, Frank Yerby, William Demby, Cecil Brown and John A. Williams—have much in common that makes them fascinating and personally engaging. Like Ewa Luczak, these writers are learned, talented, intelligent travelers; they are wanderers, cosmopolitan writers who have been undeservedly neglected. Their works attest to the value of travel. As experience teaches, travelers see their homes better in everything that they do elsewhere—in the case of these wandering African American writers they saw their homeland—the United States—better.

Luczak's book answered many questions: What were they escaping from? What were they seeking? What did they find, in addition to the bars and sex? The answers to be found in this book include: disillusionment with Europe and sympathy for Algerian immigrants in France, for African and other immigrants, and "outcasts." The writers also acquired an enhanced understanding of Europe and the U.S., of Jews and the Holocaust, and of existentialist thinkers and writers. Because these expatriate writers were living in Europe during the turbulent 1960s, their writing was suspect among some activist black American literary critics.

In the author's conclusions, she makes an extremely important historical point: when men travel without women, inevitably they have relationships with the women of the places to which they travel. This was certainly true of ancient people in the Mediterranean world, and of Spaniards who came to the "New World," and it is no less true of black expatriate writers. The conclusions of this book comment with uncommon insight on the black writers' portrayals of women: African American, white American and European women.

In all, this book is very illuminating and sheds light on black expatriate writers, what they have in common and how they were perceived. The author explains how and why they were treated differently from white expatriate writers. This book also sheds light on varieties of the African American experience of the 1960s. In sum, it makes a good case for "African American-ness being central to the writers' books." After making her case persuasively, the author states: "the European refused to fully integrate African Americans…. Paradoxically, this refusal created for African American ex-patriots [sic] an acute awareness… of their American identity." The author's last paragraph in the book brings us up to January 2009, when the "white house" becomes a "black house."

As the author tells us, the "book is concerned with the change in the African American perception of Europe and seeks to reveal how African American writers of the 1960s responded in imaginative ways to the European scene." Her Introduction precedes the book's six chapters. The author has chosen for her book the works by African American writers that received mixed reviews or that have been unfairly neglected. Chapter 1 examines "This Morning, This Evening So Soon" by James Baldwin and *The Stone Face*

by William Gardner Smith; Chapter 2, Frank Yerby's novel *Speak Now*; Chapter 3, William Demby's *The Catacombs*; Chapter 4, Cecil Brown's *The Life and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger*; and Chapter 5, John A. Williams' *The Man Who Cried I Am*. The Introduction provides synopses of each of the chapters. Chapter 6 draws many conclusions that brilliantly sum up her chapters and that point to the Introduction.

Luczak combines her extensive knowledge of European and U.S. social history, and of African American scholarly sources to place the writers and their works in a large context. She vividly describes the 1960s as a fabulous, contradictory—a painful—complex decade in the U.S. and she distinguishes astutely differences among African Americans and their leanings toward competing conceptions of black identity associated with white liberals' conception of the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power movement, PanAfricanism, and *négritude*. In the U.S., this scholar points out that the 1960s were characterized by many viewpoints being expressed by different spokesmen within the Black Consciousness Movement. Rightly, Luczak tells us that it is also a decade of difficult desegregation in the South, characterized by violence and assassinations—John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy.

In providing a comprehensive view of the American decade, the book succeeds in giving reasons why the 1960s writers and their works have been neglected or misunderstood. Luczak addresses the mixed critical reception of their works and of their personal interpretations of the black experience, in the U.S. and in Europe. They had traveled to the old continent, the author tells us, in the hope of finding a color-blind environment and more artistic freedom. However, to point out the consequences for black expatriate writers the author quotes Robert Cole's statement from *Black Writers Abroad*: "Not to return to America at that time and get involved at some level in black revolution could have been a form, ultimately, of literary suicide."

Luczak's book also documents how the writers broke away from the dominance of Paris as the center of black expatriate settlement in Europe. In France, for example she makes the break very clear by dealing with the Algerian War and France's colonial legacy. In each of the chapters the sense of place comes across effectively. The Rome, Copenhagen and Amsterdam settings are well defined and appropriate to the development of the novels' themes: white women and black bodies, reasons why writers became expatriates, and the critique of and their growing disenchantment with Europe.

Luczak's literary and critical scholarship impresses because it is cosmopolitan, international and comprehensive. It is most evident in the chapters dealing with Cecil Brown's fiction, which is characterized by a remarkable knowledge of black street language, oral storytelling and the trickster character. Her personal interpretations of these writers, their individual conceptions of the nature and function of their respective works

and their personal visions, as well as her assessment of scholarly sources and countless issues of racial politics and their impact on the writers' literary art, show that Luczak is an enlightened scholar. Her stylistic literary criticism is outstanding.

Her knowledge of comparative literature and stylistic criticism enhances the biographies of the writers and the psychological analysis of writers and the characters of their fictional works. The historical-social context is further enhanced by attention to the critical reception, mixed and controversial, by black, Negro and African American literary critics. As Yarborough points out in his generously positive Preface, Luczak avoids the pitfall of panegyrics in dealing with ignored or misinterpreted authors. Yarborough correctly observes how nimbly she maintains critical balance and analysis.

In my opinion, attention to the writers' lives enables the author to deal effectively with why African American writers were attracted to Paris and Europe, and later to Africa and non-western lands. In each chapter of this book, the author accounts persuasively and sympathetically for the reasons that explain the disillusionment and critique that writers such as James Baldwin, William Garner Smith, Frank Yerby, William Demby, Cecil Brown and John A. Williams, among so many others, make of European and American racism.

Chapter 2 brings up Yerby's bold views of miscegenation and ancestry. It exhibits the scholar's knowledge of American cinema, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, and the literature of the absurd in the work of Frank Yerby. Chapter 3 begins with the Second World Congress of Negro Writers in Rome, and ties in with the Rome setting of William Demby's meta-fictional novel, *The Catacombs*; and in Chapter 4, Cecil Brown's *The Life and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger* emphasizes Brown's contribution to European fiction and at the same time his indebtedness to Eldridge Cleaver. This chapter compares Brown's conception of racism with the conceptions of the other writers. Chapter 5 focuses admirably on John A. Williams' encyclopedic fiction, *The Man Who Cried I Am*.

In one noteworthy passage from Brown's fiction, Luczak addresses the sympathy that Brown's character, named George Washington and born on the 4th of July, has with nonconformists and outcasts. She quotes the passage that names George's cultural models. The chapter is excellent on literary influences, and this passage attests to Brown's cosmopolitan learning and cultural knowledge of international arts:

> George Washington could not relate to demoralized Bigger (Nigger, Chigger) Thomas. He could relate to Julien Sorel, to Tom Jones; he could relate to the nigger in Malcolm X., LeRoi Jones, James Baldwin and Eldridge Cleaver. George could relate to the Outcasts of Life and of Literature. He could relate to the protagonists of *The Satyricon* and *The Golden Ass*. But he could not relate to Bigger. He could not relate to stupidity, fear, and demoralization.

Luczak discusses many forms of the novel and fictional portrayals of other African American writers, which lead some of the writers—two excellent examples are Cecil Brown and John A. Williams—to write encyclopedic novels about writing novels and to acknowledge influences and personal experiences from their lives in their fictional works. Luczak's scholarship exhibits impressive knowledge of post-modern, historical and sociological novels of enlightened writers. The scholarship also exhibits praiseworthy familiarity with popular and cosmopolitan culture, and with sophisticated and street language.

The author's understanding of subtle forms of race consciousness and its intersections with identity questions and nationalistic dilemmas is commensurate with the fictional works. Contradictions in French democratic principles of humanism and French perceptions of African Americans and Algerian Arabs are handled knowledgeably. Equally admirable is how Luczak does not flinch at portrayals of female characters, especially in Frank Yerby's *Speak Now* and in Cecil Brown's *Life and Loves*. Her descriptions of the life style of American expatriates, comparing and contrasting them with white writers of the Lost Generation, are persuasively handled. Above all, the pages on the theme of travel are superb.

Luczak's contribution to African American expatriate literature of the 1960s is, in addition, a worthy tribute to the efforts of the MLA beginning in 1975 to bring "minority literatures" into the academic mainstream. This scholarly book is also a tribute to the late Katherine Newman and to the journal that she promoted in the early 1970s, *MELUS*, (*Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*). Founded in 1974, the journal *MELUS* and the MLA have significantly enlarged the concept of American literature and set it alongside the international literatures of the world. Finally, Edwin Mellen deserves much praise for publishing this insightfully written scholarly book.

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Beata Zawadka, *Dixie jest kobietą. Proza Petera Taylora wobec kwestii współczesnej południowej kobiecości* [Dixie Is a Woman: Peter Taylor's Prose and the Issue of Contemporary Southern Womanhood]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011. 239 pages.

Dixie jest kobietą is a Polish language version of Beata Zawadka's doctoral dissertation, which she successfully defended in 2007. In the introduction to her monograph, Zawadka announces the intention to combine an analysis of the socio-historical data on

women inhabiting the American South and an examination of Southern womanhood as presented in works of literature (9). In order to achieve the above goal, the scholar chooses to focus on the prose of Peter Taylor, an American short-story writer, novelist, and playwright, whose fiction was usually set in Tennessee and probed the conflicts between the traditional values of the rural society and the attitudes of the newer generations in the mid-twentieth century. Zawadka justifies the somewhat paradoxical choice of a *male* writer by pointing out that he was "one of the most penetrating interpreters of the historical and mythological legacy of the South" (11, trans. A.K.-Ł.), capable of offering a multidimensional vision of female characters and giving justice to their complexity. Furthermore, Zawadka posits that although Taylor was often dismissed as too stereotypical in his portrayal of Southern women, his literary works yield fresh insights into the nature of Southern womanhood, particularly against the background of the political and cultural distinctiveness of the region.

The methods Zawadka employs in order to support her central thesis are simple, but effective. Her detailed textual analysis of female characters in Taylor's selected short stories and novels is firmly grounded in the historical and socio-cultural contexts of both the antebellum South and the post-Civil War era. In addition to utilizing rich historical resources, throughout her book, Zawadka consistently refers to the assumptions and philosophy of academic feminism, explaining that this particular "transborder tool" of analysis will help bridge theory and practice in a productive way (12). Even though the historical and feminist perspectives are largely relegated to footnotes in the subchapters devoted specifically to Taylor's *oeuvre*, their highly informative content very effectively complements Zawadka's descriptions of plotlines and female protagonists.

The volume is organized into three rather bulky chapters. Each of them deals with a specific version of Southern womanhood, distinguished either by the marital status of the female protagonists and the less important characters in Taylor's novels and short stories or by their racial background. The chapters are organized according to the same structural principle, namely a general historical perspective concerning Southern women is followed by a detailed analysis of selected works by Peter Taylor. The Civil War provides yet another commonality in Zawadka's book, insofar as it constituted not only a landmark in the history of the United States, but also a watershed moment for the American South, necessitating, among other things, a reexamination of the Victorian ideal of True Womanhood.

The first chapter is devoted to the highest ideal of Southern womanhood as embodied by white, married, and affluent women. While the first part of this chapter is devoted to describing Old South values as well as the ambiguous consequences of espousing the traditional roles performed by Mothers, Wives, and Ladies, in the second part Zawadka

examines Taylor's fictionalized vision of married women and the influence of the patriarchal system on their motivations, agendas and social roles they agree to perform. Drawing upon the research conducted by such renowned scholars as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Tara McPherson, Zawadka stresses the subversive potential of the dominant "masquerade of femininity" in the American South, but at the same time is capable of realistically assessing the limitations imposed by the patriarchal ideology and of addressing the problem of women's active participation in sustaining the oppressive system.

The second chapter provides a thorough discussion of the status and aspirations of single/unmarried women, who are traditionally referred to as Belles, Spinsters or Widows. Zawadka argues that, similarly to the case of married women in the South, their ambitions are very much congruous with and typical of the Ideal Custodian of regional culture. Understandably, Zawadka cannot provide an exhaustive and straightforward answer to the question concerning the exact influence of the Civil War on the situation of those women, but she is keen to remind us that such novels as Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* tend to present unmarried women as skilful negotiators who are constantly trying to redefine the boundaries of "free" womanhood (112). In what is arguably the most engaging section of the chapter, Zawadka points out that although widows appear relatively rarely in Taylor's short stories and novels, they nevertheless form a very special subgroup of the Southern elites: "unlike the Belle, and more in accordance with the cultural portrait of the Spinster, [the Widow] seems to be an embodiment of greater female self-awareness" (142; trans. A.K.-Ł.) and gives the impression of being mature and able to control her own life. Sylvia Harrison, the protagonist of Taylor's short story "The Dark Walls," exemplifies some of the contradictions usually associated with the figure of the Widow. Faced with the prospect of returning to her native Tennessee after her husband's premature death, Sylvia decides to stay in Chicago and start a new life, even at the risk of not being able to entirely shake off the old habits and convictions. Having analyzed Sylvia's choices, Zawadka makes a compelling argument about the emergence of "a third, hybridized version of Southern womanhood" (157; trans. A.K.-Ł.).

The final chapter of *Dixie jest kobietą* begins with the discussion of the cultural status of African American women in the South in the years 1830-1865. Zawadka describes the ways in which the patriarchy strove to reduce them to a mere opposite or shadow of True (because white) Womanhood. She also offers a meticulous account of the dominant models of black womanhood as defined by the Southern elitist norm, focusing on the humiliating stereotypes of the "dirty," over-sexualized Jezebel, the hard-working, dumb Mammy, and the overbearing, man-hating Sapphire. Particularly poignant are Zawadka's remarks about the consequences of white planters' domination over black female labor

force: paradoxically, African American women's efforts at emancipation and fulfilling their cultural potential only strengthened the hierarchies and ideals cherished by the white South and underlying the system of slavery. The remaining part of the chapter is devoted to an examination of seven short stories by Taylor. As Zawadka succinctly observes, their black protagonists are "forced to choose between a subservient role in the dominant white culture and personal fulfillment—and thus become an obstacle to cultural progress in the region" (190; trans. A.K.-Ł.). In comparison with the other two chapters of the monograph, here the textual analysis is considerably shorter. Additionally, one might argue that an inclusion of references to the contemporary stereotypes of black women could make the chapter more pertinent, especially in terms of showing the power and continuity of prejudice.

In her concluding remarks, Zawadka suggests that while the sentimentalism of such Southern authors as Margaret Mitchell or Peter Taylor has often been denigrated as a predictable and reactionary exercise in nostalgia, it should be embraced as an organizing principle of Southern culture and examined in a wider cultural context. Ultimately, Zawadka's well-researched and enjoyable book reads like a heartfelt homage to the more traditional aspects of Southern writing and seemingly old-fashioned ways of portraying women whose free will and long-term goals are undermined by the oppressive patriarchal culture. Overall, *Dixie jest kobietą* is highly recommended as a structurally coherent, thematically consistent project which, apart from being a worthy contribution to the field of Southern studies, definitely encourages more appreciation for the diversity and complexity of female characters in Taylor's prose.

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Patrycja Antoszek, *The Carnivalesque Muse: The New Fiction of Robert Coover*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL & Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, 2010. 228 pages.

Patrycja Antoszek's *The Carnivalesque Muse: The New Fiction of Robert Coover* is an ambitious enterprise in which the author reads three of Coover's novels published at the turn of the century within the framework of the theory of carnival. The carnivalesque aesthetics as developed by Bakhtin serves only as a starting point for a discussion of the ways in which the carnivalesque images and strategies work to provoke further considerations of the functions the body and its representations play in the contemporary psychoanalytic discourse. Thus, the carnivalesque becomes more

than a postmodernist fictional device: it is, as Antoszek puts it, a means of mediating the contemporary subject's "individual terrors; it becomes an attempt to represent the unrepresentable" (204).

In Chapter One, Antoszek offers a review of the theory of carnival that she will use in her analysis of Coover's texts, beginning with a comprehensive presentation of the Bakhtinian view of carnival as an outlet for popular culture of opposition, which—through its denial of decorum and hierarchy—becomes a political statement of subversion. The gradual disappearance of carnivalesque practices, Stallybrass and White claim, must be linked to the rise of bourgeois ideology, with its insistence on setting clear boundaries between opposites, a policy allowing for the marginalization, distancing or suppressing of that which is considered "low." Nonetheless, the presence of the marginalized is essential for the achievement of a stable self—drawing on Kristeva's notion of abjection Antoszek suggests that in the bourgeois society the function of the carnival is to "play with the terror and laugh at it" (37). Carnival becomes privatized, interiorized and bound to the individual unconscious, allowing for the staging of and coming to terms with subjective obsessions and wishes, while its "symbols, imagery, imaginative repertoires" enter high culture (39). However, it is only in postmodernist novels that rely on typically carnivalesque categories of parody, eccentricity, excess, grotesque imagery of the body and heteroglossia that a fully-fledged "festival of misrule"—McHale's "fictional carnivals"—appears, the transgressive nature of carnival visible also in the crossing of boundaries between high and low art that these novels accomplish (53). The carnival, Antoszek concludes, becomes a metaphor, a symbol and a reflection of the postmodern reality, and the discussion of the phenomenon must be related to that which arises as the carnival's role as a meaningful social practice seems to disappear: the re-emergence of psychoanalysis and the re-birth of the Gothic. Thus the carnival becomes a means of mediating the repressed, which is exactly Coover's strategy in *Gerald's Party* (1986), *Pinocchio in Venice* (1991), and *Lucky Pierre* (2002).

Each of the following chapters offers an in-depth analysis of Coover's selected texts. Antoszek follows the theoretical framework set in Chapter One, in which the carnivalesque relates to various psychoanalytic concepts (Freud's uncanny, Kristeva's abjection and Semiotic order, Lacan's Symbolic and Real order) and postmodernist practices (fragmentation, simulation or centralization of the marginalized). This allows her to reach convincing conclusions about the function of the carnivalesque in Coover's novels. The conclusions are preceded by a very interesting and sustained argument over the aspects that individuate the texts under discussion. Thus, Chapter Two opens with a reflection concerning the importance of parties—"festive visions"—as instances of surrogate carnival, a modern continuation of the tradition of the carnivalesque feast, albeit without

the latter's religious function or communal scale. Chapter Three offers a scrutiny of Venice as a cultural construct, a seat of Gothic adventure, a place of "literary deaths" endowed with a "fluid, amphibious quality" (112, 113). Chapter Four examines the cultural role of pornography as potential means of articulating "the repressed, culturally unacceptable forms of sexual behavior" (170). In each case, Antoszek skillfully moves from Coover's images of the party, the city, and the film to expose their proximity to the carnivalesque, and then to suggest the implications of the presence of the carnivalesque in particular novels: Coover's focus on the body's nether regions and physiological functions and on the fragmentation of the human body is reinterpreted as fragmentation of the self, suppression of the Other, and the failure of language to fill "inevitable gaps in all representation" (82); his presentation of Venice as both the threshold and the marketplace of the Bakhtinian vision turns the place into "the public square, where the repressed, closeted inner aspects of the self are made public again" (120); while his double parody of pornography and anti-pornographic discourse turns *Lucky Pierre* into "a treatise on the nature of sex, physicality and representation" (168), whose main concerns are "performance, masquerade, and the role of arts in sublimating the abject" (164).

The strength of Antoszek's analysis lies not only in her comprehensive grasp of theory or its skilful application to Coover's novels, but also in the clarity of language and in the precision argument. Her book is evidently well-researched and offers many thought-provoking insights into Coover's novelistic practice.

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Benny Pock, *Mediality, Cybernetics, Narrativity in the American Novel after 1960*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 321 pages.

In his 1984 essay "Is it O.K. to be a Luddite?", Thomas Pynchon famously pointed out that, given the historical origins of the term, a Luddite is not so much a "technophobic crazy" but the one who "denies the machine" of the State (40). In the eyes of many postmodern critics, Pynchon's words offered the most succinct expression of the postmodern sense of rebellion against the imprisoning apparatus of the American military-industrial complex, which has kept the free thinking individual by his throat as "the Sirens of Los Alamos wailed [him] down, and wailed down Wall." Such has been the prevailing, if not "canonical," reading of Pynchon's work, the work of other writers of his generation, and the whole countercultural aesthetics of the early postmodern fiction. Its features, such as stylistically and thematically heterogeneous collage, self-referentiality,

sign-reflectedness, reader-orientedness—the list is well known—have been read as none other than markers of "historiographically metafictional," counter-systemic commentary on the American reality from the 1960s to the 1980s (Hutcheon, Maltby). But in developing this reading, critics seem to have forgotten that when Pynchon said it was O.K. to be a Luddite, he also acknowledged that whereas a Luddite sensibility always rages against the political apparatus, it recognizes that the machine as such is not the guilty suspect: "In the Computer Age" Pynchon wrote, "it may be that the deepest Luddite hope of miracle has now come to reside in the computer's ability to get the right data to those whom the data will do the most good" (41). In other words, a modern Luddite may be one who uses technology in a liberating manner, as a source of creative potentiality, instead of rejecting it as a tool of oppressive power.

Benny Pock's *Mediality, Cybernetics, Narrativity in the American Novel after 1960s* is a successful attempt to explore this creative potentiality in the engagement of postmodern fiction with the technology of new media. The book traces the history of this engagement to Norbert Wiener's theory of cybernetics, formulated first in 1950 in *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* as well as to Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* (1961) and *Understanding Media* (1964). Pock demonstrates the impact of cybernetics and McLuhanite media theory on the narrative strategies and identity constructs in the works of five writers: William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Paul Auster, Neal Stephenson, and David Foster Wallace. In Pock's view, just as McLuhan was highly critical of the type of subjectivity produced within the print regime of what he called the Gutenberg Galaxy, and proposed more holistic channels of cognition, such as the audio-tactile senses, as offering more suitable means of subjective performance, Pock's writers overcome the bounds of textuality by supplanting old types of narrativity with the more sensually eclectic modes of subjectivity construction made possible by the electronic media. This is especially true of Burroughs and Pynchon, whose works strongly undermine the myth of disembodied textuality, characteristic for the Gutenbergian view of books as carriers for "an abstract transfer of thought," by "invoking the tactile reception of new media, which refers to the increased sensual engagement demanded by television and electronic music" both on the level of formal devices and on the level of content (13).

Before proceeding to examine individual literary works, Pock contextualizes his perspective within the broader framework of poststructuralist theories of textuality and the subject. Although these theories clearly circumscribe the anti-essentialist treatment of subjectivity in the work of postmodern narratives in the 1960s, their impact was facilitated by the intense response of postmodern artists to the cybernetic theory of communication, especially, its concepts of autopoiesis and the feedback loop. Starting with the clarification of McLuhan's theory of electronic media as extensions to human nervous

system and consciousness in the light of the cybernetic models of Wiener, Friedrich Kittler, and biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, Pock explains that since "media give spatio-temporal form to thought, engaging it in a feedback loop that mutually reconfigures thought and medium" (62), and since a literary text is one such medium, its interaction with other memory carriers and transmission tools such as television or a computer works towards the expansion of the boundaries of one's memory, identity, and consciousness. "Literature may thus function as a form of memory which may be employed for individual as well as collective purposes" (67), or as Pynchon would have it, for the purposes of getting "the right data to those whom the data will do the most good." Surprisingly, Benny Pock never mentions Pynchon's 1984 essay, even though his argument at this point moves on to the historical account of what Fred Turner has termed the "cybernetic counterculture," a 1960s movement of which today's media-based Luddites, Yes Men, and digital-rights movement, Electronic Frontier Foundation, are notable remnants. Pock's account of cybernetic counterculture and its fascination with new media as a way of developing a "transpersonal subjectivity" is meticulously detailed: we are given everything from the reading list at the Joan Baez Institute for the Study of Nonviolence to the details of activities of the Manhattan USCO group, Merry Pranksters, John Cage and Roy Ascott, and even the Acid Tests at the 1966 Trips Festival in San Francisco. Pock certainly deserves great credit for reminding today's scholars of the postmodern engagement with technology (especially the ones dealing with science-fiction and its themes of disembodiment) about those early links between technology-friendly art and political subversiveness. This section is one of the strongest moments in the book, though the following chapter on William Burroughs and Pynchon does not fall far from its benchmark.

Pock finds Burroughs an exception among Beat writers in terms of his reflections on the relation between the new media and the counterculture. Not only does Pock emphasize the writer's frequent references to notions of feedback looping and game theory over his interest in psychedelic experiments, but actually re-classifies Burroughs's "expansive" style as a project of making media-based consciousness expansion alive and tactile in the text, a project based on the principle of looping aural elements (tape recordings), visual elements (images) and the medium of written language. According to Pock, Burroughs's *Nova* Trilogy (1961-64) is the most complete example of this enterprise, a "manifesto against the old usage of the book in favor of the newer media" and the best example of what Pock recognizes as a cybernetically structured "expanded subjectivity" (102, 97).

What in Burroughs's writing works best on the level of form becomes a theme in Thomas Pynchon's novels. Pock concentrates especially on *The Crying of Lot 49*, arguing that cybernetic logic underpins the subversive elements in the novel, thus restructuring the environment of Oedipa Maas, the novel's protagonist. By re-reading the oft-

quoted passages from Pynchon's novel—Oedipa's reception of the painting by Remedios Varo, her interactive encounter with Nefastis's machine, her vision of the San Narciso street layout as an electronic circuit, or Mucho Mass's becoming a radio DJ—Pock finds in Pynchon a pattern of characters undergoing a change of consciousness as a result of a sensory media experience, a pattern which links the "countercultural inversion of the Marxist dogma" with "cybernetic information theory" (116).

The following chapters of *Mediality, Cybernetics, Narrativity* deal with writers who represent so radically different types of postmodern aesthetics and countercultural contexts from Burroughs and Pynchon that one would wish to see them discussed in separate volumes. Despite the strength and ingenuity of Pock's interpretations of Auster, Stephenson, and Wallace, the background of their engagement with the theory of cybernetics and the media dominant at their historical moment is not as detailed and illuminating as was the case in the discussions of the writers from the 1960s. Entering a dialogue with Joseph Tabbi's *Cognitive Fictions* (2002), Pock reads Auster through the prism of second-order cybernetics and the neurophysiological notion of autopoiesis (a term denoting the operational mode of all living systems that share the aspects of self-organization, self-transformation, and operational closure). The interpretive angle helps Pock examine the ways in which Auster's work "emulates the moment-to-moment movement of consciousness" (146) and allegorizes memory and cognition processes as ways of structuring and restructuring information and organizing self-narratives on a man-medium platform (142). From Auster, Pock moves on to the cyberpunk writer Neal Stephenson, and although in this case the idea of the writer's engagement with cybernetics and media technology is by no means far-fetched, this chapter marks the moment in *Mediality*, *Cybernetics, Narrativity* where the book seems to be approaching its own heat death—maybe because the novels he deals with are about information overload. The Stephenson chapter stands brilliant on its own, with its careful teasing out of the formal and thematic elements of information processing, or spatial navigation and programming in *Snow Crash* and *Diamond Age*, but just like the following chapter on David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, it gets caught up in the loop of self-replicating levels of commentary and cross-references to texts and writers discussed earlier. This being said, it needs to be admitted that since in Pock's analysis, Wallace's and Stephenson's novels figure as protest declarations against what Raymond Williams has called the "mechanical materialism" of new media, the last chapters of *Mediality, Cybernetics, Narrativity* fulfill its promise of presenting a historical overview of McLuhanite and cybernetic influences in postmodern literature after 1960s. Benny Pock's book is by all means a recommended point of reference for anyone interested in broadening their understanding of the role played by technology in the shaping of postmodernist aesthetics.

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Agnieszka Matysiak, *The Backstage as the Diegetic Space in the (Neo)Gothic Dramas*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2010. 128 pages.

Małgorzata Miciuła, *(W)holes in the Eyes/I's: William Gaddis's The Recognitions from the Neo-Baroque Perspective*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2010. 124 pages.

These are two first volumes in the Studies in Literature and Culture, a new series published by the Catholic University in Lublin. The two are works by relatively young scholars, devoted to difficult and/or less known texts and characterized by a skillful and innovative use of theoretical devices that, quoting from one of the books, might be described as "neo-solutions."

The first volume in the series, *The Backstage as the Diegetic Space in the (Neo)Gothic Dramas* by Agnieszka Matysiak, is a semiotic study of the theatrical space, both the physical space and the space of meaning. The choice of texts is quite unusual; there is a chapter on Joanna Baillie's drama, and another on Sam Shepard's neo-Gothic plays, but the selection shows the latent possibilities of the Gothic space in seemingly quite remote areas of culture. Such distant affinities are always intriguing and seem to be typical of studies based on "neo-solutions." The theoretical background of Agnieszka Matysiak's book has been derived from structuralist studies of the theatre, most importantly books and articles by representatives of the Prague School, Yuri Lotman and other representatives of the Tartu School, as well as several more specific studies, including Roland Barthes's book on Racine. Such a return to structuralism could be frowned upon as a whim, but the author uses stringent structural vocabulary only as spring board for her own, innovative approach to semiosis, in which she is proposing a close correspondence between physical and semantic (cultural) phenomena. Indeed, such inspired writing is rarely seen nowadays:

> Therefore, I propose to acknowledge the concept of the sign as the entity mirroring a graphic representation of the nucleus of an atom, together with the electron cloud, where the co-existence and cooperation of its three components compose this basic unit of matter. The signified and the signifier may be equivalent to protons and neutrons—the signified being a proton, whereas the signified epitomizing a neutron. Protons represent those nucleons, which are endowed with an electric charge of +1 elementary charge and, thus, they are capable of interactions with other particles. Therefore, the hypothesis may be put forward that since the signified constitutes the conceptual unit of the sign and expresses a particular idea, some energy is also bestowed upon it for an individual concept is never neutral. Furthermore, having the energy, the signified exerts an impact on character of the concretely perceptible signifier as it is an idea that shapes the appearance of its visualized conveyor (whether it is a sound, a written mark like a letter, or a sequence of letters composing a word). (15-16)

Referents transmit energy (like electron orbitals, by absorbing and emitting it), bind or repel other signs, creating semantic fields and, ultimately, the semiosphere, a concept of the Tartu school; given such similarity between physical and semiotic phenomena, the author can question received opinions on both matter and mind, only to show how the similarity, and the questioning, works in texts.

Semiosphere, where referents transmit the energy of signifieds, may be compared to the theatrical space, as it was conceived of by the Prague School and derivative theoretical discussions, most importantly the studies by William Eggington and Michael Issacharoff. Gothic space in the theatre corresponds to a rift between nature and the mind, the rift that occurred in the eighteenth century (Foucault, Kristeva). It is gender-based and structured similarly to the tripartite sign: the male signifier is a sign vehicle (the mind, the electrons), the female aspect belongs to the signified (nature, protons). The female signified corresponds, according to the author, to physical beauty and/or the impact of the theatrical space; the most important repository of signifieds is invisible, in the off-stage, the numinous (Rudolph Otto) theatrical zone behind the significant "content" of a play. The wealth of philosophical and theoretical references is necessary, it seems, for this hidden zone to gain its voice, for it to become expressive in a critic's discussion. Textual evidence comes from a detailed chapter on Joanna Baillie and a somewhat shorter discussion of Sam Shepard's two plays, *Buried Child* and *Fool for Love*.

In Małgorzata Miciuła's book on Gaddis, *(W)holes in the Eyes/I's*, the theoretical background combines the concepts of neo-Baroque, Deleuze's folding, his minor and major strategies, Foucault's heterotopia, Lacan's theory of vision and perspective, and

feminist approaches to visuality, the body, and female *juissance*. All these concepts are essential to the discussion presented in the book, but they revolve around Lacan's discussion of perspective and the vanishing point. Miciuła concentrates on absence and omission (of women characters) in Gaddis's novel; women characters, like the vanishing point in perspective, organize and arrange the visible elements of the novel. The author shows the correspondences between the novel's composition and the paintings mentioned (and forged) in it. In this, the author presents an innovative reading of *The Recognitions*, going beyond the theme of forgery and beyond the development of the main (male) characters. In doing so, the author ignores longer sections with strong and well developed characterization of women, e.g. Esther in I.3, and, Maude in I.5, and, of course, the extensive characterization of Esme. The point holds, however, that it is through their disappearances in subsequent chapters that those characters become vanishing points. Similarly, *(W)holes in the Eyes/I's* has no extensive references to Clementine literature and Goethe's *Faust* as intertexts for *The Recognitions*, which is undoubtedly good for clarity and coherence, but presents a truncated image of the novel.

The rejection of intertextual explication, however, is only an apparent lack and certainly a deliberate decision on part of the author, who, concentrating on references to visual arts, presents the novel as a generator of structures rather than as a structure itself. With the multitude of references, Gaddis's book does not call for a comprehensive interpretation which could take into account all its complexities—such interpretation would probably go against the grain of the novel. The detailed description of the perspective and vanishing point in the novel, however, shows how this compositional device creates and brings out various points of view, subject positions, identities, characters, and, as well, intertextual references. Instead of explaining the novel's structure, a daunting and possibly impossible task, Miciuła uses "neo-solutions" to discuss the text as a generator of self-mirrored, recursively repeated patterns, a generator of infinite complexities. It seems that with the use of "neo-solutions" it is possible to present a discussion of a limited set of elements of the text and still arrive at a coherent global discussion; the intertexts and other omitted elements, like vanishing points, could be easily located and made visible in a more extended critical discussion.

There are two theoretical affinities between Matysiak's and Miciuła's books. First of all, they conceive of texts in visual terms; they are visual readings. This seems to be consistent with the subject matter, since Matysiak's book is about the theatrical space, and Miciuła's about paintings referred to in a novel. Meanings, of the greatest ideological and existential caliber, are not absent, as both authors are sometimes wont of carelessly saying, but hidden or invisible in the visual framework prepared in theoretical parts. In particular, the neo-Baroque, mentioned in both books (although *The Backstage* contains

only a cursory reference), is a visual paradigm. The visuality in the two books, however, is that of illusions and limits of visual representation: infinitely folding and repeating mirror images, automorphic recurrence of fractal shapes within them, vanishing points, optical illusions and distortions, chaos and deluding regularity of strange attractors. This desire for strange and ungainly shapes goes beyond the paradigm set by Joseph Frank in his essay on spatial form, and perhaps even beyond Mieke Bal's visual readings. Secondly, the direction set by both authors seems to be Deleuzian, that is towards a general world-view to which physical science and humanities are two variants of one and the same thing. Are the "neo-solutions" going to be more attractive for future scholars? Do they undermine the traditional paradigm of "theory," pinned down to several poles, such as "figurative," "political," "hermeneutical," or "formalist" ends of a well known continuum? Do Deleuze, Lotman, and other scholars invoked by the two authors, in the radical blend of human and inhuman world, question the very essence of *Geistwissenschaften*, as they were conceived of by Dilthey? These are, perhaps, the most general questions posed by the two books reviewed here.

Last but not least, both books deserve commendation for editing, design, and illustration. Authors, who wish to concentrate on qualities of signifiers that vanish from the referential space while interacting with it, will work on the very physical shape of their books as carefully as on their signification, ponderous as it may be. Both books are set in a wide variety of types (the reviewer could count more than ten), printed on paper that is floating between white and beige, unusually formatted, richly illustrated, and enriched with beautiful cover art. This represents a welcome change in the direction of Baroque publishing practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when books, especially scientific and critical ones, were combined works of art.

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Birgit Däwes, *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 497 pages.
Sven Cvek, *Towering Figures: Reading the 9/11 Archive*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. 271 pages.

Over a decade after the destruction of the World Trade Center, there exists a huge body of literary responses to 9/11 and its aftermath, and the amount of critical works devoted to this literary phenomenon steadily grows. Such tendencies in literature and criticism are far from being surprising, given the unprecedented scale of national trauma

in the United States as well as the global reaction of shock, compassion and support after the terrorist attack on New York. It goes without saying that events like 9/11 have an overwhelming effect on the human imagination and determine public expectations with respect to the cultural activities helping to come to terms with what is far beyond individual comprehension. A number of American writers immediately responded to 9/11 and published poems, essays and short stories about the tragedy in major magazines and newspapers. Artists from various fields were involved, from the very beginning, in ceremonies commemorating the victims of the terrorist attack. In the course of time—and predictably enough—novels about 9/11 began to appear, and by now they have become so numerous and diverse that it is possible to treat them as a separate thematic genre and even to talk about some kind of canon of 9/11 novels, including not only American books, but also a handful of works by writers from other countries. As it inevitably happens in the process of canon-formation, some books have received greater attention than others. Therefore, before any further crystallization of the canon of 9/11 novels takes place, it is definitely time for some kind of synthesis that would do justice to the diversity of narrative representations of the event. Without a doubt. Birgit Däwes's book *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*, offering precisely such a synthesis, is a very timely publication. It contains a thorough recapitulation of the state of the genre of the 9/11 novel at the present moment and develops an interpretative classification that will remain a primary reference for future academic critics writing about 9/11 in literature.

Däwes pursues a much more ambitious aim than literary scholars typically do: instead of proving a given thesis on the basis of a limited selection of texts, she approaches a major literary phenomenon in its entirety. Symptomatically enough, she is quite specific about numbers, and numbers do matter in her monograph, providing the best evidence of its scope. Namely, Däwes has identified 231 books that can be classified as 9/11 novels, all published before June 2011; out of these, 162 have been written by U.S.-American authors and constitute the material for analysis in the book. The impressive scope of *Ground Zero Fiction* can be fully appreciated if one bears in mind that the broadest earlier book-length presentation of the 9/11 novel, Richard Gray's *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* (2011), examines seventeen literary works. Däwes's discussions of individual novels are not very extensive—Updike's *Terrorist* has six pages, DeLillo's *Falling Man* has seven, and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* has ten—but clearly she is much more interested in the narrative paradigms that emerge across a variety of texts than in the implications of single novels, however important these may have been for the development of the genre. Referring to numerous examples, Däwes looks at how such paradigms function in the broad and dynamic con-

text of what she calls, after Winfried Fluck, the "cultural imaginary" (6). In this realm, fiction is "a catalyst of transgression and dehierarchization" (7), because it enables the creation of a multitude of discourses whose tentativeness or alternativeness destabilizes the entrenched discourse of commemoration and interferes, on a more general level, with a variety of social, cultural and political issues with which the American public has been preoccupied. Däwes explores the complex symbolic structures encoded in 9/11 novels as expressions not only of immediate emotional and political responses to the terrorist attacks, but also of the lasting epistemological and ontological anxieties of the postmodern age.

Contrary to most critics who have written on the 9/11 novel before her, Däwes does not take the definition of the genre for granted, and she proposes a set of its defining criteria. Thus, she points out three aspects upon which the recognition of the genre depends: the presentation of the setting, the thematic or symbolic significance of 9/11 in the plot, and the characters' perception of the event. Däwes emphasizes that each of these criteria creates a plethora of narrative possibilities, which in turn account for the multiplicity of the variants of representing 9/11 in fiction. Her criteria are valid, indeed, and, in their multifarious combinations, they appear to describe comprehensively the genre model. Some doubts may arise, however, with respect to how she applies her criteria to novels in which the presentation of 9/11 and its aftermath is marginal, if not merely implied. The long list of 9/11 novels in the bibliography includes, among others, such well-known works as Roth's *Everyman*, Powers' *The Echo Maker* or Ellis's *The Lunar Park*, which are not directly concerned with the event and only contain vague allusions to it or mention it, as it were, in passing. For Däwes, such brief references are sufficient to classify the books as 9/11 novels and to place them in the category of "unnaration," the term signifying a refusal to narrate the event. However intriguing all this sounds, one can get a suspicion that Däwes seeks pretexts to expand her list of 9/11 novels to the possible limits, especially by including in it works by established authors whose new books are expected to attract attention. Looking at some titles on Däwes's list, one can perhaps wonder whether most of contemporary American narratives of loss, mourning, menace, remembrance, forgetting, redemption and recuperation would not qualify, in one sense or another, as 9/11 novels. In any case, this is just one aspect of *Ground Zero Fiction* that calls for a serious critical debate, attesting in this way to the book's impact.

The essential part of Däwes's book—300 out of nearly 500 pages—contains the discussion of six models of representing 9/11 in the American novel. The first is what she calls a "metonymic" approach, which relies on the narrative techniques of "premonition, ellipsis, implication, projection, and satirical distortion" (20) as ways of achieving a text's indirect engagement with the event of 9/11. The second approach, described as "salvational," on the contrary, presupposes the necessity to re-enact the event and, ulti-

mately, to establish the terms for its closure. Such narratives often involve quasi-religious themes, such as recovery or redemption, and allude to the cultural traditions infused with religious significance. The "diagnostic" model comes third and comprises novels that explore the social and political consequences of the terrorist attack. In this category, the thematic scope includes "the Bush administration's immediate response, the long-term modifications of both domestic and foreign policies and… the impact that 9/11 had on concepts of gender, ethnicity, class, and national identity at large" (20). Importantly enough, this approach, as a rule, applies to novels written by American ethnic authors. Däwes emphasizes the difference in the treatment of ethnic themes in "diagnostic" and "appropriative" narratives, the latter variety manifestly aiming at reconstructing the voice and the perspective of the Other. In the fifth model, called "symbolic," the events of 9/11 provide a background for the presentation of "personal crisis, loss or decline" (21). The last category includes "writerly" narratives, characterized by formal innovations and freely combining the constitutive features of the other models.

Ground Zero Fiction benefits immensely from the author's evasion of the rigors of a pre-established methodology of reading. Quite on the contrary, Däwes works across a whole spectrum of literary methodologies, both older and newer ones. Her typological approach to the 9/11 novel evokes the spirit of structuralism, but easily transcends the limits of this traditional school of studying literary genres in highlighting the dynamics of literary and extra-literary contexts. In her understanding of the cultural imaginary and of the subversive work of literature, she makes a nod toward Mikhail Bakhtin, even if she does not acknowledge the Russian critic. On several occasions Däwes reiterates her debt to new historicism. Recent developments in literary theory, such as the incorporation of memory studies, considerably substantiate her argument. Interestingly enough, Däwes appears to be somewhat skeptical about the use of trauma theory in the analysis of 9/11 novels, even though it continues to function as a primary interpretative framework for literary scholars writing on narrative representations of 9/11. Strictly speaking, she notices that the predominance of trauma theory narrows down the scope of interpretations and, as a consequence, precludes the recognition of the diversity of 9/11 novels. Däwes has done a titanic job writing *Ground Zero Fiction*; she has proved her sweeping grasp of the subject, ability to create a thorough synthesis of a multifarious cultural phenomenon, and, last but not least, personal determination. It can be said without any exaggeration that *Ground Zero Fiction* marks a new stage in critical explorations of the 9/11 novel. Its encyclopedic quality makes it an obligatory source for all those who will write on related topics for many years to come.

Although in comparison with Birgit Däwes's *Ground Zero Fiction* most of the existing—and presumably forthcoming, too—book-length studies of cultural representations

of 9/11 are bound to appear rather modest, Sven Cvek, in his book *Towering Figures: Reading the 9/11 Archive*, demonstrates that a good selection of material for analysis enables the establishment of a truly broad perspective on narrative depictions of 9/11. Cvek's work shares important premises with Däwes's, offering a new historicist approach to the event and showing how different modes of representation create competing versions of 9/11. What lies at the core of such a proliferation of images and narratives of the event is the issue of power. Reading selected texts, generated by various media and belonging to what Cvek calls "the 9/11 archive," he traces the mechanisms of constructing hegemonic interpretations of the national tragedy, and concomitantly explores the textual strategies of contesting such imposed interpretations. He develops his argument around the concept of national trauma as a sociopolitical phenomenon. Cvek claims that 9/11 strengthened U.S. nationalism insofar as it constituted what he calls, after Dominick LaCapra, "the myth of founding trauma" (11) that facilitated national homogenization through public rituals of mourning and commemoration. At the same time, 9/11 was, unquestionably, a global event that not only redefined America's position on the arena of world politics, but also dramatically affected the ways of experiencing and understanding national sentiments on the domestic scale. Accordingly, Cvek identifies two tendencies in the 9/11 archive: "the archive speaks of a post-traumatic reconstruction of an imagined national wholeness; at the same time many 9/11 fictions also work to reconstitute U.S. nationhood within a planetary context" (11). This dichotomy underscores Cvek's argument and marks an important distinguishing feature of his book against the background of thematically related criticism.

The composition of Cvek's book follows a clearly defined trajectory, from the national to the supranational contexts of the cultural encoding of 9/11. In the first chapter, which is fairly theoretical, the critic examines the ways in which the event was historicized in connection with the hegemonic American historical narratives, but he also points out that the exceptional significance of 9/11 created the possibility of revising thoroughly the categories of historical thinking. The second chapter is devoted to the crucial role of the community as a space of national consolidation through a collective reliving of trauma. The two chapters that follow demonstrate how this process is supported or contested by literary works: thus, one chapter focuses on the uses of melodrama in establishing a narrative model of representing 9/11, and the other shows how literary texts undermine the predominant public discourse on the example of Art Spiegelman's critique of the role of the media after the terrorist attack in his graphic novel *In the Shadow of No Towers*. In the fifth chapter, Cvek makes a leap to the global aspect of 9/11, and in the next three chapters he problematizes such issues as the U.S. economic and political supremacy, fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, global capitalism

and the opposition to it on the basis of Don DeLillo's essays dealing with or alluding to 9/11. By far, the most surprising inclusion in Cvek's selection of analyzed texts is Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*, discussed in the last chapter. According to the critic, this novel, set at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, addresses some problems that are relevant for the situation of the United States in the aftermath of 9/11; in particular, the subject of terrorism, present in Pynchon's novel, provokes a fundamental question about "the possibility and the impossibility of counter-hegemonic political action in a putatively post-historical and post-political world" (15).

Birgit Däwes's *Ground Zero Fiction* and Sven Cvek's *Towering Figures* are important European contributions to the study of literary representations of 9/11. Both books emphasize the inescapability of a historicist approach to the event, demonstrate the threat posed by homogeneous and hegemonic historical interpretations, and point to the subversive role of literature. While Däwes and Cvek share certain general assumptions and conclusions, they follow different interpretative routes. The former highlights the formal variety of 9/11 novels, and the latter pays more attention to how literary and journalistic writings about the event and its aftermath are positioned in relation to the dominant political discourse. Ultimately, even if critics writing about 9/11 in literature reach similar conclusions, their interpretative procedures are impressively varied and, therefore, invariably intriguing.

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Michael Butter, Patrick Keller, and Simon Wendt, eds., *Arnold Schwarzenegger—Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Body and Image*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 266 pages.

This volume could not have been published at a more timely moment. The current scandals surrounding Schwarzenegger's personal life have refocused public attention on "The Governator" and have cracked, to put it mildly, his image of the respectable politician and family man. It so happens that the book edited by Butter, Kettler and Wendt discusses from an interdisciplinary academic perspective precisely the shaping of the image that has just been shattered. While I am afraid that the volume may be too theoretical to enter the popular market, it is certainly a most useful read for scholars from the fields of cultural studies, media studies, gender studies and political sciences who want to be able to place Schwarzenegger within the contexts of their respective disciplines and against the backdrop of the American Dream.

The volume was inspired by an interdisciplinary conference, whose topic and focus I find refreshingly narrow, that is a conference devoted solely to an academic analysis of Schwarzenegger. Admittedly, this narrowness is also somewhat deceptive for, as the editors claim, studying Schwarzenegger means studying America. In the introduction, Butter, Keller and Wendt describe Schwarzenegger as "a synecdoche," "an exemplary case" and "a lens" that brings "larger developments into focus" (10). I cannot resist adding that the Austrian-born governor is also a particularly apt figure for American Studies scholars in a German-speaking country.

While Schwarzenegger has received significant media attention, the editors insist that he has so far escaped scholarly analysis. This volume successfully remedies this state of affairs by providing a collection of insightful essays which utilize up-to-date theoretical approaches for studying the significance of Schwarzenegger in American culture. The chapters in the book can be grouped as focusing on one of three thematic areas: body, film and image. These areas correspond roughly to the stages in Schwarzenegger's transformation from a bodybuilder into a movie star and then into a politician. Of course, there necessarily exist significant overlaps, as the editors notice themselves in the introduction. However, the thematic areas also correspond to the different lenses applied by the individual researchers. While it is impossible to discuss Schwarzenegger's movie roles and neglect his body, the essays gathered in the second group (film) are, overall, more interested in the cinematographic strategies for representing the body rather than in the body itself. Meanwhile, essays focused on the body employ primarily the tools of cultural studies to put Schwarzenegger's performance of the male body in a broader cultural context, paying particular attention to bodybuilding, understood as a body technology influencing the appearance of the human body.

The primary issue which the authors of the first groups of essays analyze concerns the body as a site of cultural contestation, negotiation and normalization. The opening essay, Simon Wendt's "Bodybuilding, Male Bodies and Masculinity in 19th and 20th Century America: Eugen Sandow and Arnold Schwarzenegger," examines the cultural reception of the two eponymous bodybuilders in America of the 1890s and 1980s, respectively. Wendt reveals how constructions of corporeality changed over a span of almost one hundred years. Schwarzenegger's career began at a historical moment when muscular male bodies were ridiculed and scorned as implying an almost feminine—and by implication possibly homosexual—preoccupation with external appearance; such perception changed during Schwarzenegger's bodybuilding career. Wendt suggests that Schwarzenegger's success was simultaneously a causative factor and a result of broader changes taking place in the 1980s. Among these, he lists "growing awareness of and attempts to improve one's body in American society" (40), Schwarzenegger's success as

a movie star and "efforts by bodybuilding promoters and the print media to rid the sport of its gay image" (41). It is in this list of factors where I detect the one weakness of this article; that is, I do not find them exhaustive. One significant addition to the list of reasons mentioned by Wendt is a return to the exaggerated gender differentiation characteristic of the periods of social conservatism; and the 1980s were most certainly such a time. This argument has most often been uttered by feminist scholars writing about the female body, for example Susan Bordo, but it can also be extended to the hypermuscled male body.

In fact, one does not have to look far to see it phrased, because the two essays that follow Wendt's, Danijela Albrecht's and Michaela Hampf's, do precisely this through the analysis of the normalizing influence of the presence of Schwarzenegger's body in mainstream public discourse on the ideal of the feminine body. Albrecht analyzes Schwarzenegger's guidebooks for bodybuilding enthusiasts as solidifying certain notions of "perfect" masculine and feminine corporeality. Albrecht shows how these notions are reflected in the vocabulary of the guidebooks: men are encouraged to "build" their bodies, while women should focus on "shaping" theirs. An interesting take that Albrecht offers on this notion is that the guidebooks also present such perfect bodies as a stepping stone on the road to upward social mobility, using the author himself as the best example. Meanwhile, Michaela Hampf looks at Schwarzenegger's bodybuilding documentary *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, noticing that while the film is clothed in the rhetoric of women's liberation, it in fact propagates a very conservative femininity, not only in the sphere of corporeality. Continuing the theme of performativity, Scheller reads Schwarzenegger as a postmodern artist who merges art and life and who "can be defined primarily as a paradigmatic postmodern, postessentialist, "campy," and "dandy-like self-designer" (99). Scheller compares Schwarzenegger to Andy Warhol, emphasizing that the two are "two sides of a coin" (99) on the basis of the similarity of their lifestyles and attitudes. I do find this comparison somewhat problematic, and even if Warhol and Schwarzenegger can both be described as campy, in the case of the latter, it most certainly is the kind of camp that Susan Sontag described as "naïve," while Warhol's self-fashioning as campy was conscious and deliberate. And for a postessentialist, Schwarzenegger puts a lot of effort into reflecting his manly "essence" in his physical appearance.

The section of the volume devoted to Schwarzenegger's movies is highly interesting as a whole, as are the individual chapters. Julian Hanich analyzes the appeal of Schwarzenegger's "hard-body" movies using the concept of "somatic empathy," which he defines as "reflexive, pre-reflective form of participation or feeling with others" (107). Hanich claims that because the flexing of the character's muscles serves no narra-

tive function, the appeal which it holds for viewers is that of partaking in the character's exceptional strength, albeit obviously without identification. The two essays that follow, Lisa Gotto's "Incorporations: On the Mediality of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Cinematically Built Bodies" and Michael Butter's "From Rough Guy to Family Guy: The Transformation of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Star Persona in *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop*" are, in my eyes, the strongest in the volume. Gotto traces how Schwarzenegger's movies seem to create very rigid dichotomies related to human bodies (masculine/feminine, technological/biological, mobile/immobile) which they then proceed to transgress. Not only are these boundaries deconstructed in each single movie, but also when Schwarzenegger's choice of roles over a period of time is examined more closely, it can easily be discerned that his entire career can also be read according to the paradigm of setting borders and then transgressing them. Reading Butter's essay after Gotto's, the transition is very fluent as Butter elaborates on the transformation of Schwarzenegger's star person over a period of time, starting off as Conan the Barbarian and Terminator and ending up as the first ever pregnant male in *Junior*. While the transition may seem, at first glance, quite dramatic, Butter shows how the latter "family guy" roles depend on the "hard-body" movies, because they "engage and transform" (152) Schwarzenegger's image by "off-casting" the actor. However, and this is the most important point Butter makes, the consolidation of features of the old image (physical strength and the resulting agency) and of the new image (preoccupation with family life) contributed to making Schwarzenegger successful at obtaining the office of the governor of California. Rudinger Heinze makes a somewhat similar point, claiming that Schwarzenegger's Terminator image—in a nutshell: a physically strong outsider who enters an ailing community in order to "clean it up"—was also successfully used by the actor in his political campaign.

The last group of essays, those focused mostly on Schwarzenegger's "image" as politician, reveal The Governator to be a highly pragmatic politician, who skillfully caters to all of his diverse constituents. Frank Sauer analyzes Schwarzenegger's transformation from a Hummer-fan into a proponent of alternative energy sources and pro-ecological regulations and claims that his sudden love affair with "tree-hugging" is rooted in the California economy. The last chapter, authored by Bischhof and Strobl, probes Schwarzenegger's self-presentation in his public speeches against the backdrop of relevant biographical sources. The chapter does seem to be one of the book's weaker parts, with a simple thesis, according to which Schwarzenegger manipulated his biography in a way that makes him look like the quintessential immigrant living out the "Horatio Alger trajectory" (237). Bischof and Strobl correctly point out these manipulations and analyze them in the context of the American Dream.

Overall, this is a truly outstanding collection, even if the quality of the essays is sometimes uneven. The editors deserve due recognition already for the idea of writing a scholarly volume about Schwarzenegger and for putting the idea into life quickly—the conference took place in September 2009 and the book was on my desk in October 2011—and efficiently. The essays are well-edited and organized into a coherent whole. The volume will be engaging for scholars of several disciplines and could appeal even to readers from outside the academia, if one bears in mind the recent media interest in Schwarzenegger's personal life.

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Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, David Mauk, and Ole Moen, eds., *"E pluribus unum" or "E pluribus plura?" Unity and Diversity in American Culture*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 306 pages.

The very title of the collection *"E pluribus unum" or "E pluribus plura?" Unity and Diversity in American Culture* points to the broad framework of an ambitious interdisciplinary project which owes its publication to the European Association for American Studies Biennial Conference in Oslo in 2008. The volume is divided into three sections, devoted respectively to cultural, literary and historical explorations of unity and plurality, homogeneity and diversity, fusions and severances that infuse American Studies in all their conceivable research areas. In contrast to more run-of-the-mill collections which tend to concentrate only on one reading of the "e pluribus unum," usually in the form of historical analyses of the nation's formative years or cultural explorations of racial and ethnic identification, Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, David Mauk and Ole Moen, the editors of this volume, decided to include essays that shed an altogether new light on the eponymous notions. After all, the tensions between the centrifugal and centripetal forces that weigh on the matrix of the American public and private life can be discerned not only in the classic struggle between assimilated (or freely chosen) identities and those that were violently imposed but also in a subtle juxtaposition of literary stimuli in poetry, unremitting friction between federalist and anti-federalist tendencies in politics, political agency and subversive authority of national emblems, or even in imaginary and imagined architectural space that allows its inhabitants to escape or, conversely, to merge with the thronging multitudes.

Since each of the eighteen contributors brings a wholly unique perspective on the intersections of "e pluribus unum" and "e pluribus plura," it might be expedient to map out

a few smaller themes that are dispersed throughout the collection. The first of these revolves round the ideological underpinnings of American Studies and the transformations which this part of academia is currently undergoing. In a comprehensive essay "The Romance with America: Approaching America through Its Ideals," Winfried Fluck contends that after the founding myths, of which European scholars used to be so enamored in the past, have crumbled under the heavy weight of revisionist critiques, only the narrative of perpetual trauma remains standing. He warns his fellow scholars that by focusing on transnational, transcultural and transdisciplinary studies, in which diversity, otherness and marginality constitute the focal points, they may be in fact perpetuating the romance with America and its utopian promise, which though not (as yet) realized is undeniably appealing. The shift from perceiving the US as an exceptionalist nation to a profane one might just be the way to avoid such romantic misconceptions. Nevertheless, as of now the project put forward by Winfried Fluck is still to be developed and implemented.

A much appreciated essay by George Blaustein outlines the beginnings of American Studies in postwar Europe—"'Other' American Studies: The Salzburg Seminar, American Intellectuals, and Postwar Europe." He offers a valuable insight into both the lecturers and students of the Salzburg Seminar and the problematic nature of exporting American democracy to Europe ravished by war and stripped off of its intellectual and moral dignity. Blaustein provides not only a meticulous historical analysis supported by massive biographical research, but, even more importantly, he notes that the duality of America, which has inspired so many contemporary debates on the limits and scope of American Studies in Europe, is a part of a long-standing discussion, inaugurated perhaps more than sixty years ago in Salzburg.

Questions of identity form a second thread that emerges in a number of essays. Here, the eclecticism is in high demand, and rightly so, as the contributors analyze a number of absorbing, if a tad unrelated, subjects. Struggle over one's identity and ethnicity form the backbone of Hans Bak's "Language, Identity, and Politics in Multicultural New York: Chang-Rae Lee's *Native Speaker*" in which he demonstrates how the city can be read as both the arena of multicultural and interracial conflict and an open-ended possibility to negotiate the instances of being silenced and of regaining a voice, of being visible and remaining invisible, all accomplished through linguistic exertion and semantic games. Bak splendidly reveals how Lee's novel shares a number of affinities, as well as curious discontinuities, with Ellison's *Invisible Man*, primarily in terms of painting urban milieu as the site of assimilation, rebellion and cultural (re)negotiations between dominant white English-speaking city dwellers and non-white immigrants bringing their own incorrect, but ultimately instructive, versions of hyphenated English.

Though African-American experience often comes to the foreground in explorations of the "unum" and "plura," in this collection the two groups that enjoy most prominence are those of Jewish Americans and the Southerners. The former group is perhaps best represented by Susan Winnett's instructive essay "Back to the Fold: Memoir, Conversion, and Community," in which she analyzes the memoirs of people discovering their hitherto unacknowledged or unknown Jewish origins. Showcased as a process of inscription rather than conversion, the newly-found identities prove a shared need to access the "postmemory" which is invariably mediated through their families' traumatic pasts. Commenting further on the importance of returning to one's original community is Dana Mihăilescu with her elegantly written "Lower East Side Fiction and the Displacement of Unified Jewishness." The essay proves how apparently unified and homogenous groups were, or still are, highly diversified. Such "diversity within unity" transpires particularly well in Lower East Side Jewish fiction in which this specific New York borough is presented as "a place of dislocation and transformation" (225), even though it eventually offers the Jewish immigrants a reformulated sense of community.

The issue of southernness is explored by Marcel Arbeit in "Southern Writers outside the South and Their Identities: The Case of Elizabeth Spencer." Arbeit probes how southern identities are (re)constructed in order to handle, on the one hand, the fossilizing stereotypes ubiquitous in mainstream representations of the South, and on the other hand, the heterogeneity of newly-sprung identities. The southern subject reappears in Jan Nordby Gretlund's "Unifying and Diversifying: Southerners Caught between Jefferson and Hamilton," which examines how the two politicians' early debates saturate contemporary southern art. It is always refreshing to observe how seemingly unconnected interpretative paths come together in a scholarly work; in this case, Gretlund aptly demonstrates how political and social discussions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century reverberate not only in twentieth-century literature but also in country music. Moving even further South, Susan Castillo in "George Washington Cable's Caribbean Gothic" seamlessly fuses postcolonialism with economics while investigating the "violated boundaries" of the phantasmatic protagonists in Cable's works. The in-between-ness and indeterminacy of these characters are correlated not only with territorial violations, colonial abuse and slavery, but with gender, class, nationality and race.

Stimulating readings like those already mentioned are supplemented by essays that cover a truly diverse territory beginning with the impact of Japanese prints on Amy Lowell's poetry in Elisabetta Marino's superbly written essay, through the history of jazz reception in the Czech Republic in Josef Jařab's text, Sophie Vallas's examination of the urban locale in Ed McBain's police procedural novels, Jude Davies's rigorously

researched concept of "solidarity across difference" in Theodore Dreiser's non-fiction, and ending with Laurence Gervais-Linon's investigation of the paradoxical nature of gated communities, to name just a few. The collection's very eclecticism and essential interdisciplinarity do, however, result in somewhat erratic jumps between the subjects covered by the contributors, whereas the assessment of "e pluribus unum" and "e pluribus plura" professed by the title is only marginally present in some of the texts. Nevertheless, the volume's impressive range shows the wealth of contemporary American Studies research which encompasses not only conventional ventures into literary and cultural quarters but also highly illuminating explorations of political thought, architecture, jazz, the methodology of teaching and transformations of American academia. All in all, it is undoubtedly an inspiring volume that fittingly demonstrates the breadth and depth of American Studies and the increasing diversity of research conducted in Europe.

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Jerzy Durczak and Paweł Frelik, eds., *(Mis)reading America: American Dreams, Fictions and Illusions*. Kraków: Universitas, 2011. 472 pages.

The volume *(Mis)reading America: American Dreams, Fictions and Illusions* offers a rich and varied perspective on different aspects of American culture. The collection is divided into five sections dedicated respectively to readings of American identity, explorations of the past, interpretations of dystopian futures or alternative histories, reflections on ethnic literatures and media analyses. The overall emphasis of the collection, as already suggested by its title, is on the idea of constructing, interpreting, misinterpreting and remapping the image of America. The idea of a metaphorical, but also physical cartography is strongly present in the first essay the opening section. Andrea O'Reilley Herrera's article, indeed entitled "Cartographies of Knowledge: The Remapping of American Literature and Culture," suggests the emergence of a perspective on American studies that is increasingly transnational in scope, emphasizing experiences of mixed and hybrid forms of national or personal identity. This view emerges in opposition to the increasing visibility, found in contemporary American politics, of a discriminatory and intolerant discourse. On the other hand, Maciej Masłowski's piece concentrates on the notion of reading and interpreting America, focusing on two different modes of interpretation, represented respectively by seventeenth-century Puritan hermeuntics and the con-

spiracy theories that have flourished in American culture and may be found in literature as well, exemplified by Pynchon's or DeLillo's texts. Masłowski locates a connection between these aspects in the idea of a Manichean and deeply interconnected world. In both cases, an act of interpretation is implied in an attempt to "read" an elusive American identity.

This attempt to read, interpret and define American identity is projected towards a sometimes very recent and often traumatic past in the second section of the book. This part of the collection begins with Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis's reflection on the role of houses in literary representations of the decay of the Southern aristocracy, in particular in association with the characters of spinsters. In these narratives, exemplified for instance by Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," the houses become powerful symbols of patriarchy, sexuality, secrecy, decay and different forms of deviance, reinforcing the gothic textual frame. Subsequently, Justyna Kociatkiewicz addresses issues related to historical fiction in her discussion of Robert Coover's *The Public Burning*, a novel controversial for its treatment of the Rosenberg trial, whereas Jerzy Kamionowsky takes into consideration readings of 9/11 by Toni Morrison and Amiri Baraka. In the subsequent section, the focus shifts from reflections on the actual past to "visions of the future and pasts that never came." Significantly, the opening article by Anna Gilarek compares two alternative histories dealing with a dystopian Nazi presence in the United States: Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*. Gilarek's conclusion to her analysis of these two works is that while depictions of a totalitarian America can be considered far-fetched misinterpretations, the dominant discourse of the U.S. as an open, pluralistic society also represents a misconception, as shown by the persistent presence of nativist and xenophobic movements throughout American history, which render the fictional evocation of a Fascist America less far-fetched than it may appear at first. Dystopia is also present in Kamil Rusiłowicz's reading of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. This novel is juxtaposed to the cinematic genre of the catastrophic film, which throughout the decades embodied different collective fears before entering a post-apocalyptic perspective in the aftermath of 9/11. Rusiłowicz indicates that both *The Road* and the more recent catastrophic movies point to a condition of trauma from which America has not recovered yet, reflecting a deepening sense of uncertainty.

The following section of the book contains articles dedicated to ethnic literature with an emphasis on the construction of minority identity, as in Ewa Antoszek's paper dealing with the struggle to define the female self in Chicana literature, going beyond the impositions of traditional Catholicism or of the legacy of conquest and colonial exploitation. Latino literature is also present, this time in a Puerto Rican angle, in Jerzy Ducrzak's

paper. Durczak analyses the work of Junot Diaz in parallel with that of the representative of another minority, the African American Claude Brown. Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* and Diaz's *Drown* are placed within the broader tradition of the coming-of-age/autobiographical novel. Durczak contrasts these two texts written forty years from each other, illustrating how the two ethnic coming-of-age stories ultimately embrace diverging views of the United States, since the former endorses the notion of American success whereas the latter rejects it, emphasizing a bleak sense of alienation.

The fifth part of the volume, which concentrates on media representations, explores different aspects of visual culture in America, including, in Zofia Kolbuszewska's article, a study of Jim Jarmusch's film *Dead Man*. Kolbuszewska considers the film as a reinvention of the American frontier mythology. She locates in this representation a form of "neobaroque imago," which stresses elements of hybridity as well as of tensions between majority and minority discourse.

(Mis)reading America weaves together disparate strands and elements to create a multifaceted yet harmonious collection of articles that offer new directions to read and interpret America and its cultures. It encompasses reflections on the distant past represented by the legacy of Puritan America and attempts to imagine possible dystopian futures. It includes analyses of different elements of American literature, going from classics of the traditional canon to the recent narratives of disparate ethnic minorities, as well as considering different genres, media and trends. Many articles reflect on the consequences of 9/11, which, along with the theme of interpretation that gives the volume its title, is also a recurring motif in the collection. Thus *(Mis)reading America*, the work of mostly Polish scholars of American studies, is a thoughtful meditation from an external standpoint on the past and present of U.S. cultural identity.

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