REVIEWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

English Canadian farm novels, on the other hand, communicate the original English settlers' preoccupation with "Order and Control." They present the settler-farmer as an agent of civilized improvement, understood as replacing the bush's "disorder" with the straight lines of the furrows, of roadlessness with roads. This controlling impulse extends also onto the human nature which always threatens the barely established order through unregulated sexuality or through other human passions, such as greed or envy. What is especially noteworthy about English Canadian farm novels, however, is that the most mature of them (as opposed to the English Canadian category of rural idylls) distance themselves from this national obsession with control, featuring characters who either break out of or sabotage such "rage for order" (Martha Ostenso's *Wild*

Geese, 1925) or, if they embrace it, eventually face doubts about what they have accomplished (Frederick Philip Grove's *Fruits of the Earth*, 1933). Moreover, English Canadian authors distinguish themselves by trying, rather stoically, to make sense in their novels of the dramatic changes which took place in agriculture in the first decades of the twentieth century—mechanization and depopulation—and that were soon to obliterate the old-time, heroic style of North American farming. Thus, in English Canadian farm fiction agriculture is gradually reconceptualized as food production for the world, which in the wartime period becomes also as service to the nation and a patriotic duty (R. J. C. Stead's *Grain*, 1926).

As for the American farm novel, its tone was set by Crèvecoeur. His small, independent farmer, the true American, blessed with the opportunities of the frontier which allowed him to pursue his American dream of progress and success, was to be resurrected in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many novelistic characters, the most memorable being Alexandra Bergson from Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* (1913). However, American authors' vision of farm life darkened with time; first, the naturalists challenged the Jeffersonian myth of the farmer's independence, showing him not only at the mercy of nature (which in itself, Freitag argues, was no news in the farm novel, concerned as it had always been with lives determined by the environment), but also of the intangible forces of the market and capital. Then the Depression and the Dust Bowl shook the very foundations of the mythology, dispossessing the small farmer of the land and thus of the tool with which he could carve his better future. And yet, though humbled by their new knowledge, mid-twentieth century American novelists retained faith in the farmer, in his love of land and independence, in his hard-to-break spirit, and his ability to cooperate in the face of crisis. No book expresses better this allegiance to the national ideal of the farmer than Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* of which Freiteg writes: "[it] can be categorized not only as a typical American novel—it depicts after all 'an exodus from a blighted land (Oklahoma) to a promised land (California)'—but also as a typical American *farm* novel: ultimately the Joads are driven by their dream of home ownership and material success as settlers in California" (244).

Freitag's study brings into sharp focus the significance of the farm novel as a genre which helped to both shape and give voice to the consciousness of the three national/cultural groups. The book also makes it almost shockingly clear how these three groups, too often insufficiently distinguished one from the others from the transatlantic perspective, differ fundamentally in their responses to and interpretations of a similar experience. Farming the land can mean very different things to people who labor under different political and ideological exigencies. It can mean a patriotic obligation, it can mean

a civilizing mission, or it can mean translating the national dream into individual success.

Freitag divides his attention evenly among the three literatures, resisting the temptation to overemphasize the American over the Canadian, and especially over the French Canadian material. French Canadian farm novels, it should be stressed, get a fair share of space in this English-language study. They are also quoted in the original, even when English translations are available, which should probably be interpreted as a gesture of cultural respect and academic good manners. This being the case, one thing seems strikingly absent in this very culture-sensitive critique: an explanation of why the author has chosen to altogether ignore the Mexican farm fiction. The absence of any explanation (if not of chapters on Mexican literature) is all the more surprising since he acknowledges sympathetically in his "Introduction" the frequent Canadian complaint about being marginalized in North American comparative studies. So when one reads that the study "take[s] into account farm novels *from all over* North America" (8), one cannot help wondering about his reasons for the exclusion of Mexicans. Is it because Mexican writers did not produce farm novels in the author's understanding of the term? Or is it because these are so different in their concerns that the elegant symmetry of *The Farm Novel* as it discusses the three national literatures would have suffered? Or would including Mexicans bloat the book to an unreasonable size? Or maybe the author prefers to view the Mexican culture as part of South rather than North America? Whatever the reason, a word of explanation would disarm potential criticism of the author's decision, while at the same time simply satisfying the curiosity of the reader unfamiliar with transnational studies protocols.

But what is not there is less important than what is. *The Farm Novel* is a richly informative and extensively researched book that brings into discussion not only American and Canadian, but also German scholarship. At the same time, it is one of those critical studies which open vistas for further exploration. Freitag brings back to critical awareness many completely forgotten novels, such as e.g. Eleanor Gates's *The Plow Woman* (1906), Horace Kramer's *Marginal Land* (1939), Mary Austin's *The Ford* (1917), Louis Bromfield's *The Farm* (1933) or J.Cannon's *Red Dust* (1928)—the list is dozens of titles long—which, for one thing, beg to be reread today and reconsidered from the ecocritical perspective. In the epilogue to his book, he outlines more work yet to be done by mentioning several names of writers who continued to write farm novels in the second half of the twentieth century. In his study he also offers revisionistic readings of several canonical texts to reflect upon, most notably Frank Norris's *The Octopus* (whose ending he interprets as much more of a piece with the book's message than it is usually believed to be) and proposes original perspectives on the relationship

between the farm novel and naturalism ("the phrase 'a naturalistic farm novel' is threatened to become mere pleonasm"; 112) or on the farm epic as literary response to the end of the old-style agrarian way of life in North America. Thus, he leaves readers with a weighty agenda for their future reading and thinking. Yet what the book should be praised for in the first place is the precious reminder it offers to anglophone and francophone Canadianists, as well as to all Americanists—that without taking into account the two other national/cultural groups' responses to the continent, their understanding of North America remains incomplete.

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Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich. *Memory and Neighborhood: Poles and Poland in Jewish American Fiction after World War Two*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013. 170 pages.

When asked about images of Poles in American literature most critics and better informed readers would mention Stanley Kowalski from Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire* and Sophie Zawistowska from William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*. There are, however, more images and, which is not surprising, most of them, especially in the years after WWII can be found in works by Jewish American authors. Not many studies have been done on this topic. One can mention parts of Thomas Gladsky's study *Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature* (1992), encompassing a very large body of works, and more recently Danusha Goska's *Bieganski. The Brute Polak Stereotype: Its Role in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture* (2011).

While the first one, in spite of some drawbacks, is a good and balanced source, the other leaves much to be desired. Therefore the new book by Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich should be welcome as a new addition. The author made an enormous effort and put under scrutiny more that seventy books by Jewish American authors, discussing them in three main parts entitled: "Collective Portrait," "Memory" and "Other Traces." The first part discusses Polish anti-Semitism, the portrayal of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations in America; the second deals with images of Poland, predominantly as a land of hostility and death resulting mainly from the stigma of the Holocaust; and the last one with various motifs, including references to well-known Poles and Polish Jews, objects associated with

Poland, Polish names and contacts with contemporary Poland. Among the authors and books discussed are both classic works by well-known masters of American literature, including Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth and Cynthia Ozick, popular and slightly forgotten authors like Leon Uris, Leslie Epstein, or Edward Lewis Wallant, and a new generation of authors, including Tova Reich or Steve Stern. On account of some Polish motifs Aleksandrowicz-Pędich even included authors with Jewish roots and their works rarely presented as "Jewish," e.g. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*.

The book is relatively well-balanced and the author tries to be objective, although from time to time she expresses directly or indirectly her regret that the image of Poles and Poland is far from laudatory. She is also worried what happens if one of those books is used as the only source of information, especially by an "unsophisticated reader," and states that "the reader can only hope here that some *licentia poetica* applies both to 'obnoxious Jews' and 'every other single Pole' being an anti-Semite" (39). Such comments seem redundant, as it is fairly obvious that most authors take advantage of poetic license and one can hardly expect from fiction to serve as a faithful and objective representation of historical reality. Belles-letters and especially popular fiction favor exaggerated characters.

It is a great pity that the author has not referred to some earlier studies on images of Poles in Yiddish literature, especially on Isaac Bashevis Singer. She rightly does not include Singer's works in her analysis because he wrote originally in Yiddish (although English versions of his works are treated as second originals and further translations into most languages, including Polish and Hebrew, have been done on the basis of the English versions), but the truth is Bashevis had a great influence on generations of Jewish American authors, especially of the middle and younger generation, and influenced their imagination and style. Additionally, if not via Bashevis, some authors, especially of the older generations, absorbed their images of Poland and Poles from earlier Yiddish literature and culture. The most important types are those of *porets* (landowner) and *poyer* (peasant). The first one is usually an ambivalent figure, violent and arrogant, but can also serve as a protector of Jews in crucial moments, and the other usually negative: brutish and primitive. Contrary to those male portraits, female figures are often idealized, whether they are noblewomen or peasants, and they are often presented as mediators between two antagonistic communities, devoted to Jewish protagonists, sometimes even converting to Judaism. Their idealization encompasses also their physical appearance of an attractive high-cheeked blue-eyed blonde. One can find similar portraits of Polish women in Jewish American literature, or even American literature in general. Styron's Sophie fits very well into such a portrait.

It is also a pity that the author did not give enough attention to Leon Uris's novel *Mila 18*, one of the most popular books by this controversial writer, whom Aleksandrowicz-Pędich rightly criticizes for a highly exaggerated portrait of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations as well as for historical errors. However, this particular novel is especially important as it served for a few decades as the most representative portrait of the Warsaw ghetto in American literature and it contains a number of Polish characters, including the idealized portrait of a beautiful and altruistic Polish woman Gabriela Rak devoted to the heroic Jewish protagonist Andrei Androfsky (modeled on the leader of the Jewish Combat Organization Mordechai Anielewicz).

The motif of representation of Poles appears throughout the whole book although the main focus is in Chapter 1 in subchapters "Unpleasant Polish Types" and "Other Poles." This discussion would be clearer if the author used some other distinguishing criteria, such as gender or social status, which are of major importance in this respect.

The best parts of the book are those where the author presents a more in-depth analysis of selected works, e.g. in the subchapter "The Jew and the Polish Inheritance," where she refers to Lillian S. Kremer's and Hana Wirth-Nesher's publications and partly engages in a polemic with them. The most problematic are fragments where she presents a kind of registry of motifs, sometimes in a rather haphazard manner: not every single mention of Poles or Poland in a work is worthy of critical attention. It seems that she tried do record every single case and this surfeit of detail sometimes blurs a more general image.

Occasionally the author as if tried to correct the works she discusses. For instance she states that the character of a Polish cleaner, named Wadja, in Saul Bellow's last novel *Ravelstein* is "unnecessary for the plot" (45). It would be better to express such an opinion in a more careful manner, the more so, that soon after this statement she comes up with a fairly detailed analysis which shows the opposite: that the relationship between the protagonist and his Polish servant is fairly important.

Unfortunately the book is not devoid of factual errors. The Cossack uprising took place in 1648–1649, and not in the eighteenth century (s. 76–77).

It is not true that Chełm figures as the town of fools both in Jewish and Polish folklore. This is specific only for Jewish folklore and serves as a very good example of different cultural topographies. The same places in Poland create different associations in Polish versus Jewish/Yiddish tradition (e.g. Kock, Góra Kalwaria/Ger, Warka). Present Polish inhabitants of Chełm have learnt only recently, due to the wave of interest in Jewish topics in post-Communist Poland, that their hometown evokes such associations.

Joanna Rostropowicz-Clark is not a fictitious figure but a scholar and writer portrayed by Philip Roth (and she in turn portrayed him in one of her works).

It is not quite true that Julian Stryjkowski deals "primarily with the dilemma of the assimilated Polish-Jewish intellectual for whom the tragic memory of a lost culture and a realization of his own Jewishness collides with his commitment to the new Poland" (10). This is correct in reference to Adolf Rudnicki or Artur Sandauer, but not Stryjkowski, and, besides, this does not have anything to do with the end of Yiddish culture in Poland, because none of them ever wrote or intended to write in Yiddish. The author repeats this claim after Thomas Gladsky, who, however, is not an expert in the field of Polish-Jewish or Yiddish literature and makes some errors himself. It would have been better to refer to ample Polish literature on the topic.

Sloppy editing resulted in a number of typos and errors in names in both the main text and index, e.g. Teresa Tuszyńska instead of Agata Tuszyńska (Teresa was a model and actress, Agata is a writer and journalist), Dominic Lacapra instead of Dominick LaCapra, John Paul the Second instead of John Paul II, Byran Cheyette, instead of Bryan, Shoa instead of Shoah etc. It is also a pity that the index does not include titles of works discussed.

The author should have put more emphasis on the historical context and the time when particular works were written. Such events as the pogrom in Kielce of July 1946 or the so-called anti-Zionist, and in fact anti-Semitic, campaign of March 1968, had a lasting impact on representations of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations in the West. If post-war impressions change this rather gloomy picture for a better one, it is the question of recent years, not the whole post-war period as the author claims (131).

On the other hand, perhaps it is good that the author seemed not to fully realize the difficulties she faced while attempting such a study, which requires, next to expertise in American literature, some acquaintance with Yiddish and Polish literature, sociology (the issue of stereotypes) and history, because she might have not written the book. As it is, both the very controversial study by Danusha Goska and the not-free from errors and simplifications study by Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich encourage discussion, and might stimulate further research on this complex, difficult and insufficiently explored to date topic.

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Tadeusz Pióro. *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism*. Warsaw: Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw, 2013. 244 pages.

In the course of a conversation we had last year, a fellow specialist in American poetry and poet in his own right referred to Tadeusz Pióro as "an authority on O'Hara and Ashbery" as well as a "good, interesting" poet. The other phrases my colleague used to describe Pióro's literary stature were "formally advanced" and "somewhat similar to the New York School." The epithets I have just quoted strike a chord with one familiar with Pióro's monograph on the author of *Lunch Poems*, published shortly before the above-mentioned talk took place. The Frank O'Hara who emerges from Pióro's study is intriguing as both man and poet, and the experimental, ever-challenging character of his *œuvre* is brought to the fore. Pióro is careful—and, in my view, rightly so—not to overdose on biographical references; he does, nevertheless, manage to place O'Hara in the context of his association, both human and literary, with John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch or Barbara Guest as well as—or perhaps first and foremost—with the leading visual artists of the day. While the literary and artistic luminaries of mid-twentieth-century New York and the socio-aesthetic context of the city at large are not ignored, it is O'Hara's poetic output that Pióro focuses on.

The Norton Anthology of American Literature points out that "O"Hara's example encouraged other poets—John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler" (Baym 2: 2647) and that his "bravado was a rallying point for these writers outside the more traditional and historically conscious modernism of Pound and Eliot" (Baym 2: 2647). Both statements could serve as epigraphs to Pióro's study, in which the framework of modernism is also the point of departure, as the very title of the monograph, *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism*, demonstrates. The expression "ends of modernism" serves as the title of the study's first chapter as well, followed by two more, "Modernism and the Avant-Garde" and "Reading Frank O'Hara." In the introduction to the book, Pióro explains that the word "ends" is meant to signify "closure or demise as well as intentions or goals" (30). He also specifies that "[t]hroughout this book, references to Modernism denote primarily its avant-garde and experimental aspects, while the term High Modernism appears in reference to works and authors academically canonized in America during O'Hara's lifetime" (39) with "Vladimir Mayakovsky or Antonin Artaud fall[ing] under the former rubric" (39) and Eliot coming under the heading of High Modernism. The former two are chosen from among European modernists, and with good reason, since both resurface, to a greater or lesser degree, in O'Hara's work and views on poetry. While in his study Pióro does not undertake comparative analysis as such—with the exception of a poem by Mayakovsky set against an O'Hara poem—and concentrates on the American poet, he does attempt to put him in a

larger literary and aesthetic context. Pióro's book confirms my view that virtually every discussion of Anglo-American modernist, or indeed modern, poetry inevitably harks back to French symbolism. Consequently, references to Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud recur throughout the text, as do interesting observations on the affinities between their respective visions and O'Hara's poetics.

As anyone familiar with the basic biographical details of O'Hara's life knows, the poet of "Biotherm" had strong professional and personal connections with New York's vibrant art scene in the 1950s and 1960s. An employee at the Museum of Modern Art, he was an art critic as well as the promoter and personal friend of several exponents of Abstract Expressionism. To quote the Norton Anthology again, "this was more than a way of making a living; it was also making a life" (Baym 2: 2646). Reminding us that Marjorie Perloff calls O'Hara a "poet among painters" (15), Pióro's monograph suggests it was a way of making poetry as well, since it was the American poet's ambition to do in his own medium what the American abstractionists did in painting. In consequence, readers and exegetes of O'Hara can hardly afford to ignore references to the visual arts while examining his poetry: as Pióro points out, "the High Modernist aesthetic of painters such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock was crucial to his development as a poet" (39–40), which is why "both the poetic and the painterly 'idioms' should be considered in assessing O'Hara's position within, and beyond, Modernism" (40). Importantly, however, Pióro does not stop his analysis of the analogies between O'Hara's poetry and the visual arts at the achievements of Jackson Pollock and his fellow Action Painters. He extends his "painterly" reading of O'Hara to encompass Andy Warhol, an artist who was to the second half of the twentieth century what Pollock was to the mid-twentieth-century art scene. Pióro thus sees the American poet's *œuvre* as suspended between the achievements of the two greatest American painters of the last century.

Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism presents the poet in question as a representative of "the last avant-garde" (29), a term Pióro borrows from David Lehman. Stressing O'Hara's individualistic approach, conspicuous in, *inter alia*, his "anti-manifestoes," the author of the monograph looks at the poetry he examines in terms of its avant-gardist and experimental dimension. Rimbaud's poetic vision, marked by his search for "a new poetic language" (61), becomes a springboard for what Pióro terms "the rhetoric of excess" (61), aimed at hiding "overwhelmingly powerful and painful emotions" (64) and taking poetic shape in O'Hara's (anti-)elegies. The "poets from Rimbaud's lineage" (81) who must be considered relevant to the American poet include Mayakovsky, whose lyric is compared to one of O'Hara's. This, in turn, leads Pióro to examine O'Hara's "construction of subjectivity" (83), which, equivocally enough, is also its "destruction" (83), in the closing section of Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, the author scrutinizes the links between the notions of boredom, newness and the avant-garde, as well as those between heroism and avant-gardism in both art and life. Looking into O'Hara's writings on Pollock, the monographer argues that the real subject of the texts in question is as much the painter as the poet himself. Pióro also points out O'Hara's sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* visual artists such as Pollock or de Kooning. While Abstract Expressionism, whose modernist character is emphasized in the monograph, may seem an inevitable point of reference when it comes to O'Hara, the realism-based Pop Art and its pope, Warhol, typically seen as a reaction against the former art movement and, as Pióro reminds us, provoking O'Hara's initial skepticism as well as hostile reactions on the part of Abstract Expressionists themselves, may be less so. The monographer shows how the phenomena central to Pop Art and popular culture, such as consumerism, mechanical reproduction and spiritual death, are relevant to O'Hara's poetry, rounding off the chapter with a section on O'Hara's use of register typical of films, television or comic strips which inscribe themselves into Warholian "pastiche, or repetition" (158).

As its title suggests, Chapter Three is concerned with various ways of reading the poet of *Second Avenue*. In Pióro's own words, the aim of the chapter—as well as, I believe, of the study in its entirety—is "to expose the resistance of O'Hara's poems to critical approaches that privilege poetic artifice over mimetic realism, or vice versa" (163), though, admittedly, "[s]triking a balance between the two within the bounds of a single reading is very hard indeed, perhaps even self-defeating in a rhetorical sense" (163). The inevitable conclusion is that O'Hara's poetry invites "readings, which cannot be integrative" (189), but are likely to be "multiple" (189). This explains why Pióro takes the opportunity to return to some of the poems dealt with earlier in the monograph. He also embarks upon an extensive and absorbing reading of "Biotherm," a poem important for both biographical and artistic reasons. Struggling with what he calls O'Hara's "resistance to interpretations" (200), the monographer awakens us to the impossibility of applying certain set interpretive habits to the American poet's work: "one of his points, I suspect, is for us to stay in the dark, to abandon the hope of finding an answer to this riddle, the kind of hope that even today rewards scholars solving the riddles of *Ulysses* or the *Cantos*. In other words," Pióro concludes, "he's trying to impose another mode of reading, distinct from the one his generation was developing to tackle the most resistant works of High Modernism" (181–82).

In the opening paragraph of his book, Pióro notes that despite "grow[ing] consistently, the number of critical works on O'Hara's poetry remains relatively modest" (11). This alone would suffice to make his study a worthwhile project. However, Pióro's monograph is valuable in more than one respect. The readers are made to realize that O'Hara's is a poetry that makes great demands on their

readiness to be actively involved in the hermeneutic process, which—in this particular case—is also that of construction and reconstruction: the only certainty they are left with is that of the instability and experimentalism which mark the poet's work, full of linguistic and structural complexities, at times gravitating towards "[r]eferential uncertainty" (151), abstraction or non-referentiality. What is made clear in *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism* is that the only plausible critical attitude to the poetic work under discussion is a pluralistic one: more than one method of approaching and interpreting O'Hara is necessary, the word "interpreting" often being used for want of a more satisfactory one. Not only does Pióro offer extensive readings of O'Hara's major poems and sometimes challenge earlier readings of the poems in question, he also refers to or at least touches upon several aspects of the poet's *œuvre* which may inspire fellow scholars to pursue critical vistas which either, so to speak, hover in the background in *Frank O'Hara and the Ends of Modernism* or are so gripping that they offer seemingly infinite opportunities for the researcher, O'Hara's "painterly" connection being a case in point. The role of the media, analogies between Baudelaire's Paris and O'Hara's take on "modern metropolitan culture" (100) exemplified by New York, queer readings of O'Hara's poems, his use of camp aesthetics or corporeality are also some of the interesting possibilities opened up to readers, students and scholars by a multilevel poet whose work, in the words of Lytle Shaw quoted by Pióro, keeps revealing "strange and compelling qualities" (201).

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Izabella Kimak. *Bicultural Bodies: A Study of South Asian American Literature*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013. 144 pages.

A century or two ago, bodies, cultures, and places seemed almost inextricably entwined, but the more people migrated across the globe to settle on distant continents, the more apparent it became that there is no inevitable correlation between racially marked bodies and cultures. Since the 1940s, and ever more forcefully since the 1980s, scholars across the social sciences and the humanities

have been saying that race is a cipher—a socially constructed category that has no predictive value where human intellectual, moral, and physical potential is concerned. If race is a cipher that reveals little about our innate capacities and habits, then organizing bodies of literature and criticism around Asian bodies might seem counterproductive. Indeed some, like the Chinese American postmodern writer David Wong Louie, consider such groupings pernicious and ghettoizing: "it's like putting us in the Chinese laundries" *(qtd. in Cheung 201)*. If the aim of antiracist scholarship is to de-emphasize the significance of race, then why make it central?

An answer to this question can be found in Izabella Kimak's study *Bicultural Bodies*. The significance of race may be a figment of the American cultural imaginary but because so many believe it to be real, and act as if it were real, race has far-reaching material consequences. Americans of South Asian descent learned this in the aftermath of the 2011 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Ostensibly these events had nothing to do with South Asians, but because of their physical resemblance to Arabs, they became "objects of suspicion, racial profiling, and hate crimes" (Kimak 129). Far from being obsolete, race becomes more salient in the United States whenever this country enters into geopolitical conflicts or hits on hard times. Another group that has repeatedly borne the brunt of racially-motivated changes of sentiment is the Japanese American minority. Barred from citizenship as the "Yellow Peril" in the early twentieth century, incarcerated in 1942 following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, barely tolerated in the 1950s, rehabilitated and touted a "Model Minority" in the 1960s, and then vilified again in the 1980s when Japanese imports were blamed for the American auto industry's downsizing. The 1982 murder of Chinese American engineer Vincent Chin by angry white auto workers who misidentified him as Japanese, testifies to the material consequences of race. Racialization in the United States is thus one factor that organizes writers and critics around the racially-defined category "Asian American."[1]

Immigration is another. The drama of the interracial and intercultural encounter is replayed again and again in the individual lives of immigrants of all races. On arrival in the United States, immigrants learn that the American society is stratified

1 An ostensibly more enlightened approach used by David Coward in his 2006 study *Trailing Clouds: Immigrant Fiction in Contemporary America* was to disregard the politics of race and focus on the dominant tropes and formal elements in the fiction of immigrants from across the globe, including Saul Bellow, Eva Hoffman, Bharati Mukherjee, and Jamaica Kincaid. While this approach is not without merit, it allows Cowart to downplay the significance of racial difference, and to cast immigrant writers as staunch defenders of the United States as the land of liberty, in contrast to their "unlivable" homelands.

not just by class but also by race. Europeans discover upon landing that they are white and that certain privileges accrue to their new-found whiteness. Asians, in turn, find themselves slotted into a middle ground between black and white, and interpellated into preexisting racial conflicts. Such experiences lend themselves to literary dramatization in plots of encounter, friction, acculturation, political radicalization, or acquiescence. And since the United States opens and closes its doors to immigrants from specific countries at different historical moments, plots of first encounter tend to come in batches. *Bicultural Bodies* covers fiction by South Asian Americans produced since the mid-1970s, a period marked by the rapid growth of the South Asian minority, from less than 300,000 in 1970 to over 3,000,000 in 2010.

Though the title does not reveal this fact, *Bicultural Bodies* is not only organized around race and culture but also around gender: it is a study of literature by women, perhaps because a distinctive tradition of South Asian feminist writing has emerged that overshadows the handful of male-authored texts.[2] The fact that the body and sexuality are central within this tradition makes for a thematically coherent monograph. As Kimak points out, male South Asian immigrants often slip more or less automatically into their gender role outside the home because Asian and American cultures are patriarchal and the male breadwinner role is common to both. While the men might suffer indignities and exploitation as immigrants and people of color, their masculinity is relatively secure. Meanwhile, many South Asian women's experience in the United States is often marked by dissonance because unless they come from the westernized elites, they are treated by the diasporic communities as carriers of cultural tradition and required to resist acculturation. Exposure to western models of femininity, coupled with the obligation to resist them, can be a source of anguish and conflict—experiences that lend themselves particularly well to literary dramatization, whether the outcome is greater personal autonomy or (in)voluntary confinement to the home and the ethnic ghetto.

In choosing to study stories by and about Asian immigrant and second-generation women writers Kimak does, in a sense, set off down a well-trodden path. Many feminist and ethnic studies scholars before her have explored the race/gender nexus, particularly the loyalty conflict experienced by women of color, whose desire for personal autonomy turns them against their fathers, brothers,

2 A similar gender asymmetry has been observed among African American authors. The fact that "there are "proportionately more women writing books, and more books which appeal to the female reader" means that boys and men lose interest in literature, since it rarely reflects their experience (Staples 176). Not feeling interpellated by literature, they are also much less likely to become writers themselves.

and husbands. Charged with sexism, the men become even more vulnerable to racist oppression. The fiction of Alice Walker and Maxine Hong Kingston, among others, has been discussed within this framework, one of the most influential texts being King-Kok Cheung's "The Woman Warrior and the Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose Between Feminism and Heroism?" (1990). But Kimak turns her attention to a number of themes and phenomena passed over by her predecessors, most of whose analyses appeared before the conscious turn towards aesthetics ushered in by *Form and Transformation in Asian American Literature* by Zhou Xiaojing and Samina Najmi (2005). Equipped with the standard tools of feminist and postcolonial criticism, Kimak also carries with her the magnifying glass of narratology which allows her to examine a wide range of formal devices used by the South Asian women writers. By paying equal attention to politics and aesthetics, Kimak succeeds in reading against the grain of earlier criticism. In several instances she offers revisionist interpretations, for instance by showing that what was previously taken at face value is actually the view of a naïve narrator.

Another theoretical lens that makes Kimak's study of South Asian American literature refreshing is her use of posthumanist perspectives on the body as well as corporeal feminism grounded in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz and Judith Butler (25). Relying on these theories, Kimak goes beyond the more conventional readings that focus on the body as a signifier of racial and sexual difference, to consider the body as an autonomous agent (57, 62–63), a repository of non-cerebral knowledge and memory (58), as well as a site of mute resistance (95). But what seems to interest Kimak the most are the complex ways in which South Asian women react to being trained and retrained to perform culturally assigned roles. The roles that are foregrounded in the three analytical chapters of *Bicultural Bodies* are those of object of male desire, lover, wife, and mother. In South Asian American fiction women's bodies and sexuality are presented in a myriad ways: from the external perspectives of white and brown men, as well as from the perspectives of the female characters themselves; as sites of subjugation but also as sources of agency.

Citing Rajini Srikanth, Kimak explains that in South Asian immigrant communities men have sought to fully domesticate and control the woman's body in reaction against the lack of control they experience in the world outside the home (69). In the "contact zones" between cultures, bodily experiences such as premarital, marital, and extramarital sex, cross-racial sex, rape, pregnancy, infertility, artificial insemination, and childbirth have unstable meanings. Such epistemological instability poses a challenge for both writers and critics. As the fiction examined in *Bicultural Bodies* suggests, women find ways to contest—and occasionally accommodate to—the traditional model of gender relations.

Kimak offers ample textual evidence of such contestation and accommodation. (A story illustrative of the accommodation strategy she chooses not to examine is Divakaruni's "Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs," in which an Indian immigrant wife consents to seclusion and occasional physical abuse because she strongly empathizes with her husband, a car mechanic whose working life is a series of humiliations. When the wife is lured outside her apartment by a college-educated niece who naively wants to liberate her from the domestic confinement, the two women are attacked by a group of white boys and forced to flee home. Thus the husband's insistence on keeping his wife secluded turns out to be motivated by his concern for her safety in the rough neighborhood, as much as by his desire to assert patriarchal power.)

What is particularly useful about Kimak's study is the way it incorporates and speaks to existing criticism. Undaunted by its sheer volume, Kimak does a thorough job of reviewing what is out there and acknowledging the useful insights. She is at her best when she challenges hasty, unsubstantiated, or reductionist claims. This approach allows her to recuperate some of Mukherjee's and Divakaruni's most maligned works and to give them a second chance without dismissing their problematic aspects too lightly. Earlier critics accused these writers of complicity with Western orientalists, deploring the recurrent plots in which Asian women are liberated from the shackles of Indian patriarchal culture through exposure to American norms and values. Kimak manages to complicate the picture by looking at the entire corpus of these writers' works rather than at single novels or short stories, which has been the standard practice. This is a generous approach, one that allows for the evolution of a writer's position, and for the ironic potential of texts like Mukherjee's *Jasmine* that were previously read too literally. "Exoticized bodies," she points out, "may... be used to critique the American society for making it difficult for immigrant Others to belong and forcing them to resort to any means they have at their disposal, including the attractiveness of their bodies, to assert a place for themselves in the United States" (42). Moreover, by looking at texts that feature Indian male orientalists, Kimak is able to show that the exoticization of the Indian woman's body is a function of male social/economic advantage rather than of race.

The corpus of South Asian American women's literature discussed in *Bicultural Bodies* is representative rather than chosen tendentiously to support a narrow claim. Kimak examines the work of such established authors as Mukherjee, Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, and Jhumpa Lahiri, as well as that of lesser-known writers—Amulya Malladi, Ginu Kamani, Meera Nair, and Sheila Abdullah. The goal of each reading is to elucidate the literary text and point out its often contradictory meanings. Although travel, displacement, marginalization, acculturation, the formation of female subjectivity, and the sexual body's resistance to cultural

norms are familiar themes in Asian American criticism, Kimak tackles them anew with confidence and insight, producing a very readable, carefully constructed, and elegantly written study.

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Grzegorz Maziarczyk. *The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English*. Lublin: KUL Publishers, 2013. 316 pages.

The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English investigates the increasingly vibrant field of the history of the book, with a special focus on the supposedly transparent elements of book design and their role in producing meaning, including typeface, layout and the physical form of the book as object. As Maziarczyk points out in the opening lines of his study, the book in Western culture has come to be regarded as "the default medium for the novel" (9), thus downplaying the codex's significance as a vessel of meaning. It was perhaps only with the advent of e-books and other non-material forms of literary production that typographical features ceased to be regarded as de-semiotised structures, especially in the field of narrative fiction. Indeed, many studies have been devoted to the discussion of typographical elements in avant-garde and visual poetry, yet the domain of contemporary fiction, defined by the author somewhat broadly as "novels published since the 1960s" (10), remains, to a degree, an uncharted territory. What is especially valuable in this study is exactly the exclusive interest on contemporary fiction. Maziarczyk develops a compelling line of inquiry, discussing the works of B. S. Johnson, Raymond Federman and William H. Gass alongside those of Mark Z. Danielewski, Steve Tomasula, Graham Rawle and Jonathan

Safran Foer. Considering the broad perspective adopted, it is not surprising that the author draws on a number of different theoretical frameworks in building his argument, integrating concepts derived from narratology, multimodal discourse analysis, semiotics, and studies devoted to materiality of the text. The overall result is a comprehensive view of the evolution of typographical experiments in English fiction over almost half a century.

Maziarczyk begins by establishing the theoretical foundations for his inquiry. As has been mentioned, considering the scope of the undertaking, the tools assembled stem from various methodological fields. Chapter One begins with a brief discussion of print-centered studies of the novel, which admittedly did not ascribe typographical elements with semiotic significance, albeit established an understanding of the novel as inextricably linked with writing technology and print. Indeed, "the rise of the novel" has been specifically connected to the invention of print, thus positioning the novel in direct opposition to oral transmission and establishing it as a print-based construct. At this stage, Maziarczyk effectively argues that the connection between print and the novel, though strong and undeniable, have not been acknowledged thoroughly, avoiding the question of how print as medium may be considered meaningful. "The technological blind spot in the supposedly universal classical models of narrative, based primarily on examples adduced from narrative fiction," the author (18–19) points out, "is their failure to acknowledge the possible impact of print on its constitutive elements, purely verbal as they may be."

The discussion subsequently moves to the notion of the medium in narratology and traces the evolution of the term from its understanding confined to purely verbal narratives towards a broader view involving transmedial and multimodal matters. Going beyond the traditional, albeit misleading, understanding of the medium involving both language as a semiotic system and print as technology, Maziarczyk opts for a different theoretical designation, defining the medium as purely material and introducing the notion of the mode to deal with the sign system. Such a distinction marks a step towards the premises of multimodal narratology, which postulates that storytelling entails the use of numerous semiotic channels, verbal means being only one of many among them.

This shift allows for the recognition of multimodality of printed materials, where linguistic, graphic and spatial devices all contribute to the creation of meaning and the verbal is as important as the non-verbal. The material, however, is not disregarded for the sake of the semiotic, the double focus of Maziarczyk's study being the acknowledgment of the importance of print as a mode of expression in combination with the physicality of the book, which, in turn, is characterized as a hybrid text. Thus, the multimodal novel acts as a general term, comprising in itself the subcategory of a hybrid text which reintroduces the semiotic importance

of the visual and the material. Although this distinction may be regarded subtle, not to say secondary for the reader unfamiliar with the book and digital media studies, it actually helps resolve a significant theoretical conflict: the coexistence and the importance attached to the semiotic means both verbal and non-verbal with a simultaneous focus on the materiality of the text.

The author closes the theoretical part with an identification of three basic levels of textual materiality, also understood as a semiotic mode, in printed fiction. These are respectively typography, layout and the codex. They might be playing different roles in the production of textual meaning, metareferential, iconic and narrative, with Maziarczyk emphasizing the fact that the semiotization of textual materiality is "a strategy whereby a narrative can be constructed" (48), taking its rightful (as the author convincingly demonstrates) place among other postmodern narrative techniques.

The second chapter discusses the first significant level of textual materiality, typography, with respect to three novels exploiting its semiotic potential: Douglas Coupland's *JPod* (2006), Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (1995) and Graham Rawle's Woman's World (2005). As Maziarczyk emphasizes, the choice of texts was informed by typographical experiments present in the novels, which in all cases was further complemented by other non-verbal modes, heightening typography's semiotic potential. Before moving on to the crucial part of his analysis, however, the author devotes some critical attention to the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the description and interpretation of various typefaces.

Indeed, while a general assumption that typography is endowed with meaning is by all means legitimate, it is at the threshold of an in-depth analysis of a text that one needs to determine what exactly lies at the semiotic core of letters, their arrangement and design. Is it about their shape, color, size or orientation? Is the use of one of the above enough to produce meaning or is the combination of different factors of crucial importance here? Lastly, how does one avoid the pitfalls of arbitrariness? It is only too straightforward to ascribe subjective value to letters (e.g. italics stand for "personal", bold for solid, and capital letters mark the increase in volume). Maziarczyk acknowledges the inherent problematic of his object of study and approaches it from a different perspective.

The author emphasizes that the recognition of typography as a meaning-carrying unit is determined by the context and the departure from the established requirement of uniformity (i.e. consistent use of a single typeface throughout the text). "Thus, whether or not typographic variation is a significant element of a particular novel," Maziarczyk states (56), "depends on its extensiveness and/or subversion of conventional typographic patterns." The three novels selected and discussed in an ascending order of typographic experimentation

involved exemplify precisely this systematic variation and its contribution to narrative functions.

The analyses are well grounded and insightful, demonstrating how typography is able to render various voices and modes of writing. In *JPod* variations in typography correspond to the polyphony of speech genres and to the difference between narrative and non-narrative sections. Welsh, on the other hand, marks changes in narrative perspective by means of changing typefaces: the three levels on which the protagonist's consciousness functions is represented by shifts in typography. The materiality of the text truly begins to "speak" and signal the shifting psychological states of a character. The last novel to be discussed, a typographic experiment unique in its scope and execution, a collage of cut-out words and phrases, explores typographic variation as a representation of the narrator-character's complex identity. Thus, Maziarczyk convincingly argues that textual materiality constitutes an important part of contemporary fiction, both mainstream and non-mainstream.

In the third chapter, the author discusses the meaning of the page layout, observing that, just as in the case of the letters, no comprehensive semiotic model can be established here. The typeface performs certain essential functions in the printed text, both pointing to a given text's generic classification and ensuring the clarity of structure by dividing the text into units. The author mentions "invisible" typography of novels—typography that is conventional to a point where it is not noticed by the reader. However, the focus of this chapter lies on the novels straying from the highly conventionalized layout, such as Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* (2007), J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) or Raymond Federman's *Double or Nothing* (1976). In the first text, the graphemes are used to construct a shark which reappears throughout the novel in changing forms. By visualizing the conceptual shark, Hall changes the role of printed words, which become both carry verbal meaning and are a visual unit at the same time. Despite the fact that Saussurean division into the signified and the signifier is blurred here, the shark is materialized only within the domain of the fictive universe. As the author sees it, the shark becomes "an iconic super-signifier" (98).

The latter section investigates the meaning behind the lack of graphemes. The blank page with its empty space is used in such a way as to constitute a crucial part of the signifying system. Using Wolf's terms, the author explains the difference between the blanks that serve the role of borders of the texts, and those that visually manifest themselves through the empty or partially empty pages and it are semiotised. This intentional use if empty spaces is discussed on the examples of B. S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal* (1971) and Ronald Sukenick's *Long Talking Bad Conditions Blues* (1978).

The author continues his analysis of the page layout with the discussion of novels that through the typography undermine the linearity of the text. Both examples used here, J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) and B. S. Johnson's *Albert Angelo* (1964) correspond with McHale's idea of "split texts", that is texts that run in parallel. In the case of *Albert Angelo*, the arrangement of the text into columns can be viewed as an attempt of narrating two processes—internal and external—happening at one time. The use of two columns results in the constant switching between the two texts, as the reader cannot possibly read both narrations at once. At the same time, B. S. Johnson seems to encourage the reader to process the columns simultaneously, as the comparison between the two texts creates the meaning. In J. M. Coetzee's Diary of a Bad Year, the page is divided into three sections with the use of horizontal lines. The texts here do not belong to one genre, representing fiction and non-fiction at the same time. Co-existence of these forms seems to destabilize the ontological status of the book, as it cannot be clearly classified in one clear-cut category. The typography here emphasizes the book's hybrid and experimental form, posing valid questions about the nature of reality and fiction.

The fourth chapter takes into consideration the book as an object, as it analyses novels in which the materiality of the book transcends its conventional role and becomes an element creating the meaning of the text. The author distinguishes between two levels of involving the physical format of the book into the process of the text's interpretation. In the first one, the book is a static object that conveys a certain message; in the other, the book's format results in a dynamic interaction with the reader, forcing them to constantly flip through the pages or turn the book upside down to decipher some parts of the text, thus drawing attention to the book's materiality. Maziarczyk uses the word *performative* to describe these books that force the reader to transcend the regular act of reading and thus semiotize the physicality of a book. The examples chosen for this chapter are arranged, as the author points out, to mark the journey towards novels that manifest their physicality through performative interaction between the reader and the book.

The first example is Raymond Federman *The Voice in the Closet/ La Voix dans le Cabinet de Debarras* (1979), which combines the text in English back-to-back with the French version. Originally published in a non-standard, square format, the text follows extremely strict page layout, in which every page consists of an equal number of lines, which in turn consist of an even number of characters. These constriction are to mirror the split identity of the author and the trauma that cannot be vocalized. The following example, Mark Z. Danielewski's *Only Revolutions* (2006) consists of two back-to-back texts which meet in the middle, and it has two front covers. This unconventional format of the book forces the reader to keep turning the book around, inevitably drawing attention to the physicality of it.

B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969) abandons the traditional format of a book completely, as it is unbound and placed in a box. Not only does this foreground the material form of the text, but it also rejects any linearity whatsoever as it is the reader has to establish the order in which to read given elements.

In the final chapter, Maziarczyk focuses on the books that combine the experimental elements already discussed with the use of other semiotic resources, such as photos. The graphic elements are blended into the text creating "total books", where the visual elements cannot be interpreted separately from the text as they become a part of it. Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) includes numerous elements, creating a multimodal formation that seems to wish to compete with the dynamic electronic media. The novel about a house becomes a house—a mystical labyrinth of clashing narrations, academic digressions, and metareferentiality. Steve Tomasula in his *VAS* (2004) explores the connection between the body and the book, and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) involves multiple media to better convey the post-WTC world and its inadequate means of communication. In these novels, as the author claims, the graphic elements serve a more significant role than simply illustrating the fictive universe. They rather tend to undermine the stories, and to foreground the materiality of the book to draw attention to the artificiality of mimetic representation.

Maziarczyk's *The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English* traces the development of experimentation with form. As the author discusses most contemporary fictive endeavors alongside novels marking the beginning of postmodernist experimentation with form in the sixties and seventies, this study is an insightful analysis of the changing attitude to the semiotics of materiality. The book is logically organized and well-informed. The only drawback of the study is that only one illustration of each novel is included.

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Carmen Birkle and Johanna Heil, eds. *Communicating Disease: Cultural Representations of American Medicine*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. 465 pages.

The immensely popular "Literature, Arts, and Medicine Database," created in 1993 at New York University School of Medicine, was designed to provide scholars, educators, students and patients with resources in the field of "medical humanities" which, according to the founders, "include an interdisciplinary field of humanities

(literature, philosophy, ethics, history and religion), social science (anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology), and the arts (literature, theater, film, and visual arts)" (http://medhum.med.nyu.edu). The database was not, however, the first to attest to the interdisciplinary connections between medicine and the humanities. These connections were brought to light with the introduction of humanities programs in medical school curricula, the rise of literature and medicine as an academic discipline in 1972 when Joanne Trautmann started teaching literature at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, the works of Rita Charon in narrative medicine and the founding of the academic journal *Literature and Medicine* at John Hopkins University (Hawkins and McEntyre 3–4).

Carmen Birkle and Johanna Heil's collection, *Communicating Disease: Cultural Representations of American Medicine*, provides an excellent example of how medicine and the humanities meet to produce innovative discourses and insightful comments which effectively challenge reductive dichotomies between the humanities and natural sciences, with the position of privilege often allocated to the latter. In an attempt to draw attention to the interdisciplinary underpinnings of the discipline, the editors have selected texts that consciously address the question of how medicine and literature/cultural studies comment on the same phenomena and how their discourses complement rather than exclude each other. In the words of Birke and Heil, the aim of this volume is to show "that literature and other cultural products do not stage gigantic monologues addressed to one in particular, but rather offer the opportunity for dialogue between the humanities and the natural sciences, between literary studies and medicine as two sides of the same life-science coin" (xvii-xviii).

The collection is divided into four sections, each addressing various aspects of the "interfaces of literature and medicine," emphasizing different positions of gaze: those of the doctors as well as those of the patients. The first part, entitled, "Negotiating Medical Practice," reveals the multifaceted nature of medicine and its involvement in such diverse agendas as ethnic and class issues as well as globalization. For instance, Marcel Hartwig in "'Some with their fear th' Infection bring, And only shun the Doctor's Skill': Medical Practice and the Paper War during Boston's Smallpox Epidemic of 1721," traces the birth of knowledge about inoculation against smallpox that took place at the intersection of two professions, physicians and clergymen, and consequently the evolution of the discourses used by its opponents and supporters (Cotton Mather among them). A brilliant example of an interdisciplinary reading bringing together literary studies, medicine and postcolonial studies is offered by Stephanie Browner, author of *Profound Science and Elegant Literature: Imagining Doctors in Nineteenth-Century America* (2005), in her chapter titled "Resocializing Literature and Medicine: Poverty, Health, and Medical Science in Postcolonial Literature." Analyzing two recent novels, Aravind

Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995), Browner calls for a resocialization of medicine, which remains blind to the fact that the suffering of those who live in extreme poverty is often preventable, thus emphasizing the ethical dimension of medical practices. In the analyzed texts, medicine participates in the socioeconomic structures that generate power and wealth and consistently deprive the poor of access to decent health care.

The prevailing motif of section two, entitled "Subverting the Medical Profession," is gender and subversive interventions into typical portraits of physicians as they were painted when the profession was taking shape in the nineteenth century. The essays offered in this part, Carla Bittel's "A Literary Physician? The Paris Writings of Mary Putnam Jacobi," Antje Dallmann's "'Doctors Are Never Mistaken': Doctor Romances and Re-Negotiations of the *Nature* of Marriage in Late Nineteenth-Century America," Kirsten Twelbeck's "How Far Could They Go? Imprisoned Nurses, Unsexed Angels, and the Transformation of True Womanhood in Civil War America" and Katja Schmieder's "'Do Not Cross'—TV Women Doctors Trespassing on Male Territory," all tell stories of women who enter the (forbidden) spaces—medical universities, examination rooms, hospitals, morgues—entirely dominated by men and how they invade and conquer these spaces on their own terms, significantly redefining the terms of medical practice.

The third section, "Transmitting Disease," takes up the theme of communicating disease and concepts such as the mobility of diseases, infections, epidemics and plagues, their effects on individuals, communities and entire nations as well as their ideological implications. While the first three contributors, Imke Kimpel, Ingrid Gessner and Astrid Haas, concentrate on literary responses to these issues, Rüdiger Kunow, in "The Biology of Community: Contagious Diseases, Old Age, Biotech, and Cultural Studies," discusses the case of Mary Mallon, known as Typhoid Mary, and demonstrates how the topic of contagion can be expanded to comment on the "biotechnicalization" of human life and the production of "failed bodies."

The final section looks into the healing potential of narratives. Narratives dealing with personal experiences of pain, illness, grief and death are now well-established as separate literary genres and valued in patient-doctor communication. The essays in this section draw attention to the complexity of the language which attempts to deal with trauma, its metaphorical nature and, not surprisingly, its limitations when faced with the task of expressing unspeakable pain. The contributors re-examine such classic texts as Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* and George Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* (all in Christine Marks's contribution) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (Anna

Thiemann, Peter Schneck) but also offer insightful analyses of more recent texts such as Siri Hustvedt's *The Shaking Woman or a History of My Nerves* (Anna Thiemann), Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker* (Johanna Heil, Birgit Däwes), John Banville's *The Sea* and Richard B. Wright's *October* (Anca-Raluca Radu).

The closing essay in the collection, Dietrich von Engelhardt's "The World of Medicine in the Medium of Literature: Structures, Dimensions, Perspectives," serves as an apt conclusion for the entire collection. Engelhardt, as a medical historian, demonstrates medicine's long history of involvement with literature as well as its transnational character which in turn draws attention to the two fields' common interests in the changing context of globalized cultures.

Many of the remaining essays are no less interesting but the extensive scope of the project does not allow for a detailed presentation here of each of the discussed aspects of how medicine and literature interact to produce interesting dialogues. *Communicating Disease* is indeed an eclectic collection (which, contrary to what its title suggests, does include texts centered on British culture) whose aim is not only to demonstrate the diversity of cultural representations of American medicine but, moreover, to define the premises on which the two fields meet and interact. The collection is strongly recommended for those who already see medicine and literature in dialogue as well as for those eager to adopt the new perspective.

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Ewa Antoszek, Katarzyna Czerwiec-Dykiel, and Izabella Kimak, eds. *Inne bębny: różnica i niezgoda w literaturze i kulturze amerykańskiej* (Different Drums: Rebellion and Resistance in American Literature and Culture). Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2013. 199 pages.

Inne bębny: różnica i niezgoda w literaturze i kulturze amerykańskiej is a collection of essays by Polish scholars which explore a broadly understood theme of rebellion and resistance in contemporary American literature and culture. The first part of the title refers directly to Henry David Thoreau's classic—*Walden, or*

Life in the Woods (1854). In his open critique of materialism and conformism of nineteenth-century America, Thoreau encouraged his fellow citizens to follow the sound of different drums, that is, not to be afraid to think and act critically in order to contest the reality that surrounded them. In so doing, Thoreau, argue the editors, became a precursor of a tradition of rebelling against oppression curtailing the individual's sense of freedom. Exploring literature, film, music and art, the articles in the collection point to the role of the rhetoric of rebellion and resistance in the shaping of contemporary American culture. Each of the critical analyses is an exploration of an artistically manifested rebellion as well as of the oppressive forces against which the artists revolt.

The first group of articles focuses on twentieth-century canonical works in the field of literature and cinema, exposing their previously overlooked transgressive potential. The section opens with Małgorzata Rutkowska's analysis of the motif of travel as a form of rebellion in Henry Miller's *Colossus of Maroussi*, Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* and Paul Theroux's *The Mosquito Coast*. As Rutkowska explains, the journeys which the protagonists of the novels undergo serve as a critique and rejection of America and its fundamental values. Portrayed as a nest of corruption, America is juxtaposed with " new spiritual centers" (Miller's Greece, Bowles' Moroccan Sahara and Theroux's Honduras), which the protagonists head for. Movement is understood by Rutkowska as the antithesis of the seemingly safe and stable life in America which stands for spiritual and cultural stagnation. Thus, travel becomes a symbol of rebirth and of gaining a new sense of self. However, while in *Colossus of Maroussi* the journey leads to Miller's moral and spiritual awakening, the other two novels end in the protagonists' death in a foreign, "exotic" country. For Rutkowska, the self-destructive life journeys may be treated symbolically as the fate of "white" America unable to understand and accept the Other as inherent part of its own culture.

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis employs feminist criticism to examine dining and cooking rituals as the strategies of asserting gender and sexual identity in Fannie Flagg's famous novel, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, as well as in its cinematic adaptation. Run by the main protagonists, Idgie Threadgoode and Ruth Jamison, the Whistle Stop café is seen by the critic as an ambiguous place where gender and sexual norms are transgressed, challenging the socially accepted order in the southern American community in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, the café, or more importantly, its kitchen, remains a place culturally designated for women, where they are to perform their expected subservient roles as mothers and housewives. On the other hand, it becomes a source of Idgie's and Ruth's financial empowerment and a center of their developing, ambiguous partnership. Niewiadomska-Flis argues that the rituals connected with preparing and consuming food are not only manifestations of an intimate bond between

the two women, but they can also be interpreted as acts of performing their homoerotic desires. Thus seen from a new perspective, the café is perceived by the critic as a site of resistance and radical openness. It is a place where the two females challenge the patriarchal, heteronormative system in the American South of the 1930s.

Beata Zawadka's article on the 1950s filmic oeuvre of Douglas Sirk is an impressive examination of the transgressive potential of the director's melodramas: *All I Desire*, *Magnificient Obsession*, *All the Heavens Allows*, *Written on the Wind* and *Imitation of Life*. Considered by Sirk's contemporaries as classical Hollywood "tearjerkers," the films are now critically acclaimed for their incisive, social critique of the conformist life of the upper middle class America of the 1950s. As Zawadka argues, the key to de/en/coding Sirk's "impossible stories" lies in the understanding of their intended theatralization which relieves the classical Hollywood genre from its formal and ideological constraints. Sirk's experience as a theater director as well as his interests in painting had an unquestionable impact on his productions. Consequently, his kitschy, pathos and action-filled melodramas become highly stylized cinematographic "performances" of life. By stressing his works' performative character, Sirk simultaneously liberates his narratives from the necessity to depict the world realistically. In doing so, the director challenges the genre as a mode of cultural production, pointing to its "imperialism" in creating a "real" vision of life. In Sirkian "impossible stories" the fatalism of the characters' lives is always overcome by the classical Hollywood happy ending. As Zawadka aptly argues, this strategy is in fact used by Sirk to reveal Hollywood's power to create and sell an illusion of life.

The subsequent section of the book comprises in-depth analyses of the theme of rebellion manifested through/in art and experimental writing. In "Living Pictures in the Works of Stephen King," Zofia Kolbuszewska examines the reasons behind King's employment of the trope of the living picture in his story "The Road Virus Heads North" and novel *Rose Madder*. As the critic claims, King uses this particular trope to manifest his doubt in the cultural status of horror and to stress his own ambiguous position between high and low culture. This ambiguity is manifested by the writer's status as a widely recognized classic and an author of popular bestsellers. Kolbuszewska's analysis of King's use of the living picture as a means of addressing the question of the Other in American culture is particularly interesting. Drawing on the Gothic convention, ekphratic discourse and the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, the critic interprets the living picture as a manifestation of the uncanny which questions the socially established and accepted order. Thus used in King's texts, the living pictures reveal growing, deep anxieties in contemporary American culture, arising from the inevitable confrontations with a broadly understood Otherness.

Paweł Frelik's article "Paul Laffoley: Science Fiction Art in Search of Utopia" is an insight into the work of the artist of the fantastic, probing the reasons for his marginal position in the world of art as well as his insufficient recognition in science fiction cultures. On the one hand, Laffoley's outsider position can be attributed to the artist's persistent rejection of any form of categorization of his art. Yet, more importantly, it is his combining art with belief that raises major questions among audiences approaching his work critically. Deciphering the utopian vision of humanity encoded in Laffoley's work, Frelik points to alchemy, occultism and transcendentalism as major influences on the artist's philosophy. This spiritualistic aspect, together with Laffoley's openly declared belief in extraterrestrial life, leave audiences perplexed. As Frelik stresses, for Laffoley, his work is first of all a visionary project which documents and contributes to the enhancement of the humanity's development through the evolution of consciousness. Consequently, his ambiguous work challenges not only critical approaches towards science fiction literature and art but also gives opportunity to rethink modern understanding of art in general.

Equally interesting is Julia Nikiel's critical overview of bizarro, a controversial literary movement which emerged in the 1990s. As the critic states, in the most general terms, bizarro is a radical response to the broadly accepted literary and linguistic *savoir-vivre*. According to the movement's leaders, Carlton Mellick III, Kevin Donihe and Kevin Dole II, previously established literary traditions limit the artist's self-expression and the ways in which reality can be described. Although bizarro has already gained a large number of readership, it remains relatively little known in the academia. The reason for that, argues Nikiel, is bizarro's inherent "weirdness" celebrated by the writers. Contesting the limitations of literary realism, bizarro artists draw on science-fiction, fantasy and horror to create absurd, dreamlike visions of the world. Pointing to the movement's use of obscene, violent and sacrilegious content, Nikiel claims that this strategy aims at challenging the constraints of literary "good taste" and the terror of political correctness. Although offensive and nonsensical, bizarro is perceived by Nikiel as a movement successfully reflecting and commenting on the state of contemporary American popular culture.

A lot of attention is given in the collection to the theme of rebellion and resistance in contemporary ethnic American literature and culture. A very interesting contribution to this section is Mateusz Durczak's examination of a controversial dispute over the use of the word "nigger" within the African American community. Although the use of the "N-word" by white Americans has officially become a legal crime, the word remains popular within the African American hip hop community. As Durczak states, the official requests made by the African American establishment to ban completely the use of the racial

slur revealed a serious split within the African American community. Attacked by the community's leaders for ignorant and disrespectful use of the word and for propagating it as a means of financial profits, the hip hop community not only refused to comply with such demands but accused the elite of the lack of understanding for the ordinary "black street." For this group, claim the hip hop artists, the word has received a new, positive and empowering meaning. Durczak's important analysis not only addresses the complexity of the problem of language as a tool of both oppression and liberation, but it also points to a much larger dilemma that ethnic American artists and writers are exploring nowadays; namely, the generational conflict concerning the understanding of ethnic American identity (both communal and individual) as well as freedom of artistic expression.

This problem is also explored in the article by one of the co-editors of the book, Izabella Kimak, in which she focuses on South Asian American women writing. Kimak's analysis of selected works by Jhumpa Lahiri, a well-acclaimed second-generation writer, and those written by first-generation authors, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Bharati Mukherjee, points to a conflict that stems from the writers' serious differences in the understanding of the South Asian immigrant experience. It is especially vivid in their portrayals of India and America. As Kimak stresses, while the first generation writers tend to see the two places in terms of binary opposition, with South Asia depicted as a site of constraint and America as a symbol of liberation, the second-generation writers openly refuse to follow this model, considering it as an oversimplification. Lahiri's gradual distancing herself from "ethnic" themes and her literary exploration of commonly shared human experience should be read as an explicit statement about her work. Not only does she refuse to follow the path of her literary predecessors, but also refuses to carry the burden of an ethnic writer "representing her people." Lahiri's claim for freedom of artistic expression is undoubtedly one of many ethnic voices emerging on the literary scene, pointing to a new phase in contemporary ethnic American literature. Junot Diaz's novel *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, analyzed by Karolina Majkowska, can serve as such an example. Pointing to the novel's intertextuality, various literary and cultural references, series of original footnotes and a multitude of foreign words and phrases, Majkowska describes Diaz's work as a voice from the periphery challenging both western and Dominican literary traditions. Revolting against the reductive classifications of ethnic American literature, based on the center-periphery dichotomy, Diaz is undoubtedly an important voice in contemporary American literary canon.

For the readers interested in Latino–American female writing, Grażyna Zygadło's and Maja Sobotka's articles should be of particular interest. Zygadło examines Chicana artists' use of their lesbianism as a political statement in their struggle

against gender and sexual oppression. Analyzing the works of such accomplished writers as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga and Susan Castillo, the critic explores lesbian Chicanas' double stigmatization. Not only do they struggle against the dominant society's sexism and homophobia but they are also outcast in their own ethnic communities. Their writing becomes therefore both a political tool used to publically speak about the situation of the queer in America as well as a means of open celebration of the female body and the self. Maja Sobotka analyzes the "poetry of rebellion" by Puerto Rican author Luz María Umpierre. As Sobotka aptly observes, Umpierre's entire work is a manifestation of her life-long activism against racism, sexism and homophobia. An openly declared lesbian, promoting her theory of homocriticism, Umpierre has fallen victim to various forms of prejudice which she addresses in her poetry. Consequently, language becomes Umpierre's tool used to shape and express her critique. Original in style and provocative in content, Umpierre's poetry is a documentation of her struggle against the forces silencing her voice and of her constant affirmation of herself, her lesbianism and of womanhood at large.

Inne bębny is by no means a project that aims at exhausting the theme of rebellion and resistance in American literature and culture. Its goal is rather to show various faces of rebellion depending on the time, context and the medium used by the artist discussing it. Analyzing the examples of artistic revolts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the collection also shows how various socio-political and cultural changes have affected America's understanding of freedom. This is clearly demonstrated in the articles devoted to ethnic American artists. The ethnic writers' work is the best example of how, from a tool of oppression and domination, language has become a means of personal and communal liberation.

Exploring the complexity of the above mentioned themes, *Inne bębny* is undoubtedly an important addition to the field of American studies in Poland. The fact that the collection is written in Polish makes it useful not only for Polish scholars working in the areas of research explored by the contributors, but also to a wider, not necessarily academic readership interested in American studies. While most of the analyzed works are generally known to Polish Americanists, there is still a significant portion of material which might be new to a non-academic audience. In this respect, articles by Kimak, Frelik, Nikiel, or Sobotka are of unquestionable value. Moreover, theoretical backgrounds against which individual analyses are conducted provide useful information on the most recent developments in literary and cultural theories. Zofia Kolbuszewska's critical analysis of Stephen King's employment of living pictures and Beata Zawadka's examination of Douglas Sirk's melodramas can serve as good examples.

Overall, *Inne bębny* is a well-edited and harmoniously balanced work. Even though the quality of some of the articles in this eclectic, multifaceted collection is sometimes uneven, each one of them is of great academic merit, offering new perspectives on contemporary American literature and culture. An insightful examination and meditation on the American tradition of rebellion and resistance, *Inne bębny* is ultimately a careful and mature reflection on America's ongoing quest for freedom.

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Buelens, Gert, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, eds. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. London: Routledge, 2014. 200 pages.

Trauma theory has become a prominent discourse in American literary and cultural studies since the early 1990s and the publication of Shoshona Felman and Dori Laub's influencial work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* which has creatively integrated the Holocaust studies, psychoanalysis and deconstruction in order to conceptualize witnessing, memory and testimony of trauma in literature, film and medical science. In addition, Cathy Caruth's seminal edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory,* which was followed by her own influencial work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History,* have laid the groundwork for the practice of interdisciplinary trauma studies. These innovative texts have inspired explosion of interest in trauma theory and criticism which still shows no signs of abating. The interdisciplinary focus of the new field has been continuously expanded by numerous scholars from diverse disciplines such as medical science in Judith Lewis Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, history studies in Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, literary criticism in Laurie Vickroy's *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* as well as cultural studies in E. Ann Kaplan's *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. Initially, a number of American research projects associated with Yale University, trauma studies have soon expanded to include also studies of European contexts. English-language European trauma studies such Jane Kilby's *Violence and the Cultural Politics of Trauma* and Roger Luckhurst's *The Trauma Question* have also helped to problematize theoretical issues arising with accumulated body of knowledge and practice concerning fast-growing trauma studies in the new geographic locations. This predominantly Euro-American

approach of trauma theory to literature and culture with its primary focus on two iconic historical traumas of the Holocaust and the 9/11 terrorist attack has recently become challenged and redefined as more global concerns have gained attention of contemporary trauma theoreticians and critics. Attempts to broaden and reconceptualize the scope and framework of trauma discourse to include African, Asian and Australian perspectives have already been made within the study of one medium by E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang in *Trauma and Cinema: Cross Cultural Explorations* (2004).

Similar but more comprehensive major theoretical and thematic reformulation of discourse on trauma is also undertaken in a new compelling collection of essays titled progressively *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism* edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone. The study published this year, theorizes literary and cultural representations of more recent late twentieth and early twenty- first century collective traumas in the increasingly globalized world. This theoretical volume advances a project of further dialogizing and pluralizing of not only Euro-American but also postcolonial traumas. By dividing *The Future of Trauma Theory* thematically into two parts focusing first on the situated examples of history and culture and then exploring politics and subjectivity its editors by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, accomplished trauma scholars, clearly stated their primary concerns and constructed a logical book structure. Two introductory texts and ten inspiring essays charter new territories and concepts associated with the recent collective traumas historically situated in such diverse locations as Angola, Australia, Cambodia, Lebanon, South Africa, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The substantial contributions to the volume are written by the major international scholars in trauma theory and criticism representing many research disciplines such as critical theory, contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary studies, international politics, history departments, Holocaust, memory and genocide studies.

The volume opens with a fascinating Preface by Michael Rothberg, an accomplished scholar of Holocaust and memory studies, who, in this way, is credited for providing a ground-breaking example for the new trauma paradigm showing how Holocaust memory and postcolonial studies can be productively combined in his *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009). In his thought-provoking introductory text to *The Future of Trauma Theory* Rothberg tests the limits of classical trauma theory by drawing attention to new conceptualizations of "systemic non-spectacular violence" associated with the exploitative conditions of workers in globalized economy or cumulative, devastating effects of climate change, which have been so far less frequently analyzed within the framework of trauma studies than more dramatic "event-centered accounts of

violence" (XV). Such new areas, concepts and connections are productively explored throughout the individual chapters of this ambitious future-oriented collection.

The first, more extensive part of the study, is titled "History and Culture" and comprises six stimulating essays by contributors from both American and European universities. The first two essays in the Part I "Knowledge, "afterwardsness" and the future of trauma theory" and "Fascism and the sacred: sites of inquiry after (or along with) trauma" are authored by the two expert Holocaust studies scholars respectively, Robert Eaglestone and Dominick LaCapra, offering original insights into representations of the Holocaust from the new vantage points provided by the less canonical texts of trauma studies.

In contrast to two previous essays, Stef Craps, a specialist in postcolonial and trauma literature, critiques classic trauma theory for its largely unfulfilled promise of creating ethical communal engagement through listening to another's traumatic history, and he proposes in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age" to move beyond Euro-American aesthetic and thematic focus in order to explore more diverse representations of trauma in their distinct local contexts and forms. He illustrates his argument with a detailed examination of Aminatta Forn's critically acclaimed novel, *The Memory of Love* published in 2010, to provide an example of "more inclusive, materialist and politicized form of trauma theory" (51). Craps underscores the contrast evoked in Forn's novel between the local consequences of the long civil war in Sierra Leone and ambivalence about efficacy of Euro-American therapeutic trauma models such as famous "talking cure" brought by the outsider, a British psychologist. Craps eloquently observes that Forn's silences in the novel effectively undermine the universality of Euro-American model narrative therapy.

Also Nouri Ghana's contribution "Trauma ties: Chiasmus and community in Lebanese civil war literature" challenges the readers of trauma theory to explore cultural differences in forms and effects of local violence in the regional literary texts. She specifically examines Elias Khoury's experimental novel, *City Gates,* published in 1981 and draws attention to haunting evocation of mourning in this postmodern Arabic text devoid of emotional and narrative closure. Ghana carefully lists a number of tropes such as chiasmus, metonymy, repetition which Khoury uses to simultaneously express and occlude the impact of trauma on the survivor. She emphasizes that the function of the central figure in the novel, a traumatized stranger, is to convey vulnerability of ineffectual agency and fragmented subjectivity but also to create new bonds within the post-traumatic community. Although Ghana is aware that the text she has chosen as her case study may be testing the limits of a reader used to European modes of expression, she still considers the effort required to enter the realm of Lebanese civil war literature a valuable experience promising more polyphonic future trauma research.

In one of the most accomplished and inspiring essays in this significant collection, titled "Affect, body, place: Trauma theory in the world," Anaya Johanara Kabir undertakes the mixed media approach to her consideration of the dynamic connectedness of affect, body and locality in the transnational trauma theory. Invoking the trope of unrequited love and self-annihilation in a Taliban poem at the beginning of her essay, Kabir suggests that to be emotionally and culturally proficient in Islamicate regions the readers from other cultural backgrounds should be willing to interrogate such Sufi-inspired concepts and complex traumas of postcolonial subjectivities. In her attempt to overcome the limits of Euro-American trauma theory and fill in its gaps with forward-looking projects in disparate settings, Kabir undertakes examination of textual and non-narrative, performative examples from culturally distinct regions of south-east Asia, Southern Africa, and contact zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan. One of Kabir's examples, which challenges the paradigm of Euro-American trauma studies, is a non-narrative spatial arrangement of the Phnom Penh's Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum commemorating the atrocities perpetrated by Khmer Rouge regime headed by Pol Pot, which traumatized Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Although museum appears to be a classic site of memory as theorized by Pierre Nora, Kabir argues that it is far from exemplifying one of the "dominant and dominated" sites, as conceptualized by Nora (67). Instead, by collapsing features of two types of commemoration in the same space, namely as secular building of national memory situated next to a place focused on commercial activity but named "Bodhi, after sacred site of Budda's enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, and supplemented by a Buddist altar introducing "commemoration-as-healing," Tuol Sleng constitutes a dinstinctly local affective and performative model of trauma witnessing and testimony which blurs the boundaries between reality and representation, official history and interactive affective involvement (68). Another, equally performative example of distinct non-Eurocentric expression of trauma, which Kabir discusses in "Affect, Body, Place" foregrounds body and affect in the Angolan electronic music-dance complex, kuduro. 'Kuduristas,' Angolan performers of kuduro, combine art and trauma to reconnect traumatized collective subjectivities through their body movements which evoke simultaneously suffering and joy. As Kabir perceptively observes, Kuduro's regenerating effect is closely attached to the local frames of reference and cannot be easily compared to European electronic dances. Still, Kabir envisions kuduro as becoming in future a part of broader "kinetic histories" of Black Transatlantic realm of dance, music and trauma partially described by Paul Gilroy with respect to jazz and hip hop music (71). Referring to Michael Rothberg's influencial notion of "multidirectional memory," which conceptualizes multiple but complementary modes of memoralization of traumatic experiences, Kabir proposes to expand non-Eurocentric trauma theory by making vibrant interconnectedness of affect,

body and place central to post-traumatic recovery and re-establishment of shattered communal connections exercising "resources of the body to re-embed itself in place" and "affect world" (73).

Following Sigmund Freud's biological account of traumatization in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and Judith Butler's response to 9/11 in *Precarious Life,* Sam Durrant, an expert of postcolonial literature, traces the trajectory of critical engagement with individual corporeal vulnerability and collective traumas in his essay "Undoing sovereignty: Towards a theory of critical mourning." By using insights from Marxist theory Durrant proposes to theorize critique of postcolonial mourning in an attempt to upset connections between practice of mourning and property claims. In order to achieve this aim, Durrant discusses a critique of memorialization of Irish Famine, reexamines Horkheimer's and Adorno's reading of *The Oddyssey* focusing on its unsuccessful attempts to account for and contain the traces of violence during re-establishment of community and the cycle of post-apartheid poems about recovery of corporeality and rejection of reconciliation in the aftermath of Truth and Reconciliation Commission written by the South African poet, Ingrid de Kok.

The second, much shorter, part of *The Future of Trauma Theory* titled "Politics and subjectivity" highlights the traumas caused by the state and political subjection. In the title featuring a memorable quote from the poem by the refugee detained in western Australian immigration detention camp near Woomera "'That which you are denying us': Refugees, rights and writing in Arendt," Lyndsey Stonebridge convincingly argues that the discourse of denial of human rights invoked by Arendt in her analysis of the impact of Holocaust and her 17-years of being "stateless" is comparable to the current situation of detained refugees and their testimonial writing and for these reasons it should be acknowledged by the future trauma theory. In Stonebridge's essay, like in Kabir's contribution, body also features prominently, this time in its traumatized form of Australian refugee's lips sutured in an act of silent protest. In contrast, Jenny Edkins' text "Time, Personhood, Politics" theorizes the philosophical concept of "trauma time" which can be used in political analysis as a means to defy sovereign power and its connection to linear time. Drawing on Georgio Agamben's and Eric Santner's notions of time and personhood, Edkins, who specializes in international politics, suggests that escape from oppression by sovereign power leads, paradoxically, not from but rather to the ordinary time and relinquishing the fantasy of exceptionality. Similarly to Edkins, Pieter Vermeulen evaluates the sovereign power's policing of wounded subjectivity in "The Biopolitics of trauma." Vermeulen claims that such traumatic events as 9/11 and efforts aimed at revenge and prevention of similar suffering helped to perpetuate vicious circle of violence. Drawing insights form Jenny Edkins, that work of trauma scholars has effects comparable to other

social actions, and the paradigm represented by the functioning of our immune system in contact with alterity, Vermeulen emphasizes that trauma studies with its affinity to work of memory can perform the role of an immunitary system which resists repetition or escalation of life-threatening violence. Finally, in the last essay " Future shock: Science fiction and the trauma paradigm" Roger Luckhurst, the author of impressive outline of trauma studies and its centrality to many contemporary cultural concepts and practices, *The Trauma Question* published in 2008, boldly declares that future trauma criticism should go beyond the study of aporias in modernist texts and instead should redirect its attention to new radically reconceptualized visions of trauma neurology and post-human visions of trauma evoked in "hard Science Fiction."

In summary, *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a rich, valuable and stimulating contribution to recent interdisciplinary research on literary and cultural criticism in which trauma studies have continued to play a major role. However, in their persistent effort to make trauma studies more inclusive of non-Euro-American topics and contributors, the editors *The Future of Trauma Theory* focused primarily on collective traumas as discussed by predominantly male contributors. It should be noted that only three out of twelve contributions to this collection are written by the women researchers. Furthermore, feminist and gender studies scholarship which was instrumental, not only for the rise, but also the later development of the trauma studies has been relegated in *The Future of Trauma Theory* to one reference in a section entitled rather pejoratively "the empire of trauma" and a perfunctory footnote acknowledging a borrowing (49).

While I agree with Stef Craps, who argues in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age" that Euro-American trauma theory requires more diverse, global contexts to consider collective as well as individual consequences of traumatic racist or otherwise oppressive systems, I would like to emphasize that those systems have produced not only numerous military and economic conflicts, which his essay and other contributions in the collection consider, but also high rates of gender-based physical and sexual violence. Multimedia global projects such as protest dance action "One Billion Rising to End Violence Against Women," initiated in 2013 after a series of gang rapes in India by Eve Ensler, a renowned playwright and performer, and continued by transnational activists in 200 countries in 2014, testify to the rising public awareness of the interdependence of gender stereotyping and traumas of physical and sexual violations acknowledged by many trauma researchers I referred to in the opening of this review (e.g. Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth and Laurie Vickroy). However, this significant omission in the otherwise comprehensive volume, can be remedied by a new more intersectional analysis of the role played by race, class and gender in trauma-inflicting systems of oppressions.

In conclusion, *The Future of Trauma Theory* constitutes a ground-breaking theoretical contribution to the field of contemporary literary and cultural trauma studies and it testifies both to the current productivity and future potential of trauma research by outlining several directions in which it can be developed. The contemporary and global focus of the collection pluralizes, politicizes and opens trauma theory to innovative forms of testimonies, witnessing and conceptions of recovery. Importantly, it also establishes new grounds for connections between trauma studies and postcolonial studies. The collection is also a valuable source for its theoretical gaps as they too pose new challenges to the trauma paradigm by raising important questions and stimulating further discussion in this quickly-developing field. Since neither feminist nor gender studies perspectives, which have been central to both emergence and recognition of trauma studies, have been discussed in this collection in depth, it remains for the future scholars to undertake a yet more inclusive analysis of intersections of, not only racial, and economic, but also gender-based contexts of traumatic experience and its literary and cultural (re)presentations. In general, both the new trajectories outlined in the study as well as its silences can prove stimulating for an ongoing engagement of literary and cultural studies in which trauma theory holds an important place. *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a must for researchers of contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary and cultural studies as well as for scholars from the departments of the history, memory and politics who are interested in the cutting-edge theoretical framework of trauma studies and the invigorating visions of its future aspirations.

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Kacper Bartczak and Małgorzata Myk, eds. *Theory that Matters: What Practice After Theory*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. 315 pages.

Kacper Bartczak and Małgorzata Myk's co-edited volume *Theory that Matters: What Practice After Theory* is divided into four parts: "Theory-Continuations," "Practices-Literature," "Practices-Film/Media," and "External Practices-Mixed Media." The first part consists of reflections about theory in general, explications of specific theoretical works, as well as polemical developments and contributions. The second and third parts consist of theory-heavy interpretations of texts; some essays examine texts which include much theoretical discussion, so the texts are presented as theoretical writings. The essays in the fourth part discuss external history of literary theory, that is they all seem to deal with reception and sociology of academic and artistic endeavors. As a whole, the book could be described as a report on the current state of knowledge in literary theory.

With some exceptions, the selection of authors and themes is limited to "theory" as it is understood at departments of English or American studies (which is perhaps a handy circular definition of the word "theory"). At the same time, the book reflects the sense of suspicion and irony about such notion of literary theory. Many authors, especially in the first part of the book, reflect on how "theory" can be (and has been) understood as a relatively closed body of writing shaped by relatively few star-professors (as in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's well known anthology), at a few leading universities in the United Kingdom and in the United States. This seems to be problematic, given the fact that so many essays condemn various forms of dominance, hegemony, and globalization: why

is struggle against hegemony so centralized? Is theory only written in English? Can the subaltern speak (and "get published") without quoting from fashionable names? Is French theory American? What theory is being developed now in India, China, Middle-Eastern or African countries? In my opinion, any such arrogant question is a harbinger of the end, or of an absolute change, a revolution, which might be vital for future relevance of literary theory, or of humanities for that matter. The collection contains a number of essays that explore such questions, as well as a number of exercises in perpetuation of the theoretical canon, and this tension seems to be the current and undercurrent of the book.

The first essay, by Tadeusz Sławek, is a reflection on functions of theory: it introduces the themes of the end of the world, constitutes a sort of therapeutic speech that goes on until it forgets its meaning, and a position of absolute distance from the world of meaning and force. One cannot but think of Jones Very, a theologian, philologist, and poet, who allegedly told his college class to flee to the woods (for the end is nigh), which they allegedly did; that was theory in action, and taken seriously. Are students and critics, today, prepared to take theory seriously, too? The essay seems to be a flowery Jeremiad cross-pollinated by fairy tale, and its subversive, religious impulse is illustrated with fantastic imagery from Edgar Allan Poe, Jonathan Swift, and Hans Christian Andersen.

Other essays in the first section, similarly, reflect on functions of theory, or on its historical development and contemporary state of the art. Thus, Leszek Drong proposes "Theory for Theory's Sake," which reflects the apparent emancipation of theory and its elevation to the "central and transcendental signified." The author proposes Stanley Fish's recent notion of academizing, which is "converting real-life issues into objects of intellectual inquiry" as the desired product of theory. The third essay, by Tymon Adamczewski, discusses "the critical aftermath" and is basically a brief history of theory. Agata Preiss-Smith revises "the political in what is now invariably called theory" and proposes Chela Sandoval's appropriation of Barthes's definition of myth. The fifth essay, by Tomasz Dobrogoszcz, is an informed historical discussion of the use of psychoanalysis in postcolonial theory, beginning with Franz Fannon's psychiatry, and ending with discussion of sources of psychoanalytical terminology in Homi Bhabha's work. In the next essay, Sumit Chakrabathy provides an explication of Bhabha's reflection on postcolonial identity. Wojciech Majka, in his astute and conceptually dense contribution, proposes a way out of the homelessness of man, from Descartes, through Kant, Rorty, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, to acceptance of suffering as cognitive perspective on being. The final essay, by David Waterman, proposes a "zero theory," which is a subversive and questioning form of social engagement.

The second section is called "Practices: Literature," and it is a set of innovative, theory-heavy interpretations, and several critical discussions of texts as theory.

The first essay, by Antoine Cazé, is a model example, in that it discusses similarities between Rancière's remarks on aesthetics of democracy, and the poetical procedures of collective authorship in American LANGUAGE poetry. The following two essays, by Tomasz Basiuk and by Agnieszka Miksza, both reflect on life-writing, and the theoretical considerations in and about autobiographies and their relation to fiction. Both authors seem particularly interested in fragments of self-reflection in life-writing, comparing them to self-reflection and self-definition in life. Wit Pietrzak provides a similar discussion of Paul Celan's poetic and moral appeal to Martin Heidegger, discussing the text as theoretical debate and as object of theory (Bloom, Rorty) at the same time; the reflection is further illustrated with an very rich collection of references to T. S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Wallace Stevens, John Ashberry, and John Banville. Somewhat similarly, Grzegorz Czemiel discusses Ciaran Carson's poetry as an essay on epistemology. Difficulties in classification of American nonfiction as an emerging genre are discussed in the essay by Olga Nesmelova and Zhanna Konovalova, who focus on the nonfiction authors' comments about their genre (including Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and Tom Wolfe). In the last essay in this section, Aleksandra Bubiło discusses Samuel R. Delaney's pornographic texts, providing a comprehensive review of theories of pornography.

The third section is similar to the second, only it focuses on films and media. Marek M. Wojtaszek confronts the plight of *The Soloist* (a schizophrenic homeless musician genius) with various theoreticians who treated schizophrenia as topic (Laing), or applied it as intellectual concept to analysis of something else (Deleuze and Guattari). Katarzyna Poloczek addresses the anti-theory backlash, concurrent with the anti-feminist backlash in America, and discusses three films as examples. Nina Czarnecka-Pałka provides ways of saving psychoanalytical film theory for feminism; like Poloczek, and several others in the book, Czarnecka-Pałka addresses the contemporary negative attitude towards theory. Finally, Robert Westerfelhaus discusses a reality show, *Queer Eye*, and various contradictory critical reactions to it, and how those reactions apply various theoretical tools; the author presents the variety of contradicting views as a blossoming, good state of theory.

The last section, "External Practices," is not simply about mixed media, but more about situations which blur the traditional (or commonsensical, or naive) relation between theory as tool, its object as raw material, and life as external given to be represented by texts and theory. Thus, there are essays about life as theory, or theory materialized as artistic practice, or texts using theory as imagery etc. The first essay, by Rod Stoneman, ostensibly deals with the history of film and television theory, but it really is an autobiography of a person whose professional life was shaped by theoretical developments. Mark Tardi's essay, undoubtedly the most unusual one in the collection, combines objectified pieces of poetry and

theory by various authors, poets, theoreticians, and, if the readers are to take his word, by Facebook users (most language comes from Thalia Field's poetry collection from 2000, *Point and Line*). Tardi presents a collage, with "prompts" from Thalia's poems, which really look like prompts, separated by square brackets, and asking for an input from the reader. Other prompts are taken from a Facebook survey. Tardi's essay neatly corresponds to Tadeusz Sławek's discussion of theory as deliberate erosion of meaning, and exploration of unpredictable sweet nothings. The final essay, by Kacper Bartczak, describes a poet's reading of literary theory, with various possibilities, as source of language and imagery, as framework, or as source of "useful experimental inspirations." This argument is developed in the subsequent series of interviews with Polish poets, about their reception of literary theory. The poets are Julia Fiedorczuk, Maciej Melecki, Joanna Mueller, and Krzysztof Siwczyk.

The book presents a state of a certain idea of theory, which went beyond literary criticism, beyond rhetorics, beyond philosophy, and which, with the post-modern and post-structuralist turn, reached unprecedented, glittering peaks of reflection on language, thought, and writing. These peaks, as many essays suggest, seem now to be receding into the past. Many essays talk self-consciously about theory's demise; theory seems to be in quest for a rationale not for itself, but for its continuing demise. More optimistic versions also seem to be quite desperate by implicitly proclaiming that anything goes. There is also a pronounced note of fear, in some essays, that students, and subsequent generations of critics and teachers, will simply forget the whole thing, or an important segment of it. Which brings me to the most disturbing theoretical question for me—the question of teaching. By numbers, it can be assumed that most people who read theory today are undergraduate students; they are usually forced to read it, and they often hate it. Testing and failing undergraduate students on this is an ugly and dirty sin that many theoreticians commit, daily and about everywhere. Teaching is to theory what upbringing is to family; apart from family bliss, there are cases of family violence, implicit threats, dependency disorders, miseducation, and failing parents. Students are theory's children. No author mentions this huge captive audience that theory has, year after year, at universities and colleges.

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