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REVIEWS

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Materiality, Electricity and the Soul in Edgar Fawcett's Scientific Romances

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Abstract: The article discusses two novels by Edgar Fawcett, a prolific poet and novelist active in the 1890s, as examples of materialist representation of psychology. Fawcett's literary materialism was not only a thematic reference to his contemporary science, but a certain convention of characterization, which emphasized mystery and drastic imagery as means of character development. Numerous other examples of this tendency in the 1890s are described as well. The theoretical background is derived from the recent materialist turn in literary criticism.

Keywords: Edgar Fawcett, Gilded Age, science fiction, materiality

Materialist approach in literary criticism is an offshoot of the general interest in materiality in history and cultural criticism. The frequently recognized seminal work in this current seems to be Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986), a material-history book about the cultural construction of things, their changing value and functions; the book established the general interest in things, rather than matter (and materialist determinism) in material history. Frank Trentman's more recent article is a programmatic manifesto of this approach, announcing that "things are back" ("Materiality" 283) and that they constitute the "material stuff of life" (284). Recent book-length studies in the culture of things include Frank Trentman's *The Consuming Passion: How Things Have Seduced, Enriched, and Changed Our Lives* (2015), and his later monumental *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (2017). Social history of things has also been merged with literary criticism in Bill Brown's *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (2003), a study in American realism early in the twentieth century, when American life began to be dominated by consumerism: mass ownership of many things, apparently a new thing, was turning into a "tyranny of things" (21), with fetishism, habit formation, habitual actions shaped by thing ownership, cultural object lessons at museums and exhibitions, and the "misuse value" (120) of things, rather like a negative value of objects when they become detrimental to their owners. Brown's study, however, is a very broad panorama of material culture, unlike some very specific monographic studies. For instance, Mark Noble presented an informed survey of the sources of Walt Whitman's famous reference to atoms ("Whitman's Atoms"), and Paul Gilmore ("Romantic Electricity") related many images from Whitman and other authors to their contemporary scientific revelations about electricity and its links to chemistry.

Materiality-based approach in humanities can lead to a somewhat surprising turn from anthropocentrism to anthropomorphism, for example in Jane Bennett's political-theoretical article which is an attempt to "give philosophical expression to the vitality, wilfulness, recalcitrance possessed by non-human entities and forces"

(347). Bennett, treating things as part of natural environment, demands an ecological approach to matter (and human-made things), and even more, because the critic writes about "thing-power materialism" (348) as a political program.

> My view is that while humans do indeed encounter things only in a mediated way, there nonetheless remains something to be said for the naivety of naïve realism. A moment of naivety is, I think, indispensable for any discernment of thing-power, if there is to be any chance of acknowledging the force of matter. A naive realism (which, in my case functions as an onto-story rather than an apodictic account) allows nonhumanity to appear on the ethical radar screen. Yes, there is a sense in which any thing-power discerned is an effect of culture, and this insight is a valuable counter to moralistic appeals to 'nature.' But concentration on this insight alone also diminishes any potential we might possess to render more manifest the world of nonhuman vitality. (357)

The "making manifest" of things is a recognition of a "secret life of things" (358), which Bennett describes with reference to Deleuze and Guattari, and thus indirectly with reference to the contemplative recognition of complex and surprising qualities of matter, that is to the attitude necessary in natural sciences (represented, in the article, by Stephen Jay Gould, Lynn Margulis, and Dorion Sagan). Other than Deleuze and Guattari, the French thinker who most likely has influenced studies in materiality is Bruno Latour, who, apart from his well-known books, presented a programmatic article on "When Things Strike Back: A Possible Contribution to 'Science Studies'" (2000). Anthropomorphism, as Bennett observes, seems to be a paradoxical antidote to anthropocentrism, as it enables people to tune in with the world of things. In an even more striking recognition of materiality's secret life, Ian Bogost is amazed at the very existence of every object, a fact as surprising and mysterious as the Big Bang:

> The unit reveals a feature of being that the thing and the object occlude. The density and condensation of tiny ontology has a flip side: something is always something else, too: a gear in another mechanism, a relation in another assembly, a part in another whole. Within the black hole–like density of being, things undergo an expansion. The ontological equivalent of the Big Bang rests within every object. Being expands. (26)

Thus, what is perceived as sublime and strange on a grand scale, is present in every humble object, not to mention its humbler raw material, the matter. This kind of fascination is discernible, again, in many of the chemistry-themed texts discussed in the present article. In non-fiction, the confident tone of articles written after the creation of Mendeleev's periodical table of elements became generally known is exemplified by a triumphant article about meteorites published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1890. Presumably, not only the periodic table, but also advances in chemical analysis have influenced the tone of the following statement:

> It is well known that the different compounds which constitute this earth have been resolved into sixty-six elements…. Of these sixty-six elements, thirty four have been recognized among the substances brought to our earth by meteorites. Not one new substance, unknown to us before, has been detected; nor,

> excepting in a single doubtful case, has the spectral analysis of the heavenly bodies revealed the possibility of an unknown element…. Moreover, these elements come to us from the infinity of interplanetary space, combined in minerals often identical with, always similar to analogous combinations of like elements on our earth. (Heard 217)

The author then compares meteorites to witnesses, confessing "nothing but truth and only truth" when questioned in the universal language of sixty-six elements. Thus, the "man can stand before God, holding a fragment of a star and say, 'Lord we understand thy laws!'" (218). The confidence springs from the new habit of thinking about matter, as a set of infinitely varied compound particles that consist of a small number of types of building blocks. As Sarah Alexander observed, the conclusion was received with some misgivings in Victorian culture, as irreligious and confusing, somehow undermining matter as a firm foundation of society (125). This reaction suggests a link between the perceived unholiness of materialism and Darwinism; Boller provided ample evidence that both -isms were mentioned together in the 1890s (12-28). However, this new confidence in a simplified system of matter was, in the 1890s, undermined again by the discovery of natural radioactivity and radioactive decay, and the discovery of new elements.

Consequently, the final decades of the nineteenth century in American fiction saw a wave of interest in what I would refer to as new materialism presented by contemporary chemistry and physics, most importantly by discovery of new elements, especially the radioactive elements. Stories about atoms seem to be rarer than stories about newly discovered, mysterious rays. Their most usual premise is to describe (discovery) of materiality of something that was (and is) commonly regarded as something immaterial, such as personality or memory. The implication of such description seems to be that a chemist can physically manipulate things that were considered non-physical, immaterial, such as spiritual or mental facts. Thus, a number of stories and novels, for example, are chemical versions of "Avatar" (1856), the well-known story by Théophile Gautier; the French story was about mind-swapping effected through magic, and the mind-swapping stories from the 1890s usually employ scientific imagery. Edward Bellamy's novel about *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*, where a German professor uses an electric apparatus to remove bad memories, is probably one the most important and successful examples. Another relatively well known text is Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Ray of Displacement" (1895). A more exotic text is Cyrus Cole's novel *The Auroraphone: A Romance* (1890), about an interplanetary telephone left behind by Venusians in the Rocky Mountains. Apart from interesting facts about their history and science, Venusians communicate their discovery that celestial bodies, souls, personalities, are all made of stardust, at various stages of condensation and evaporation. Cole, who seems to have been an informed but isolated amateur, refers directly to Pierre-Simon Laplace and to Poe, who are both known to Venusians and have Venusian counterparts.

Other texts with similar themes seem to be incidental occurrences in commercial fiction: Don Mark Lemon's "The Mansion of Forgetfulness," published in *The Black Cat* in 1907, is an imitation of Poe's "Morella," with a purple ray that destroys memories, and Epes Winthrop Sargeant's "Beyond the Banyans" (1909) has

a similar theme, which leaves a very interesting idea undeveloped: it is a story of a slave-owner from antebellum South, who moves to Belgian Congo, re-establishes a plantation, and uses electric mind control to keep slaves in subjection and to rejuvenate his father by moving his soul into a young Black body (the invention kills all, including the inventor, and the slaves are free again). Two more examples are fantasies about new types of food, which affect the relation between matter and life. Alice McGowan's "A Pestilent Vapor" (1903) features an inventor of gas-food, who himself becomes gaseous through eating gas. Materiality becomes the theme when the protagonist discovers that he can, by force of will, become invisible, dissolve, sneak away through keyholes and chimneys, and then re-compose himself as solid matter (but eventually loses control over those abilities, and disappears, as it were, in a puff of gas). In Edward A. Robinson and Geroge A. Wall's *The Disk: A Tale of Two Passions* (1884), the invention of food-purifying gas is only a background device in an erotic melodrama. It seems that at the end of the nineteenth century, such stories seem to be survivals of an earlier time, and occur in relative isolation, either written by cranks and amateurs, or used as background for a different theme, as in novels by Edgar Fawcett.

Edgar Fawcett was a highly successful social satirist, author of numerous novels and poems published between 1871 and 1904. Today he is mentioned, if at all, in historical studies on early science fiction, and in detailed studies on American realism in the 1880s and 1890s, for instance Wasserstrom's (1959) and Harris's (1983) articles about the need for reconsideration of the Gilded Age in American literature. Wasserstrom, for example, observed in the 1950s that

> [w]e have long condemned the writers of that generation—Edgar Fawcett, Winston Churchill, Henry B. Fuller, Robert Herrick—for their disregard of the force of sex. Despite the testimony of Henry Adams, none of these novelists did in fact disregard sex. But they were so convinced of its evil that they composed dramas of passion quite unaware that sex, not some notion about conscience or commerce, provided the root of their thought. (494)

Be it as it may, Fawcett's wide range of themes and profuse output in fiction makes it possible to project anything into his work; he was, for instance, described as gritty urban realist by one of his contemporary critics (Delbanco 28), as a science-fiction pioneer by science-fiction critics (Bleiler; Stableford 47), and is remembered as social satirist by general critics today; this versatility is perhaps a mixed blessing in terms of critical recognition today (Harrison 112). Although he published over one hundred poems, published in magazines and seven book collections, his poetry is not mentioned at all today. It seems that he was regarded as an urbane aesthetic authority, as he also published articles on music, interior design, and general social commentary in magazines. It is an interesting emblem of his popularity that on a list of "famous American books and living writers" from 1907 in *The Journal of Education*, Fawcett is not listed, but a brief poem of his is used as a convenient and elegant frame for the list. This seems to be an appropriate description of Edgar Fawcett's position in the history of American literature.

His fantastic novels are slightly satirical too, and scientific speculation in the two novels discussed below is given relatively little attention in the texts. On the other

hand, there seems to be a link between Fawcett's use of matter and the dehumanized, artificial characters he satirically describes. Probably the most important example is *Douglas Duane: A Romance* (1887). In *Douglas Duane,* personality turns out to be of electro-chemical nature, and can be transferred between bodies when they are immersed in two electrolytic vats, connected through vaguely described apparatus invented by the narrator. The protagonist, a selfish and immoral man, uses the vats to get into the body of the husband of a woman he madly desires, which seems to be a direct imitation of Gautier's story. In a slightly different manner, personality is materialized in Fawcett's short novel, *Solarion: A Romance* (1889), where a German chemist discovers the secret of enhancing mental evolution of animals, which leads to creation of a human-like dog, who is then mercilessly treated by the protagonist, a member of the American high society.

Edgar Fawcett's two novels support the hypothesis that scientific romances written after 1860s, were continuations of the antebellum tradition of American romance; this is how Brian Stableford defines Fawcett's science fiction (45). Of course, Fawcett was one of many authors who used the term romance, which was so common that it probably did not have much meaning, other than referring to fantastic content. His fiction, however, represents a successful application of earlier, substantialist representation of matter in satirical fiction; in his two chemical novels he seems to be representing matter like Hawthorne and Poe did, for instance in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" or "Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." Stableford quotes from Fawcett's epistolary romance, *The Ghost of Guy Thyrle*, which opens with a sort of artistic manifesto:

> Nowadays we want a different kind of romanticism, a kind that accommodates itself more naturally to our intensified sceptic tastes. It is the actual, the tangible, the ordinary, the explained, that realism always respects. From the vague, the remote, the unusual, the problematic, it recoils. Yet frequently the two forces of realism and romanticism have met, as in Balzac's 'Peau de Chagrin,' which might be called a fairy-tale written by a materialist. To make our romances acceptable with the world of modern readers, we must clothe them in rationalistic raiment. So clothed, my friend, I should name them 'realistic romances'—stories where the astonishing and peculiar are blended with the possible and accountable…. From this point of view I occasionally strive to prove my faith in the unparished charm and potency of romance[.] (48)

Of Fawcett's realistic romances, *Solarion* is of particular interest because of the moralizing intensity of the contrast between two the central characters: a brilliant but selfish American chemist, and his creation, a chemically-enhanced dog who turns out to be more human than people. There is also a noble, disillusioned German chemist, an important secondary character.

Fawcett's two scientific romances, which are more reminiscent of long short stories, are sometimes mentioned as his best work (Bleiler); they reveal keen interest in natural science and German philosophy. Both *Solarion* (1889) and *Douglas Duane* (1889) are social melodramas of passion, but the theme is represented with images of fantastic inventions related to chemistry and electricity. The electric imagery is perhaps related to Fawcett's fine long poem, "The Story of the Lightning" (1872), a

poetic monologue of a female thunderbolt which (who) falls in love with a man. The lightning provides ample descriptions of her exciting life among clouds and storms, aerial seas and continents etc. Although she only wants to "offer" herself on the ground in front of the man, her passion, and her very being, turns out to be an electric discharge that kills the man. Electricity, paradoxically, turns out to be simultaneously material (as lightning) and immaterial (as passion), and the same paradox is represented in Fawcett's scientific romances. In both texts, the soul is discovered to be a phenomenon of electric nature, liable to control by means of scientific apparatus, which leads to an intellectual conflict between materialism and idealism, parallel to a moral conflict between selfishness and selflessness; Fawcett's characters associate materialism with selfishness and idealism with selflessness. Thus, Douglas Duane is consumed by selfish, sexual passion for the wife of his friend, Floyd Demotte, but he is also a chemist interested in Faraday's law, the link between chemistry and electricity (562). Duane invents an apparatus that can transfer the life and soul from one living thing to the dead body of another, electrically. Having revived a few plants, he obviously decides to put his soul into the body of the husband of the woman he loves, which he does successfully. Things go wrong when Duane does not know how to behave, and she realizes that her husband is not himself. The interesting point is that the novel is narrated by Duane, from within his friend's body, and the frame narrator is listening to Duane in an asylum. The highly unreliable narrator adds numerous comments on philosophy and morality of scientific research.

The descriptions of electricity and chemistry in *Douglass Duane* are intriguing, because the author is interested in the baffling borderline between "ordinary" matter (naively perceived in terms of pebbles, grits, or household objects), the seemingly immaterial effects of electricity, and the material effects of electricity (such as electrocoating, or electric corrosion). For Duane (and presumably for Fawcett and his implied readers) this baffling borderline seems to be the mystery of life itself: "I had so often felt that the sword which should cut the Gordian knot of our human existence lay in this wild, alert, unintelligible ardour, than which nature has none other at once more appalling and more mysterious" (580). This quotation is one of many, and it explains why Fawcett combines images of electricity with melodramatic plots: electricity is, presumably, the semi-material stuff of destructive and selfish passion. The text does not make it clear, however, what is the nature of selfless (and religious) sentiment. Fawcett is evidently fascinated by electricity, and sees it as one of the Gothic aspects of nature, revealed by natural science. Among several reflective passages on the hideous and disturbing aspect of science, the discovery scene, related in a deranged monologue, characteristically combines chemistry, selfishness, materialism, and mysterious scientific discovery. It turns out that electric principle of life can be transferred only between the same species, which corresponds to "the protection of species in animals, concerning which Darwin has so much irrefutably to assert" (582). However, the narrator also discovers that the experiment can transfer vitality only in one direction, from the more "base" Darwinian realm of nature, and not from a more beautiful and higher species. The "destructive bath" has an elective affinity for the base kind of vitality. Once this is clear to him, Duane knows how to revive the baser type of life.

The discovery provokes a series of internal monologues:

> I had, in the first place, found a new way of dealing with electricity, and had caught form the mysteries lying beyond all science a new electrical agent was due to my own genius of discovery. This last sentence might seem to flavour of egotism. Let it do so. My genius is to me a mental admission which no dissentient criticism may affect. (582)

There follows a paragraph on egotism and its positive meaning for development of science, and immediately afterwards, Duane peers into mysterious depths of discovery and simultaneously experiences a surge of sexual passion, as if experiencing an electric discharge too:

> The night, as I have said, reigned mute around me when this last great conviction of conquest pressed into my mind. An awe had now filled and swayed me. I stood alone with a phantom, as one might say, summoned from unconjectured depths. The very intensity of the silence bore upon me. I thought upon the woman I loved, pierced though I was with other keenly opposite sensations. I could not escape such remembrance. I might hate it, but it was still sure to push itself assertively into my consciousness…. And yet I abruptly asked myself, while I sat there, fatigued and excited in my unquestionable triumph, why should Millicent's face thus intrude upon me? (582)

After a brief monologue on his desire and hesitation, the scientist turns to his scientific apparatus, and, thinking simultaneously about Millicent, electricity, soul, and religion, arrives at the idea of transferring his (base, electric) soul into the body of Millicent's husband. The monologue still is suggestive of electric shocks:

> A horrible shudder passed through me at this instant. I rose and tottered weakly towards the still, cold, mechanical evidence of that marvellous law which I, Douglas Duane, had so strangely excavated from the glooms of the unknowable.
>
> Was there a God? I had not proven that there was not, with all my atheistic proclivities. Was there a soul—a human soul? I had neither proved nor disproved a human soul. But I had proved, beyond the last imaginable protest of the materialist, that in lower orders of life vitality was transmissible from one vegetable form to another. (583)

Thus, admitting that there are no reasons to do so, the narrator equates vitality with the soul, and material quality of the soul with a threat to religion. There is also another, related threat, however, which manifests itself when Duane is already in his rival's body, but continues to speak his own voice (625). This is recognized by Demotte's wife, who finds the alien voice abhorrent and scandalous, and refuses to have anything to do with Demotte/Duane. She is, in short, reacting with horror and revulsion to the stranger's voice in her husband's body; when the soul is identified with the material body, its voice becomes horrible.

In *Solarion*, Fawcett's choice of themes is similar, but the situation is somehow reversed and made more complex: the narrator is a materialist who, as a teenager, exposes a fraud spiritualist who claims that the soul is electric and material

(pantheistically). Pantheistic spiritualism, which treats God and the soul as the fabric of the universe, is presented as a naïve form of materialism, a necessary illusion practiced by the protagonist's mother. Later, however, he steals a horrible discovery that animals can be invested with a soul (and thus learn to speak) through application of electricity. Again, as in the earlier novel, Fawcett combines electricity, materialism, evolution, and religion, into a coherent cluster of materialistic images which represent matter as a mysterious and marvelous thing, one of the proverbial "great secrets of the universe" (338). The protagonist, Kenneth Effingham, steals the secret from Dr. Conrad Klotz, a reclusive German scientist. The conversation between Effingham and Klotz is the first focal point of the scientific sub-plot of the story, and it revolves around its central themes in materialistic terms, by comparing thought with vapors and substances:

> You see, I refer to your English-speaking philosophers because I have grasped their greatness, their lucidity, their freedom from vapory German mysticism. Kant was a superb dreamer; Hegel was a Locke spoiled by religious fantasy; Fichte was a splendid juggler with shadows he believed substances[.] (*Solarion* 326)

On his dying bed, Klotz reveals that he has "seen how evolution could be pushed forward by means of electrical nursing and stimulations" (337), but bids Effingham to destroy the single remaining copy of the book that describes the discovery. Effingham disobeys and pursues the experiments described in the book, neglecting his love interest, Celia, who marries another man. The descriptions of Effingham's experiments are of Gothic nature, as they "transcended in strangeness and wildness the first throb of momentum given by steam, the first legible word written by telegraphy" (338), and the narrator agonizes, in a few passages, about the hideous and dangerous world, about to be revealed by wonders of modern science. His own experiments are part of the picture, as both Effingham and Klotz are worried about the "hideous injury it might bring mankind" (325) if the soul is created chemically in the process of assisted evolution. Essentially, the experiments consist in giving electric shocks to a dog in order to make it speak. The "exquisite but transient torment" of the dog is an uncanny anticipation of behavioral science in a novel from the 1880s: "Here flashed and withered the new electricity, whose potency dealt in molecular agitations and displacements never dreamt of by the most learned men of Europe. Begotten of a chemical combination hitherto unguessed, its rigors had the stress of half-tamed thunder bolts" (*Solarion* 339).

There follow dialogues between the scientist and his dog, which are the most interesting part of Fawcett's novel, and perhaps the most interesting passages in his entire work. The treatment seems on a par with representation of similar themes by classic science fiction authors: H.G. Wells used speaking animals in *The Island of Doctor Morreau* (1896), and Olaf Stapledon employed the same theme in *Sirius* (1944), a novel about a scientifically-enhanced dog who falls in love with a woman. The dog in Fawcett's novel is worried about being a "monstrosity," and asks "why did you make me as I am" (342), forcing Effingham to recognize and admit his selfishness and unfeeling attitude. The animal character also provides interesting descriptions of

animal emotions and perceptions of life, encouraging Effingham to be more gregarious and romantically involved.[1]

> 'You know why I am so wretched,' exclaimed Kenneth. 'I see that you do! You understand me!'
>
> 'Yes,' Solarion answered; 'I understand you. If there is anything I could do to help you! But I am so powerless! It seems me that she must love you as you deserve to be loved. But if she does not, you must force her to do so.'
>
> 'Force her, Solarion?'
>
> 'Woo her,—win her,—make her love you. She must see, sooner or later, that nature could not have given you such a pulse of passion unless there were corresponding ardour in her.' (*Solarion* 341-342)

As in *Douglass Duane*, things go wrong when the scientific plot meshes with the romantic one: Celia becomes available again when her husband dies, but Solarion falls in love with her too, effectively becoming Effingham's rival. The man bids the dog not to meet Celia, but Solarion disobeys and soon Celia reveals to Effingham that she is strangely influenced by the charm of Solarion's thoughtful and intense gaze. (The novel is perfectly decorous for the 1880s, but Fawcett is trying to give intimations that are tactful and disturbing at the same time). Confronted by Effingham, the dog declares its love to Celia, and denies obedience to Effingham. It also transpires that Celia became Solarion's new mistress (in the sense of a dog owner). The man shoots and kills the dog, but before his death Solarion makes a beastly dash at Effingham's face, and by destroying it, renders the man too ugly to be an eligible bachelor for Celia. Alone in his old age, Effingham muses on the broken promise he made to Klotz.

Materiality of the soul was more obvious in *Douglas Duane*, but in *Solarion* too, the theme is represented in terms of criticism of materialism: Effingham is worried that he effectively created a soul in a dog, and that he has thus proved the material (electric) nature of the soul.

> As he entered his laboratory…, Kenneth felt as though he were indeed about to call spirits from the vasty (!) deep. And well might he so have felt. Superstition is fading from the earth; but while men live and awe is an emotion that may be quickened, some adequate substitute will not prove wanting. The Unknowable, as an element in science, will continuously supply this; for until all final causes are comprehended, mystery must never hide at the back of both human knowledge and endeavor. Here will lie all the ghosts of our future 'Hamlets,' the witches of our future 'Macbeths.' Electricity is not the only nimble and fiery demon to be summoned by the unborn sorcerers from the nature's unexplored and shadowy gulfs. Light, heat, optics, chemistry, physics, mineralogy, will all have their weird and perchance blood-curdling messages to deliver, and it may be that aeronautics will surpass even those in grandeur and suggestiveness of tidings. People with 'nerves' will possibly be as much afraid to look through one of our coming telescopes as if they were now requested to walk at midnight through a graveyard. (*Solarion* 338)

1 There is, perhaps, a possibility that the unusual theme influenced Olaf Stapledon's *Sirius*, which elaborates the same themes of dog turned into a human being, a failed romance, human hostility, and reversal to canine life.

In both novels, scientific themes are integrated into a passionate love plot, equating scientific endeavor with irresponsible and destructive sexual passion. For the present study, however, it is striking that both sexual passion and intellectual activity are presented as effects of electricity; the series of images where Fawcett makes the connection are similar to the imagery of his electric poem, "The Story of the Lightning." Electricity, presented as a mysterious and paradoxically non-material property of matter, leads Fawcett's characters to a sort of passionate pantheism which they are not ready to accept. Stableford (53) described this hesitation in terms of transition between religious belief and scientific view of the world: science had undermined religious concepts (creationism, existence of the soul, divine intervention and miracles), but had not, and could not yet replace the functions of religion as source of morality, teleology, and consolation. This interregnum, however, leads to curious descriptions of the matter in chemical terms. As chemistry developed simpler and more definite tables of elements, it became increasingly difficult to describe spiritual phenomena in terms of substances. The shift, as demonstrated by analysis of prose works, was towards gothic representation, in terms of hidden and terrible monstrosities, defined either as unknown forces (new electricity, electromagnetic waves, or mysterious rays), or as arcane formulae, as very unusual chemical compounds.

The representation of matter in Fawcett's novels indicates a major shift in literary characterization, related to the shift in literary and scientific representation of matter. As mentioned in the opening of the article, this shift consisted in the reduction of the number of elements, and the general simplification and systematization of representation of matter. The simplification is apparent, for instance, when one compares Fawcett's material soul to earlier representations of this theme in Poe's and Hawthorne's fiction, e.g. in "Facts in the Case of Ms. Valdemar" or in Hawthorne's well known stories where psychology is related to chemistry, such as "The Brithmark," "Rappacini's Daughter" or "Dr, Heidegger's Experiment." Arguably, Poe and Hawthorne saw spiritual phenomena as a sort of rarefied matter, because matter as such had the potential to "be" a soul; in other words, the soul was described as a substance; hence, they referred to fluids and elixirs, to a great variety of substances which were often andowed with animality and spirituality. In Fawcett's fiction, the diversified, animated and spiritualized matter of the antebellum fiction was replaced by an inanimate and simpler matter that could still "hide" spiritual phenomena as electricity. Spiritual phenomena, however, would no longer be described substantialistically in Fawcett's fiction, as well as in fiction by his contemporaries, and possibly this was a general cultural trend. Consequently cultural representation of the soul often relied on references to one phenomenon, usually electricity or radioactivity. As science promised to explain spiritual phenomena through positivist cognitive regime in non-substantialist terms, monstrosity and mystery became, as exemplified by Fawcett's fiction, the remnants of sustantialist representation of mental phenomena (characterization) in literature.

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Arnon Gutfeld

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Armenian Genocide: The Clash between Idealism and Pragmatism

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Abstract: The article focuses on the conduct of American foreign policy on the subject of the Armenian genocide. This conduct serves as an excellent study of a major theme in the history of the formulation of American foreign policy—the clash between moral values and pragmatic economic and strategic interests and constraints and between the declared policy of President Wilson and the real policy of his and subsequent American administration on the Armenian genocide issue. A special emphasis was placed on "denial" as the final stage of a genocide.

Keywords: Armenian genocide, U.S. foreign policy, Denial of Genocide, Woodrow Wilson, diplomacy, Turkey, Armenia

The conduct of American foreign policy on the subject of the Armenian Genocide serves as an excellent case study of the perpetual challenges in formulating policies that balance between moral values and economic and strategic interests. It is a tale of the collision between moral responsibilities and humanitarian values and their abdication in favor of immediate tangible earthy gains. American inaction, contrasted by President Wilson's and America's warm vocal support of the Armenian cause, reflected a disparity between its declared and actual policies, contributing to the genocide.

The systematic genocide of the Armenian people that lived in the Ottoman Empire was planed and executed by the Ottoman authorities. The genocide began in the 1880s and lasted until 1923. During the World War I years alone, 1.5 million Armenians, one million Greeks and 750,000 Assyrians [1] (indigenous Christian people in the Ottoman Empire) were exterminated.[2] These events received much attention and space in the American newspapers and were the subject of extensive interest and debates in the American political, intellectual, business and religious communities. Influential political, business and industrial leaders such as future U.S. president Herbert Hoover[3] that observed that during World War I "the name Armenia was in the

1 The extermination of 750,000 ethnic Assyrians in the former Christian-majority regions of Van, Bitlis, and Diyarbakir vilayets, known as the *Sayfo* (meaning sword or extermination in Modern Aramaic), under Ottoman rule and guidance, is generally studied as a separate event and will not be dealt with in this article.

2 Samantha Power, *'A Problem from Hell': America and the Age of Genocide.* New York: Perennial, 2003, 1-14.

3 During World War I Hoover was responsible for the humanitarian aid that helped in returning more than 100,000 Americans to the U.S. providing them with food, clothing, money and travel funds to make it possible for them to return to the U.S. from Europe. After Germany occupied Belgium, Hoover organized and headed the organization that provided relief, especially food to the Belgians. After the U.S. declared war against Germany, President Wilson appointed him to head the Federal Food Administration. See George H. Nash, *he Life of Herbert Hoover* (vol. 2) *Days*

front of the American Mind[.]"[4] American missionaries were numerous and heavily invested and very much involved in educational and medical enterprises in the regions where the deportations and massacres took place throughout the Ottoman Empire and especially in Armenia. The need to finance the missionary and relief efforts that caused the establishment of the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (later known as Near East Relief) that raised vast amount of funds and was an important lobby on behalf of U.S. support for Armenia and Armenians.[5] According to Peter Balakian, the Armenian-American historian, poet and professor of literature, "The U.S. response to the Armenian crisis, which began in the 1890s and continued to the 1920s, was the first international human rights movement in American history and helped to define the nation's emerging global identity."[6] Balakian emphasized the role played by American cultural and intellectual leaders in support of the Armenians and viewed it as a "prologue to twentieth-century American engagement in the formulation and the execution of American foreign policy It highlighted the constant clash and simultaneously operations of humanitarian-idealism and pragmatic self-interests in the conduct of American foreign policy."[7] From the earliest days of the colonial settlement, the leaders of the colonists in British North America believed that the colonies had a special mission to serve as the "City upon the Hill," "The New [Israel] Jerusalem," "The Light to All Nations." Their mission was to establish "God's Kingdom in America"—"Mankind's Last and Best Hope."[8] In the nineteenth century, after the Declaration of Independence, the adoption of the Constitution and the drive to settle the frontier, Americans believed in their "Manifest Destiny"—believing that the Creator directed them to conquer the continent from sea to sea. After the conquest of the West with its

of Armageddon, 1917 -1921. New York: Norton, 1988; George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover (*vol.3*) Master of Emergencies 1917 – 1918.* New York: Norton, 1996.

4 Herbert Hoover, *Hoover Memoires: Years of Adventure.* New York: Macmillan, 1951, 385.

5 Recep Boztemur, "Religion and Politics in the Making of Near East Policy," *Religion and Ideologies.* Vol. 11, Summer 2005, 45-59; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *The Land of Aching Hearts: The Middle East in the Great War.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014; Bruno Cabenas, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014; Joseph L. Gabrill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Foreign Policy 1810-1929.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1973; John DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900-1939.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

6 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, xviii.

7 The classical study of this theme is Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self Interest in American Foreign Relations.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1953; See also Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad.* Vols. I and II. New York: Norton, 1994.

8 Perry Miller, *Errand to the Wilderness.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978; Sacvan Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins of the American Self.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976; Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World.* New York: Knoff, 2002.

vast natural resources, their mission became to bring the blessings of democracy and Christianity to the entire world. Americans believed that the Creator awarded them "God's Elect," "heaven on earth."[9] Americans also believed that Providence provided them with the blessing of two oceans that kept them far from European entanglements and permitted a policy of "Isolation," but at the same time the U.S., as a commercial trading nation adopted the foreign policy of the "flag follows the dollar" that meant wherever there was an American economic interest there would also be American political and/or military intervention.[10] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the U.S. became a world power, its flag was present in the seven seas and the U.S. became a major actor in global politics. Isolationism did not disappear and was supported by a great number of Americans. Thus, ideals and pragmatism continued to play a role in the formulation of American foreign policies. Ideals had a great impact in the foreign policies of Presidents such as Wilson. Cynics claimed that God had ten points whereas Wilson needed fourteen.[11] Presidents Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama could also be described as being in the Wilsonian tradition permitting ideals to heavily influence their foreign and domestic agenda and policies. Franklin D. Roosevelt emphasized in his speeches, to the American people during World War II that the U.S. was fighting for the "Four Freedoms"[12] and President Ronald Reagan led the moral battle against the USSR—"The Evil Empire."[13]

There was great interest and much support of the Armenians in the United States. This stemmed from the extensive involvement of American Protestant missionaries in the educational and medical systems in the Ottoman Empire and especially in Armenia.[14] After the end of World War I the main American interest in the Middle East became economic-strategic: oil, investments, markets and the strategic importance of the Turkish ally.[15] Those interests overshadowed ideals and humanitarian considerations and led to what became known as "the great betrayal."

9 The classical and most important study of this topic is Albert Katz Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935; See also Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier.* Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 5th edition, 2001; Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History.* New York: Knoff, 1963.

10 Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1925; Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of the United States as a World Power.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 196*1;* Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956.

11 Thomas Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal.* Chicago" Quadrangle, 1961; Ernest R. May, *World War I and American Isolation 1914–1917.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Historical Studies, 1959; Arthur S. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist.* Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961; Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956.

12 Robert Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932 – 1945.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 317-528.

13 Alexander M. Haig Jr. *Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy.*`New York: Macmillan, 1989.

14 See supra note 5.

15 John DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900 -1939.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

Numerous Americans, during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the initial decades of the twentieth century felt, that the United States failed to act in an appropriate manner in regard to the Armenian debacle and protested against President Wilson that declared his support for Armenian independence and abhorred and protested the Ottoman-Turkish policies designed to exterminate the Armenians. His promises and statements on behalf of the Armenians were not accompanied by meaningful actions and caused harsh protests and criticism by many in the U.S. against him. Wilson, whose father was a minister, viewed "human rights" as a central subject in his agenda but there was a great contention and clash between his declared policy and his real policy. Wilson refused to declare war on Turkey and claimed that the cause of his inaction rested with his conviction he would lose an important lever of pressure that might result in American inability to assist the numerous American missionaries in the Ottoman empire. Theodore Roosevelt, that preceded Wilson as President, attacked Wilson and called him "an abject coward," "the worst president since Buchanan" because of his refusal to undertake effective measures on behalf of the Armenians.[16] Roosevelt called the massacre of the Armenians as "the greatest crime of the War" and viewed the American failure to take effective steps against the Ottomans as an act of "condoning Turkish crimes." Roosevelt emphasized that Wilson's talks about ensuring world peace was a "mischievous nonsense" and that his refusal to go to war against Turkey demonstrated that all his declarations about "making the world safe for democracy" were simply "insincere claptrap."[17]

The date that symbolized the start of the methodical annihilation process was April 24, 1915. This date was chosen to serve as the annual remembrance date for the Armenian Genocide. It commemorated the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Ottoman and Turkish regimes in order to exterminate the Armenian people. On that date in 1915, the Ottoman authorities arrested and murdered 250 Armenian leaders and intellectuals in Constantinople [present day Istanbul].[18] Large scale massacres of Armenians occurred in Anatolia between 1894–1896. 250,000 Armenians were slaughtered and a similar number became refugees.[19]

In the years prior to World War I murder of Armenian males and children and death marches of women, elderly sick and children that were forced to cross deserts without food or water to concentration camps became routine. Confiscations of property, sales unto slavery and rapes were part of a systematic process of humiliation and extermination. After murdering males that reached military service age came the turn of political, religious and intellectual leaders to be slaughtered. The remaining Armenians were forced to leave their homes. The deportations were officially started in July1915, after a law that authorized deportations of "suspected citizens" was enacted. All these activities occurred simultaneously in all the territories that were

16 Theodore Roosevelt to Samuel Dutton, November 15, 1915 in Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear and Take Your Own Part.* New York: T.R. Doran Co., 1916, 377-383.

17 Roosevelt to Dodge, May 11, 1918, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt.* Vol. 8. *Days of Armageddon.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952, 1316-1318.

18 Ibid., 211–215.

19 Vakahn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide.* Providence: Bergham Books, 1995, 155-156.

under Ottoman rule. The goal of the Ottoman authorities was to concentrate all the Armenians in the Aleppo area in northwest Syria and then to transfer the survivors to the Deir ez-Zor area in northwest Syria.[20] The central Ottoman authorities claimed that the "forced transfers" took place because of an "wartime emergency necessities" and that its purpose was to protect the populace. Women, children and the elderly were forced to participate in the death marches. Their property was declared "abandoned property" and was confiscated by the Ottoman authorities. It was estimated that in the period before 1915 over 1,5000,000 Armenians perished.[21]

The Holocaust of European and North African Jewry during World War II, revived the interest and the responsibility of the international community to act on behalf of the victims and the persecuted people. A need was felt to provide for a new moral world order that would guarantee respect for human life and it became an integral part of numerous agreements that were codified by the United Nations. It raised Armenians' hopes that their predicament would receive worldwide attention. The United Nation's Assembly in 1948 adopted the "Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide." This convention defined Genocide as: "any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."[22]

The new term "Genocide" entered the legal and political lexicon after World War II relating to premeditated mass murders. It was Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish Holocaust survivor and a legal expert, who invented the term after researching the Armenian Holocaust that had a great similarity to the Jewish Genocide during World War II.[23] Turkey that was established after the demise of the Ottoman Empire continued the policy of denial of Ottoman-Turkish responsibility to the Armenian Genocide. The only nation supporting this stance is Azerbaijan. Numerous nations, forty-three states in the U.S., the United Nations, the European Parliament, The World Council of Churches, The Turkish Human Rights Association, The International Association of Researchers of Genocide, many in the academic world and the legal realm recognized the Ottoman-Turkish responsibility for the Armenian Genocide.[24] On April 22, 1965, Uruguay was the first nation to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and decreed that annually, on April 24 it will celebrate "A Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Martyrs." Recognition of the Armenian Genocide found expression in the many declarations of heads of states and in the resolutions passed by numerous parliaments.[25]

20 Peter Balakian, *Burning Tigris.*175–180.

21 Ibid., 53-62.

22 "UN: When to refer to a situation as 'Genocide.'" http://www.unorg/en/genocideprevention/documents/publicatio0ns-and-resources/GuidanceNote-when%20to%refer%20%20situation%20as%genocide.pdf.

23 On Lemkin's story and his contributions see Samantha Power, '*A Problem from Hell'.* 17 -73; Jay Winter, "Citation, The Genesis of Genocide." *The Quarterly Journal of Military History.* Vol. 29, No. 3, 2017, 19.

24 The Armenian Genocide Museum Institute. *Recognition.* http://genocide-museum.am

25 Ibid.

Testimonies of American Diplomats in the Ottoman Empire as Relayed to the Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador in Constantinople

During the Armenian Genocide the U.S. had no territorial ambitions or meaningful strategic interests in the Middle East. American policies did not constitute any threat to the sovereignty or the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.[26] Its neutral posture till April 1917 permitted the U.S. to maintain diplomatic relations and an embassy in Constantinople and a wide network of consulates throughout the Ottoman Empire. American diplomats conveyed eyewitness reports to the embassy in Constantinople and thus to the State Department in Washington, D.C. about the Armenian Genocide. Those reports were the basis for the information on this topic. Moreover, many of the American diplomats risked their lives in order to save Armenian survivors and refugees. Henry Morgenthau served as the American ambassador in Constantinople between 1913 and May 23, 1916. After April 1915 the Ottoman authorities prevented him from relaying to or to receive coded messages from the American consulates in the Ottoman Empire. Most of the documents that he sent or received underwent censorship by the Ottoman authorities. The Ambassador realized that the Ottoman authorities attempted to conceal information.[27] In the following months he continued to receive numerous reports from the consulates that described in the deportations and murders of the Armenians. On July 10, 1915, he sent the following message to his superiors in Washington: "Persecution of the Armenians assuming unprecedented proportions. Reports from widely scattered districts indicate systematic attempt to uproot peaceful Armenian population and through arbitrary arrests, terrible torture, wholesale expulsions and deportations from one end of the Empire to the other, accompanied by frequent instances of rape, pillage, and murder turning into massacre, to bring destruction and destitution to them."[28] In another cable, on July 16, 1915, Morgenthau wrote "a campaign of race extermination is in progress under the pretext of reprisal against rebellion."[29]

On September 3, 1915, Morgenthau issued an urgent call for humanitarian assistance for the Armenians. This call resulted in the establishment, on September 16, 1915, of the American Committee for Armenian-Syrian Relief, an organization that in 1919 assumed the name of Near Eastern Relief. In 1916 the U.S. Congress adopted a resolution on the "Serious and immoral Evil Plight" of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The purpose of the resolution was to facilitate the raising of funds from the American public in order to assist the victims. The resolution was supported

26 Rouben Paul Adalian, "American Diplomatic Correspondence in the Age of Mass Murder: The Armenian Genocide in US Archives." In Jay Winter (ed.). *America and the Armenian Genocide.* 146–184.

27 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918, 327.

28 Ibid.

29 Morgenthau to Secretary of State. July 16, 1915, Cable 858, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1915.*

by President Wilson.[30] Ambassador Morgenthau became the main spokesperson of this new organization and the remaining short time of his tenure in Constantinople he saw to it that the needy victims would receive food, medicine, clothing and other equipment that they required. He succeeded in convincing President Wilson to send an American naval vessel that delivered emergency aid to the Armenians. Between 1915 and 1929 the organization raised $120,000,000 and goods worth a similar amount in order to help the suffering Armenians and assisted in rescuing many Armenians.[31] Ambassador Morgenthau demonstrated great courage and confronted with leadership of the Ottoman administrations on the Armenian question. In one of the exchanges he had with Talaat Pasha, the Ottoman Interior Minister, Talaat Pasha admitted that the acts described by Morgenthau did indeed occur but blamed the Armenians for getting rich at the expense of the Turks, for wanting to create an independent Armenian state, and encouraging the enemies of the Ottoman Empire as the reasons for their treatment.[32] During two different meetings Talaat Pasha demanded that the Ottoman Treasury would receive the insurance funds of those hundreds of Armenians that purchased policies in American life insurance companies since they and their heirs were no longer alive. In addition, Talaat ordered to confiscate funds that were transferred by cables to Armenians from the U.S. and demanded their transfer to the Ottoman treasury. The Ambassador was flabbergasted and deeply shocked by these demands.[33] Both Enver Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister and Talaat Pasha admitted their responsibility to the deportations and the massacres and added that these actions were planned in advance.[34] Morgenthau attempted, but failed, to convince the German Embassy to intervene and pressure their Ottoman allies to stop the massacres. The Germans refused to intervene.

The Ottoman authorities informed Morgenthau that "the manner that the Turkish authorities deal with Turkish citizens is a pure internal affair, unless it has a direct effect on the lives and interests of Americans. Therefore, it is not an American governmental concern." Morgenthau rejected this approach.[35] Morgenthau continued to appraise the State Department about the Armenians' fate and also continued to implore President Wilson, the State Department and Congress to put pressure on the Turks to stop the annihilation of the Armenians. He demanded also from the American authorities to put pressure on Germany to pressure the Turks to stop the mass murders and deportations and to assist those Americans that wished to provide humanitarian assistance to the Armenians. It was then that Morgenthau coined the term "race

30 *Congressional Record.* 64th Congress, 1st Session, 1916, 2335-2336; Donald A. Ritchie, "Congress Confronts the Armenian Genocide." In Jay Winter (ed.). *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915.* 280-281.

31 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 280.

32 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story.* 290, 334-339.

33 Ibid., 337-339; Peter Balakian, *Burning Tigris.* 260-261, 290.

34 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story.* 337-338,351-352. See also Tanner Akcam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Studies in the History of Genocide, 2018, [Documents], p. 175-233.

35 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 277.

extermination."[36] Despite his repeated appeals, Morgenthau was disappointed and frustrated by his failure to prompt the American administration to undertake effective actions to halt the debacle. When he ended his tenure as ambassador he wrote: "My failure to stop the destruction of the Armenians had Turkey for me a–place of horror, and I found intolerable my further daily association with men who, however gracious and accommodating they might have been to the American Ambassador, were still reeking with blood of nearly a million human beings."[37] In 1918 he published his memoir of his service in Constantinople focusing on the Armenian Genocide in a book entitled *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story.* Abram Elkus replaced Morgenthau as ambassador and served until April 1917, when the U.S. declared war on Germany. On this occasion Turkey severed relations with the U.S. Elkus' role during his short stay was limited to attempts to assist Armenians, but the aid, in most cases, were confiscated by the Turkish authorities.

Leslie A. Davis, American Consul in Harput

Leslie A. Davis, a New York lawyer, was the American Consul in Harput in the Elazig Province. He was stationed there from May 14, 1914 to May 16, 1917. Davis witnessed the demonization of and the horrendous actions perpetrated on the Armenian population and the closing and destruction of the missionary institutions during his tenure there.[38] Davis also relayed numerous reports about transgressions in the neighboring provinces, such as Diyarbakir, from American missionaries that were stationed there and from survivors that he hid in the Consulate. He sent numerous cables and reports to Ambassador Morgenthau and to the State Department hoping that the State Department would intensify its efforts to assist the Armenians. On June 30, 1915 he filed the following report and sent it to Ambassador Morgenthau: "one of the severest measures ever undertaken by the government and one of the greatest tragedies in all history…. Another method has been found to destroy the Armenian race. This is no less than the deportation of the entire Armenian population…. A massacre would be humane in comparison with it. In a massacre many escape, but in a wholesale deportation of this kind in this country means a lingering and more dreadful death for nearly every one. I do not believe it possible for one in a hundred to survive, perhaps one in a thousand."[39]

Davis hoped that his reports would result in effective protests or to actions that would result in the cessation of the murder. Many of his cables and reports and

36 Morgenthau to Secretary of State, August 11, 1915, in *Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States1915. Supplement*, *The World War.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1928, 986.

37 Hans Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story.* 385.

38 United Sates National Archives, Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State, 867 Series, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, File 867.4016, Race Problems. Leslie A. Davis, "Report of Leslie A. Davis, American Consul, Formerly of Harput, Turkey on the Work of the American Consulate at Harput since the Beginning of the Present War" (prepared for Mr. Wilbur Carr, Director of the Consular Service), U.S. State Department, RG 59, 867, 4016/392.5.

39 Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughter House Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917.* New Rochelle, NY: Artiside D. Caratzas, 1989, 143-144.

cables were intercepted by the Ottoman authorities.[40] On one occasion, when he approached the Governor of the Province and asked to stop the deportations, he was asked to present his request in writing and include a statement that all the Armenians that were deported were "punished because they were found guilty of crimes against the Ottoman authorities and therefore deserved their fate." Davis was emphatic in his refusal to comply.[41] According to Davis, by September 1915, there quarters of the Armenians that resided, in what he called "the Slaughter House Province" were deported.[42] Davis witnessed the pillage of the Armenian properties and consequently he hid and provided food for Armenians that he hid in the Consulate building. He attempted to save Armenian-Americans that resided in the Province and made great efforts to ascertain the fate of Armenians as per requests that he received from their relatives that resided in the U.S.[43] Many of the deportees left their money, valuables and documents in the Consulate, that included gold worth $200,000.[44]

During the Spring of 1915, Davis traveled to thirty-six abandoned Armenian villages in the vicinity of Harput. Most of them, before the deportations, had 300 Armenian households. The homes in those villages were totally destroyed. In many of the villages the churches were destroyed and Davis found in them heaps of decaying corpses. The stench was unbearable.[45] He also discovered remnants of concentration camps of Armenian refugees and found there passports of Armenians that were expelled from the distant city of Erzurum, a city in eastern Anatolia.[46] His most shocking report described his two trips to Lake Goelzuk, there he found dismembered bodies, hands, legs, heads and dead babies most in temporary graves. Part of the bodies were devoured by dogs. He also saw hundreds of bodies floating in the lake. The victims were thrown to the lake from cliffs near the lake. In gorges and crevices near the Lake he saw piles of bodies in various stages of decay, their clothing was removed and afterward the bodies were stabbed and bayoneted: "We estimated in the course of our ride around the lake, and actually within the space of twenty-four hours, we had seen the remains of not less than ten thousand Armenians, mostly innocent and helpless women and children, were butchered on its shores and barbarously mutilated."[47]

Until the end of his service as Consul in 1917, Davis continued to travel and discovered heaps of dead Armenians in every location that he traveled to. Upon his return to the U.S. he was asked by the State Department to describe his experience his reports were published by the Department of State under the title of "An American Diplomat's Report of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917." [48]

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40 Peter Balakian, *Burning Tigris.* 238.

41 Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harput 1915-1917.* Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute, 1997, 52-55.

42 Ibid., 53-55; Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 38.

43 Ibid., 40; Peter Balakian, *Burning Tigris.* 238.

44 Leslie Davis, « Report." Supra Note 40, 31 -38.

45 Ibid., 63-69.

46 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*. 247.

47 Leslie A. Davis, *Slaughter House Province.* 84-87.

48 Leslie A. Davis, "Report." See Supra note 40.

Jesse B. Jackson, American Consul in Aleppo, and Other American Consuls

The reports of Jesse B. Jackson, the Consul that served in Aleppo between 1908-1917, provided further first hand reports for Ambassador Morgenthau and for the State Department. Jackson witnessed caravans of hundreds of thousands Armenians that were expelled from all parts of the Ottoman empires and were forced to cross the Deir ez-Zor desert where most died of starvation, torture and disease in a massacre that occurred during the summer of 1915.[49] Jackson described the deportees as naked, injured, dirty and fatigued. Most were dying of dysentery and typhoid fever. In his August 1915 report Jackson summarized: "It is a gigantic plundering scheme as well as a final blow to extinguish the [Armenian] race."[50] Jackson also received reports from F.H. Leslie, a minister that served as his representative in Urfa, on the deportations and massacres. Leslie, for his aid to Armenians was arrested, tortured and committed suicide in jail. Jackson was involved in saving a great number of Armenians by supplying Armenians in the city, and in the neighboring towns and villages, in the camps and in the orphanages, food and financial help. His activities were contrary to stern, explicit instructions *that* he had received from the Ottoman authorities that prohibited him from engaging in such activities.[51]

Other American consuls that were stationed in different parts of the Ottoman Empire filed similar reports in the cables and reports that they had sent the Embassy and to Washington. The consuls Oscar Heizer in Trabzon and W. Peter in Samsun, Charles A. Allen in Adrien [Adrianople], Edward A. Nathan in Adana and Mersin, George Horton in Izmir all reported on the atrocities perpetrated on the Armenians and the Greeks.[52] The State Department also received reports from the consulates in Jerusalem, Haifa, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo, Salonika, Odessa, Tbilisi, St. Petersburg and Alexandretta Those reports were used by Morgenthau in his efforts to supply a complete picture of the atrocities and for his attempts to raise help for the survivors.[53] Consul Oscar Heizer described the deportations of the entire Armenian population from Trebizond, the forced drowning of many of them in the Black Sea and the plundering of their property.[54] Consul W. Peter described the forced conversion of Armenians to Islam and the transfer of their homes to local Turks and to Islamic refugees from the Balkans.[55] All the reports corroborated each other and provided evidence to systematic, initiated and directed persecutions by the authorities. In a report written by Talaat Pasha on November 18, 1915, he confirmed that he had full knowledge of the reports that the consuls sent to Ambassador Morgenthau.[56]

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49 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 253-260.

50 *United State Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917.* As quoted in Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 256

51 Ibid., 260-261.

52 For Horton's reports see Gordon Horton, *The Blight of Asia.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1926.

53 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*. 265.

54 Ibid.

55 Oscar Heizer to Henry Morgenthau July 28, 1915. U.S. Nati9onal Archives, RG 59,867, 4016/128, 1.

56 Peter Balakian**,** *The Burning Tigris.* 346-347.

American Diplomacy and the International Response

During and immediately after the end of World War I the horrific crimes perpetrated upon the Armenians that resided in the Ottoman Empire became well known, all over the world, through the extensive coverage in the press internationally. In 1915 alone the *New York Times* published 145 articles that dealt with the massacre of the Armenian people. The conclusions from the reports were unequivocal: the massacres were "planned," "systematic," "organized," "supported and executed by the Ottoman authorities." It was "a project of annihilation and of systematic race murder."[57] The sources of most of the reports were missionaries and diplomats, many of them Americans, that were stationed in the Ottoman Empire.[58] These reports caused the allies, Russia, France and England to issue a joint statement in London on May 24, 1915, on the subject of the mass murder that warned the Ottoman authorities of the grave consequences of the crimes: "For about a month the Kurd and Turkish populations of Armenia have been massacring Armenians with the connivance and often assistance of Ottoman authorities. Such massacres have taken place from mid-April at Erzurum, Terdjan, Eghine, Bitlis, Moush, Sasoun, Zeytoun, and in all Celicia. The inhabitants of approximately a hundred villages in the vicinity of Van besieged by Kurds. At the same time, the Ottoman government has acted ruthlessly against the defenceless Armenian population of Constantinople. In View of this new crime of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied governments make known publically to the Sublime Porte that they will hold all members of the Turkish government as well as those officials who have participated in these massacres, personally responsible."[59]

This was the first use of the term "crime against humanity" in an official document in an international context.[60] This was also the first time that courts were established to deal not only with "War Crimes" but also with "Crimes against Humanity." This occurred before the Nurnberg Trials that were convened after World War II.[61] The Turkish government, after World War I, in 1919, put on trial a few government officials that belonged to the "Young Turks" and charged them with crimes related to the massacres, plunders and the deportations. Nationalist Turkish scholars criticized these trials as "show trials" or "Kangaroo Courts" designed to placate and appease the victorious allies.[62]

57 Ibid., xix.

58 In 1900, for example, there were 300 American missionaries in 162 missions and in 21 centers throughout the Ottoman Empire. In most they ran and activated schools and hospitals. See Merrill Peterson, *Starving Armenia.*19.

59 Telegram sent from American Embassy, Constantinople to Department of State, Washington, May 29, 1915. "French Foreign Office requests following notice be given Turkish Government. Quote May 24th." [France, Great Britain, Russia Joint Declaration]. United States National Archives, RG 59, 867, 4016/67.

60 Woodrow Wilson, *Self Determination and the Rights of Small Nations.* Dublin, IR: Candle Press, 1918, 18-19.

61 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 331-333.

62 An example to the approach of a Turkish scholar to the Armenian Genocide and to the official Turkish historic narrative on the subject could be found in the book by Dr. Sukru Server Aya, *The Genocide of Truth Continues… But Facts Tell the Real Story.* Istanbul: Der'in yayiniari, 2010.

In April 1917, the U.S. declared war on Germany and in December on Austro-Hungary but not on Turkey that severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. when the U.S. declared war on Germany. The U.S. assumed a neutral stance *vis-à-vis* Turkey that continued to be a loyal German ally. The numerous American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire staunchly opposed an American declaration of war against Turkey because they feared that would cause their expulsion and thus they would lose the great investment in educational network and in the hospitals and infirmaries they had established throughout the Ottoman Empire during the previous 100 years. The value of the properties owned by the American churches was estimated at $123,000,000 [1900 value]. The American missionaries were cognizant that if they were expelled there would not remain a single body that could provide humanitarian assistance to the remaining Armenians and that would result in their complete annihilation.[63]

Former President Theodore Roosevelt bitterly attacked this position of the missionaries and the unwillingness of the Wilson administration to declare war on Turkey: "I feel that we are guilty of a peculiarly odious form of hypocrisy when we profess friendship for Armenia and the downtrodden races in Turkey, but don't go to war with Turkey. To allow the Turks to massacre the [Armenians] and then solicit permission to help the survivors, and then to allege the fact that we are helping the survivors as a reason why we should not follow the only policy that will permanently put a stop to such massacres is both foolish and odious[.]"[64]

It seemed that President Wilson attempted to protect the interests of the American missionaries and at the same time maintain a lever of pressure on the Ottoman authorities in order to assure the continuation of the missionaries' work.[65] Wilson also suspected that the allies had plans to annex parts of the Ottoman Empire into their spheres of influence and rule and wished to limit their imperial appetites.[66] Wilson erred in his policy decision. It did not result in any Ottoman change in the genocide policies and also numerous Americans were already among the victims of the Ottoman policy.[67] The consequence and significance of Wilson's refusal to declare war on Turkey resulted, after the cease fire, in the U.S. possessing lesser, limited influence during the negotiations with Turkey after the end of the war.[68]

63 Ibid., 305-307.

64 Theodore Roosevelt to Cleveland Dodge, May 11, 1918. *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt.* Vol. 8, New York: Cooper Square Press, 1923, 1316-1318.

65 Suzanne E. Moranian, "A Legacy of Paradox: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Armenian Genocide," in Jay Winter (ed.). *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 310-314; Lloyd B. Ambrosius, "Wilsonian Diplomacy and Armenia: The Limits of Power and Ideology," in Jay Winter (ed.). America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915. 116.

66 John Milton Cooper, "A Friend in Power? Woodrow Wilson and Armenia," in ibid., 105, 110.

67 Jay Winter, "Introduction: Witness to Genocide." In *America and the Armenian Genocide of `1915*. 3-4.

68 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 296, 308, 331.

The Sevres Conferences and the Debates in the American Policy Decisions Network

During October 1915, President Wilson received information about the massacres of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and was under pressure to protest to the Ottoman authorities on the subject.[69] After the end of the war Morgenthau continued to lobby on behalf of the Armenians and urged the American Government to send troops to Armenia to defend the young democratic republic that was just established.[70] This did not happen. Despite this, in response to a request by Pope Benedict XV Wilson stated that: "one of my most cherished desires [is] to play any part that I can in securing for that wronged and distressed people the protection of right and the complete deliverance from unjust subjection."[71] Support of the Armenians was bi-partisan and was supported by both parties in Congress but the President had to contend with a small number of opponents from his own Democratic Party.[72]

In January 1919, Vice Admiral Mark Bristol was appointed to the post of American High Commissioner in Turkey. During his service there that lasted to 1927 he represented a different attitude towards the Armenian question and focused on what he called a "wider point of view" whose purpose was to get rid of the Armenian "lemon."[73] His prejudice against Armenians and his poisonous hate towards them were evident in the numerous reports that he sent to his superiors in Washington. Bristol opposed any reparation for Armenians, opposed the establishment of an Armenian state and described Armenians as a people that caused problems and strife. In many of his reports he dismissed reports that described massacres of Armenians and defined them as misleading lying propaganda.[74] In addition, he asked the State Department to pressure American newspapers to be less supportive towards the Armenians. Bristol was a senior U.S. Navy officer and had great respect and admiration for the brutal power of the Turks. He placed commercial interests before humanitarian considerations and human lives. He did not possess a modicum of sympathy for the Armenian suffering. He refused to investigate and report on murders and deportations of Armenians that were ordered by Mustafa Kemal's government that occurred in the 1920s. Three American destroyers that docked in Izmir harbor were ordered by the naval high command not to interfere.[75] This caused the American missionaries in Turkey to demand Bristol's removal because of his clear preference for the Turks

69 Colonel House to Wilson, October 1, 1915, In *Wilson Papers.* Vol. XXXV, 3; John Milton Cooper, "A Friend in Power?" 104.

70 *New York Times.* November 6, 1918.

71 "Wilson to Pope Benedict XV, December 24, 1918." In Arthur Link (ed.). *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, 489.

72 Lloyd B. Ambrosius, "Wilsonian Diplomacy," 113-114; John Milton Cooper, "A Friend in Power?" 107.

73 Library of Congress, Division of Manuscript, The Papers of Mark L. Bristol, Box 65, Armenia File, Bristol to American mission, August 21, 1919; Bristol to Harbod, Box 31, August 20, 1919.

74 Mark L. Bristol Diary in Mark L. Bristol Papers, Library of Congress, June7, July 20, September 7 and November 9, 1919

75 Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City.* London: Faber and Faber, 1972, chs. XVII-XX.

they viewed him as unfit for his position.[76] Their protest elicited no response from the American authorities.

President Wilson at the Versailles Peace Conference

Early in 1919, the Versailles Conference convened in Paris. President Wilson presented his vision—the "Fourteen Points," the principles that should be the base and guide the conduct of nations after World War I. Point number Twelve of his plan called for "A New World Order" that would ensure security for the lives and an opportunity for the autonomous development of Greeks, Assyrians, Arabs and Armenians that had lived under Turkish rule.[77] In the Armenian case, Wilson suggested, that Armenia should be placed under the protection of the League of Nations that would recommend and choose a nation that would run Armenian affairs until Armenia would decide to declare its independence.[78] Two Armenian delegations were present at the Versailles Conference but both did not receive official recognition. Both delegation hoped and begged for American protection and leadership that would result in the U.S. would be awarded the mandate of Armenia. Most European nations urged the U.S. to agree to accept the Armenian mandate until Armenia would decide to declare independence.[79] President Wilson refused to decide and did not wish to commit himself "until the American people and its representatives in Congress would express their opinion on the subject." Thus Wilson postponed and delayed the signing of the Versailles Treaty, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Turkish government, and the details of the aid package to Armenia.[80] This was politics of shrieking and avoiding responsibility.[81] In May 1917, Lloyd George, The British Prime Minister, urged President Wilson to send American troops to Turkish Armenia and to Constantinople.[82] Wilson refused because he did not wish to have the U.S. mixed in the "territorial debates of the Old World."[83] Thus he highlighted the limits of his powers and of his worldview. In closed meetings Wilson told some of his Democratic Party supporters that he thought it was the duty of the U.S. to agree to accept the Armenia mandate because of the extensive American influence there that stemmed from the large numbers of American missionaries that served there and had a great influence on the educational institutions there. He added that such a step would be purely altruistic and would not result in financial gains. Wilson attempted to pursue a policy that would be balanced between

76 Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 125-126.

77 "Address of the President of the United States, delivered at a joint session of the two houses of Congress, January 8, 1918." Hose Doc. 765, 65th Cong. 2d Sess. 1918.

78 Richard G. Hovanissian, "The Armenian Genocide," 259; Lloyd B. Ambrossius, "Wilsonian Diplomacy," 126.

79 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 300.

80 Robert Underwood Johnson, *Remembered Yesterday.* Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1923, 528-530.

81 Davis to Wilson, January 15 and January 21, 1920, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* Vol. LXVII, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, 63-67, 79.

82 "Meeting of the Council of Four," May 5, 1919, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* Vol. LVIII, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987, 436-438.

83 Memorandum, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* December 30, 1918, Vol. LIII, 561-562.

American public opinion, national interest and moral duty.[84] This was not a simple task in the post-World War I American environment. Americans were deeply disappointed with the results of the World War. Wilson decided to send Henry Churchill King, the President of Oberlin University in Ohio and Charles Crane, a prominent Chicago businessman on a fact finding mission to the Middle East to ascertain the wishes of the people of Syria and Palestine as to the future of the territories that they lived in. Most Arabs wanted an independent Syria and not a French mandate and seventy-two percent opposed the Zionist plans to settle Palestine.[85] The King-Crane Commission also investigated the conditions under which the residents of the area would support mandates.[86] The future of Armenia was also discussed in their report that was supportive and sympathetic to the Armenians. It described the crimes inflicted on the Armenians "as black as anything in human history" and demanded that the wrongs inflicted on them be rectified. Their report stressed that in any political solution in the region had to take the Armenian interest into account. Because of the great decline in the Armenian population that was caused by the massacres and deportations, the Commission recommended that the Russian Erivan region and the Ottoman provinces of Trabzon, Erzurum and Bitlis along with an outlet to the Black Sea would be included in the new independent Armenia when it would be established. This was intended to assure that within five years the Armenians would constitute a demographic majority in Armenia.[87] The establishment of an independent Armenia was, according to the report, essential because: "the demonstrated unfitness of the Turks to rule over others, or even themselves; because of the adoption of repeated massacres as a deliberate policy of state; because of an almost complete lack of penitence for massacres, or repudiation of the crime—they rather seek… to excuse them… because the most elementary justice suggests there must be at least some region in Turkey where Armenians can go and not have to live under Turkish rule; because nothing less than that could give the Armenians any adequate guarantee of safety; because consequently, nothing less will satisfy the conscience of the world… the Armenians have surely earned the right, by their sufferings, their endurance, their loyalty to principles, their unbroken spirit and ambition, and the demonstrated industry, ability and self-reliance to look forward to a national life of their own; because such a separate state would probably make more certain decent treatment of Armenians in other parts of Turkey; and because there is no adequate substitute for such a state. In the interests of the Armenians, of the Turks, and of peace of the world alike, the formation of a separate Armenian state is to be urged."[88]

The report emphasized neither the Turkish authorities nor the Turkish people recognized their responsibility for the Armenian massacres.[89] The authors of the Report

84 Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 72.

85 Andrew Patrick, *America's Forgotten Middle East Initiative.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, 160-161.

86 Richard G. Hovannissian, "The Armenian Genocide," 261.

87 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 351; Merrill D. Peterson, Starving Armenians. 83.

88 *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919.* vol. 12 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1947, 814.

89 Ibid., 810-813.

recommended that the Turks express their remorse for their crimes by transferring territories to Armenia and agree to "just repatriation" that would help the victim to rebuild the regions that the Turks destroyed.[90] The authors of the Report added: "It was better to spend millions to preserve the peace than billions to wage another war."[91] On August 28, 1919, The Report was presented to the Paris Peace Conference but it was not published or circulated until 1922.

Robert Lansing, Wilson's Secretary of State, was an extreme opponent of Wilson's policy on Armenia. Lansing, a radical nationalist, entire worldview was based on economic and military considerations only and mostly on what would the U.S. profit from its policies. He opposed the sovereignty of small, weak nations and held international justice codes in contempt. He declared "that almost any form of atrocity is permissible provided a nation's safety is involved."[92] Lansing had no desire or need to investigate "crimes against humanity" and succeeded in removing those words from the final draft of the Paris Peace Treaty. He believed, supported and gave priority to international trade, commerce and economic ties that would ensure that the U.S. would be the leading and most important leader of the capitalist world.[93] Many believed that both Lansing and Wilson preferred to place the responsibility for the future of Armenia on America's allies and blame the U.S. Congress in America's inaction on Armenia's behalf. The President used the wide support the Armenian cause had in the U.S. to promote his political agenda. Humanitarian considerations, on this matter, were not really important to the American political leadership.[94]

The Armenia Mandate

In July 1919, after returning to the U.S. from the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson embarked on a journey across the U.S. in an attempt to convince Americans to approve the Versailles Agreements and to join the League of Nations. Later that month the American envoy to the New Armenian republic called on the Allies that met in Paris to provide military protection to Armenia against the Turkish attempt to annex Armenian territories. He said that this had to be done in order to prevent "a disaster… more terrible than the massacre of 1915."[95] Wilson wrote that he directed the State Department to support an initiative in Congress that would authorize him to send a military mission to Armenia. In September 1919, a military mission headed by General James Harbod left for Armenia. Its mission was to ascertain the interests and the constraints on American involvement necessary to protect American interests in Armenia.[96] The Mission's report confirmed that the massacres and deportations of 1915 were planned and executed by the Turkish authorities and added that Turkey must

90 Ibid., 814.

91 Ibid., 819-828, 841-847.

92 Christopher Simpson, *The Splendid Blonde Beast.* New York: Grove Press, 1993, 23-34.

93 Ibid.

94 Desk Diary of Robert Lansing, August 21, 1919. *Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* Vol. LXII, 453-454.

95 James Gidney, *A Mandate for Armenia.* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1967, 170.

96 United States National Archives. RG 1256, 184.21/142 and RG 256184.021/106/113;

never, in the future, rule any part of Armenia. The Mission concluded that the Turks would never cease to try to annihilate the Armenians. Only if a third powerful entity would intervene on behalf of the Armenians could they be saved. In its final report that was presented on October 23, 1919, it was stated that if the U.S. would not assume responsibility over the Armenian territory all assistance efforts to save the Armenian would be like "pouring water through a strainer." [97] The Mission's Report stated that it felt that the U.S. had a "moral duty" to assume the "burdens and the responsibilities" of the mandate of Armenia. The Mission's Report summarized the occurrences and the impact of the Armenian Genocide: "Mutilation, violations, torture, and death have left their haunting memories in hundred beautiful Armenian valleys and traveler in that region is seldom free from the evidence of this most colossal crime of all ages…. Conditions shriek of misery, ruin, starvation, and all the melancholy aftermath, not only of honorable warfare, but of bestial brutality unrestrained by God or man."[98] The American authorities never related to the King–Crane Commission or to the Harbod Reports.[99]

During this time period, President Wilson suffered near fatal, severe strokes that caused brain damage that hindered his ability to function.[100] For a month a Senate sub-committee deliberated Wilson's proposal and conducted hearings on the question whether to station American army and naval personnel in Armenia in order to ensure the very existence of the Armenian state. Finally, the subcommittee report was defined as "wholly advisory." It was drafted by Wilson's Republican adversary, future President Warren G. Harding. It did not reach consideration on the Senate floor until May 1920.[101] When it reached the Senate floor the proposal did not include the sending of American military personnel to Armenia. It empowered the President to dispatch a naval destroyer and a unit of U.S. Marines to protect the lives and property of American citizens that resided in the port city of Batumi.[102] The President countered by requesting the Senate to grant him the authority to assume the mandate over Armenia. On June 1, 1920, this request was denied by the Senate.[103] Moreover, the U.S. did not grant diplomatic recognition to the Armenian Republic, this contrary to its European allies. This despite the efforts of the pro-Armenian Lobby in the U.S. Because of America's refusal to undertake the Armenian mandate and because of the fact that the U.S. did not sever diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire, the U.S. was not invited to be an official participant in the 1920 San Remo Conference and therefore was not permitted to participate in the deliberations concerning the future of Armenia. Armenia, during that time, was threatened by Turkey's Mustafa Kemal and

97 United States National Archives. RG 256, 1284.021/329 enclosures; RG 59, 860J.02/25; RG 256,867B.00/296.

98 nited States National Archives, RG 256,184.02105/5.

99 Richard B. Hovanissian, "The Armenian Genocide." 257.

100 Merrill D. Peterson, "Starving Armenians." 85.

101 John Milton Cooper Jr. "A Friend in Power?" 109.

102 U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, Hearings: *Maintenance of Peace in Armenia.* Congressional Record, 66th Congress, 1st sess. Washington, DC: 1919.

103 Wilson message to Congress, May 24, 1920 in *Wilson Papers*, vol. LXV, 320-323; *Congressional Record.* 2nd Sess., 8073 June 1, 1920.

by the Russian Bolshevik regime. In the San Remo Conference, the Allies presented the U.S. an official request to assume the mandate over Armenia. The U.S. refused this request when it realized that the Allies divided the oil fields in the Ottoman Empire amongst themselves leaving the U.S. out of the of the act. [104]

"The Great Betrayal"

The American public, meanwhile, lost interest in the Armenian topic because of the deep disappointment from the outcome of the World War that resulted in the rejection of Wilson's idealism and the unwillingness to assume the costly burdens of international commitments. [105] The State Department, headed by Bainbridge Colby, the new Secretary of State, assumed a much more favorable stance on the Armenian question. and on April 23, 1920, accorded de-facto recognition to the Armenian Republic.[106]

A month later, Wilson's request to accept the mandate over Armenia was deliberated in both houses of Congress and was rejected. Numerous Congressmen wondered why the American people must finance the defense and the rebuilding of a poor devastated nation, especially since there did not exist the slightest chance for any material profit from assuming the mandate. Most members of Congress had an the image of Armenia as a poorhouse populated by wretched beings that could not deliver any meaningful economic or strategic contribution to the U.S.[107] At that time the American business community rapidly took advantage of attractive economic opportunities in the Middle East, especially in the oil business. Those opportunities did not exist in Armenia. The attempts of President Wilson to include a statement supporting an independent Armenia that focused on Christian and humanitarian values and duties into the Democratic Party's National Platform failed.[108] Instead, the following paragraph appeared in the Party Platform: "We express our deep and earnest sympathy for the unfortunate people of Armenia, and we believe that our government, consistent with Constitution and our principles, should render every possible and proper aid to them in their efforts to establish and maintain a government of their own."[109]

When it signed the Treaty of Sevres on August 10, 1920, the Turkish government undertook to arrest and try those who were responsible for the massacres. The international community had no doubt about the veracity of the reports of the massacres. The Treaty also recognized and supported Armenian independence and called upon the President of the United States to determine Armenia's borders and

104 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 366.

105 Mark Malakasian, "The Disintegration of the Armenian Cause in the United States, 1918-1927," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. Vol. 16, No. 3, August 1984, 349-365;* Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: U.S. foreign Policy at Home and Abroad.* vol. II, New York*:* Norton, 1994,328-330; Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 227-270.

106 Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 98.

107 Richard Hovanissian, *Between Crescent and Sickle, Partition and Sovietization.* Vol 4, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 15-24*;* James B. Gidney, *A Mandate for Armenia.* ch. 10.

108 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 362.

109 "1920 Democratic Party Platform." https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/1920-democratic-party-platform.

ensure that Armenia would have a Black Sea outlet. The treaty also demanded from Turkey to relinquish all claims on Armenian territories.[110] The delay by President Wilson to determine Armenia's borders hindered the process.[111] In December 1920, Armenia became part of the Soviet Union after it was forced to relinquish territories in its western regions to Turkey. It was ironic, since President Wilson had the authority to send American forces to Armenia without the need to wait for Congressional approval on the mandate issue but he chose not to act.[112]

The Change in America's Policy on Armenia and Its Complicity in the Denial of the Armenian Genocide

In contrast to Wilson's and the Democratic Party's professed idealism, President Warren G. Harding and his Republican Party promoted American policies of isolation and the limitation of American involvement overseas. The Republican Party that opposed Wilson's "irresponsible" attempt to receive the mandate over Armenia did not change its position on the issue. During the Harding Administration public opinion was divided between calls for aid and justice for Armenia and the limits sets by the Republican Administration on this issue. Instead of emphasis on the past, the injustice and the massacres the Harding Administration preferred to focus on the present and future and face the new emerging realities.[113] This was manifested when Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes refused to act in behalf the Armenians and Greeks in the 1922 Izmir calamitous riots.[114] Hughes declare that the time had come for the U.S. to alter its policy towards Turkey because of the changes in the political climate.[115] Europe that just began to distant itself from the horrors of World War I and in the U.S. "Splendid isolation" foreign policy and a desire "to return to normalcy" reigned. It found expression in unwillingness to be involved in European affairs in particular and world affairs in general. A great, unreasonable fear of Bolshevik revolutionary designs gripped the nation after end of the War in the period that became known as the "Res Scare" and was characterized by mass hysteria and persecution of alleged Communists and traitors and total disregard of basic Constitutional rights.[116] One of the

110 Fred Israel (ed.). *Major Peace Treaties of Modern History, 1648-1967.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1967, 2048-2088.

111 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*. 359-360.

112 James W. Gerard to Wilson, May 24, and May 18, 1920. *Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* vol. LXV, 287-288.

113 William W. Peet to James L. Barton, memorandum, 1923, in American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Western Turkey Mission sup. 1920-1924, vol. 1. Documents. No. 37 Houghton Library, Harvard University; James L. Barton, "Report on the Lausanne Conference" in ibid., No. 328.

114 Allen Dulles to Mark Bristol April 21m, 1922, U.S. National Archives. RG 45, Washington, DC. In Christopher Simpson, *The Blond Beast.* 34.

115 *The Treaty with Turkey: Statements Resolutions and Reports in Favor of Ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne.* New York: General Committee in Favor of Ratification of the Treaty with Turkey. 1926, 11-17.

116 Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime.* New York: Norton, 2004, 135-233; Robert J. Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to 1976*. Urbana:

results of these currents was the tragic reality that the surviving Armenians witnessed that American and European policy makers preferred to overlook and disregard their predicaments and chose to forget their past and their suffering. At the same time, the rapid winning rise of Kemalism occurred in Turkey and the Sevres Treaty was ignored since Mustafa Kemal succeeded to pressure the European allies to agree to a new and much more lenient and comfortable treaty—the Lausanne Treaty of July 24, 1923. The U.S., again, was just an observer. The American position was that the rights of minorities had to be protected and also called for the establishment of a homeland for the Armenians. This point caused vigorous protests from the Turkish Delegation that clarified, before the convening of the Lausanne Conference that raising the Armenian question would result in the cessation of the deliberations.[117] Later, the Turks promised to return oil fields, railway building rights and other resources in Turkey's eastern provinces that had been cancelled, to American corporations.[118] The Turks used this economic bait and the U.S., that at the time, was concerned about its low oil reserves enthusiastically swallowed the bait.[119] In the Lausanne Treaty, Turkey was cleared from all responsibility for the policies and deeds of the Ottoman Empire. It was the economic and commercial preferences and interests of the Allied Powers that were the reasons for the betrayal, the denial and the abandonment of the Armenians. The word "Armenia" did not appear in the final draft of the Lausanne Treaty.[120] The U.S. Senate, in 1927, did not confirm the Lausanne Treaty and the Treaty was denounced by the Democratic Party in its 1924 Presidential Elections Platform. In 1927, the U.S. renewed diplomatic relations with Turkey and both nations opened embassies. In the respective capitals.[121] Immediately after the Lausanne Conference the Turkish and American delegations met to formulate a Friendship and Commerce Treaty. This treaty was planned by the State Department and received its approval. The main points if this treaty were: Free passage to American ships in the Dardanelles, an "Open Door" policy towards American business concerns and protection of the Christians living in Turkey.[122] This treaty was described by Oscar Straus, a former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, as "diabolically one-sided" but it was, in 1929, approved by the Senate.[123] This treaty in addition to the American economic rivalry with the European nations, especially in the oil fields concessions, resulted in the abandonment of the Armenian

University of Illinois Press, 2001; Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955; Arnon Gutfeld*, Montana's Agony: Years of War and Hysteria 1917-1921.*Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1979.

117 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 369-370.

118 Luther L. Fowler to Ernest W. Riggs, June 10, 1923. *ABC Papers.* [Supra Note 116] Central Turkey Mission 1920-1924, Documents, vol. 1, No. 46; George Sweet Gibbs and Evelyn H. Knowlton, *History of the Standard Oil Company: The4c Resurgent Years 1911-1927*. New York: Harper & Bros. 1956, ch.11.

119 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 365-366.

120 Treaty of Lausanne, July 24, 1923. https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne; *New York Times,* Editorial, July 24, 1923.

121 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 372.

122 Gregory Aftaldinian, *Armenia, Visions of a Republic: The Independence Lobby in America.* Boston: Charles River Books, 1981, 58.

123 Ibid.

cause: "The Department of State became a concession hunting agency for the Standard Oil Company."[124] As a result, Turkey took advantage of the opportunity and adopted a policy of denial and oppression of any public debate or official mention of the horrible treatment of the Armenians in the West. This policy reached the Hollywood film industry: in 1935, when Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer acquired the right to produce a film based on Franz Werfel's novel *The Forty Days of Moussa Dag,* the story based on the Armenian genocide in order to produce an important blockbuster film. The State Department intervened in order to cancel the production of the film by MGM because of threats and protests by the Turkish government.[125] The economic and commercial interests of the American business community had much greater importance than Turkey's treatment of minorities or the right to free expression.[126]

The American Refusal to Recognize Turkey's Responsibility for the Armenian Genocide

During the deliberations in the United Nations in 1948 on the U.N. Convention on Genocide, The Armenians realized that they had been victims of a crime that till than had no name or definition. In order to honor the memory of the victims, Armenians in all the nations of their diaspora began efforts to receive national and international recognition of their debacle through adoption of decisions that recognize the historical veracity of their holocaust. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide the governors of Massachusetts and Maine delivered speeches and published memorials about the genocide. Commemorative speeches were also delivered in the U.S. Senate. Future President Gerald Ford, then a Republican member of the House of Representatives from Michigan, declared in Congress that he recognized the "Turkish Genocide of the Armenian people." In 1975, both houses of Congress attempted to adopt a resolution that called for a "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man" on April 24. Because of State Department's demands and pressure every mention of Turkey was removed from the Declaration. The resolution read: "The President of the United States is Authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry who succumbed to the genocide perpetrated in 1915, and in whose memory this date is commemorated by all Armenians and their friends throughout the world."[127] This resolution did not pass in the Judiciary Committee of the Senate because of the opposition of the State Department that feared that adoption of this resolution would insult Turkey, an American ally in NATO that her friendship was very important to the national security of the U.S. and to

124 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 366-370.

125 Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 156-158.

126 George A. Plimpton, "The New Turkey," in *The Treaty with Turkey: Statements, Resolutions and Reports in Favor of Ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne.* New York: General Committee in Favor of Ratification of the Treaty with Turkey, 1926, 10.

127 U.S. Congress, House, "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man," H.J. Res. 148, 94th Congress, 1st Session, *Congressional Record.* April 8, 1975, vol. 121, pt. 8, 9244.

its European allies.[128] In 1985, 1990 and in 2000 the government of Turkey succeeded to block Congressional resolutions for memorial days for the Armenia Genocide.[129] In 1996, the House of Representatives succeeded to pass legislation that ordered cutting aid to Turkey because of Turkey's refusal to recognize its responsibility for the Armenian Genocide.[130] Presidents and numerous members of Congress, since the mid-1970s sent official condolences to the Armenian people on April 24, the memorial day for the victims. The Presidents of the U.S., from Jimmy Carter to Donald Trump, purposely avoided the use of the word Genocide in their descriptions of the calamity and failed to identify the guilty. Turkey continues to employ its political clout, as a member of NATO, and threatens to shut American military bases in Turkey and cancel contracts of acquisitions of weapons from American companies in order to pressure the American Government not to recognize the Armenian Genocide.[131] The Turkish government assumed an extreme stance on the subject by declaring that it would not be able to protect the lives of Americans in Turkey if the U.S. would mention or refer to the Turkish responsibility for the Armenian Genocide.[132] The efforts of the Armenian Diaspora contributed to the greater emphasis of the media on the subject and contributed to the general public's greater awareness of this topic. Numerous Armenians believe that the continuous denial of the Turks of the Genocide created a situation that necessitated a situation that called for greater international necessity to study and be aware of the historical facts till the time that recognition of the Armenian Genocide would become unequivocal and universal.

Denial

The Turkish government refuses to acknowledge Turkey's responsibility for the Armenian Genocide. Recently, Turkey demanded that the "historical truth" about the 1915 events should be studied based on documents in the Turkish State Archives. The official Turkish version mentions only "deportations" and "resettlements" that were performed by the Ottoman military in "self-defense" against hostile forces during battles for the very survival of the Empire. According to the Turkish official version the Armenians died during the resettlement process as a result of epidemics, hunger and fatigue. The official Turkish version also claims both sides were responsible for unsavory incidents that occurred during what the Turks describe as a civil war. The Turks also claim that the number of dead Armenians was "only" 300,000.

In February 1996, the following petition signed by more than a hundred Holocaust scholars and literary figures, among them Yehuda Bauer, Israel Charny, Raul Hilberg, Helen Fein, Steven Katz, Robert Jay Lipton, Deborah Lipstadt, Robert Melson, Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Harold Pinter, Susan Sontag, John Updike and Kurt Vonnegut appeared in the *Journal of Higher Education:* "Where scholars deny genocide, their message is: murders did not really matter; victims were

128 Merrill D. Peterson, *Starving Armenians.* 380.

129 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris.* 385.

130 Ibid., 390.

131 Ibid., 385-387.

132 Ibid., 389.

not really killed; mass murder requires no confrontation, but should be ignored. Scholars who deny genocide lend their considerable authority to acceptance of this ultimate human crime. The Denial is the final step in Genocide: it murders the dignity of the survivors and destroys the remembrance of the crime. The denial of genocide is the final stage of genocide: it murders the dignity of the survivors and destroys the remembrance of the crime. Denial of genocide strives to reshape history in order to rehabilitate the perpetrators and demonize the victims. The Turkish government's denial of the Armenian Genocide encourages—by its very nature—the current programs they deny the Jewish Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide; it encourages genocidal episodes that are currently occurring in Africa, the Balkans, and elsewhere. The Turkish government's tactics pave the way for state-sponsored Holocaust and genocide denials in the future."[133] In the fall of 2000, the House Subcommittee on International Relations and Human Rights passed by a large majority a Armenian Genocide Resolution despite intense Turkish opposition. Several distinguished genocide scholars, among them Elie Wiesel, wrote to the House Subcommittee urging the members not to succumb to Turkish pressure.[134] Deborah Lipstadt wrote the Congressional Committee: "Denial of genocide strives to reshape history in order to demonize the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators[.]"[135] Richard Hovannisian characterized the process of denial as "Falsification, deception and half-truths reduce what was to what may have been or perhaps what was not at all…. By altering or erasing the past, a present is produced and a future is projected without concern for historical integrity. The process of annihilation is thus advanced and completed by denial."[136] In the Armenian case, denial under the guise of an historiographical debate had been institutionalized by the Turkish authorities and by its powerful economic and military allies. Nations, such as the United States succumbed to Turkish pressures and supported the Turkish policy of denial. Other nations joined the U.S. in this conduct because they shared economic and strategic interests with Turkey. Those nations preferred to placate Turkey thus cynically abandoning their humanitarian principles. Economic and security considerations triumphed over universal humanitarian values.

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On April 22, 2021, on the Armenian Remembrance Day—a date on which many around the world reflect on the genocide of the Armenian people, President Joe Biden of the United States officially labeled the mass killing of the of the Armenians, prior to and during World War I, as a genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire.

133 *Chronicle of Higher Education.* February 2, 1996, A30*;* Richard G. Hovannisian, "Denial of the Armenian Genocide in Comparison with Holocaust Denial," in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.). *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide.* Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999, 201-236.

134 Elie Wiesel to Hon. Chris Smith, Chair, House International Operations Subcommittee, September 12, 2000. Correspondence to U.S. House International Relations Committee Concerning HR 398, the United States Training and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, 106th Congress 2nd Session, September 14, 2000.

135 Deborah Lipstadt, letter to Chris Smith, September 2, 2000, *ibid.*

136 Richard Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial*, 229-230.

Biden, during the Presidential elections campaign promised to recognize Ottoman responsibility for the massacre. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's growing hostility toward the United States in the past four years; Turkey's recent decision to withdraw from the European Convention on Women's Rights and Domestic Abuse was declared "deeply disappointing" by the U.S. The Biden administration also issued a severe condemnation of Turkey in its report of human rights abuses around the world. Biden labeled Erdogan an "autocrat" and promised to oppose "new moment of advancing authoritarianism." Anthony Blinken, the American Secretary of State, a son of Holocaust survivors, in his confirmation hearing, because of Turkey's drift towards Russia in the past four years, called Turkey "a strategic—so-called strategic,—partner of ours." These moves along with the calling, of the Biden administration of the killing of the Uyghur Muslims by China a genocide all pointed to a concentrated effort by President Biden to reestablish the United States as the world's leading moral leader. Biden stated that the U.S. confirmed this historical event not in order to assign blame but in order to ensure that that what occurred would never again be repeated.[137]

Only by acknowledging the responsibility for the horrendous injuries and pain perpetrated on the Armenian people and an official apology by the Republic of Turkey, the successor state to the Ottoman Empire, would initiate a healing process that would allow a future peace between those two peoples. The chances of this happening soon, to use an understatement, are not promising.

137 *Washington Post.* April 22, 2021.

Klaudia Borkiewicz

Text as a Dialogue: The Role of Paratexts and Intertexts in Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*

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Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the vibrancy and multidimensionality of Hemingway's work lies in its dialogic nature. In the light of the above-mentioned, referring both to Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and Genette's concept of paratext, the paper constitutes an attempt to bring into focus a dynamic network of interactions, which manifest themselves at the level of the text's structure and meaning. Correspondingly, an outgoing dialogue between Spanish and American culture, between the factual and the fictional, between the articulated and the unsaid, should be viewed as breeding ground for the reader's role in the negotiation and co-creation of meaning. As a result *Death in the Afternoon* becomes something more than just a manual on how to look at the bull fight. With its internal diversification, the text becomes a chance of meeting, a carnivalistic space opened for an ongoing dialogue and interaction between the elements both internal and external to the text, inviting the reader to immerse fully into a constant and always relevant conversation between writing styles, forms of artistic expression and culture.

Keywords: Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*, paratext, intertextuality, dialogism

"Good writing is good conversation, only more so" (Stone 69), states Hemingway. And of course, one of the core features of a good conversation and at the same time of good writing is the presence of a lively, immersive, vibrant dialogue, which allows for the rise of a complex net of interrelations between the characters, meanings, and the text's composing parts. Despite Hemingway being called the master of dialogue, due to his skillful use of language in its roughness and economy in masterly compositional attempts to reenact the real speech in the text with its natural dynamism and briskness, the novel in focus, *Death in the Afternoon,* features only a few dialogues, since the book appears mainly as the writer's monologue on Spanish corrida. Nevertheless, the literary work in focus remains one of Hemingway's most multidimensional and compositionally complex dialogues, which embraces not only the parts of the text devoted to conversations but also the whole literary composition, at the same time allowing for the rise of cross-textual links with other works of literature as well as a complex net of interconnections with the elements of the world external to the text.

Originally criticized for its overly detailed technicality, elegiac tone, or excessively diversified structure, dense with fragments of clearly expository character, interrupted with elements of philosophy or even literary criticism (Mazzeno 25), *Death in the Afternoon* appealed to Hemingway's readers with its extraordinariness, that paradoxically seems to lie in its internally diversified literary structure, that gives rise to what some of the critics would call the cacophony of voices, while others view it as a well-organized and consciously created chaos stemming from the polyphony of interconnections between styles, genres and topics explored. Amongst thirty texts (Mandel xiii-xv) in which Hemingway addresses the theme of bull fighting *Death in the*

Afternoon remains the most professional and exhaustive account of Spanish corrida, revealing the depth of the author's insight, sharp eye for detail, the involvement of a genuine aficionado and skillful use of language to express both the technical and the abstract dimension of bull fighting, viewed simultaneously from two, equally important perspectives: as a traditional sport and as a form of an abstract modern art, that maintains its freshness despite being firmly rooted in a centuries-old Spanish tradition.

Although originally meant to be "an introduction to modern Spanish bull fight," a sort of a comprehensive guide-book for those who are unfamiliar with the intricacy of Spanish corrida, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* should be perceived in broader categories of cross-relationships between fiction and journalistic attempts to state the world in its objective, purely factual being, between the text itself and other texts it refers to, between verbal and non-verbal forms of artistic expression, between American perspective on the world and Spanish tradition. This list is by no means exhaustive and addresses only some of the major axes of both intra- and extra-textual dialogues in Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*. Written as a form of expression always in between, *Death in the Afternoon* appears as a ground for mediation between the contrasting phenomena, a space for interfusion and blending, a text that dwells on the borderland of fiction and non-fiction and, therefore, becomes a borderland itself, a meeting place for diversified themes that take part in a vibrant dialogue and interaction. As a result, the text appears as a pulsating, carnivalistic space that escapes critics' attempts to clearly delineate its borders, to circumscribe and define it, to structure and synthesize the fluid and multifaceted. And perhaps it is the intangibleness and carnivalistic character of Hemingway's work, because of which the text appear not as a carrier of fixed meanings but rather as space which allows meanings to arise as a result of tensions between the elements brought into interaction and confronted by the author in an experimental, but planned attempt to extract new senses from universal themes such as art, tradition, and culture.

Despite its seemingly loose internal structure, where each chapter could become a separate article on bull fighting, and each digression, that particular chapters abound with, can become a separate, full length story, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* still appears as a coherent whole, although composed of numerous loosely connected, juxtaposed elements. In this view, Hemingway's work of 1936, can be perceived as a late literary equivalent of cubism. Dividing the observed phenomenon into smaller parts, each of them approached from a different perspective in order to be represented simultaneously within one artistic framework, Hemingway seems to explore the possibilities of transposing a painterly technique onto a literary form of expression. The projection of de-construction of a selected clipping of reality, and further re-construction of the world from a number of autonomous elements, sharply silhouetted against the rest of the composition, leads Hemingway to obtain a peculiar effect of a continuous falling apart of a composition, that surprisingly manages to maintain its coherence despite its internal roughness, diversification, and hybridity. The resulting fractures and crevices in the structure of the work become a space for a vibrant dialogue between the composing parts, at the same time allowing for the reader's or the viewer's participation in the process meaning extraction or creation.

"I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you," writes Cézanne to Emile Bonnard (Rapaport 36); "I owe you the truth in bull fighting and I will tell it to you" could Hemingway write in the very first chapter of *Death in the Afternoon*. And, since according to Hemingway (*For Whom* 474) "there is no *one* thing that 's true. It's all true," the nature of truth is the reason why it dwells in the abovementioned voids, fractures of the multifaceted, hybrid composition, that leave space for all kinds of frictions allowing for the rise of complex, manifold meanings.

The complexity of *Death in the Afternoon* was captured in Scribner's advertisement for the book: "Bull fighting, bulls and bull fighters plus much collateral observation on life and letters. Drama, color, action, humor, and 80 amazing pictures" (Trogdon 35). But definitely, there is much more to the dialogic nature of the book, than just the elements enumerated by the publisher in the brief invitation to reading. In a letter to Scribner, reporting his work on *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway reveals:

> I will keep the bull fight book going and might do the first part and get it out of the way up to date. It will have illustration—drawings and photographs—and I think should have some colored reproductions. It is a long one to write because it is not just to be a history and text book or apologia for bull fighting—but instead, if possible, bull fighting its-self. As it's a thing that nobody knows about in English I'd like to take it first from altogether outside… and then go all the way inside with chapters on everything.… I think a really true book if it were fairly well written about the one thing that has, with the exception of the ritual church, come down to us intact from the old days would have a certain permanent value. But it has to be solid and true and have all the dope and be interesting—and it won't be ready for a long time. (Baker 236)

Taking both top down and bottom up approach, Hemingway aspires to provide the readers with an exhaustive account of bull fighting that, in its final version will stand for bull fighting itself. According to the writer, the process of making a literary work something more than just a mere description or a reflection of a bull fight requires the writer to refer not only to multiple perspectives from which the phenomenon should be approached but also to multiple means of artistic expression that would allow not for the presentation, but for the full animation of the bull fight before the reader-viewer eyes.

Becoming involved in a dialogue with a bull fight means allowing it to speak. But how is it possible to make a bull fight express itself fully in a language that appears foreign to the spectacle that speaks itself? How can a multilayered, internally contradictory phenomenon, that touches the physical and the spiritual, the visual and the abstract, be transformed into a seemingly flat textual form of expression, without losing any of its dynamism and vibrancy? A mere translation of a bull fight from one medium of artistic expression into another seems not to match the complexity of the task.

As Hemingway emphasizes, to make the bull fight "speak for its-self," make it preserve its autonomy, not to subordinate the original spatio-dynamic form to its textual counterpart, the phenomenon needs to undergo a peculiar form of a meticulous de-construction. This artistic disassemblement of reality should be performed from the outside and followed by a careful re-construction conducted from the inside. However,

to keep the account "solid," "interesting," and, most importantly, "true," to create an impression of movement and emphasize the visual dimension of the spectacle, the textual layer of the composition requires supplementation with a certain form of visual enhancer—drawings and photographs. As the writer planned, these would capture the moment, but at the same time add dynamism to the whole composition.

The internal roughness of the text's both compositional and semantic structure allows *Death in the Afternoon* to acquire a peculiar sense of vibrancy. Its complexity is therefore not only a matter of an abstract modern style, that draws inspiration from cubist visual art and Spanish culture "that nobody knows about in English" but also of a brisk dialogue between its composing parts, themes explored and styles applied. The text's internal hybridity as well as its loose structure, both at its semantic and compositional level, make *Death in the Afternoon* appear as an intermedium, "a conceptual fusion" (Higgins 19), a text that crosses the boundaries of its purely literary dimensions allowing the elements of journalism, literature, photography, foreign culture, and finally, a bull fight, viewed as an inherently visual and dynamic spectacle, float within and beyond its textual framework, meet and interact.

The internal diversification of modernist artistic creations, that cross the pre-established boundaries of the field has been captured in Higgins model of intermedia, which "provides a framework through which both the limits of and similarities between distinct media are recognized in such a way that their combinatory potential opens up the possibility of thinking one medium through another" (Zinman 21). Higgins's *Intermedia Chart* (1995) presupposes free movement of its elements, which float unrestrainedly within and beyond the large *Intermedia* universum. The boundaries of particular media represented on the chart are a matter of convention, and the relationship between them should be viewed as dynamic and convertible rather than stable. Therefore, the scope of mutual influence of one medium on another is also subject to progressive alterations.

As the chart's malleability provides almost an infinite number of possible configurations of the elements composing its dynamic structure, concerning both the type of media that enter into direct interaction and the extent of the elements' superposition, it can be assumed that the outcome of reciprocal interactions may be difficult to predict. The newly arisen intermedia or, in other words, intermedial fields created as a result of the above discussed interplay between the chart's elements, are characterized by an unprecedented nature based on interfusion, juxtaposition, and blending. Interestingly enough, instead of remaining within its freshly created framework, the new intermedia show a tendency for spontaneous evolution into new shapes and variations.

An example of media hybridization and blending, recognized as an evolutionary continuum rather than a result-oriented process, is a gradual interfusion of painting with other forms of expression, such as music or poetry. As Higgins notices with reference to visual art, "painting has ceased to be a matter of paint staying on the canvas in the world of visual art, but instead painting has come to migrate, abstracting itself from its traditional bases, entering the world outside of itself, interacting and fusing with other media to form visual poetry, visual music, these in turn to become new media capable of migrating yet further" (20). Although centered around visual art, Higgins's

observations on the evolution of modern painting can as well be applied to literature and its dynamic progression towards a brisk blend with other forms of artistic expression, that brings into life new, carnivalistic creations from the borderline of various media.

Correspondingly, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* can be treated as a literary work that, created in consequence of fusion and blending, ceases to be a purely literary form. The fusion of styles, genres, words and photographs makes it slip conventional methodological categories universally applied to works of (non)fiction. Similarly, the bull fight itself escapes any attempt to unequivocally circumscribe its nature, delineate its borders, classify it as a cultural, artistic or sport phenomenon. In this view, the hybridity of Hemingway's work appears as an well-ordered artistic chaos that acquires the features of the phenomenon it attempts to de- and re-construct.

In the light of the above stated it can be argued that the dialogic nature of the text in focus becomes a breeding ground for tracing the cross-textual links, which fit into the concept of Kristeva's intertextuality understood as "the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position" (Roudiez 15). As Juvan notices, both the text and intertextuality are *activities*, and represent dynamic, rather than stable phenomena, that are "involved in the process of deconstructing and new construction of meanings that have been pre-encoded in other texts" (12). For Kristeva, the process of meaning transfiguration should be understood as a dialogue between two self-contained and equally important systems of signs which act as carriers of meaning; although the authors or creators of these systems can be involved in the procedure, the matter of mutual influence is not to be taken into consideration (Roudiez 15).

Kristeva's concept of intertextuality is not be analyzed in the context of mutual dependence or subjugation of the abovementioned systems of meaningful signs, but functions rather as a dialogue between two or more independent sources of meaning. Similar premises govern Bakhtin's dialogism, which becomes the basis for Kristeva's intertextuality theory. As Kristeva (65) herself notices, Bakhtin was the first literary critic to "replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply exist but is generated in relation to another structure." Accordingly, the text's meaning is never finite or stable. In an almost infinite net of interactions with other texts, forms of artistic expression, elements of culture which create the context in which the text is embedded, meaning cannot be perceived as something permanently assigned to the text; it becomes not only an aim to be pursued but an action, *activity* as it was mentioned before, constantly in progress, a somewhat fluid entity that undergoes constant transfiguration.

This, in turn, requires the reader's active participation in the process of meaning co-creation or re-building, which opens a new space for the author-reader dialogue and interaction. As Penas Ibáñez notices, *Death in the Afternoon* becomes a milestone in the process of Hemingway's creation of the relationship with his readers, as the book becomes a manifesto of the writer's extraordinary style known as the Iceberg Theory (231). This technique assumes the reader's active involvement in deciphering the text's meaning by a careful exploration of the work's complex message encapsulated in an economic form. "The dignity of movement of an iceberg," writes Hemingway in chapter sixteen of *Death in the Afternoon*, "is due to only one eighth of it being

above water" (183). Using the iceberg metaphor Hemingway suggests that the surface structure of the text, although complex and manifold, abounds with understatements and seemingly empty spaces that have to be filled in the process of reading.

Almost thirty years later in "The Art of the Short Story," a short meta-textual commentary on the essence of good writing, Hemingway still advocates minimalistic style, that allows for the condensation of meaning and clarity of representation: "If you leave out important things or events that you know about, the story is strengthened. If you leave or skip something because you do not know, the story will be worthless" (2). The Iceberg Theory thus, well established and widely appreciated both by critics and readers at that time, evolves into the Theory of Omission. Full of cracks and fissures between its vividly silhouetted composing parts, that, among the rest of the elements, carry the vast body of condensed meaning, the text's semantic structure resembles the rough framework of a colourful mosaic or a cubist painting.

The intended discontinuity of the work's both compositional and semantic structure creates a breeding ground for the rise of a broadly conceived dialogism, not only between the creation's composing parts, and a load of meaning ascribed to them at various levels of abstraction but also between the artist and the audience, between the composition and the world external to it, between the contextual frameworks of both the entire work and its minor composing parts. Perceived from this perspective, all the fissures in the work's structure become a place of encounter, a free space capable of accommodating the reader's personal experience with which the text is approached, as well as new meanings created as a result of tensions between the elements both internal and external to the text.

As Hemingway's writing technique presumes the reader's active participation in a genuinely dynamic dialogue not only with the text but also with the writer, the Iceberg Theory can be simultaneously viewed as a reading technique that assumes the immediacy of meaning creation in a dialogic act of the work's reception. Following Penas Ibáñez's consideration of non-standard narratives, of which *Death in the Afternoon* is an unquestionable example, due to a considerable disproportion between the pronounced and the understated, it can be also argued that the crevices in the text's structure become an invitation to an active search for "an alternative that cannot be located in the visible part of narrative text" (Penas Ibáñez 231).

As Penas Ibáñez further notices, it is a narrative always in suspension, a narrative in the continuous process of becoming, "a narrative to be, a narrative in search of a reader to actualize it in the process of reading" (231). The same applies to the bull fight, which appears to the audience as a work of art in its progressive, dynamic form, always as a coherent whole, if viewed from the perspective of time, but paradoxically, in a given moment of its being, never fully complete, always in the process of gradual *becoming*. Arising before the viewer's very eyes, founded on a continuous change, a bull fight represents one of the most volatile forms of art. As Hemingway notices in chapter ten of *Death in the Afternoon* modern bull fighting

> is an impermanent art as singing and the dance are, one of those that Leonardo advised men to avoid, and when the performer is gone the art exists only in the memory of those who have seen it and dies with them…. If it were permanent it could be one of the major arts, but it is not so it finishes with whoever makes it,

> while a major art cannot even be judged until the important physical rottenness of whoever made it is buried. It is an art that deals with death, and death wipes it out. (98)

Volatile and momentary, the bull fight materializes itself only instantaneously in a form of a highly personalized spectacle, of which the nature depends on individual features of the matador and the bull. This adds to its overall transiency, as a particular bull fight cannot be re-told in its wholeness in any of the universal languages of art. Heading the state of a full accomplishment, the bull fight gradually wipes itself out, as Hemingway notices, processing towards self-annihilation that, paradoxically, enwreathes the spectacle as a whole. From that moment on, contrary to other works of art, the bull fight exists only within the dimension of the viewer's intimate experience of exposure to someone else's communing with death:

> Suppose a painter's canvases disappeared with him and a writer's books were automatically destroyed at his death and only existed in the memory of those that had read them. This is what happens in bull fighting. The art, the method, the improvements of doing, the discoveries remain; but the individual, whose doing of them made them, who was the touchstone, the original, disappears and until another individual, as great, comes the things, by being imitated, with the original gone, soon distort, lengthen, shorten, weaken, and lose all reference to the original. (98)

In its gradual progression towards new forms, the bull fight draws on its past, engaging in a dialogue with its former versions. Although the merger of the instantaneous with the bypast allows for the creation of a masterpiece only when the artist "goes beyond what has been done or known and makes something on his own" (Hemingway, *Death* 98), bull fighting appears as an internally dialogic form of art. Taking the perspective proposed by Hemingway and perceiving the bull fight purely as a work of art, it can be argued that its complicated tissue consisting of precise gestures and dynamic movements, which altogether construct a highly expressive spectacle with a vast body of abstract, symbolic meaning hidden beyond its discernible structure, becomes a peculiar form of a non-verbal text of art or, if broader contextualized, culture.

However, contrary to other forms of artistic expression, the bull fight as a text of art can be read only instantaneously, as its reception needs to be simultaneous to the process of its creation. And if, according to Derridean perspective of trance, writing should be perceived as a form of a continuous absence either of the referent or of the one who communicates (Derrida, *Acts* 102), then the bull fight can be viewed in the categories of presence, instantaneity, and simultaneity, since it requires the matador, the bull and the audience to be embraced by the same space-time framework of the spectacle.

Furthermore, the bull fight seems to be closer to the dynamic, living act of speech characterized by immediacy, than actually to writing. As a form that appears always "when Nature, as self-proximity, comes to be forbidden or interrupted, when speech fails to protect presence," writing becomes an artificially created dimension of both human thought and the reality it tries to embrace and convey for an inevitably absent addressee (Derrida, *that dangerous supplement* 249). Moreover, being a system

of artificially created signs that become an unnatural imitation of speech, a simulacrum of an act of immediate presence that unfolds before its participants, writing does not only entail a peculiar sense of retardation in relation to the natural, lively speech act but also a certain form of detachment from the world it signifies in an abstract, symbolic manner (Derrida, *that dangerous supplement* 249). In this way, writing allows only for creating a reality of references, a mere representation of thoughts and the true essence of speech that both lose lots of their original meaning in the process of encapsulating them in writing. Writing, Derrida argues, "is a violence done to the natural destiny of the language," a treacherous, but inevitable and necessary form of linking human thought with the reality it struggles to express in the face of an imminent absence, that would otherwise inhibit the act of communication (*that dangerous supplement* 249).

How can thus Hemingway re-construct the sense of the instantaneous presence of the bull fight in a form of expression into which absence seems to be inherently inscribed? As a genuine aficionado, Hemingway as an author gives ground to Hemingway as a narrator, a guide who introduces the reader into Spanish corrida by means of a hybrid narration, that unfolds before the reader-viewer gradually, in all its complexity and internal diversification. "Prose is architecture, not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over," states Hemingway in chapter sixteen of *Death in the Afternoon* (182), emphasizing the primacy of a clear and well-planned composition and minimalist style over superfluous verbosity that leaves no space for the reader's autonomy and active involvement in the process of meaning creation. And indeed, narration in *Death in the Afternoon*, complex but at the same time surprisingly transparent in its carnivalistic hybridity, resembles more of a progressive architecture of a well designed form, than an explicit description of the phenomenon in focus. This architectonic approach towards the non-standard narration on the bull fight, a narration supposed to become a bull fight itself, becomes the writer's remedy for "the inability of language to state reality, recall feeling, replicate (or even approach) experience," which Hemingway first most vividly explored in *The Sun Also Rises* (Berman 76).

The peculiar infertility of language as well as the need for instantaneity and simultaneity allow Hemingway to reach beyond the linguistic and the textual. In order to preserve the dynamic nature of the bull fight, to reconstruct its gradual evolution towards its final fulfillment, an act of self-annihilation, to make the reader become a viewer, Hemingway interweaves the descriptive tissue of the text with the visuality of photographs, images skillfully drawn with words with almost mathematical precision, Spanish culture expressed most genuinely by the use of idiom explained thoroughly in the glossary, portraits of matadors presented as if they were captured in motion, fragments of fiction and criticism, and, perhaps most interestingly, dialogues with the Old lady. This makes *Death in the Afternoon* become not only an internally varied, experimental narration but also makes it overcome the obvious boundaries of the text. Bringing so many diversified elements to the work's both compositional and semantic structure, Hemingway creates a more inclusive imaginative scheme, a complex net of interconnections, that give rise to an almost indefinite number of cross-textual influences. *Death in the Afternoon*, although complete, remains still open; open for new meanings which are yet to come to the text with the reader and their individualized perspective, open for the broadly understood Other from outside of the text, open for

further transfiguration and change: "I know things change now and I do not care. It's all been changed for me. Let it all change. We'll all be gone before it's changed too much and if no deluge comes when we are gone it still will rain in summer in the north and hawks will nest in the Cathedral at Santiago and in la Granja…. We've seen it all go and we'll watch it go again (261). Hemingway's observations on the inevitable change of everything he experienced, explored, and managed to re-construct meticulously by means of an experimental narration can be extended to his creation. Eluding the author's control and starting to function autonomously within a complex net of interdependencies. Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, despite its clear-cut compositional framework, becomes as supervening as the bull fight itself. Its meaning, driven by the dynamics of intertextual relationships appears as fluid and malleable rather than stable and pre-constructed.

As it initiates interactions within the complex network of interconnections, the process of meaning deciphering simultaneously becomes the process of meaning creation. However, the text's dynamism stems not only from its relationship to the meaningful phenomena external to it. Juxtaposing Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and Kristeva's notion of intertextuality with Genette's idea of paratext allows for obtaining a more comprehensive view on a text as a dialogic form which interacts not only with the peripheral or extraneous but also appears as an internally dynamic structure consisting of elements that remain in a constant dialogue.

As Bredendick explains, peritexts are "any and all texts, inside and outside the covers of the book, that present, explain, situate, contextualize, illustrate, comment on, and classify the work for the reader" (205). Taking into consideration their linkage with the major text, paratexts can be divided into epitexts and peritexts. Epitext is any form of text which, although does not constitute a material part of the text in focus, is semantically or thematically related to it. As for the peritext, its relatedness to the major text is similar as in the case of epitexts, but contrary to them, paratexts constitute an integral part of the book.

As Bredendick further notices, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* does not fall into any of the established literary conventions (205). With its manifold structure and internal diversification in terms of themes explored and styles applied, the book appears as fluid in terms of genre. Thus, since its multidimensionality rejects the idea of genre perceived as a rigid concept, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* cannot be equivocally categorized as fiction or non-fiction writing, journalistic account or a novel, but needs to be perceived as a text constructed along a continuum of various genres, among which Bredendick enumerates a manual on bull fighting, a memoir and a travel book, all of which flow smoothly one into another (206). Although such diversification in terms of genre within one text makes it acquire internal dynamism, it may be problematic for the reader. As the meaning is to be deciphered not only from the semantic layer of the text but also from its formal appearance, layout, and applied writing techniques, the recipient of the literary work may find it difficult to choose a reading strategy suitable for a particular type of text (Bredendick 206).

To facilitate the process of deciphering the text's meaning Hemingway provides the reader with a number of paratexts, which contextualize his work and make it, to some extent, self explicable. Twenty chapters on bull fighting are followed by other

forms such as the glossary explaining the terms denoting the most important aspects of Spanish corrida, a description of various people's reactions to bull fighting, evaluation of Sidney Franklin as an American matador, and the "Bibliographical Note." These, due to their autonomous character, explicatory nature and the form distinct from that according to which the author shaped the chapters making them become a thematic and stylistic continuum, may be treated as a superstructure, which contextualizes the ideas discussed in the major body of the text. However, it is important to notice that without the aforementioned additional elements the twenty chapters of *Death in the Afternoon* still constitute a stylistically and thematically coherent whole.

The list of epitexts, however, would not be complete without mentioning eighty-one photographs with captions. According to Bredendick, their major aim is to illustrate the most important aspects of bull fighting (222). However, perceiving the carefully selected photographs only as an *illustration* of the text's content would mean that the images, instead of constituting an inherent part of Hemingway's work, play a supplementary role within the text's structure, being only a subsidiary element, an addition to the book. Assuming that the notion of the text can be extended from written and purely linguistic forms of expression to more abstract, non-linguistic, or even impermanent carriers of meaning, the photographs can be perceived as space within the text where the experimental narration on the bull fight undergoes a rapid transfiguration from a verbal into a visual mode of expression.

In the view of the above discussed, the extrinsic layer of Hemingway's work appears as internally coherent in its textual dimension, but at the same time remains internally heterogeneous and varied. Consequently, Hemingway's narration in *Death in the Afternoon* resembles a journey across Spain; although it follows consistently one route, the dynamism of motion opens diversified landscapes that flow rapidly one into another. In a like manner, Hemingway's narration, despite running along the same thematic axis, becomes a subject to stylistic variations as the story unfolds. Aware of the obvious limitations of language Hemingway weaves the purely linguistic tissue of the text with photographs, that narrate these parts of the story line that cannot be fully expressed by words:

> I will not describe the different ways of using the cape, the gaonera, the mariposa, the farol, or the older ways, the cambios de rodillas, the galleos, the serpentinas in the detail I have described the veronica, because a description in words cannot enable you to identify them before you have seen them as a photograph can. Instantaneous photography has been brought to such a point that it is silly to try and describe something, that can be conveyed instantly, as well as studied, in a picture. (169)

Discussing the dynamism and complexity of particular maneuvers in the bull fight Hemingway emphasizes that the photographs in *Death in the Afternoon* are not to be perceived as complementary and additional to the linguistic layer of the text. Instead, they should be treated as one of the narration's dimensions, which refers directly to the nature of the bull fight characterized by visuality and instantaneity of both expression and reception. Becoming an integral part of the work's compositional and narrative structure, carefully chosen and described according to Hemingway's Iceberg Theory,

the photographs contribute to the maximal condensation of meaning, adding a vast body of information in a very economic form.

According to Brand, closely analyzed and treated as an elaboration on the text, the photographs "can indicate the sequence, speed, or rhythm of the action" (167). As the verbal enters into a relationship with the visual, Hemingway creates a new space for dialogue and interaction between two different forms of artistic expression. This unique blend makes the visual an integral part of the textual, broadening formerly established boundaries of the text as such. Brand suggests that *Death in the Afternoon*, with its intricate net of interconnections between the verbal and the pictorial "is not a guide on how to fight a bull; it is, rather, a guide on how to look at the bull and at the bull fighter who is fighting him" (169). This makes the reader instantaneously become a viewer of the spectacle reconstructed by the use of diversified means of expression.

Discussing the role of photographs in the non-standard, hybrid narration of *Death in the Afternoon*, it is worth referring to Higgins's considerations regarding the central position of photography in modern art: "photography always has a found element, and making a photograph is at least as much a matter of perceiving it in the *material* as of taking it from its old context and, by means of an apparatus, producing a picture from it. One enters into a dialectical relationship with the materials at hand, what I have been calling the *material*" (14). Exploring the character of the material within the abstract dimension of modern art, Higgins distinguishes three phases of saving the visible on the photograph: perception, extraction, and conversion. All of the foregoing stages require the artist to enter into a dialogue with the material, which, in the process of extracting it from the amalgam of other elements it remains in a relationship with, becomes subject to de-construction. The final stage in turn, is aimed at re-construction of the element in focus in a new context. This allows for accentuating its formerly subordinate features and, consequently, enriching it with new meanings. In this perspective, photographs in *Death in the Afternoon*, become not only an inherent part of the narration, a rapid transition from one mode of expression into another but also appear as a crucial mean in both de- and re-construction process.

The visual, camera-like perspective finds its reflection also in the purely linguistic layer of the text. According to Trodd, Hemingway's detailed, precise, almost mathematical representations of the bull fighter's movements, create a peculiar "moving picture aesthetics" that "rendered in prose a series of filmic wide-shots and close-ups" (217). As a result, prose enters in a dialogue with the pictorial, saturating itself with the visuality of meanings. Hemingway's "multi-focal camera-eye" technique is perhaps most pronounced in the fragments re-enacting the matador's manoeuvres, of which an example can be found in chapter seventeen of *Death in the Afternoon*, in which the author discusses the placing of the banderillas:

> Bulls that take up a querencia against the barrera cannot be banderilla-ed by the use of the quarter or the half-circle method of running across the line of the bull's charge, placing the sticks as the man's line of movement crosses that of the bull's, since the man after passing the horn would be caught between the bull and the barrier, and such bulls must be banderilla-ed on this bias or al sesgo. In this manoeuvre the bull being against the barrera one man should be in the passageway with a cape to attract the bull's attention until the man who is to

> place the banderillas starts at an angle, from further down the barrera, plants his banderillas as he passes the bull's head, without stopping, as best he can. (187)

The accumulation of words organizing space in a geometrical manner, indicating the lines of movement, locating the elements within space, and specifying their position with mathematical precision, serves general space geometrization. The scene, once composed along clear cut lines and angles, appears to freeze in time as if the dynamism of both the bull's and the matador's motion was slowly retarded and stopped at the most appropriate moment so that all the important details are fully pronounced.

However, apart from approaching space in an analytical manner, as a reality composed of clear-cut, self-contained, almost palpable elements that, highly visible and sharply contoured, can be easily extracted from the background and delineated, Hemingway introduces into the scene the sense of motion. Although retarded, or in some cases finally stopped for the reader to create an opportunity for closer inspection of the scene, the dynamics of motion in Hemingway's representation of the bull fight introduces the sense of spatiality. The image, otherwise two-dimensional and flat, is given a new dimension that opens up with the matador's or the bull's movement within the arena. The impression of three- instead of just two-dimensionality of the scene is thus obtained by means of the author reconstructing the sense of motion, led along invisible, geometrized lines. This approach towards space and movement construction in *Death in the Afternoon* casts a new light on Hemingway's use of the photographs that should be read as an excerpt from the real, three-dimensional scene, not just a flat representation of it. As a result, the reader is invited to step into the multidimensional scene stopped, or retarded in motion, with the narrator explaining the technicality of *suertes* with an engagement of a genuine aficionado.

Hemingway with his "camera eye" (Trodd 209) again makes the reader simultaneously become the viewer. Since the bull fight is first to be enacted by a matador and a bull, and watched by aficionados, it appears as both a theatric and visual form of artistic expression, that can be approached and analyzed similarly to any other piece of visual art. Nevertheless, it can be argued that while the bull fight is dynamic, the photograph is static and presents only a clipping, an excerpt from a complex and dynamic motion sequence in time. However, this dynamism is retained due to the juxtaposition of the pictorial and the descriptive, as the flow of the words superimposed on the photographs allows for reenacting or constructing anew the real experience of action and movement.

However, these are not only the photographs that can be treated as a paratextual and dialogic element in Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*. The twentieth chapter of the book, a closure to the previous nineteen chapters, although shares with them the same stylistic and compositional qualities, bears features of a paratext, as it points out to a vast body of nonexistent text on bull fighting, Spanish culture, and Spain in general. Referring to his private experience and real events, Hemingway underlines the "empty spaces" in the text, purposefully created deficiencies, suggesting that the book is not fully exhaustive, as there is still lots to be said on the topic explored:

> If I could have made this enough of a book it would have had everything in it. It would have had the change if you leave the green country behind at Alsasua.…

> It should make clear the change in the country as you come down out of the mountains and into Valencia in the dusk on the train holding a rooster for a women who was bringing it to her sister…. It should have the smell of burnt powder and the smoke and the flash and the noise of the traca going off through the green leaves of the trees…. This is not enough of a book…. If it were more of a book it would make the last night of feria…. It should, if it had Spain in it, have the tall thin boy, eight feet six inches; he advertised the Empastre show before they came to town…. What else should it contain about a country you love very much? (254-261)

The phrases indicating unexploited opportunities interweave and interact with the narrator's memories, setting the internal rhythm of the last chapter. Since all the events and places sketched by the author in the twentieth chapter exist only in the dimension of the writer's memory, Hemingway paradoxically refers the reader to another paratext, composed rather of foregone occurrences than of words. Elements of a larger mosaic of memory, flashes from the past, presented in the twentieth chapter resemble the light going through the incisions and apertures in the rough structure of the text, suggesting the existence of a foregone world, a world of people, events, and places that could be read like a text. However, transformed into memories, it remains accessible mostly for the narrator and those who co-experienced it. The scraps of the past spread throughout the final chapter, the only pronounced fragments of Hemingway's memories from Spain, act as a tip of the iceberg, leaving the vast body of hidden meaning underneath the surface of the narration.

As Hemingway reveals in a letter Gingrich, an editor of "Esquire" (1911-1945) and a collector of the writer's first editions, the twentieth chapter of *Death in the Afternoon* "is what the book is about but nobody seems to notice that" (Baker 378). "They just think it is a catalogue of things that were omitted. How would they like them to be put in? Framed in pictures or with a map?" (Baker 378) complains the author further in the letter, underlining that the real power of his narration on the bull fight and, less directly, on Spain, paradoxically lies in its alleged shortages: empty spaces, understatements, messages hidden underneath the perceptible surface of the text, waiting to be discovered and explored by a perceptive reader.

All the markers of unexplored possibilities from the twentieth chapter become an invitation for the audience to active participation in filling the empty spaces of the text with new meanings. This, in turn, creates a ground for the author-reader dialogue, as the recipient, being given by the author both the autonomy and space to interact with the text in their own, individual way, becomes at the same time an active creator of the text's content.

Apart from the dialogue between the author and the reader, the audience and the text, between the pictorial and the verbal, the text's genres and its composing parts, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* undertakes a brisk dialogue with Spain, perceived by the author as an amalgam of people, genuine and authentic in their being, mesmerizing places immersed in unique landscapes and climate, and riveting culture to explore and dive in, rather than just a country to visit. Spain, reconstructed in the book as the cultural Other within the familiar (Europe) becomes a party in a dialogue, a dialogue between the cultures. Its elements interact with Hemingway's western

perspective, enriched with or even simultaneously doubled by his aficionado approach towards the bull fight. Although rebuilding it from the perspective of a spectator coming from the outside, by immersing himself fully into culturally different phenomena, Hemingway positions himself as an aficionado, an individual who managed to dive deeply into the foreign and the strange, understand the abstract truths lying at the roots of the spectacle, and, thus, is able to communicate them to the public.

As *Death in the Afternoon* was "intended as an introduction to the modern Spanish bull fight and attempts to explain that spectacle both emotionally and practically," written because "there was no book which did this in Spanish or in English" (Hemingway, *Death* 359) it can be argued that the text becomes a multi-layered translation of the bull fight, Spanish culture, and Spain in general for a (western) reader. The translational character of the work assumes interaction amongst the translated, translation, the translator, and the reader, for whom the transcription process is performed. Trying to discuss, circumscribe and, most importantly, re-construct the bull fight in words, Hemingway transposes movement and dynamism into a less tactile and thus, more abstract, linguistic dimension. In the process of transferring a non-verbal means of expression, a kind of performative and at the same time visual art, into a literary work, the writer aims at preserving the unique character of the spectacle. Sensitive to all the shades of meaning, focused on the economy of language, instead of explaining descriptively Spanish bull fight terms, Hemingway injects them into the text's tissue. This gives rise to a peculiar literary-technical discourse that allows for achieving semantic precision, and, correspondingly, creating a deeply genuine narration on the bull fight, rooted in the nature of the spectacle, coming from within it rather than from the outside.

In the view of the foregoing, it can be stated that Hemingway's attempt to make *Death in the Afternoon* become not only a book on the bull fight, but the bull fight "its-self" requires a multi-stage translation of the spectacle, with some of its phases happening simultaneously at different levels of transposition. Firstly the spectacle, firmly grounded in the performative and visual dimension, needs to be transposed onto a carnivalistic, multifocal narration that exploits various means and styles of expression. At the same time, the writer's subjective perception of the bull fight, both in its wholeness and in details, needs to be translated into a more analytic, technical account of events. Simultaneously, the spectacle, embedded in Spanish culture and language undergoes transposition into a new socio-cultural context, according to Hemingway's wish to make it known "in English" (with English denoting not only language but a broader a scope of both cultural and social phenomena that manifest the Western way of being) (Baker 236). Such a process of translation and transposition assumes transgression of the elements into contexts formerly foreign to them, bringing new meanings to the surface of the text.

"No. It is not enough of a book, but still there were a few things to be said. There were a few practical things to be said"—admits Hemingway (*Death* 261) in the last lines of the twentieth chapter. The book, although abundant in detailed, technical explanations on the bull fight, interwoven with elements of literary criticism, discussions on visual art, fragments of fiction, and carefully selected photographs that carry these parts of narration that cannot be expressed in words, is still open. And it

is perhaps its openness, the sense of incompleteness despite its complexity, its lack of a closing framework which would set its boundaries, that predestines the book for a continuous, never-ending *becoming,* transfiguration, and change. All the seemingly empty spaces in the text's structure, the fissures and crevices become a chance of an ongoing dialogue, a meeting between the author and the reader, a meeting between cultures, a space for interaction between literary genres, writing styles, and means of artistic expression. Always ready to acquire new meanings, internally carnivalistic, brisk, and diversified, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* appears as a text which escapes any attempt to unequivocally define it. Therefore, anyone trying to write something about the text that after decades remains still fresh and open can only repeat Hemingway's words from the last, but not the closing chapter: there were a few things to be said, a few practical things to be said.

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Tadeusz Pióro

"Where Children Play Among the Ruins of the Language": *A Nest of Ninnies* and the Literary Legacies of New York Dada

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Abstract: Narration and dialogues in *A Nest of Ninnies* rely largely on linguistic equivalents of what are known as "found objects," or "ready mades," in the visual arts. This endows Ashbery's and Schuyler's novel with a sense of humor much like the one developed by the New York Dadaists in the years 1916-1920. Because of the high incidence of camp humor in the novel, affinities between it, as well as the camp aesthetic more generally, and the New York version of Dada, may be seen. Yet the principal claim of the article is that this novel is part of the literary legacy of New York Dada, a movement significantly different from the original Dada of Zurich.

Keywords: Dadaism, New York Dada, ready mades, found objects, Marcel Duchamp, John Ashbery, James Schuyler, Ronald Firbank, camp

The "Nest" in question is, of course, the 1968 novel by John Ashbery and James Schuyler, and not its English namesake of 1608. W.H. Auden presciently wrote that it was "destined to become a minor classic,"[1] even though spotting "a minor classic" upon its publication usually means placing private taste ahead of, and above, forseeable critical consensus. While I have no doubts about Auden's rightness in this case, I suspect the reasons for his judgment had more to do with his admiration of Ronald Firbank's writing, an admiration he shared with the novel's authors, than with what I will refer to in this paper as "the spirit of Dada," or, more specifically, "of New York Dada." This artistic and literary movement was so named only after it had, by and large, come to an end, in or around 1921. Writing from New York to Tristan Tzara, Man Ray argued with tongue in cheek that "dada cannot live in New York. All New York is dada, and will not tolerate a rival,—will not notice dada… so dada in New York must remain a secret" (Naumann 143). Ray wrote this letter on June 8, 1921; in April of that year, the first, and only, publication to officially represent the Dada movement of America was printed. Edited and designed by Ray and Marcel Duchamp, it was titled *New York Dada* and included a mock authorization from Tzara himself: "Dada belongs to everybody. Like the idea of God or of the toothbrush" (Tomkins 232-3).[2]

But by 1921, the most important work of the New York Dadaists had already been done, and while much of it falls under the rubric of the visual arts and the kind of performances which would later give rise to happenings and performance art, the literary "component" holds its own and has proved influential for future generations, albeit not in the global sense of Duchamp's or Ray's breakthrough achievements. William Carlos

1 W.H. Auden, excerpt from the *New York Times Book Review*, quoted in the blurb to the Paladin edition of *A Nest of Ninnies*, 1990.

2 Man Ray's photograph of Duchamp in drag (as Rose Selavy) was on the cover, and the four-page sheet included a poem by the Baroness Elsa von Freitag-Loringhoven, accompanied by two photographs of her nude torso.

Williams, Mina Loy, Wallace Stevens, Bob Brown, Maxwell Bodenheim, Elsa von Freitag Loringhoven, Alfred Kreymborg and Arthur Cravan are the most recognizable, and in some cases canonical, poets associated with New York Dada. Among those born two or three generations later I would certainly include John Ashbery and James Schuyler. They co-authored *A Nest of Ninnies* over a period of seventeen years, but the main reason it took them so long to write a 200-page novel of manners was Ashbery's ten year residence in France. In his letters to Ashbery from the time of his stay abroad, Schuyler asks as least twice whether they might continue writing the book in some "virtual" way, for instance, if one of them wrote a paragraph and mailed it to the other, to which he would respond with another paragraph, and so forth. Ashbery's replies to these suggestions have not been published, but in an introductory note to the Dalkey Archive edition of *A Nest*, he admits that this method of writing was not successful, and they soon gave it up. This is significant insofar as we wish to regard *A Nest of Ninnies* as a collaborative work "performed live," with all the immediacy of call and response this entails.[3] Schuyler refers to one aspect of this collaborative process in a letter to Ron and Pat Padgett of January 16, 1966: "It takes us an awfully long time to get anything done, since something like: 'Mr. Kelso is out of town this week. He's at the Mills' can mysteriously break us up for a good deal of our writing time" (Schuyler 159).

Mr. Kelso is the star salesman for an unnamed company in which Marshall Bush, another of the novel's principal characters, holds a managerial position. His sister, Alice Bush, leads the intertextual dance from the very first sentence of *A Nest*: "Alice was tired" (9), just like Lewis Carroll's Alice in the opening sentence of *Alice in Wonderland*. The Bushes live in upstate New York and spend much time with their neighbors, Doctor and Mrs. Bridgewater, and especially with their college age children, Fabia and Victor. When Fabia lands an entry-level job at Marshall's company, Mr. Kelso and his mother join the cast of what will soon turn out to be a jolly company of globetrotting gourmands, composed of the Bushes and Bridgewaters, as well as Mrs. Greeley and her son, Abel, who also live in Kelton, NY. Jointly and severally, they go on vacation to Florida, where they meet a French traveller in luxury goods named Claire Tosti, and when they follow her to France, she introduces them to her sister, Nadia. From Paris, they go south, as before jointly and severally, and find themselves as far away as Sicily, with Rome on the way there and the French Midi on the way back, having meanwhile made friends with several Italian men. When they return to New York, it is made known that Alice has secretly married one of these men, named Giorgio Grossblatt, and that Victor has secretly married Nadia. Alice and Giorgio open an Italian restaurant in Kelton, which turns out to be roaring success. Fabia remains single, even though she seems to be trying hard not to, and enough hints are dropped

3 Mark SIlverberg has catalogued, or at least listed, the collaborations of the New York School poets done within their own circle, as well as those involving people from outside of it. Four of the former were undertaken by John Ashbery with James Schuyler; Ashbery's other collaborative works, in the field of literary and visual art alone, number fourteen. In the same field, Schuyler's also stand at fourteen (Silverberg 211-14; 245-47). The tradition of creating collaborative works in avant-garde circles, including both European and American Dada, was one of the most important forms of contesting the myth of the individual genius as the only genuine source of creative inspiration. Perhaps more to the point, it was also a good way to have fun together.

for readers in the know to peg Marshall as gay. Claire Tosti's imminent marriage to Irving Kelso is announced in the final, operatic chapter of the novel. Nothing ever "happens," and even the occasional blizzard, conflagration or power failure cannot disrupt the steady flow of martinis.

It is not what the characters do, however, but the ways in which they speak, that matters most in this book, although the narrators' passages are no less important to the panorama of linguistic and stylistic registers it displays. Several times in the course of the novel, one of the characters makes a statement that seems to express this authorial approach. For instance, when Paul Lambert, Victor's French pen pal, hears a song on a car radio, he is asked by his American companions to translate the lyrics: "It tells about a girl—a woman—who waits on the mole for her sailor. When he comes back, first she is going to beat him up, then she is going to show him a good time." "Well—does she?" Dotty asked. Paul shrugged. "It is of no importance. The entertainment lies in the low-class argot of her expressions" (108). As several critics have observed, the language of the novel is its principal "focalizer," even though—and this is the paradox I will try to unravel—this language seems to be as incidental as the novel's sketchy emplotment and cartoonish characterization.[4] Or, I might also suggest, as Duchamp's ready mades. To make this connection clearer, and perhaps more plausible as well, a brief account of the differences between New York and Zurich Dada should be of help.

In his introductory essay to the catalogue of *Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York*, an exhibition held at the Whitney Museum in 1996-97, Francis Naumann points to the humorous intent of many works by the New York Dada artists. The humor of the original Zurich Dadaists was quite different, and while Naumann does not delve into the reasons for this, I think that the historical circumstances in which each of these movements was born have at least as much to do with their various approaches to humor as any personal traits or inclinations. Richard Huelsenbeck and Hans Richter served in the German army before coming to Zurich in 1916, and Hugo Ball, although physically unfit for service, or, according to other sources, a conscientious objector, visited a wounded friend near the front lines and could see the results of trench warfare and the new technologies of killing. A strong, originating impulse of Zurich Dada was the shock this kind of warfare caused millions of soldiers, including Richter and Huelsenbeck as well as all those educated and sensitive young men who believed they were fighting in the name of ideals they had been conditioned to accept as axioms. Their disenchanment, to put it mildly, led to the total critique of all ideals and axioms, which, by and large, constituted Zurich Dada. Their humor was "noir" humor, easy to mistake for abysmal nihilism. The world had to be built anew, so everything in the present world had to be ridiculed to death and destruction.[5]

4 In his monographic study of James Schuyler, *Nowy Jork i okolice*, Mikołaj Wiśniewski provides a useful account of the critical reception of *A Nest of Ninnies* (Wiśniewski 258-62).

5 Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp's biographer, presents this aspect of Zurich Dada is a slightly different way: "The original Dadaists were as dedicated to their nihilism as any band of fanatical world savers.… Except for Arp, not one of them showed any evidence of a sense of humor, and the absence of this element—inimical to fanaticism of all kinds—was a crucial factor in Dada's explosive postwar growth and its equally rapid disintegration. In New York, on the other hand, things were a bit more lighthearted. Even such natural Dada personalities as Arthur Cravan and Elsa von Freitag-Loringhoven did not take their antiserious activities too seriously, and the

The New York Dadaists, by comparison, had a rather limited knowledge of the Great War, gained chiefly from newspaper reports and letters from friends or family who were somehow engaged in it (for instance, Wallace Stevens' sister, who volunteered for the Red Cross and was killed by an exploding shell in Belgium). Knowing about the horrors was not the same as having witnessed them. However acute the New York Dadaists' cultural and social critique may have been, it remained a far cry from the total rejection enacted by their Zurich "comrades in arms." In a speech delivered to the Societé Anonyme, an artists' organization founded by Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and Katherine Dreier in 1920, the poet Marsden Hartley insisted that "Life is cause for riotous and healthy laughter, and to laugh at oneself in conjunction with the rest of the world, at one's own tragic vagaries, concerning the things one cannot name or touch, or comprehend, is the best anodyne I can conjure in my mind for the irrelevant pains we take to impress ourselves and the world with the importance of anything more than the brilliant excitation of the moment.… We shall learn through dadaism that art is a witty and entertaining pastime" (Naumann 17).

Naumann argues that the "essential characteristics of New York Dada find their roots in a specifically American form of humor" (17), but is quick to add that the French members of this coterie relied on their own, characteristically Gallic, form of humor in constructing their works. Naumann also quotes Mark Twain's distinction between the two: according to Twain, American stories are humorous on account of their pacing, while French stories are witty. In other words, the French short-circuit the logical connections between cause and effect, while Americans draw them out to expose, bit by bit, some kind of fallacy. In the visual arts, Naumann contends, Man Ray's 1917 assembly *New York* is characteristic of American humor, and Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* of the French. Naming Ray's *New York* as an example of American humor—which, according to a scholarly study Nauman quotes, is "consciously anti-intellectual… prone to exaggeration… makes fun of minorities" (Naumann 19)—might seem a little forced, but *Large Glass* certainly displays wit. Both strategies, however, the French and the American, have their place in Ashbery's and Schuyler's *A Nest of Ninnies*. In their case, the various "found objects" used by the Dadaists are linguistic, and could be roughly classed as crypto-quotations or paraphrases from a broad spectrum of literary works (from Trollope, Dickens or Austen to pulp fiction, as well as from a variety of poems), mid-century radio soap operas (Karin Hoffmnan, Ashbery's biographer, singles out *Vic and Sade* as his favorite),[6] and from the ways in which their parents and neighbors and friends spoke when the two poets were growing up in the thirties and forties. Of course, this does not exhaust the list of their inspirations. Yet the point of my comparison of Ashbery's and Schuyler's *objets trouvés* with the found objects of visual artists does not lie in the fortuitous recognition of potentially useful materials, but in the act or gesture performed by using them.

Institutionalized art, along with the economic and social results and side-effects of its institutionalization, was a frequent target of Dada critiques, which eventually led to the rise of the "Neo-avant-garde" and its own, fated institutionalization. In his history of Dadaism, Hans Richter lashes out at the neo-avant-gardists, accusing them

brouhaha over *Fountain* was played out in a key of larky humor" (193).

6 Hoffman 36-7.

of making empty, formal gestures without any of the aesthetic and ideological impetus that characterized Dada, whether in Zurich, New York, or, with some reservations, Berlin and Paris. While he does not say this literally, he regards their work as career-oriented and institutionally bound.[7] I am not competent to judge the fairness of his attack, but I know of many cases which show that it misses the point, or at least an important point which, in an old-fashioned manner, I would call the freedom of the artist, especially the freedom to mean nothing in particular, even as critics sweat over endowing that artist's works with some kind of relevance.[8] It is precisely this kind of freedom that Ashbery and Schuyler exhibit, or flaunt, in their novel.

Or should we say: "novel"? To classify it in the simplest, most worn-out terms, we should probably call it a comedy of manners cum marriage novel. The classic marriage novel, however, most famously Jane Austen's, relies for its dramaturgy on the heroine's decision-making process and the incidents that complicate it. Once she reaches a decision, the novel ends, as if her life after marriage were not a suitable subject for polite fiction. None if this can be seen in *A Nest of Ninnies*: the marriages, except for Claire's to Irving, are announced post factum, are not controversial, and we see the newly-weds eagerly going about their business, or rather the businesses they start once their cohabitation begins. This suggests a Bildungsroman plot and an actual, rather than merely symbolic, integration into the middle-class world of family businesses, with its financial rewards and the promise of offspring they enable. But, differently than in the typical novel of growth, the characters who get married never rebel against the values of their parents or their social class. When there are disagreements, they concern the shape of someone's sunglasses, or the color scheme of a boutique. In that sense, *A Nest of Ninnies* may be called an idyll. Yet these disagreements, while chiefly of an aesthetic nature, are not "merely" aesthetic, since their performance relies on linguistic and cultural found objects, with all the ideological implications of such a practice discreetly making their presence known.

Some of the "Ninnies," as I shall from now on call the novel's characters in aggregate, are conscientious about "bettering" themselves culturally and intellectually. Fabia reads Proust, Alice reads Tolstoy and is a serious student of music, capable of naming the source of a little-known tune hummed by someone at a boring party. They both read art historical journals, and attempt to fit the knowledge gained therefrom into the practical advice offered by magazines devoted to home decor and related manifestations of good taste. The results of their efforts are rather grotesque, as the narrators at first take pains to imply, but later describe at length. Alice and Giorgio's

7 Richter 346-63.

8 In his polemic with Peter Bürger, Richard Murphy brings to light another aspect of artistic freedom: "the possibility of reconceptualizing social practice is itself predicated upon the privilege of attaining a certain independence from the real (rather than being merged with it) and upon a sense of *critical distance* from the object to be criticized. In other words, the possibility for criticism and social change appears to be predicated upon precisely the aesthetic autonomy which the avant-garde according to Bürger is supposed to overcome" (27). Bürger's theory of the avant-garde gave rise to many, well-founded polemical responses or rebuttals, but I cannot recall a single one which locates his initial error in taking the Dada imperative of integrating art with everyday life and forcing it into a Marxist critical matrix. That is the price one pays for taking Dada at its word.

Italian restaurant, located in a shopping mall in Kelton, seems to be faux-Tudor on the inside, and its business policy, as we might surmise, is to get the customers drunk long before they are served food. Fabia's brother Victor, who, along with Alice, unsuccessfully tried to open a curiosity shop early on in the story, starts an antique business with his wife Nadia and her sister Claire. Claire buys "antique" junk in New England and ships it to Paris, where the newlyweds are trying to kick-start a fashion for such kitschy bric-a-brac. Needless to say, both ventures turn out to be smash hits. Yet they both rely on a kind of cultural recycling, on "found objects" which are eventually (mis)placed in accordance with market logic. It is not unlikely that these couples' enterprises ironically thematize Ashbery's and Schuyler's cannabilization of the kinds of language on which commercial fiction relies for plot progression, as well as for expressing tensions or conflicts between characters. There are, however, no such conflicts, and no plot to speak of, in *A Nest of Ninnies*. These traditional components of a novel have been replaced by their simulacra, and not a little of the characters' chatter may be taken as a commentary on this substitution or displacement.

Let us now consider several samples of style from *A Nest of Ninnies* and some earlier works. The following sentences end Chapter IV of Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*: "The horses were put in—the driver mounted—the fat boy clambered up by his side—farewells were exchanged—and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again." And this is the final sentence of *A Nest of Ninnies*: "So it was that the cliff dwellers, after bidding their country cousins good night, moved off toward the parking area, while the latter bent their steps toward the partially rebuilt shopping plaza in the teeth of the freshening foehn" (191). (The "cliff dwellers" are those of the party who live in high-rise buildings in Manhattan). In many of the novels "we know best," chapters begin with a mention of the time of day and a brief description of the weather, and end on a parting or departure, if only to bed for the night. Ashbery and Schuyler follow this pattern in their novel, preserving a convention most likely established because of the serialization of novels in the nineteenth century. Yet there is something strange about an expression such as "bent their steps," made even more unconventional by the "freshening foehn," "in the teeth" of which their steps are bent. The language calls attention to itself rather loudly here, but its clamor is tempered by the fact that this is the last sentence of the novel, so readers' attention is naturally more focused on events than the style of their representation.[9]

Table talk pervades *A Nest of Ninnies*, unsurprisingly since the characters spend most of their time eating, drinking and talking "nineteen to the dozen." The following two excerpts should do justice to the general mode of their board-side intercourse. Marshall, his secretary Miss Burgoyne, her parents, Irving Kelso and Fabia Bridgewater are on their way to lunch somewhere in Manhattan.

9 This may also hold true for some opening sentences. Harry Mathews said so, referring to the first sentence of the narrator in his novel *Cigarettes*: "The gabled house loomed over us like a buzzard stuffed in mid flight" (3). Asked about the odd comparison, Mathews explained that in the opening sentences of a novel one "can get away" with all sorts of idiosyncrasies which would later draw too much attention (Mathews, In conversation with Tadeusz Pióro).

> 'I make it a rule never to cross against the light,' Mrs. Burgoyne said, stopping short at the curb.
>
> 'I'm afraid you'll get us all arrested, Mother,' Miss Burgoyne said, mystifyingly.
>
> 'The perils of the machine age, Fabia said. Despite these, however, the party was soon comfortably seated at one of the larger tables in Childs.
>
> 'Why don't we all have the oysters Rockefeller?' Marshall said.
>
> 'I don't see those on my menu,' Mrs. Burgoyne said.
>
> 'Mr. Bush was joking,' Miss Burgoyne said. 'The menu has the cheese fondue on toast tips I told you about,' she added. 'But I don't know if you'd like it.'
>
> ….
>
> 'I always wonder what men talk about at their lunches,' Miss Burgoyne said archly. The cheese fondue seemingly had gone to her head like wine. 'I suppose they talk about business,' she went on, 'but that isn't what they look like they're talking about.' She lapsed into a sudden silence. (23-4)

The next conversation takes place at a party at Irving Kelso's and his mother's apartment. Besides the Bushes, Bridgewaters and Claire Tosti, the Kelsos have invited the Turpins. Mr. Turpin used to be the French consul in Honolulu. The talk is of the Bridgewaters' planned visit to France which, according to the head of the family, should "broaden [his] children's horizons."

> 'Good,' Claire said. 'When you have mastered the Louvre, and other notable spots, you may proceed with the provinces.' To Victor she added, 'Should you come in the summer, you may have the use of my season pass to the Bains Deligny.'
>
> 'Is that a place to take a bath?' Victor asked.
>
> 'No, to swim—as the English say, to sea-bathe,' Mrs. Turpin said in kindly tones. 'This summer Mr. Turpin and I hope to be at my little farm. You must come and see the true country life. The very hogs are fed on chestnuts.'
>
> 'What else do you grow on your farm?' Alice asked.
>
> 'My wife merely owns the farm,' Mr. Turpin said. 'She does not dig and delve.'
>
> 'In the fall,' Mrs. Turpin said, her voice rising excitedly, 'when the chestnuts are ripe, hogs are driven up the hills. With sticks, by boys. Later, they are driven down again.'
>
> Though the others waited, this was the end of her tale. (74)

While both conversations seen to be absurdly inane, they are also funny or humorous in several ways, but not really at the expense of the characters involved, since their "ninnyhood" is already established by the time we reach these passages in the text. In the first excerpt, when Mrs. Burgoyne insists on obeying the rules of pedestrian traffic, her daughter "mystifyingly" claims that this might lead to their being arrested, intending perhaps that since no one else obeys them and crosses "against the light," they might be charged with blocking traffic. Or, to put it differently, that in Manhattan transgression is the norm. What kind of transgression is really on her mind may be gleaned from her final lines, which seem to come out of nowhere, but which may have something to do with the fact that she is lunching with her boss, whom she has observed

lunching with men, and it didn't look like business was what they were talking about. I take this to be a hint that she knows Marshall is gay, especially since she unexpectedly "lapses into silence," as if she were afraid that this casually mentioned topic might lead to an indiscretion. Then again, unconsciously, she might have been responding to a feeling that her mother had hopes she would make an advantageous match with Marshall, but that is probably a little more than needs to be assumed.

At the Kelsos' dinner party, Mrs. Turpin's enthusiasm over the chestnut-fed hogs reveals the force and extent of Ronald Firbank's influence on *A Nest of Ninnies*. Like Miss Burgoyne, she ends her "tale" abruptly, as if she thought it might be unwise to go on. Some readers might be at a loss to say what makes her voice rise "excitedly": the chestnuts, the hogs, the taste of their meat or just the quaint old country ways, while others would be quick to guess that the boys and their "sticks" are responsible. But apart from this rather discreet bawdiness, considerably toned down in comparison to Firbank's, it is "the very hogs" that bring to mind his use of the English language. Firbank wanted to make his writing sound odd, or queer, partly by using the camp banter of "queens," and partly by employing French syntactic structures, French word order in sentences, and literally translated idioms or ready-made phrases. Some, although not all of these strategies, may be seen in the following passage from *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, in which a royal dinner in the land of Pisuerga is described:

> the Queen of the Land of Dates… seemed to be lost in admiration of the Royal dinner-service of scarlet plates, that looked like pools of blood upon the cloth.
>
> 'What pleases me in your land,' she was expansively telling her host, 'is less your food than the china you serve it on; for with us you know there's none. And now,' she added, marvellously wafting a fork, 'I'm forever spoilt for shells.'
>
> King William was incredulous.
>
> 'With you no china?' he gasped.
>
> 'None, sir, none!'
>
> 'I could not be more astonished,' the King declared, 'if you had told me there were fleas at the Ritz,' a part of which assertion Lady Something, who was blandly listening, imperfectly chanced to hear.
>
> 'Who would credit it!' she breathed, turning to an attaché, a young man all white and penseroso, at her elbow.
>
> 'Credit what?'
>
> Lady Something raised a glass of frozen lemonade to her lips.
>
> 'Fleas,' she murmured, 'have been found at the Ritz.'
>
> '……!....?....! !' (Firbank 27-8)

Queen Thleeanouhee (for that is her name) seems to be disparaging the royal cuisine of Pisuerga while praising its presentation, or, in other words, expressing her preference for form over content. In her Land of Dates, content is everything, form does not exist: perhaps the excellence of the content makes it superfluous. Yet now, she admits, she is "forever spoilt for shells," meaning china in a literal sense, but, more importantly, form in its broader meanings, including, perhaps, the form of the novel as an attractive container for *n'importe quoi.* It does not matter much whether we assume the Land of Dates to be a public toilet, even though the interior design of such conveniences is

discussed with gravity by some of the leading matrons of Pisuerga, or whether the meat in the Land of Dates, even it comes from chestnut-fed hogs and is tenderized by boys with sticks, is superior to the meats of Pisuerga: it is the shock effect of scarlet plates upon a white cloth, on which meat of any kind is served, that makes the conversation perversely meaningful. A shock effect was also what Firbank tried to achieve through his (mis)use of English. The lines about the fleas in the Ritz can be adapted to fit any meaning we choose for the lines preceding, even though these fleas inaugurate a leitmotif which pops up throughout the novel for comic effect.

In the final, "climactic" chapter of *A Nest of Ninnies*, which the narrators call its "Walpurgisnacht," several new characters appear, the most important among them an English architect, Godfrey Mullion. Mullion has settled in Kelton, probably due to lack of metropolitan employment, and designed the interior of a pub called Sir Toby Belch, which Alice and Giorgio take over and remake into their own Osteria Trentino. They throw a grand party to celebrate its opening. In the course of the evening, Mullion discovers a fellow soul in Henry Scott, Alice's music teacher. Unisono, they recite from memory a passage from Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies,* and exchange views on Victorian fiction for adolescent boys, novels set in boarding schools, where the opportunities for homosexual experiences outnumber a pupil's chances to avoid them.[10] When the festivities come to an end, he is offered a lift home, but declines, saying that a walk through Kelton at midnight never fails to inspire him. Then he adds: "only a European can appreciate what goes on here—," at which point Fabia takes this for sexual innuendo, and quotes "The Tale of the Ancient Mariner" as if that part of Coleridge's poem referred to gay cruising: "and he stoppeth one of three." After this interruption, Mullion completes his sentence: "where children play among the ruins of the language" (188). Although this does not blunt Fabia's insinuation, Mullion's use of the definite article—"*the* language"—indicates a specific language, British English, perhaps in its Victorian or Edwardian phase of literary development. And since Ashbery and Schuyler, from the beginning of the novel to its blithe and winsome end, have been at play among the high and low and—this in particular—medium registers of this language, Mullion's remark casts them as children in the act of chanting, or just murmuring, "dada."

But be that as it may, the more important point of Mullion's remark comes with the word "ruins," which could be understood as the remains of an edifice or structure which has been broken to pieces, and all comers can pick and choose among them for their amusement, even as the past wholeness of that structure now reveals its transitory essence. Where everything once had its proper place, the very notion of a proper place seems to have lost its usefulness, and even its original purpose. In such an environment, "the language" no longer serves the aims of what Fredric Jameson termed "the will to style." The stability of the edifice of language made the will to style thinkable and performable, just as the relative stability of the definitions of fine art made possible the gradual institutionalization of post-Academic and early Modernist painting. Dada exploded these definitions and exposed their ideological implications. Its followers could play among the ruins, as long as they did not try to recreate the system Dada had set out to destroy.

10 For the likely sexual implications of this conversation, see Wiśniewski 261-65.

Duchamp's found objects are not creative art works, but objects of everyday use, intentionally misplaced and parodically endowed with the artist's signatures. The ready phrases and clichés of *A Nest of Ninnies* are also objects of everyday use, serving both practical communication and safely conventionalized literary creation. While this kind of writing lends itself easily to parody or pastiche, hardly anyone bothers to parody or pastiche such styles as are not driven by the "will to style," with sentences constructed out of ready-made phrases, along with ready-made plot lines and all the other elements of novelistic narrative familiar to the point of total predictability. Thus it is, finally, this kind of writing in which the "ruins of the language" are to be found and played with.

To conclude, two sentences from *A Nest of Ninnies*. Alice and Victor are sitting in a drugstore in Florida when Claire Tosti, whom they have not yet met, enters and orders a sandwich.

> '*Voulez-vous me passer le sel, s'il vous plait*,' Alice said to the woman.
> '*Comment?*' the expensively turned-out dish said in sincere bewilderment when she realized it was she who was addressed. (48)

The word "dish" is, *toutes proportions gardées*, like the moustache Duchamp placed under La Gioconda's nose. Here it means an attractive-looking person, although I believe that this usage was more common in gay, rather than straight, parlance. "To dish" also means to chatter or gossip and, again, I have encountered it only in reference to gay or campy banter. The presence of "dish" in an otherwise perfectly "well-behaved" sentence may be taken for a camp gesture, just as Mona Lisa's moustache and goatee. Duchamp's Dadaist joke, an integral part of which is its title, *L.H.O.O.Q*, shockingly brings in Mona Lisa's sexual appetite at the same time as it makes her into a transsexual (let us add, quite convincingly). His slightly later work, *Rose Selavy*, presents Duchamp himself in drag, but looking very much like the man he was. In each case, however, the Dada spirit is also the spirit of camp. By way of their camp jokes and stylizations, Ashbery and Schuyler expose the affinities and identifications of that aesthetic with New York Dada.

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The Paradigm of the Void: Louise Glück's Post-Confessional Deadlock

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Abstract: Awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, Louise Glück emerges as one of the major and most important American poets of the late 20th and early 21st century. What does this centrality tell us about the trajectory that the American poetry has traced since modernism? I attempt to offer a critical evaluation of Glück's post-confessional stylistic, developed between the debut *Firstborn* (1968) and *Averno* (2006), by setting it in contexts that are historical and, later in the paper, psycho-theological. First, I treat her formula as a double response—to the modernist legacy of T. S. Eliot and to the challenges of postmodernity. Faithful to Eliot's urge to transcend the biographical by connecting it with the transcendental, Glück resists the skeptical thesis of the demise of grand narratives, and writes in defiance of the postmodernist poetics of such poets as John Ashbery. Not undermining the biographical foundation of the lyric—the way Ashbery has done in his linguistic excess—she strives to make it paradigmatic. However, in this heroic search for a paradigm, Glück proposes a deeply ambiguous modification of Eliot that I characterize in psycho-theological terms. Following Agata Bielik-Robson's research, I characterize Glück's metaphysics as a form of Thanatic Lacanian Gnosticism. At this level we confront the costs of Glück's post-confessionalism: a serious impairment of all those aspects of the self that make it an embodied and gendered human being.

Keywords: Louise Glück, post-confessional lyric, psychoanalysis and poetry, post-secular studies, John Ashbery, Agata Bielik-Robson, psycho-theology, Gnosticism and poetry

One way to place a poet's work is to check other poets' ideas and apply their measuring devices. Delivering his Harvard series of Charles Eliot Norton Harvard lectures, John Ashbery resorted to a concept created by one of his own masters, W. H. Auden, who distinguished between major and minor authors. Both categories contain poets capable of producing works of brilliance, the significant difference between them regarding not the quality of single pieces but overall prolificacy (a major poet must write a lot), combination of thematic range and originality ("his poems must show a wide range of subject matter and treatment") originality of vision, and, finally, a consistency with which her poetic vision developed (Ashbery 7). Is Louise Glück a major poet?

Deflecting Ashbery's (and Auden's) template at this stage, let us start with a more modest notion and talk, instead, of the latest literary Nobel winner's importance. Here the answer is clearer—Louise Glück is an important poet; it is hard to think of a Nobel Prize winner in literature who would *not* be an important writer. However, as literary scholars we should be able to account for this importance beyond the poet's record of literary honors and awards—literary awards help but do not tell the whole story. For example, what light does Glück's prominent position throw on the main development lines of the post-WWII American poetry? What place does she occupy within the larger historical mapping of American poetry, since modernism till nowadays?

I see Glück's contribution as a staunch siding with one intellectual-aesthetic line with which American poetry responded to its central 20th century legacy—modernism. It is a legacy in the form of a task and ongoing question. Without going into a complex terrain related to the question of what kind of modernism a critic or historian has in mind, I would like to narrow things down to one basic problem that has fueled the originality of American poetry since the modernist aesthetic revolution: the place of the biographical subject in relation to the metaphysical order recognized or implicated in the position assumed by the subject emerging from poetry. It is on this terrain that Glück may be seen as one of the major and important voices, with her output presenting a distinctive and consistent development of a vision that presents a strong position—an argument comprising aesthetics, metaphysics and a theory of the subject—in the debate over the consequences of modernism.

In what follows, I will attempt to characterize this position through a critical discussion of Glück's post-confessional formula, developed within her creative trajectory, from the debut volume *Firstborn* (1968) to *Averno* (2006). I will first couch this formula within a historical context in which American poetry after High Modernism grappled with the questions of the biographical subject, its coherence, voice, and its metaphysics. As an artistic response to those fundamental questions—the possibility of relying on the biographical, representing subjecthood in language, the place of the subject in relation to the grand narratives ordering experience—Glück's creative output offers an austere statement. Hers is a deeply Eliotesque position of humbleness in the face of the unifying orders, modified so as to include a channel of communication with one's biographical past. Ingenuous as the formula is, it exacts heavy costs. Glück's poetry contains a psycho-theological element that greatly diminishes those spheres of the subject that make it a finite and embodied being: her austere recentering of the subject, combined with a prophetic elevation of voice, rely on a suppression of the bodily and affective dimensions responsible for gender difference.

The Historical Context: Siding with Eliot Against the End of Grand Narratives

According to David Orr, who offers an ambitious genealogy of the post-confessional 20th century lyric, finding its roots in Romanticism, the tendency to look to the personal, even the "confessional," constitutes the main line of the American lyric. Its strongest practitioners follow the "moral imperative of authenticity" (651) and, in its pursuit, do not hesitate to reach toward "the personal lyric centered in urgent autobiography" (651). From this point of view, the High Modernist preoccupation with depersonalized technique appears as a deviation, "in fact, an aberration from the American theme" (651-2).

Orr's approach is controversial and it clashes with that of another camp which we might call anti-confessional. Here we find sustained, prolific and powerfully argued insistence on the High Modernist indispensable influence on later American poetries. Such critics as Marjorie Perloff, Charles Altieri, or Charles Bernstein have seen American post-war and late 20th century poetry thriving and blooming under the combined influence of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot (at least in his

earlier period), particularly in the way those modernists paved the way to exploring diverse departures from the centrality of (auto)biography as poetic fuel. According to this postmodernist standpoint—rather continuous with modernism than forming an opposition to it—it is the poem's intertextual and linguistic event that displaces the coherent biographical subject, opening poetry to psychological flexibility and modulating the epistemological functions of the subject toward intersubjectivity and exchanges with variously postulated externality. In this model, the strictly autobiographical simply ceases to function as a source of (major) inspiration to the poet.[1]

What is more, even though Orr's thesis on the centrality of autobiography and the aberration of modernism is formulated in a piece praising the achievement of the post-confessional poets, some of them—and Louise Glück is certainly the case in point—would strongly object to the idea of High Modernism, particularly Eliot's unwillingness to seek authenticity in the autobiographical, being an "aberration." Leaving aside the problematic profiling of what is and is not "American" in poetry, Glück, although definitely an autobiographical poet, is nothing if not a disciple of Eliot's in the way she approaches autobiography as theme. For her, just as for her confessional predecessors, notably Lowell, Eliot remains a tremendous influence. Although his injunctions against the biographical—his argument from "Traditional and Individual Talent" about poetry being a depersonalized and humble dialectic and negotiation with tradition—stood as a barrier to what those poets wanted to do, their way to biography passes through Eliot's indispensable lesson in acquiring a formal and aesthetic distance to one's own lore of painful personal experience.

It is this very legacy that makes the term "confessional" so problematic in the critical approaches to Lowell, Plath, and Bishop. Proposed by M. L. Rosenthal in his discussion of Lowell's *Life Studies*, the term "confession," used in an appreciative argument, came loaded with a number of highly problematic formulations. Where Rosenthal speaks of *Life Studies* being "a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is honor-bound not to reveal" (117) he strikes a risky note. The problem resides in losing control over one's emotional distance, and thus precisely in sacrificing the technical and the aesthetic for the sake of emotional exhibitionism. The fact that later commentators of the confessional mode appreciated the problem and tried to clear the middle-generation poets of, indeed, the very term "confession," is owed to Eliot's continuing influence over their control of form. Adam Kirsch, to

1 Some of the most characteristic arguments within this camp, put forward by such critics as Marjorie Perloff, Michael Davidson, or Charles Bernstein, contain the explorations of the poetics of indeterminacy, opacity of the medium, and linguistic innovation. Here, the idiom of subjectively centered transparency is undermined for the sake of the greater engagement with the diversity of styles and sources. According to Bernstein, it is this innovation—in which convention is replaced by continuous inquiry into the forms of writing, a "poetics of poetics" (78)—that constitutes American originality, the Cavellian project of the Americas as "a process not yet complete" (72). Added to those linguistic approaches, I would also mention Charles Altieri's phenomenology of poetic value, derived from his analyses on how the decentering of the subject helps to reconceptualize subjectivity into a diverse network of stances where value is inseparable from the affective sphere, a position that Altieri developed writing on John Ashbery and Wallace Stevens.

give one example, has illustrated at length how the achievement of Lowell, Bishop, Berryman and Plath rests on their carefully crafted aesthetic distance to personal experience, their scornful rejection of "poetry as some kind of therapeutic public purge or excretion" (Sylvia Plath qtd. in Kirsch x). An additional disadvantage of the idea of confession is its entanglement with what Frank Bidart, praising Glück, banishes as "the circumstantial," meaning simply, material that is too closely related to the narrowly rendered existential situation of the poet (19).

The conundrums related to the poetic treatments of the personal are at the very heart of Louise Glück's poetic project. While she is relentlessly personal in her prolonged dwelling on the family story, she attempts to approach this layer through a whole series of aesthetic and intellectual gestures that are meant to distance her from the formula of "sincerity." Glück has been outspoken in her avoidance of "the sincere," and she has praised such poets as Milton or Keats precisely for acquiring the kind of aesthetic distance to personal anguish that she clearly learned from Eliot. When Glück speaks, in an essay tellingly titled "Against Sincerity," for the "artist task… involve[ing] the transformation of the actual to the true," and the whole operation rlying on "distinguishing truth from honesty or sincerity," she is sounding the unmistakable note of instruction she accepts from Eliot. This lesson becomes apparent when Glück claims that the exquisite skills of "inward listening" that she finds in Keats indeed allow the poet a much needed relief from the personal: "that it was his hardly concerned him. It was a life and therefore likely… to stand as a *paradigm*" (*Proofs and Theories* 35-36, emphasis mine). It is this search for the paradigmatic that shows her a follower of Eliot's central program of submitting the self to large organizing orders in their diverse formulas—mythological, psychological, religious or (post)-metaphysical.

Eliot's heritage can be variously interpreted. Some American poets and critics have sided with Pound and Eliot discovering in them the message on the technically informed dismantling of the self with a view to observing its dependence on language and discourse, thus subscribing to the general post-modern argument of the end of the grand narratives. While the representatives of this branch of the literary evolution are many, John Ashbery's name would certainly be among the central examples. Louise Glück's post-confessional formula becomes clearer to us once we spot her difference with Ashbery and the post-modernist camp precisely on the point of how she wants to read Eliot in relation to the fate of the grand narratives. On the view that she represents, whatever fragmentation of self or language the 20th century poet registers, she remains bound by Eliot as a moral teacher whose overall lesson has been aptly summarized by Charles Altieri in the following way: "the world of broken images has to be seen in relation to the symbolic and the transcendental orders that they represent, and that they violate" ("T. S. Eliot" 552). In Glück, not only do those orders *not* disappear—as the proponents of the end of the grand narratives would like to see the situation—but are reinforced by becoming the very structure of psychological life, which can now be extrapolated from the individual to the universal caught in a perspective that I am going to call psycho-theological.[2]

2 In employing this term, I am drawing on the post-secular research of Agata Bielik-Robson who defines this term as "a form of thinking that combines psychoanalysis and religion" (*Finitude* 150).

We can now understand why Glück was right in sensing that one of her deepest quarrels is with John Ashbery's gargantuan linguistic aesthetic in which the energies of intertextually unleashed and painterly correlated poetics of excess dismantles the biographical basis of utterance, while at the same time undertaking a monumental task of confronting the vacuum left after the demise of variously understood grand narratives. In her camouflaged polemic against Ashbery, poignantly titled "Ersatz Thought," Glück speaks of the techniques of avoiding continuous syntactic logic, one of them being "non-sequitur," which she (indirectly) identifies with Ashbery's poetics. As part of Ashbery's metaphysics—a way of engaging "the void" or "the infinite"—this technique is deemed by her to be aesthetically and intellectually ineffective. "Though the void is great, the effect of it being evoked is narrow," Glück says, also complaining that the poems of this stylistic simply implode under their size and tedium: "the problem for the reader is that the experience of reading a stanza is not different from the experience of reading forty stanzas" (*Originality* 30), giving us very little to "explore here" (*Originality* 25). But an even more serious criticism that Glück levels against Ashbery is that his variety of non-sequitur, which a critic like Marjorie Perloff would call "the poetics of indeterminacy," is an attempt of dealing with the self that is simply disingenuous. Ashbery's refusal to deal with the biographical or coherently discursive material directly is compared to a code, a strategy of avoidance of the self, in which a poem is "a diagram of systematic evasion" (*Originality* 27). The disingenuousness of the maneuver consists in the fact that the self is, indeed, not only not avoided, but placed in the very center of attention: "Certainly the art of incompleteness makes the self startingly present… in these homages to the void, the void's majesty is reflected in the resourcefulness and intensity with which the poet is overwhelmed." In short Glück argues that Ashbery's acclaimed indeterminacies are technical gimmicks masking the poet's narcissism which, however, never fails to surface, and it does so in the stylistic excess itself: "style of saying hardly leaves behind the self" (*Originality* 30).

Let us note what this polemic reveals about Glück's own standpoint: the poet's love of the self is inescapable. Which entails the unavoidability of the biographical. Rather than trying to avoid it then, the poet refuses to shrink from a more painful but honest, intellectually deeper, aesthetically more complex and satisfying, psychologically more revealing task of confronting the drama of the self, while also showing it to be paradigmatic. Siding with the later Eliot, Glück steers clear of constructs which highlighted the linguistic mediation of central narratives—cultural or metaphysical—holding those stable in view as indispensable for poetry as a culturally serious project. Glück's answer to this challenge is her entire trajectory of volumes in which the persistence with which the personal biographical drama is visited is matched with the coolness of the gesture—afforded by the affinity of poetry with certain facets of psychoanalysis—with which the personal is shown to be an instance of some overarching mechanisms that can be understood in psycho-theological terms. Her merger of poetics and psychoanalysis allows her to reinstate metaphysics in the center of the psychical life, not only not giving up on the idea of grand narratives regulating the life of the individual, but making them more intransigent than it was the case with Eliot's submission to Christianity.

The Post-Confessional Formula: Classical and Biblical Analogies in the Psychoanalytic Setting

Robert von Hallberg, quite rightly juxtaposing Glück's stylistics with Plath's, states the following: "There is fierceness here, as in Plath, but there is no way of attributing her ferocity to excessive emotionality: she is an insistently analytical writer who regards emotionality as a trap" (143). Hallberg's account links this elimination of the affective first to Glück's stylistic preference for the ascetic ("taciturn" or "bare style") associated mostly with W. S. Merwin (140), and speculates about its sources being the poet's overall intellectual conservatism (144), her "mordant humor" (143), but most crucially her austere "variety of authenticity" (144). This demanding brand of emotional/stylistic discipline is the poet's attempt to "stay true" to her metaphysical insights regarding the human condition, by staying faithful to her "unwillingness to take any consolation for granted" (145). This difficult stance of moral, emotional, and aesthetic balance is especially noteworthy in a poet whose nearly sole theme is painful autobiography. The stylistic and psychological aspects are here a part of a larger apparatus in which the painfully personal can be confronted openly, bluntly, and persistently, while the poet avoids the trap of cheap emotionality and exhibitionism. But Glück's ascetic style is much more than her subscribing to a fashionable 70's style. It is also one of the means of modulating her "confessions" by couching them within a combination of psychology and metaphysics. The non-emotional ascetic style fits two other distancing devices: analogies to the mythological or biblical patterns and affinities between the poetic speech and the mnemonic utterance activated by psychoanalysis.

In what is perhaps her functioning within the general purview of Eliot's influence, Glück has returned to mythologies—both Greek and Roman—in order to find in them stabilizing and universal patterns within which to speak of personal history. Early on, the dominance of the mother is compared to the grim presiding of a Fate (one of the Moirai) over the life of her daughter. "There is always something to be made of pain. / Your mother knits" – we read in "Love Poem," one of the numerous early lyrics devoted to the poet's mother (*First Four* 90). In the same volume we find the early attempts to approach the theme of marriage through the myth of Persephone (the poem "Pomegranate"). It will be extended and more fully developed in *Averno* (2006), where Persephone's subjection to the will of her mother and husband will be correlated, as a myth related to barrenness, to the psychical condition of the subject. In *The Triumph of Achilles* (1985) the eponymous hero and his lot serve as a universalizing take: finding the essential human condition in the recognition of loss and incompleteness. *Meadowlands* (1996) contains an ample treatment of the theme of the decay of marriage through analogies to Penelope, Odysseus, Telemachus and Circe. Further examples include the myth of Dido, who represents generalized feminine suffering under the oppressive historical mechanisms, or, again, the Fates (the poem "The Queen of Carthage" in *Vita Nova* (1999)). These rich classical allusions are complemented with biblical ones. Glück's religious quarrel is with the cruel "Jewish God / who doesn't hesitate to take / a son from a mother" (*Poems* 213) as she puts it in *Ararat* (1990). A set of biblical allusions become the central structural device in *Wild Iris* (1992), a volume that functions as one cycle of poems based on the trope

of Eden, in which plants, humans, and the Christian God exchange reflections and confessions in indirect dialogues. In all of those volumes the personal story remains at the center, but the mythology or religion based parables always provide a safe cushion of universality to even the most painful confidence shared with the reader.

It is important to note that neither Christianity nor classical mythology is acknowledged as any ultimate metaphysics in its own right. They serve as props, stage devices, that the poet uses in a process of delving deeper, beyond the personal reaction to pain and misfortune. We do obtain a project that, if not metaphysical, can be called psycho-theological. In it, however, the classical mythology and Christianity merge with a modulation of voice owed to psychoanalysis, as the entire formula tends toward a version of Gnosticism, or Gnosticism recalled by psychoanalysis. I will discuss the Lacanian psychoanalytic and its Gnostic underpinning below, however at this point let us simply note the general affinities with psychoanalysis as another set of distancing devices.

Glück's explicit interest in general patterns and motifs offered by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis is first noted in *Descending Figure* (1980), but a more dispersed presence of psychoanalysis is felt in other volumes of the entire early period. A psychoanalytic predilection can only be natural for a poet whose strong instinctual theme is the Freudian "family romance"—a complex system of emotional bonds involving subjects grappling with their psychological roles as parents, spouses, children, and siblings. Numerous poems of the early period refer to the highly charged daughter-mother relations and to the resulting mechanisms of self-aggression (including anorexia), occurring in the developing female subject. These mechanisms had been a focal point within the Freudian model.[3]

Self-imposed "hunger" is one of the more frequent tropes of the early phase in Glück, and it belongs to a larger process in which her subject strives to regulate the affective sphere, related first of all to the mother (although the relation to the father will gradually gain in importance in the later stages). The process contains elements of aggression and self-aggression, hatred and reconciliation, as strategies of dealing with a sense of loss or lack of autonomy. Images of imposed overeating or overfeeding abound early on, in the debut *Firstborn* (1968), as parts of an oppressive order—both cultural and psychological. The dominant mother who controls the life of the entire family, breast feeding or refusal thereof—are other frequent motifs at this stage. Mother and daughter are captured within a nexus of binds and transferences which make them actors in perniciously cold, psychologically founded rituals of domination, submission and aggression, the onset of which is related to the moment of birth, treated psychoanalytically as a cataclysmic separation from the prelinguistic fulness and immediacy related to the mother's body. "It was better when we were / together in the body," says the subject in "For My Mother," marking the beginning of mourning

3 They have been described in detail by Melanie Klein who explored the forming of the female subject within the bounds of the Freudian model. Working with this model, Janet Sayers has shown how a complex system of aggression directed by the infant daughter toward her mother and then, through guilt, to herself, may result, among others, in eating disorders, when the developing female engages in a "destructive phantasy… unconsciously expressed in… shame, guilt, and self-starvation" (31).

over this lost sense of fullness and union, "then spring / came and withdrew from me / the absolute / knowledge of the unborn" (*First Four* 64). From then on, mother and daughter are caught in a mechanical and ritualistic system of competing over emotional dominance, the snapshots of which we visit in numerous poems throughout the early period. The same cruel, predatory, tight network of emotional competition determines the relation between Glück's autobiographical subject and her sister, as another aspect of the badly played-out "family romance," most closely covered in the volume *Ararat* (1990), probably the most "confessional" collection.

The development of the child under the aegis of mourning the loss of the prelinguistic unity with the body of the mother—a clearly Lacanian motif—culminates in the volume *Descending Figure* (1980), in which the further process of the female subject formation—much troubled, comprising various self-excising gestures—is correlated with what Lacan called the mirror stage. An entire section titled "The Mirror" pushes these processes from infancy to early adulthood, when the female is first subjected to marital rituals, depriving her of any control of her self and her body ("Epithalamium"), to which she then reacts self-aggressively in a poem "The Mirror," which describes what in fact is a moment of de-investing oneself of one's gender difference. The subject scrutinizes here mirror reflection, "scrapes the flesh away," and declares: "I see you correctly, / as a man bleeding" (*First Four* 121). The cycle crests in the tellingly titled "Dedication to Hunger" where the earlier struggles with anorexia coalesce into a symbol: here "hunger" becomes a generalized state of wanting which is no longer opposed as the subject enters a transformation consisting in the rejection of her own body, desire, the entire sexual sphere sacrificed to the composite symbolic order one of whose elements is poetry itself. Although she loses vitality, she gains self-control and power the external materialization of which is poetic initiation. Completing the cycle of alienation from the bodily—performed not as a gesture of gender politics but a spiritual reaction within a certain recognition of metaphysical nature—and making of the bodily and the sexual an offering, the subject declares "I felt / what I feel now, aligning these words." In a strictly classical gesture, poetry—formal poetry, in which, as in Eliot, the individual livelihood is submerged and submitted to large universal mechanisms—is the only bulwark against forces that preside over and effectively annul the modern individual's false claims to autonomy. Composing this kind of verse "is the same need to perfect, of which death is the mere byproduct" (*First Four* 133).

Reena Sastri remarks how the convention of confession, when understood accurately, remains in accord with Eliot's aesthetics of the modulation of voice adhering to any matter, the personal included. It is those modulations, "from symbolic, to discursive, prosy to oracular" that inform the "evocations of the otherness of self and of poetic voice," found in Plath (1008). Joining Glück into this lineage, Sastri observes: "Drawing from myth, psychoanalysis can point not only toward the personal but equally away" (1018). Sastri has in mind Glück's predilection toward the paradigmatic, the "encounters with the elemental" (Glück qtd. in Sastri 1018), all of those converging on the issue of the "origins of the poetic voice" (1018). Stated differently, psychoanalysis allows the poet to put distance between herself, her speaker in the poem and the poem's thematic contents. Thus, Glück gets away with relentless

thematizing of the personal because she emulates what psychoanalysts call "the talking cure"—the analyzed subject's speech as erratic effort of reaching back to trauma and verbalizing it, which is also the subject's attempt of coming to terms with one's own incompleteness and dependence on all sorts of instabilities inscribed in language.[4] Such subject cannot be trusted and we obtain the final defense against "sincerity." The strategy is thematized in a piece called "The Untrustworthy Speaker." Here the poet returns to one of her most persistent, and most Eliotesque motifs—the symbolic "wound," a general incapacitation of the vitalist energies—and notes: "a wound to the heart / is also a wound to the mind." Glück heaps one dissimulation over another; her blunt personal confidences come with a safety switch always on: "Don't listen to me… / I don't see anything objectively" (*Poems* 216).

The Psycho-Theological Insight: Confronting the Thanatic Order

And yet, the further they get from being sincere, the closer these voices are supposed to get to the truth understood as visionary power. Helen Vendler has characterized this stylistic as one of "spiritual prophecy," maintained in language of "high assertion… as from the Delphic tripod" (16). Glück's speakers often signal this power of vision which affords them a variety of knowledge or insight. "I know"—is one of the phrases that controls this utterance, and, despite all the speakers' dissimulations, the power of this poetry rests on the idea of the subject indeed obtaining insight into something more than personal crisis. Activating one's memory, as in psychoanalysis, combined with mythological or biblical patterns, shows the particulars of the personal story to be part of larger mechanisms, metaphysical, religious or post-secular, orders whose significance amounts to nothing short of a complete vision of cosmological or psycho-theological nature.[5] The task of reading this poetry is not one of assessing the sincerity of confession (it remains an open question if the distancing devices really work), but of identifying the predominant stance Glück's subjects take toward the exigencies of being.

At the level of the "spiritual prophecy," the controlling formula is one of the Eliotesque "wound." Glück, as Eliot before her, is a poet who recognizes a crisis, enquires into its non-personal sources, and then looks for a positioning toward it. The state of "being wounded," as a recognition of a larger malady, dominates right from the start. The debut volume *Firstborn* (1968) abounds in blurred images of oppression and a general existential discomfort. At first, since a lot of those scenes belong on the plain of marital life, the reader might be justified in identifying the source of the

4 Bruce Fink brings up the idea of the "talking cure" when he discusses how the analysand's effort is one of verbalizing trauma, or "the real"—the content that so far escaped symbolization. Talking "transforms the earlier unspoken… incompletely conceptualized experiences" (25). It is clear, however, in this Lacanian discourse, that the entire process is prolonged and it gives us a subject that is unstable, in search of oneself, ridden with lack, incompleteness and self-deception. The Lacanian subject, seeking itself in language—that is, amidst language's own constitutive lack and slippage of the signifier—is a "split subject," internally divided between the false ego and the unattainable unconscious (Fink 45).

5 Robert von Hallberg has noted that Glück's poems, at various stages, were "more cosmological than human or earthly" (144).

crisis along the lines of the feminist critique of patriarchal social order. And although this line is not entirely misleading, patriarchy remaining a culprit in the early and middle period volumes, it is increasingly shown to be a mere facet of something much deeper and pernicious than a historical, contingent cultural order. In Glück, culture and history pale in front of metaphysics. The author of *Wild Iris* proposes a modification of Eliot's patterns: whereas he unveils a historical crisis affecting individual psychology and then searches for remedies in variously identified transcendental orders—from mythological foundations that allow us to discern the modern malaise to the later rediscovery of Christianity—hers is a devastating discovery of the *malaise* at the very heart of the cure. Increasingly, in this poetry, the condition of "being wounded" will be associated not with a specific political regime, where, as in Sylvia Plath or Adrianne Rich, female suffering has its cause in the cultural control of biological and gender roles, but with a flaw encoded deep in the very occurrence of human life within a barren universe. Unlike in Eliot, here the very concept of barrenness belongs on the plain of metaphysics.

The tensions, shortcomings and disappointments of the family life, touched upon in the first volume, are transposed to a different context right with the next one. In *The House on Marshland* (1975), the familial discontents are shown from increasingly generalized perspective—afforded by cultural patterns negotiating trauma (well-known legends) or through one's own memories of childhood always compromised by trauma, veiled, approached with the indirection of the lyric convention – and they are accompanied by poems depicting generally barren landscapes. This revisited wasteland confronts us in the opening lyric, "All Hallows," one of Glück's numerous ascetic landscape poems, in which the "assembling landscape" will never afford solace, since nature is tainted with sterility, and life forces are too closely intertwined with the forces of death: "This is the barrenness / of harvest or pestilence" (*First Four* 61). Harvest, blooming trees, budding sexual functions – these tropes place us immediately with the Eliotesque thematic of fertility and Plath's thematic of gender and biology. But here "harvest" is equalized with "pestilence," and this merger constitutes the central and controlling trope in Glück's *oeuvre*.

The early volumes trace the sickening factor which paralyzes the psyche and blocks the life of the erotic affective sphere, confining it to a fallibility and perniciousness associated with the very forces of nature, including human biology and reproduction. Birth, pregnancy, just as spring, or any other instance of nature's vitality, are always pictured as traps, they are "routine message[s] of survival," and they will mark the female as victim, instilling in her mechanisms that will increasingly be read as alien and cruel. The body will be "inscribed" with the "fruits" as with "unravelling dark stains in heavier winds" (*First Four* 70)—a shockingly devastating metaphor for pregnancy, rivaling Plath's "fat gold watch" from "Morning Song." But the problem is not, as in Plath, the patriarchal control of biology and gender roles, but the total and devastating submission of the Eros to Thanatos. Fertility is not to be trusted, as a tainted trap and harbinger of destruction, and this correlation continues well into much later volumes. "Surely spring has been returned to me, this time / not as a lover but a messenger of death" (*Poems* 363), we read in the title lyric of *Vita Nova* (2009), and the only thing that surprises in this passage is the phrase "this time." In Glück,

the female affective sphere related to the erotic and the bodily are part and parcel of "harvest-as-pestilence," and should be treated as an element within the larger waste-stricken landscape. Hence images such as the one from "Aphrodite" where "A woman exposed as rock / has this advantage: / she controls the harbor" (*First Four* 141). On the surface, this can be a metaphor of a psychological defense against patriarchal oppression; but read in the context of the entire metaphysical system of this poetry, it is an image of the female subject divesting herself of sexuality which is seen as barren and "wounded," always-already possessed by the big Other, which is death itself. All nature in Glück's early/middle period is so possessed. In fact, it isn't merely the female sexuality that is so treacherous or devastated: the Eros in general, both male and female, is a system of subterfuge, presumption and naivety, damaging the subject with false hopes, shallowness or outright stupidity. When, in the often quoted "Mock Orange" the female subject confesses "I hate sex," this is indeed a rebellion against male domination ("the man's mouth / sealing my mouth"). However, such scenes in Glück always reveal a deeper foundation of the badly poised gender relations. The Eros in Glück is blind, weak and intoxicating the human with mechanized responses and "tired antagonisms." The female subject shares this knowledge with her dominant partner: "Do you see? We were made fools of" (*First Four* 155). This kind of insight is attained in close vicinity of natural abundance, stimulated, as in this poem, by the nauseating flower fragrance ("the scent of mock orange / drifts through the window"). Gardens—a recurring setting—are in fact chilling areas of imprisonment, a trope that is fully employed in the volume-long painful confrontation with the vegetative vitalism—a cruel subterfuge in the order of creation—in *Wild Iris* (1992).

From early on, nature in Glück is a theatrical stage on which the liveliness of organisms is an illusion, merely an overture to revealing a bigger master, a principle stronger than life. In the early poem "Messengers" animals are carriers of death, their organic movability only a temporary indicator of fate, as they are "slowly drift[ing] into the open / through bronze panels of sunlight" (*First Four* 68). The movement "into the open" is a self-expository gesture of submission; the animals' only agency is in accepting their vulnerability to a destructiveness already at work in their bodies: "They are almost motionless, until their cages rust" (68). Or there is no agency at all—the animals are a mechanical or reversed *trompe l'oil*, living organisms tuned into a ceremonious convention, sealed in the artifice of light coming not from nature but from the supernatural order of death. The animals move into view effortlessly, fulfilling their roles of life-mocking decoration. In a related poem of this period ("Thanksgiving"), we see them as "prey," of which not even forgiveness is expected, as "they can afford to die. / They have their place in the dying order" (*First Four* 116).

The bronze pale light of "Messengers" later floods the spectacular volume *Wild Iris*, but it is the spectacle of suffering pervading and tormenting all that lives. The garden in this volume is in fact a prison within malevolent creation: flowers whisper of suffering and surprise at the cruelty of perishing, while the human female subject, herself cognizant of the pain of being, is taking the most difficult middle ground between them and a presiding deity, a Christian-like God, as impatient with flowers and humans as Jehovah was with Job. The garden is beautiful, its illuminations strongly reminiscent of various medieval and renaissance traditions in which the

clarity of light echoes Platonic ideations; but Glück makes this beauty walk hand in hand with cruelty: life is a ridiculous vegetative occurrence, a sad parade of organisms-as-victims, and the role of the human is to be rent apart in painful (and rigid) awareness of this affliction. All actors of the spectacle try in vain to communicate their terrible condition—fear, loneliness, vulnerability to time, perishability, affective desolation—but are in fact caught in an ontology based on division and separation. This rigidly divided realm bespeaks a primordial falling apart, a Gnostic catastrophe that makes all creation a deeply flawed "perennial struggle with matter" (Zazula 257). The idea of having consciousness integrated with matter is a malicious ploy, earlier identified by Gnostics, and a statement offered by the eponymous *Wild Iris* at the start of this volume could serve as a motto to the entire early/middle period: "It is terrible to survive / as consciousness" (*Poems* 245).

The post-confessional formula that receives its shape between *Firstborn* and *Ararat* (1990) and is imaginatively consolidated in *Wild Iris* (1992) carries a metaphysical (or psycho-theological) insight that shows the modern wasteland not to be redeemed by a return to organizing orders, as in Eliot. Rather, the orders themselves are encountered, confronted and acknowledged in their inexorable Thanatic destructivity. To be sure, the dominance of Thanatos is not a thesis arrived at through any openly metaphysical inquiry; rather, Glück's metaphysics emerges as a translation of the entire panoply of psychological mechanisms, the central motif of which is the female subject repudiating her erotic/affective sphere in a defensive and sacrificial strategy. Life rituals of the early and middle volumes (eating, or overeating, feeding, preparing for births, preparing for funerals) continue to be dominated by "mothers," whose psychotherapeutically revisited dominance makes them into the Fates. As dominated by the Thanatic element, these aspects of living are to be opposed, and to achieve the opposition the female subject will seek radical elimination of the entire erotic affectivity. The various self-excisions inflict the bodily and take it out from the realm of authentic livelihood. What is gained is a higher level of authenticity and consciousness—strongly formalized, rendered in almost ceremonial and high-aesthetic, indeed hieratic style—that we find in the resultant verse, the formal poetry becoming a sort of sublimating crust of the excruciating psychical processes: "It is a form / of suffering" (*First Four* 76). However, whatever oppositional potential these psychical gestures possess, they soon morph into a form of rigidified acquiescence. Hence the poems in which the subject turns into stone, assuming the rock-stable controlling position (as in the already discussed "Aphrodite"), or banishing the victim part of herself—the only part that would in fact have had a chance for a "destiny"—while enhancing the predatory aspects, even at the cost of affective suppression. The subject remains stranded in the (self)-aggressive position of "the hunter," even though "that part is paralyzed" (*First Four* 172), and on its way, as we will see, to merging with the controlling Thanatic order.

The Psycho-Theological Trajectory: Paying Tribute to the Thanatic Order

When she takes those high and costly grounds, the subject comes face to face with the powers that govern the "mothers" of the Earth—the powers that psychoanalysis

and mythology unanimously subsume under the name of Thanatos. To be human is to be wounded by death, the iron principle of necessity that in the Greek pantheon is presided over both by Fates and Ananke, and which in the reality of the modern philosophy and psychology spells out the all-pervasive presence of death, death as the ultimate and only reality, foundation of all being. This is the central message of the early/middle period, elaborated and illustrated in the sequence of volumes from *The House on Marshland* (1975) to *Ararat* (1990). Bypassing *The Wild Iris* (1992) and *Meadowlands* (1996)—artistically most satisfying collections which, however, do not develop the psychological formula—the Thanatic transformation of the subject is revisited with belated (and doomed) attempts at recuperation from this position, which we observe in the later *Averno* (2006).

The key arch of this formative sequence is found in the elegiac and funeral poems in *Descending Figure*, *The Triumph of Achilles*, and *Ararat*. They reveal the true master force standing behind and informing the desolations of the "family romance." Death in the family, first the death of the baby sister, then the death of the father, gradually emerges as the only force regulating the psychical and spiritual life, and the funeral scenes, attending to graves, being "at the grave" (*Poems* 131), is the primary location (the title of the volume *Ararat* is the name of the poet's family cemetery). The eponymous cycle in *Descending Figure* is an elegiac sequence devoted to the death of the baby sister. Death is a mute force, the Lacanian Real, a nucleus of all anxiety that defines the tone of memories; not speaking, the dead are more alive than the living. If the death of the sister signifies loss, it will be registered by the subject through the affective posture of the mother. The early lines give us a recognition of some sort of larger abandonment—"If I could write to you / about this emptiness." There is a blurry transference of life and death between the sisters, the subject already undergoing an internal split—"Often I would let my name glide past me" (*First Four* 113)—in a self-effacing move compensating for the death of the sister, performed to appease the mournful mother. This is why all memories connected with the mother contain the element of unfulfilled longing. The mother is a remote priestess whose life is filled with unceasing *exequiae*, a psychical portrayal of the parent which takes its final shape in the funeral *Ararat*: "My mother's an expert in one thing: / sending people she loves into the other world" (*Poems* 212), a statement that is more a declaration of a necessity than complaint. It is, again, the sister's death that regulates these behaviors, according to the principle that the dead are more alive than the living: "My sister spent a whole life in the earth" (*Poems* 211). Death supplants life, making births into automatic harbingers of dying: "my mother planned for the child that died" (*Poems* 210). Thus, the mother (and the father with her) are removed to the level of cold functionaries of death. Emotionally barren, their scarce warmth is a good that both the surviving sisters must fight for, another conspicuous theme in *Ararat*.

It is this environment that determines the psychical trajectory of the subject. How does the subject cope with such pressures? I have already illustrated the process which dominates Glück's major phase: the sacrificial excisions of the affective. These purely psychological moves, however, are indicative of another move on the psycho-theological plain—that is the plain in which the defensive modulations of the psychological subject connect her with the transcendental order. In Glück, this trajectory

is from a passive victim wounded by the Thanatic orders to their self-appointed ally. The forming of the alliance is depicted in the cycle of poems devoted to the father: portrayed first as a living but coldly remote parent, then on his deathbed. The poems of the death of the father, visited twice—in *The Triumph of Achilles* and five years later in *Ararat*—define the position the subject takes in relation to the foundational psycho-theological order of reality. First, we have the decisive transformation of the subject in the poem "Metamorphosis." The daughter is leaning over the dying father, and the following substitution takes place:

> then he looked at me
> as a blind man stares
> straight into the sun, since
> whatever it could do to him
> is done already. (*First Four* 157)

The sun is always an ambiguous deity in Glück. The "contract" the father is turning away from—or falling away from as a no longer needed functionary—is the law that has bound him throughout his life: the Lacanian law of the father, which in Glück is one and the same thing as the law of the Other, that is, ultimately, death. The father's face—flushed with fever, disease and dying—is illuminated with a "light" that is *not* the Christian/Platonic light of grace and eternal life, not the light of the Platonic Eros, but the light of what the Polish scholar Agata Bielik-Robson has called the "acephalic Neoplatonism." This form of belated Platonism, always hostile to embodied finitude, reoccurring in modernity, and vainly seeking a recentering of life in a metaphysical fullness, always ends up shedding the "dark entropic sun of Thanatos" (*Finitude* x).[6] The light-as-contract which illuminates the father's face is a mortifying light of dying or being dead during the lifetime, and it is somehow already present as X-ray in the previous section of "Metamorphosis" where we learn of "the spot on the lung / [which] was always there" (*Poems* 148). This light is a variety of the bronze panels of sunlight we have seen earlier flooding the animals in "Messengers," turning the animals into a sculpted relief devoted to death, and the merciless light that burns or freezes the flowers in *Wild Iris*. In Glück, light, especially the sunlight, radiates destruction, not love. It is a Thanatic "entropic" glow presiding over creation recognized by Gnostics as a malevolent error.

Glück's proper element is theology filtered through 20th century psychoanalysis and her Gnostic traits are a surface derivation of a more subterranean thought that can be traced to Jacques Lacan's post-secular variety of Gnosticism. While some critics have offered discussions of single volumes by Glück in the light of Julia Kristeva's research on melancholy, where the poet displays "passionate strictness" in restraining affective and linguistic pleasures (Selinger), I claim that her psychoanalytic modulations of voice govern all volumes of the early/middle period and send us to one of the greatest influences on Kristeva's work, Jacques Lacan. Agata-Bielik Robson has investigated in detail Lacan's crypto-theological, gnostic identification of death as the

6 Bielik-Robson comments: "Within this religious complex, death becomes the model of the Absolute, as well as the mystical foundation of all authority: virginally pure, ideal, ultimate, unflinching legality that knows no exception, no extenuating circumstances" (*Finitude* 122).

ultimate "master"—the ultimate reality that governs the evolution of the subject toward authenticity. Bielik-Robson reads beyond the Freudian layer of Lacanian discourse and traces in it the Gnostic intrusions where this highest form of consciousness is found with the vision of Eros crushed by Thanatos, and life as an anomaly in the midst of the cold universe. According to Bielik-Robson, Lacan's teaching urges an authenticity of some more "lordly" human subjects who fully recognize their non-negotiable and non-dialectical subjection to nothingness and "rediscover [themselves] in the universe of death" (175), thus becoming "free of the sheeplike superstitions of Eros" and merging with a voice that says "I have come to life only in order to die… I hail death by returning to it right now," thus heeding the Gnostic tradition's "call of the distant God" (*Saving Lie* 176).

Tending toward this area is the prevailing psychical and spiritual movement in Glück's development. Piotr Zazula has rightly read *Wild Iris*, finding in it the human "sense of inner spiritual split" that should be traced to Gnostic "struggle between spirit and matter" and the idea of God as a faulty creator (257). But in this poet the pure Gnosticism—a description of reality belonging, after all, to an ancient moment in the history of the religious culture—is replaced with a psycho-theological move that, as Bielik-Robson has shown, has been a means by which certain thinkers of modernity grappled with the demise of the traditional Christian Absolute. Here, the Lacanian preference for the death drive, tinged with Gnostic epiphanies, far from informing any single volume, is the major spiritual position dominating the majority of the poet's development, all the way to the late collection *Averno*. The arrival at the place of the Lacanian Thanatic insight is tantamount to the female subject renouncing all traces of desire, the bodily as a site of somatic subjectivity, sexuality and gender difference. The process culminates in the moment we have just observed in "Metamorphosis." It is the female subject, now fully integrated with the contractual light of the Thanatic order—the contract extended by what Bielik-Robson names death-as-the-only-master in her reading of Lacan—that is found right in the position of source of the ghastly Thanatic glow. From there, she is a transformed priestess of death, who is beyond the idea of compassion, pain, emotional hurt. We encounter this new self in the next section of the poem which offers one of the most chilling moments in Glück's entire *oeuvre*. Here, the daughter now surpasses her mother in performing the *exequiae* over her dead father's body:

> I run my hand over your face
> lightly, like a dustcloth.
> What can shock me now? I feel
> no coldness that can't be explained.
> Against your cheek, my hand is warm
> and full of tenderness. (*First Four* 158)

The fragment is a great display of Glück's mastery at extreme emotional dissimulation. Every assertion is in fact pointing toward its opposite. "I feel"—there no feeling here, as the subject is bereft of this human layer, and coldness is in fact all she "feels," since "my hand is warm" but *only* in comparison with the corpse's coldness. The "tenderness" in the last line is completely unconvincing; there is a coldness of ritual here, an entirely

impersonal and ceremonial shrouding of the body ("my hand… like dustcloth"). It is the hand of the human subject who in the previous section fully headed the Lacanian-Thanatic "call of the distant god."

No longer roaming those altitudes, it returns to a ghastly existence, having been altered, however, reintegrated with the father's image, and, thus, the patriarchal order. This full identification with the patriarchal presence is visited again, as a more sober aftermath of the gnostic epiphany of "Metamorphosis," in a series of poems in the funeral and elegiac *Ararat*. The central piece of this revisiting is "Terminal Resemblance," which is a more "secular," even wordy or conversational version of the same moment we saw in "Metamorphosis." Here the dying father and the daughter actually do share a normal conversation, awkward as it is, its underlying theme being the daughter now fully mimicking the father's inability of showing emotion. The process is complete in the last line where the daughter becomes the father's mirror reflection: "Like him, [I] waved to disguise my hand's trembling" (*Poems* 235). Here is a brilliant figure, to be rivaled only by John Ashbery's "shield of a greeting"—a formulaic movement of the hand as a double-edged gesture, not so much a communication as a blockade of emotion, a distancing from the other, a repression of the affect, performed in the close imitation of the father's life-long chilling repressions. Some critics have read such moments *Ararat* in the light of Julia Kristeva's exploration of lament as a form of love, as instances of a love that is, as in the Biblical Song of Songs, "fierce as death." On such readings, the moments of strongest emotional restraints in Glück are attempts to "unlock a love like that, a fierce erotic drive to hold life together" (Selinger).

It is extremely difficult to see the attempt ever successful, not only in *Ararat*, but in all the volumes discussed here. Exercised for too long, emotional restraint ceases to bespeak intensity and simply morphs into spiritual desolation. "Terminal Resemblance" is surrounded by poems in which the father-daughter relationship consists in the daughter integrating herself with the gaze of the father, "learning / to absorb its emptiness" (*Poems* 233), and then the father's death-bound existence fully continued by the daughter, a faithful follower of the "call of the distant god": "Tonight I saw myself in the dark window as / the image of my father, whose life / was spent like this, / thinking of death, to the exclusion of other / of other sensual matters" (*Poems* 237). There is no place for Eros in this psychic organization.

The female subject renouncing the gender difference, taking up her place in the patriarchal order that can be interpreted as the form of the Lacanian search for authenticity in the psycho-theology of submission to death—this position, worked out between the poems devoted to the father in *The Triumph of Achilles* and in *Ararat* is the defining structure of the female subject in Louise Glück poetry, reaching well into the late 1990s and 2000's. It must be noted that the later volumes, especially *Averno* (2006), contain poems which are an attempt to recuperate from the earlier strict renunciation of the finite. A discussion of how difficult a task it is should be reserved for another article. We can only note here that the utterance in many of these poems is offered by a subject who can at best realize its self-inflicted desolation, as in "October," one of the key lyrical sequences of the volume: "It does me no good / to be good to me now; / violence has changed me" (*Poems* 493-94) and "My body has

grown cold like the stripped fields" (494). In another poem, "Telescope," this subject gazes for a while at vast, interstellar emptiness, and then tries to transfer her attention, finally, to earth. The result is poignantly ambiguous. After dismantling the cosmos-scanning device and turning her looks to the landscape around her, she sees "how far away / each thing is from every other thing" (*Poems* 550). Having been adhered to for so long, the bleak emptiness of the empty universe is hard to eliminate, and the "dark entropic sun of Thanatos" persists.

Concluding Remarks

With relentless consistence of vision, Glück definitely passes the major poet test created by Auden and recalled by Ashbery in his Harvard lectures. The Nobel prize makes her also one of the central and most important poets of the Western world now. What does this centrality tell us about how poetry in general, and American poetry more precisely, has dealt with the modernist legacy?

Glück's high aesthetic ground of the psychic authenticity is obtained at a great cost. Impervious to the various 20th century skepticisms regarding the subject's independence from the excessive linguistic proliferations, she reaches for one of the lyric's most traditional topics—the personal history—believing that her distancing techniques will fend off the risk of excessive narcissism, and that she will be able to objectify the poetic subject by connecting it to paradigmatic orders. In doing this, she underlines her difference from the post-moderns. Glück has criticized Ashbery for never really avoiding excessive narcissism, arguing that his linguistic bravados fail to mask the underlying poetic preoccupation with the self and eventually end up as a sort of flat and tedious "homages to the void." But betting on a more authentic dealing with the residual poetic narcissism—by trying to raise the personal to the paradigmatic—she runs her own poetics into a severe subjective predicament.

Where Ashbery—a "postmodernist" operating beyond one of Enlightenment's grand narratives, that of the centralized subject and its singular and authentic experience—is willing to freely explore chance encounters of desire with non-personal linguistic excess, Glück clings on to the idea of the deep subject—a subject that is in fact itself quite narcissistically obsessed with its own story[7], but which is striving to transform the biographical obsession and push the contingency of the personal story toward the paradigmatic. And indeed, it is a poetry of a paradigm—the psychoanalytically constructed paradigm that brings the subject into confrontation with a post-religious vacuity in which the Platonic ideas of the source of life that once nourished normative Christianity undergo a modification into their opposite: the ultimate nothingness of death as essential reality.

Catastrophically, this level of metaphysical insight paralyzes all those aspects of the self that belong to its earthly, existential, embodied, sexual and gendered being. Unlike one of her predecessors, Sylvia Plath, who used classical analogies to stir up

7 It is a debatable point in fact if Glück's distancing strategies work. Some critics are not convinced and point to the fact that the biographical is Glück's one and only topic whose constant reoccurrence in each next volume, all classical allusions notwithstanding, "demonstrates a disconcerting inability to find her way out of the cul-de-sac of subjectivity" (Henry).

the emotional, affective and gendered sphere of her speakers, the prophetic voices in Glück choose to "express but what we feel, and to feel very little… to play dead" (von Hallberg 142). This paradigmatic insight thwarts the idea—rather important to internationally founded community of poets who take their cue from the modernist experiment—of the poetic re-inhabitation of the earth. It is an old Whitmanian dream, modulated by numerous American modernist and contemporary poets, of form as channel which the psyche, confronting the demise of the traditional religious systems, could use to negotiate its finite and embodied post-metaphysical condition.

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Negotiating Subjectivity within Simulation: The Posthuman in Philip K. Dick's *Ubik*

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to offer a reading of P. K. Dick's *Ubik* which investigates the possibility for a representation of posthuman subjectivity in the novel. The forming of a sustainable posthuman subjectivity occurs in the novel against the backdrop of what might be described in Baudrillardian terms as hyperreality. The use of Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality may not only guide the analysis towards uncovering the circumstances facilitating the emergence of posthuman subjects in *Ubik*, but also reveal an illustration of the dialogue between the postmodern and the posthuman positions. Ultimately, I contend that Dick's novel depicts the emergence of posthuman modes of subjectivity in a process which is facilitated by the context of hyperreality. This unexpected coincidence occurs through a positive, constructive interaction with the environment, bestowing, through symbolic exchange, sustainability to the inhabitants of unstable reality.

Keywords: Philip K. Dick, *Ubik*, posthumanism, hyperreality, subjectivity

Introduction

In Philip K. Dick's 1969 novel *Ubik*, the protagonist, stuck in a virtual reality and trying to make sense of it, is at one point described as "an ineffectual moth, fluttering at the windowpane of reality, dimly seeing it from outside" (ch. 10). This metaphor encapsulates one of the struggles central to Dick's works: to glimpse a reality always occluded by some seemingly insurmountable barrier. What are the means of crossing this boundary? What kind of observer has the capacity to see beyond the veil or recognize an illusion? The answer may lie in the creation of a new mode of subjectivity. If the *human* is a moth incapable of perceiving an authentic reality, then possibly a *posthuman* can—a being that is able to extend themselves onto the adjacent environment, gaining a multitude of diverse perspectives.

Katherine Hayles assesses the potential of Dick's novels to illustrate the involvement of cybernetics in the posthuman discourse:

> Dick's narratives extend the scope of inquiry by staging connections between cybernetics and a wide range of concerns, including a devastating critique of capitalism, a view of gender relations that ties together females and androids, an idiosyncratic connection between entropy and schizophrenic delusion, and a persistent suspicion that the objects surrounding us—and indeed reality itself—are fakes. (161)

Ubik seems especially saturated with the theme of scrutinizing reality, however, as I will argue, the authenticity is not the ultimate point of investigation in the novel. Instead, it sets the stage for a broader question of what, if any, authentic subjectivity may arise in this virtual world of commodified objects.

In this paper, I shall embark on a posthumanist reading of Dick's *Ubik* supplemented with Jean Baudrillard's works. These frameworks help interrogate the presence and the characteristics of subjectivities which may arise in the novel's virtual world. While examining the construction of the simulation presented in the novel, I will be referring to the idea of hyperreality outlined by Baudrillard as it can guide the analysis towards uncovering the circumstances facilitating the emergence of posthuman subjects in *Ubik*.

The first step of the analysis will concern the perception of a virtual world as experienced by the protagonist, Joe Chip. His own transformation may reveal the shifting modes of subjectivity emerging from the virtual reality of the novel. A closer attention will be given to the objects themselves, as experienced by Joe Chip. Their status as real is interrogated throughout the novel's narrative, and, as I will argue, they reveal themselves as a part of a broader phenomenon of simulation analogous to Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality. On this basis, I will try to identify modes of posthuman subjectivity emerging in this setting.

The final focus of my analysis will involve juxtaposing two characters in *Ubik*, Ella Runciter and Jory Miller, in a posthumanist framework. They represent consciousnesses which attempt to establish new modes of subjectivity, unbound by the self-perpetuating artifice of the simulation. By comparing their enterprises, I hope to demonstrate how they may serve as attempts at constructing posthuman subjectivity represented in Dick's work.

Terms

a) Hyperreality

In his earliest publications, Baudrillard focuses on the critical analysis of capitalism. Among other things, he claims that Marx misattributes the power of capital to production and that it is consumption instead. The capital is not generated by utility of the product or the labor but by "sign value"—a network of arbitrary social and political constructs inscribed onto the commodified objects that create an illusion of value. In turn these commodities generate the desire and thus a consumer. In a perversion of Kantian principles, people have become the means for the goal of consumption (*The System of Objects* 56). Thus, Baudrillard positions the human subject as subordinate to the objects—products of a commodified world. People are seduced and manipulated by their manufactured value. In this process "the individual is nothing but the subject thought in economic terms, rethought, simplified and abstracted by the economy" (C*ritique* 133). The system of objects governed by signification reduces the subject itself to a sign.

In his later works, and especially in *Simulacra and Simulation,* Baudrillard extends this process of signification to the whole of reality. In the essay "Simulacra and Science Fiction" he positions it as the third order simulacra, or "simulation simulacra: based on information, the model, cybernetic play. Their aim is maximum operationality, hyperreality, total control" (309). In this scenario, the whole of reality experienced by the subject and any object within it are saturated with the *sign value.* The network of signs can no longer refer to any materiality, but only to previous signs.

The signs become self-referential and self-generating. The subject which becomes enveloped in this system experiences what Baudrillard calls *hyperreality*. In these circumstances, Baudrillard sees the futility of any attempts at realizing the classical (western) notion of discerning reality. An objective material reality and freedom from the commodity are untraceable from the perspective of a human subject navigating through the network of signs.

Through the lenses of Baudrillard's hyperreality, a parallel can be drawn between his ontological model and the world depicted in *Ubik.* A significant portion of the novel takes place in a technologically induced virtual reality experienced by the inhabitants of machines designed to prolong the brain functions of the deceased. However upon their revitalization these individuals do not retain the awareness of their situation. They have to gradually come to the realization that what they perceive is not the physical reality but a substitute, organized as a self-perpetuating chain of references and signs. The world depicted in the novel, as I will be arguing, bears the characteristics of Baudrillardian hyperreality.

b) Posthuman subject

Baudrillardian ideas expand upon the postmodern school of thought in 20th-century philosophy. One of the facets of postmodernism deals with diagnosing issues of subjects acquiring ontological knowledge and practicing signification in a world wherein the great narratives of the past and humanistic ideals of modernism are obsolete. They are substituted with power structures in which the autonomous subject is ensnared and dissolved. This crisis of truth is illustrated in Baudrillard's writings. However, he falls short of negotiating productive solutions to this issue. As Best and Kellner argue, in his later works Baudrillard moves toward "nihilistic cynicism" (112) and "aligns himself with a conservative tradition of passive and apologetic thought that envisages no alternatives to the existing order of society" (135). They further argue that the postmodern projects accurately discern a number of social issues but fail to find the solutions. This inadequacy generated a number of new critical movements, one of which was the concept of posthumanism. Similarly to how postmodernism arose as a critique of modernity, posthumanism aims to contribute to the discourse a response to the issues of subjectivity identified by the poststructuralists and postmodernists. It ventures to accomplish this by negotiating new models of subjectivity, based neither on the humanistic, autonomous individual, nor on the postmodern subject, pulverized by the system of signs. Instead, posthumanists strive for a move towards a dynamic, open subject. As such, posthumanism could be understood as both a critique and a continuation of the postmodern discourse.

Rosi Braidotti defines subjectivity from a standpoint of critical posthumanism as "a structural relational capacity, coupled with the specific degree of force or power that any one entity is endowed with" (*Posthuman Knowledge* ch. 2). This power should be understood as a dialectical negotiation with the other resulting in accumulation of knowledge. The entire environment surrounding the posthuman subject is both susceptible to being modified as well as capable of modifying the subject. This balance necessitates a sort of invitation towards the other; a willful immersion into the interconnected space. Whereas Baudrillard imagines the individual as enslaved

by the politicized environment, the posthuman thought outlines a dynamic, mutual relationship between the nodes of the network:

> The posthuman subject is a radically new mode of subjectivity, characterized by heterogeneity, openness and variation… a cluster of complex and intensive… assemblages which connect and interrelate in a variety of ways. (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 16)

Instead of being limited by its bounded organism-barrier, it is open to its surroundings, indeed, it is its relationality with "what would be considered the bounded organism's 'outside' or 'other' that constitutes this ex-centric, non-anthropocentric posthuman subject" (Sharon 152).
Therefore, the consciousness involved in these conditions is outside of the humanistic sphere and by extension, outside of the commodified system that would endanger it.

Toffoletti postulates that a posthuman subject can emerge "at the collapse of the relation between representation and reality" (3), referring to Baudrillard's model of simulation. She describes "new formulations of the subject and fresh means of experiencing our surrounds through posthuman figurations. These entities are neither real nor imaginary, but products of a simulation order where dichotomies of value implode as the sign/origin relationship collapses" (2-3). Therefore, the third-order simulacra would provide ideal conditions for the emergence of such a subject, but at the same time it would not be bound by its rules. The arbitrariness of signs saturating the hyperreality would hold no power over a consciousness which rejects the entire taxonomy of real/signified. If, as Baudrillard models it, the third order simulacrum is not originating in materiality but in the sign-order, then such construction of subjectivity would be able to navigate through the hyperreality without falling prey to its illusion.

Following Toffoletti's thesis that "to be posthuman is to construct a notion of self within a culture of simulation, virtuality and the digital," and that "It is a new mode of existence by which the subject comes into being, as distinctions collapse between nature and artifice, self and computer, virtual and real" (28), one could argue that the world of *Ubik* is exactly the kind of environment that could facilitate the emergence of posthuman consciousness. Although Toffoletti states that "science fiction is no longer a legitimate mode of explaining the posthuman moment," because, as she argues further, "the gap between the real and the imaginary is eroding, and along with it, the genre of science fiction founded on fantasy" (Toffoletti 32), this critique is not entirely accurate in the case of Dick's fiction, because while his novels deal with the search for some authentic reality, they operate mostly on the narratives of clashing, conflicting and transforming simulations or hallucinations. In fact, it can be argued that *Ubik* especially concerns the question of how a posthuman subjectivity can realize itself and achieve agency over a simulacrum.

Joe Chip and the Simulacra

The plot of *Ubik* begins in a distant future of 1992. The novel follows Joe Chip, an "inertial" in a prudence organization run by Glen Runciter. Inertials are people able to negate psychic powers of telepaths. Runciter Associates employs people like Chip to

protect their clients from corporate espionage. Another piece of world-building revealed at the start of the novel is the institution of cold-pacs, where the deceased, frozen into a state of "half-life" may, in a limited capacity, communicate with the living.

Joe Chip, his partner Pat Conolly, Runciter, and a group of inertials are ambushed during an assignment on the Moon. A bomb explodes, apparently killing Runciter. However, as the team returns to Earth, a series of anomalous transformations of reality occurs: everyday items—like money, technology or consumables—begin to revert into older variants of the same objects. Soon, the entire reality shifts further and further back in time, while the members of the team spontaneously age rapidly and die one by one. Chip eventually discovers that it was Glen Runciter who survived the assassination, and the rest of the inertials, himself included, are kept in half-life, surrounded by a virtual universe that continuously degrades. To arrest that entropy, Joe attempts to acquire a mysterious product called Ubik. He is ultimately assisted by the consciousness of Ella Runciter, Glen's wife, who is also a half-lifer. Together they uncover an entity who has been aging and destroying the other members of Joe Chip's team—a half-lifer Jory Miller who tried to prolong his existence by feeding on the vitality of other inhabitants of the virtual world.

The half-life reality is related in the third person from Joe Chip's point of view. His interactions with the simulated environment and his gradual transformation within it may be read as insights into the possible modes of relationships between the objects and the subject, as well as an investigation into what kind of subjectivity may emerge from this system.

After Joe's transference into the virtual half-life, a strange process occurs in his immediate vicinity. Everyday objects begin to transform into older version of themselves. Cigarettes, electronics, buildings and vehicles are randomly replaced with their counterparts from previous decades. Eventually, this phenomenon encapsulates the entirety of Joe Chip's surroundings.

Joe Chip tries to rationalize the process by referring to Plato's theory of forms while observing one such disintegration, when a television set transforms into an antique AM radio: "But why hadn't the TV set reverted instead to formless metals and plastics?…. Perhaps this weirdly verified a discarded ancient philosophy, that of Plato's ideal objects, the universals which, in each class, were real. The form TV set had been a template imposed as a successor to other templates, like the procession of frames in a movie sequence" (ch. 10). Yet, it cannot be said that the cold-pac reality ever achieves those "universals," since the regression gradually approaches the 1939,[1] and at times reaches 19th century. The nature of Plato's ideal forms is supposed to be beyond time, but Dick seems to argue that the historical and cultural genealogy, or signification, is nondetachable from an object. This is why the TV set does not return into its base components. The physical reality does not matter in a world based on sign value. Even if it did, the ideal forms, in their abstraction, do not relate to any objective truths but to the human perspective: a person sees a TV set, and not its material composition. The

1 It is worth noting here that for the most part, with minor exceptions, the regression slows down on the 31st of August, 1939. Perhaps Dick tries to signal that the stable points of reference of reality were somehow destroyed by the World War 2, and everything after that—the post-war modernity—is already a self-accelerating illusion.

entire process of attaching a conceptual "ideal form" to an object is yet another layer of signification, further entangling it into the hyperreality.

One could see this description of a "template" as being in line with Baudrillard's precession of simulacra: a hyperreality in which the sign is not generated by reality, but by yet another sign (Baudrillard, *Precession of Simulacra*). By that logic, the objects occupying the simulated world are of the third order of simulacra: they were constructed without labor and as such are signs that relate to nothing but themselves. Perhaps this is why they "revert"—falling ever deeper into their genealogical network of prior signs, looking for a stable, traceable origin and never finding it, surrendering the search at a distant, apparently arbitrary point in the past.

Trifonova provides one possible explanation of Baudrillard's views which might be helpful in comparing *Ubik's* world to the idea of simulacrum. She argues that the model of hyperreality does not operate on the basis of virtuality or the imaginary, as these would be "forces of negation whereas the pathological involution of the real in the hyperreal puts an end to negation…. The virtual/hyperreal results from a reversal of causality, the introduction of the finality of things at their origin, the accomplishment of things even before their appearance" (Trifonova). This "reversal of causality" is exactly the behavior exhibited by the cold-pac world in the novel: objects reverting, in their entropy, to their historical predecessors, previous forms, instead, as it would be the case within a more temporally logical change, into aged, deteriorated versions of themselves.

However, there is one element of the virtual world that runs against the principle of gradual decay. Throughout the novel, the human characters are stalked and killed, one by one, by a shape-shifting being, later revealed to be Jory Miller, who feeds on the vitality of his victims. While the objects undergo the aforementioned temporal reversals on the grounds of being a part of a decaying virtual world, the negative effects of Jory's attacks on the persons trapped in there do not conform to the same pattern. People attacked by Jory age rapidly, become weak until perishing of old age, only then to be brought to the status of objects. They do not turn into their ancestors, or de-age, which suggests that in this simulation there exists some fundamental distinction between people and objects. Only the approaching death of consciousness begins to transpose the realm of the object onto them. The reader gets a glimpse at this process when Joe Chip is close to death:

> It isn't the universe which is being entombed by layers of wind, cold darkness and ice; all this is going on within me, and yet I seem to see it outside… Is the whole world inside me? Engulfed by my body? It must be a manifestation of dying, he said to himself. The uncertainty which I feel, the slowing down into entropy—that's the process…. When I blink out, he thought, the whole universe will disappear. (ch. 9)

Joe Chip experiences a slow dissolution; annexation into the environment as impending death brings upon him the process of reification. Perhaps he considers the world to be disappearing with him based on the psychological notion that it is only the subject that can "experience" such disappearance. This would suggest that within the *Ubik's* version of hyperreality, despite Baudrillard's assessment of the dissolution of

the subject into the system of signs, there survives a vestige of subjectivity, revealed at the moment of death. Again, Trifonova notices that such a possibility exists in Baudrillard's model of simulacrum:

> The de-realization of reality is the destruction of subjectivity but, as Baudrillard notes, the crime is never perfect. If the real is still preserved… as the trace of what has been murdered.... [I]ts destiny passes into the object. By subjectivizing or de-realizing the world, the subject has revealed its ability to appear and disappear… which is, in fact, the strongest proof that there is still a subject…. By disappearing, by eliminating itself as a point of view, the subject has proven itself even stronger and more real than Baudrillard might have expected. Subjectivity includes its own annihilation. (Trifonova)

Therefore the distinction between the world of objects and the subject can still exist in hyperreality, albeit hidden deep beneath layers of signification. The unfortunate thing is that for Jory's victims in the novel, this becomes apparent only after their life had been extinguished. However, there is still a chance for sustainable subjectivity in the simulation, but it necessitates a radical transformation away from the humanistic subject. If it were to be reformed into a posthuman consciousness, this subjectivity should be able to grow, emerge and plant itself *throughout* the hyperreality, overcoming it. This process is depicted in the novel as Ella's and Joe Chip's survival against Jory, and will be explored further in the next sections of this paper. However, even before that, the reader can distinguish an important change in Joe Chip's attitude towards his surroundings, when he attempts to stabilize the objects in front of him, acting against the process of regression: "'You are a spray can,' Joe said to the pasteboard container which he held in his hand. 'This is 1992,' he said, and tried to exert everything; he put entirety of himself into the effort" (ch. 16).

In what the narration calls "his final transcendental attempt" (ch. 16), Joe transforms from a passive observer, being led deeper into the world of reversed causal chains, to an active agent working to stabilize the simulacrum by extending and embedding his subjective perception onto the environment. He ostensibly establishes a transversal relation between the subject and the object, using the pronoun "you" to refer to objects, as if his will made it possible for him to transgress the ontological barrier between the human organism and a piece of matter. Joe Chip, in this state approaches a form of a relational, posthuman subject as outlined by Braidotti in *The Posthuman*: "a subject that works across differences… but still grounded and accountable" (49). However, Joe Chip cannot accomplish his goal in separation from the system of signs, so the object of his agency also becomes the catalyst facilitating this generation of reality. It is the eponymous substance—Ubik; a commodity which also undergoes a transformation of its own.

Ubik—Commodity/God

Already at the beginning of the novel, before the characters even enter the cold-pac virtual reality, Dick paints a picture of a world that is ostensibly commodified in a fashion reminiscent of Baudrillard's characteristics of hyperreality. The line between

the subject and the object is blurred as everyday items in Joe Chip's life actively urge him to spend money. Coffee machines, news dispensers, even his apartment door, refuse to operate without compensation:

> 'The door refused to open. It said, 'Five cents, please.'
> He searched his pockets [...] 'I don' t have to pay you.'
> 'I think otherwise,' the door said. 'Look in the purchase contract.'
> ….Sure enough; payment to his door for opening and shutting constituted a mandatory fee[.]
> 'You discover I' m right,' the door said. It sounded smug." (ch. 3)

A maintenance person reveals the value system of the 1992 reality through a judgment of Joe Chip's character: "Our department—in fact this entire conapt building—is now programmed against an extension of services and/or credit to such pathetic anomalies as yourself, sir" (ch. 3). The worth of a person, their status as *normal,* is defined by their credit capacity. In a manner closely resembling Baudrillard's evaluation of capitalism, the line between an active agent and an object is vanishing. Joe, even before his half death is exposed to a reality in which objects usurp a primary place in the societal hierarchy. This inversion of power echoes the already mentioned metaphor constructed by Baudrillard in which "[objects'] emphatic goal-directedness has very nearly turned them into the actors in a global process" (*System* 56). The agency of the objects in the real world of the novel foreshadows the hegemony of hyperreality in the half-life virtual world.

Moreover, the only goal of this mechanism is to further its saturation, by ensnaring the entire social dynamic into a mode of endless, empty transactions. Daniel Wyman may help us to connect this dynamic to the Baudrillardian simulacra, by noticing that it is the commodification of reality that initially strips Joe of his agency: "In *Ubik* Dick characterizes Chip by his inability to keep money, and opens with him arguing with his door, which threatens to sue if Chip won't pay for its services…. In this way, Chip's ability to act is constricted by money, and he is commoditized" (19). Capitalist system of value is in control, permitting only a degree of autonomy to the subject measured by financial wealth while at the same time generating autonomy of the objects. Commodities in Dick's novel invade spheres of life which are, in the western tradition of philosophy, excursively human. They appropriate language, agency, and finally, invert the order of the system: they become more autonomous while people such as Joe are commoditized.

After the explosion, when Joe becomes a part of the cold-pac virtual world, this mechanism is still present, although it assumes a different form within the narrative. The already established, decaying objects which populate the environment are also marked by the quality of a commodity. Especially so is a substance called Ubik. Glen Runciter, contacting Joe from the living world through a television screen, urges him to buy a spray can of Ubik, because it apparently serves as a deterrent against the all-consuming decay. His monologue takes the form of a TV commercial wherein he explains: "You see, world deterioration of this regressive type is a normal experience of many half-lifers.... A sort of lingering universe is retained as a residual charge, experienced as a pseudo environment but highly unstable and unsupported by any

ergic substructure.... But with today' s new, more-powerful-than-ever Ubik, all this is changed!" (ch. 10). Runciter not only confirms the nature of the half-life world as an unstable facsimile of reality, but also presents a possible solution. However, he cannot explain how this "magic" product works, except for "by making use of the most advanced techniques of present-day science" (ch. 10). This advertorial mode of description accompanies Ubik almost every time it is mentioned. Four of the five epigrams presenting this substance in the novel are commercials praising, in vague terms, the virtues of the spray. As Poster notices, through these instances, "we are confronted with a culture permeated by commercials such that reality is sustained by them. People… are able to maintain their sense of reality only by imbibing commodity culture" (260). Therefore, presenting Ubik in this way makes it just as counterfeit as the objects it is claiming to stabilize. The only apparent value is bestowed upon it by the language of advertisement. This way of introducing this object into the world automatically bonds it to the realm of commodities and thus to the system of signs. At the same time, the vague, empty descriptors of Ubik do not position it in the realms of utility nor materiality. Its origins, or indeed essence are completely obscured if not nonexistent—a part of the same hyperreality that Ubik is somehow supposed to keep at bay. The commercialized Ubik promises only an illusion of salvation from the hyperreality. Poster sees in this process a reflection of a movement towards the posthuman:

> With the multiplication and dissemination of increasingly advanced information machines, the earth has entered a posthuman era. Our society has done so under the general regime of commodity, which, at the cultural level, disseminates itself in the discourse of advertising. Dick's novel explores the Ubiquity of the ad and its relation to the formation of a humanity that is synthesized with information machines. (251)

In this view, the commodification of life is a factor (perhaps even a facilitating circumstance) in the emergence of the posthuman. However, while this hyperreality is the setting of the posthuman transformation, I argue that this transition may occur as a response to the "regime of commodity," and not in line with it. If we were to perceive Ubik as a synonym of a vital and positive—reintegrative—force, a force belonging to a post-humanist reality, even though it is presented as a commodity, this would suggest that Dick positions capitalism as an environment facilitating posthumanism while being critical of its artificiality. In the novel, this conflict does not go unaddressed.

Joe repeatedly fails to acquire Ubik through commerce. The substance is either too expensive, unavailable, expired, or taken away. Glen Runciter's commercialized salvation is fleeting if not downright unobtainable. Joe Chip, as an individual, is unable to overcome the simulacra while submitting to their capital-triggered structures. Then, when all hope seems lost, Ubik, the substance itself, undergoes a transformation negotiated by Ella Runciter, another half-lifer who assists Joe Chip.

Ella, at that point in the novel already being engaged in a posthuman mode of subjectivity (as I will explain in the next sections), helps the protagonist. She provides Joe Chip with a "lifetime" supply of the substance free of charge (ch.13). With this act she distances Ubik-substance from Ubik-product, thus severing the aspect of

commodity from the object. Hayles proposes that this transformation stands for Dick's admission of the failure of capitalist economy of signs, as the substance can only be understood in the context of what it stands against: the egotistical, exploitative actions of Jory Miller. Jory *consumes* his surroundings, and the now transformed Ubik deters his murderous spree. The critic writes: "Only after acknowledging this appetite (which must be understood as operating on the multiple levels signified by 'consuming') can the author discern, among the trashy surfaces of capitalist excess, the divine within the world" (Hayles 187). This reframing in the narrative pulls Ubik from the hyperreal feedback loop of signs, giving it a potential to create authentic points of reference.

By referring to an earlier work of Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign,* one can see this process as analogous to what he calls "Symbolic Exchange." It is a phenomenon in which a subject, through their own sacrifice, gifts an object to another person and through that exchange the object is detached from the system of signs. Baudrillard explains how in a symbolic exchange "object is not an object: it is inseparable from the transferential pact that is sealed between two persons… once it has been given—and *because* of this—it is *this* object and not another. The gift is unique" (64). In this process the arbitrary value of the object (stemming not from any material qualities or labor but from a general political economy) is invalidated. The network of signs that have been entangling the object is severed since "[w]hat is neither sold or taken, but only given and returned, no one 'needs'.… This is the metabolism of exchange…. In this domain, value isn't even recognized. *And desire is not fulfilled there in the phantasm of value"* (207). Symbolic exchange therefore becomes an abolition of "need" and leads to the destruction of the illusion of value.

Through this framework, one can initially position the Ubik spray as an object of consumption exemplifying the sign value (realized through the language of advertisement). However, the act of symbolic exchange initiated by Ella transforms Ubik by destroying its attachment to the commodified sign economy. With that transition, the manner in which Ubik is referred to also changes, from a register of advertisement to that of religious speech. No longer capable of expressing itself as a commodity, Ubik assumes a new voice in the final chapter of the novel: "I am Ubik. Before the universe was, I am... I am the word and my name is never spoken, the name which no one knows. I am called Ubik, but that is not my name. I am. I shall always be" (ch. 17). The substance becomes a god, no longer a purchasable product, but a divine, central being. It establishes itself as a narrative resurrection of what Baudrillard deems the lost "strong referential" (*Simulacra*), perhaps not yet "authentic," but symbolic in its counterfeit, capable of creating a reality that is not subservient to hyperreality. This shift outside of the value does not automatically make Ubik itself real, but according to Boon, Dick exposes in it the arbitrariness of commodities, thus stripping them of their illusory power over the subject: "For Dick, it is precisely the most obviously 'counterfeit' objects in the world that have potential ontological import, because their inauthenticity already contains a negation of conventional notions of authenticity and, as such, they are closer to the truth than those objects which human beings consider real or authentic" (73).

Through the adaptation of religious language, Ubik discards the pretense of value that the other, counterfeit objects in the simulation try to uphold, therefore

paradoxically becoming more authentic than any of them. Boon continues: "the pathos of Dick's work lies in the way he is able to narrativize the struggle of any particular object—human or nonhuman—to overcome its status as a counterfeit in search of its own hidden truth" (81). This subversion of the perception of authenticity, opens up a possibility of creating *new* modes of being for a posthuman subject, establishing an independent perspective instead of relying on humanistic conventions.

Figurations of the Posthuman

The need for a departure from the conventional model of the subject has been one of the main goals of postmodern thinkers. Best and Kellner describe their aim to "decentre and liquidate the modern bourgeois, humanist subject which they interpret as a construct of modern discourses and institutions" (283). However, as they continue, "all postmodern theory lacks an adequate theory of agency, of an active self, mediated by social institutions, discourses, and other people" (283). Posthumanism attempts to construct ontologies surpassing the postmodern impasse by employing open, affirmative and dynamic ways of interacting with the world.

It may be the case that in reading *Ubik* one may find a representation of the discourse between postmodernism and posthumanism. In this section, two characters from the novel will be analyzed in order to evaluate their potential of representing a posthuman subject in hyperreality. Those will be Jory Miller and Ella Runciter, both of which exhibit a capacity to modify the simulated reality.

a) Jory

Throughout the novel Joe Chip is pursued by a malevolent entity, identified by the end as Jory Miller. He has been in the half-life state longer than any other character. He keeps himself alive by invading the cold-pac realities and consuming the vitality of other inhabitants. This antagonist exhibits some control over the simulated environment. Lacking a body, he becomes an ever present, invisible form, only revealing himself as a shape-shifter assuming the visages of his victims. His predatory drive towards immortality at the cost of others positions Jory as a being still enslaved to a desire for autonomy from others, yet interfering with their capacity to both live and die. As MacCormack notices: "posthumanities experiment with infinite life has led to some very irrational reasonings.... Virtual universes are corroded for the unconscious sublimation of alterity as annexed, incorporated and consumed as part of the hysteric drive for posthumanity" (136).

Therefore, Jory can be seen, in his selfish form of self-realization and attempts at immortality, as a being in a self-perpetuating loop of isolation which the simulacrum forces upon him. It can be argued that Dick created here a figure analogous to Baudrillard's jogger: "[jogging] it is the pleasure not of pure physical exertion but of a dematerialization, of an endless functioning…. Making the body run soon gives way… to letting the body run: the body is hypnotized by its own performance and goes on running on its own, in the absence of a subject" (*Transparency* 47).

Jory institutes his subjectivity only as a means of egotistic gain, turning every interaction with another human into a vampiric exploit. Just like the jogger, his own

compulsion for survival makes his consciousness subordinate to that compulsion. He spirals into a vacuum of his own making and becomes a subject in relation to nothingness—since he devours any stable point of reference he encounters, leaving only a pre-world war facsimile of history—and an object, a vessel for his own self-perpetuating need for consumption. Ironically, this isolating, aggressive attempt at retaining subjectivity is what allows the simulation to gradually destroy it.

Joe Chip realizes that the regression of the universe is not entirely a result of Jory's will. While he struggles to stabilize the simulation for his own benefit, his power over the objects within it begins to wane: "He had constructed—not this world—but the world, or rather its phantasmagoric counterpart, of their own time. Decomposition back to these forms was not of his doing; they happened despite his efforts.... As the boy says, it' s an enormous effort" (ch. 16).

Jory only maintains the *appearance* of being in control when in fact his power over the simulation is as fabricated as the objects he conjures. Despite his veneer of omniscience over the simulacra, he is as much subservient to the structures of hyperreality as his victims. By exerting energy to sustain a simulation without an authentic reference point, he becomes trapped in a prison of his own making.

b) Ella

The force opposing Jory, and guiding Joe Chip, is Ella Runciter, Glen's wife. While she coyly claims that the reasons for her assistance were "selfish, practical" (ch. 16), as she wants Joe Chip to take her place as an adviser to her husband, she also invites him to take up the mantle of the protector against Jory's predatory influence.

She, just like Jory, has the capacity to alter the virtual reality. However, while he utilizes it to manipulate and destroy its inhabitants, Ella partakes in a more productive form of creation. She moves against the capitalistic construction of Ubik in an affirmative direction, by providing the other inhabitants of un-dead virtual reality with the spray can for free, without engaging in its commercial mechanisms—something which her husband failed to accomplish or even conceive of, instead repeatedly urging Joe to buy Ubik.

Unlike Jory, Ella chooses to embrace death, believing it to be a way for reintroduction to reality through reincarnation: "Fairly soon I'll be reborn into another womb, I think" (ch. 16). This too may be seen as an expression of her becoming posthuman, when compared to Braidotti's observations: "in a posthuman perspective, the emphasis on the impersonality of life is echoed by an analogous reflection on death. Because humans are mortal, death, or the transience of life, is written at our core: it is the event that structures our time-lines... not as a limit, but as a porous threshold" (131). Instead of clinging to her half-life, Ella accepts death, however instead of seeing it as a dissolution of the subject, she uses it to *affirm* her subjectivity, claiming: "I don' t think of myself as an 'entity,' I usually think of myself as Ella Runciter" (ch. 16). The "threshold," as Braidotti calls it, allows Ella to leave behind the commodified web of signs, and become a posthuman creative force. She establishes herself as capable of generating a new mode of existence in the simulation. She is conscious of her physical limitations, yet able to overcome the cold-pac prison. Thus proving herself a posthuman cyborg—embodied, female and adaptive.

If, as Hayles proposes, "in the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation" (3), then Ella and Jory would qualify as posthuman beings. They permeate the entire simulation, free to assume different avatars and to modify their surroundings, while their bodies inform their outlook towards death. In Jory's case, it is a will to survive, realized by assimilating other inhabitants of the simulation and feeding of their vitality. For Ella, this interaction is reversed: she displays an emphatic motivation to save the other inhabitants connected to her in the virtual reality, while fully accepting death. She engages in the collective of half-livers, as well as the objects in the simulation (through Ubik).

In that sense, Ella is closer to a true posthuman subject, as outlined by Hayles to be "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (3). This stands as a radical departure from the liberal humanist subject, characterized by Hayles by following Macpherson's analysis of possessive individualism as "owning nothing to society" and exhibiting "the human essence [that is] freedom from the wills of others" (3). Jory's predatory, egocentric acts of destruction are done in order to make him self-reliant in the simulation, whereas Ella understands the futility of that solitary undertaking, and opens herself up to a mutually beneficial inter-connectivity with the whole of the simulation, stabilizing the world; offering *herself* as a point of reference from which a reality can be reconstructed. Ella is the embodiment of what Hayles sees as "a version of the posthuman that embraces the possibilities of information technologies without being seduced by fantasies of unlimited power and disembodied immortality, that recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being" (5).

The process in which Ubik becomes transformed occurs thanks to the symbolic exchange facilitated by Ella's sacrifice or gift. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death* Baudrillard expands on the implications of this phenomenon. According to him, the fundamental driving force behind the political economy is "the will to abolish death" (167), which is antithetical to the mechanics of symbolic exchange that necessitates or even embodies death or sacrifice. Baudrillard equates the idea of symbolic exchange to death as these two phenomena sever the connection of the object or subject respectively from the value assigned to them by the consumerist system. Therefore such an exchange is impossible within "this process of spiralling hoarding" (167). Because Jory creates the simulacra to feed and prolong his life, guided by an obsession over deferring death, he is only in control as long as his hyperreality stays impenetrable. However, the symbolic exchange between Joe Chip and Ella 'breaks his spell'. By shedding the sign value of Ubik, and, as Hayles proposes, celebrating finitude, they overcome the impossible and are able to see through the realm of simulacra.

Conclusions

Hayles notes the capital-oriented dissolution of stable distinctions between the subject and the commodity in Dick's mid-sixties novels: "Typically these are highly commercialized spaces in which the boundaries between autonomous individual and technological artifact have become increasingly permeable…. Given this dynamic,

it is no surprise that the struggle for freedom often expresses itself as an attempt to get 'outside' this corporate encapsulation" (162). The lines between the subject and its environment are dissolved in hyperreality, granting it the power to reshape it, but also opening them up to be consumed or transformed by the environment. Since the simulacra operate on abstractions, a subject embedded into this world faces the danger of being denied autonomous physicality, reduced to the same abstraction that surrounds them.

Dick utilizes an artificial labyrinth of white noise made of commodified signs and copies—the simulacra—leaving his characters with two options: either to stay lost, trying to navigate a space without an authentic point of reference, or explore a perspective that allows them to influence the environment and carve out their own exit. While it may not be possible to entirely escape hyperreality, the posthuman perspective may grant them the ability to recognize it for what it is, bestowing on them a capacity to overwrite the system of signs with emergent reference points.

However, it is important to make a distinction: this capacity is *not* a mastery over the world the posthuman subject inhabits, it does not come from an "illusion of control" which, in Hayles's view would come from "ignorance about the nature of emergent processes through which consciousness… and the environment are constituted." Rather, it is a "dynamic partnership between humans and intelligent machines" (288). Indeed, Joe, as a fully *human* subject is defenseless against the distorting, decentralized world of the half-live. Only the involvement of subjects permeating the simulation, such as Ella, facilitates his agency. By opening himself up to the transformative qualities of the Ubik spray—and negotiating a mode of existence outside of commodified sign system with Ella's help—Joe is establishing this kind of partnership.

In the novel, the individualized beings are plunged into a (third-order) simulation. However, while for Baudrillard these are rather grim circumstances, inevitably leading to a dissolution of subjectivity in a temporally unstable oblivion, Dick goes a step further and proposes solutions to that crisis. As Sue Short states in her critique in *Cyborg Cinema*: "Baudrillard… appears to combine deterministic explanations of media power with SF fears about human identity being threatened by external forces, yet his work is notably devoid of any response other than resignation and apathy, asserting that 'only fiction of a political universe remains'" (162).

Critical and philosophical posthumanism, in contrast, searches for alternative modes of subjectivity capable of overcoming this hopelessness. Similarly, Dick's fiction does indeed focus on the internal and replicated, rather than exploration of the unknown, but within those simulated spaces, a new subjectivity *can* be discovered, formed as a posthuman, overcoming the simulation, emerging as new, despite the closed loop of self-reference. *Ubik* is an experiment in pushing the characters past the humanistic perception of (un)reality. The product of this reaction is a synthesis of a posthuman subject for whom the hyperreality is just as much an obstacle, as it is a catalyst for transformation.

Baudrillard proposes that a simulacrum is "never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference" (*Simulation 6*), and that "never again will the real have a chance to produce itself" (2).

In contrast to this grim synopsis, the posthuman ontological shift, as embodied by Ella Runciter, has the potential to ultimately overcome these limits, finding the "reference" through interconnectivity with other beings, and returning to the real by embracing death.

Yet, through Jory's character, Dick warns: this transformation is not a given. Stirred into a vortex of desperate, consumerist preservation, it can just as well doom the undertaking. The transformation, then, cannot be done in a vacuum of ego. Dick seems to succeed at conveying the posthuman modes of perceiving and interacting with reality, as not equivalent to those of a classically understood liberal subject. Ella Runciter asserts her subjectivity through a positive, constructive interaction with the environment, bestowing, through symbolic exchange, sustainability to the inhabitants of unstable reality. Posthuman subjectivity necessitates an openness to the environment; a positive-sum game. The equation in Dick's experiment is then alchemical: a posthuman, affirmative something, out of a postmodern, unreal nothing.

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Klara Szmańko

"At the Western Palace": The Dehumanization of Whiteness, Americanness, and Chinese-Americanness in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

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Abstract: The dehumanization of whiteness in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) inheres in the overarching ghosthood metaphor. While first generation Chinese American immigrants in *The Woman Warrior* attribute the power of transforming people into ghosts to the United States of America as a country, the questioning of a person's humanity by calling them a "ghost" is not reserved for white people alone. Chinese American immigrants also run the risk of losing their humanity and becoming ghosts if they renounce their relatives and their heritage. The husband of the first-person narrator's Chinese aunt, Moon Orchid, is an example of a Chinese American man, who turns into a ghost on account of swapping his Chinese wife for a much younger American one. The clinic in which Moon Orchid's husband works, a chrome and glass Los Angeles skyscraper, becomes a vehicle for the metaphoric representation of the United States as the Western Palace – also the title of the fourth of the five chapters of *The Woman Warrior*, exemplifying narrative techniques employed by Kingston in order to render the above mentioned dehumanization.

Keywords: Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, point of view, narration, ghosts, whiteness, white Americans, Chinese Americans, Chinese immigrants, white people, barbarians, savages

> How do we know that ghosts are the continuation of dead people? Couldn't ghosts be an entirely different species of creature? (Kingston 77)

The dehumanization of whiteness in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) inheres in the overarching ghosthood metaphor present in the opening epigraph, which captures the characterization of whiteness in the narrative, referring not only to the representation of ghosts as supernatural beings, but also to the portrayal of whites as dehumanized and at least partly separate from humanity. First generation Chinese American immigrants in *The Woman Warrior* attribute the power of transforming people into ghosts to the United States of America as a country. Yet the questioning of a person's humanity by calling them a "ghost" is not reserved for white people alone. Chinese American immigrants also run the risk of losing their humanity and becoming ghosts if they renounce their relatives and their heritage. The husband of the first-person narrator's Chinese aunt, Moon Orchid, is an example of a Chinese American man, who turns into a ghost on account of swapping his Chinese wife for a much younger American one. The clinic in which Moon Orchid's husband works, a chrome and glass Los Angeles skyscraper, becomes a vehicle for the metaphoric representation of the United States as the Western Palace—also the title of the fourth of the five chapters of *The Woman Warrior*.[1] Glass and chrome are only a facade of

1 Toming Jun Liu suggests that in the Chinese language the term "western palace" is also a

luxury, comfort and opulence covering the arduous immigrant reality encapsulated in the following statement: "This is a terrible ghost country, where a human being works her life away.... Even the ghosts [white people] work, no time for acrobatics" (122), "I can't sleep in this country because it doesn't shut down for the night. Factories, canneries, restaurants—always somebody somewhere working through the night. It never gets done all at once here" (123-24). According to Brave Orchid, the narrator's mother, who utters the above-cited words, the demands on human beings in the United States have a negative impact on relations between people, estranging them from one another. The article explores the following aspects of the perceived process of dehumanization on American soil in *The Woman Warrior*:

- narrative techniques, including experimentation with a viewpoint, employed by Kingston in order to render the avowed dehumanization;
- the conflation of whiteness and Americanness in the mentality of at least some first generation Chinese American characters;
- the Moon Orchid character as the greatest victim of the dehumanization taking place in the United States;
- Moon Orchid's husband as a Chinese American man whose own humanity becomes significantly compromised on American soil;
- and the undermining of what a whiteness studies scholar, Ruth Frankenberg, terms as the "self-naming" power of whiteness (13).

The conscious and strategic uprooting of Moon Orchid's husband from his Chinese American heritage is placed in the article in the literary context of Asian American characters, who regret the severing or loosening of the ties with their homeland communities. The article is written in the spirit of New Historicism, which assumes that "literary and non-literary 'texts' circulate inseparably" (Veeser xi), refusing to "observe strict and fixed boundaries between 'literary' and other texts" (Montrose 26): hence the juxtaposition of Frankenberg's and Arkush and Lee's sociological research with Kingston's Chinese American autobiographical fiction underlain by her real life experience.[2]

The discussion of the dehumanization and dehumanizing quality of whiteness as well as Americanness centres in the above-mentioned "At the Western Palace" chapter. Unlike other chapters of *The Woman Warrior*, "At the Western Palace" is narrated in the third person, selective omniscient point of view. The choice of the third person narration is strategic, capturing the distance in relations between people and also indicating the first person narrator's distance towards depicted events. At other points of the narrative the narrator consistently chooses the first person narration even while recounting the events in which she does not participate directly. The narrator's distance is the most palpable in the passages referring to her closest relatives through official

Chinese idiom for a "second wife" (12).

2 I wish to stress that the ample critique of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* does not probe the problems raised in the article. I cite the criticisms which are closest to the perimeter of the themes discussed here, that is, Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's "Necessity and Extravagance in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*: Art and the Ethnic Experience," Cheng Lok Chua's "Mythopoesis of East and West in *The Woman Warrior*," and Toming Jun Liu's "The Problematics of Kingston's 'Cultural Translation': A Chinese Diasporic View of *The Woman Warrior*."

terms of reference like Brave Orchid or Brave Orchid's husband, rather than mother or father. The narrator's impersonal stance in the chapter magnifies an air of estrangement hovering over interpersonal relations in the United States. This estrangement is the most conspicuous in Moon Orchid's encounter with her husband, when the narrator compares both of them to the colonists of the Chinese land. Greeting Moon Orchid, her husband says "hello" "like an Englishman in Hong Kong," to which Moon Orchid answers "hello" "like an English telephone operator" (138). The third person mode of narration not only exposes the estrangement of people from one another, but also their estrangement from themselves. Self-estrangement, as well as self-irony of the narrator, is visible when she depicts herself in the following words: "There was indeed an oldest girl who was absent-minded and messy" (152). Significant portions of "At the Western Palace" chapter are focalized through Brave Orchid's and Moon Orchid's points of view. In particular, the focalization of the narration through Moon Orchid's point of view further accentuates the loosening of human ties on American soil. Moon Orchid relates everything that she witnesses in Brave Orchid's household in the third person, magnifying the overall distancing effect of the third person narration employed by the narrator in the chapter. Moon Orchid's third person narration within the third person narration adopted by the first person narrator for "At the Western Palace" chapter renders her estrangement from the new environment in which she finds herself. Moon Orchid focuses on Brave Orchid's children and all their daily, mundane activities. Meticulously documenting everything that they do, she resembles an ethnographer studying her subjects. After retreating into madness, Moon Orchid still describes the children's proceedings in the house, but no longer changes her intonation and no longer poses any questions.[3]

The passages of "At the Western Palace" focalized through the viewpoint of Moon Orchid's husband show the acme of estrangement from the people who deserve respect and acknowledgement from the man who looks at them or rather through[4] them at that particular point of the narration. Initially, Moon Orchid's husband fails to recognize Moon Orchid and Brave Orchid as his relatives, addressing them as "Grandmothers" and reflecting on what he perceives as the ugliness of their faces: "These women had such awful faces" (176). During an ensuing conversation Moon Orchid's husband[5] does not refer to Moon Orchid's and his own daughter as "our daughter," but as "her daughter," which again accentuates the husband's distance (177). A slightly different perspective of the events narrated in "At the Western Palace" chapter appears at the beginning of the following and last chapter of the book, entitled

3 Reconciling herself to Moon Orchid's madness, Brave Orchid defines insanity as telling the same story time and again (184).

4 Reaching for the term "looking through," I draw on the typology of vision established by Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. In the epilogue to the narrative, the Invisible Man declares that his narrative recounts "what was going on while your eyes were looking through" (439). "Looking through" signifies the visual sweeping of the surface of one's body without delving beneath.

5 The name of Moon Orchid's husband is never revealed, possibly for two reasons: potentially to stress the narrator's distance to this particular character or to give an air of authenticity to the text that was constructed as the first person autobiographical narrative and that was defined by publishers on the book cover as a memoirs, although Kingston herself defied this classification, identifying the book as a first person novel, whose narrator should not be identified as herself even if the narrator's life is based on her own.

"A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe." While "At the Western Palace" chapter presents an elaborate version of an encounter between Moon Orchid and her husband, the opening of "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe" offers a bare version. The bare version emerges from a short conversation between the participant in the events, the narrator's brother, and the narrator's sister. Reading the conversation, the reader may have an impression that it is the narrator herself talking to her brother. Only at the end of the conversation does the narrator announce that she did not talk to the brother in person, but obtained information through her sister. As in "The Laws" chapter of *China Men*, Kingston illustrates the process of retrieving information, vouchsafing her brother's version and her sister's personal opinion on the events. Polyphony and a sudden shift of narration from third person back to first person reinforces the postmodern aesthetics of the narrative. The bare version recounted in the afore-mentioned conversation is very short on details, suggesting that the narrator fills the gaps in information with her imagination. Not acknowledging the role of her imagination directly, the narrator still admits that her stories are "twisted into designs" (189).

The portrayal of whiteness as dehumanized and dehumanizing is one more juncture in *The Woman Warrior* when whiteness and Americanness are discursively closely linked. Both were often linked in white mentality. The white conservative discourse and popular imagery often equated whiteness and Americanness. For example, for white women investigated by sociologist Ruth Frankenberg, "the two place markers 'white' and 'American' at times operated interchangeably" (Frankenberg, "Whiteness and Americanness" 66). Kingston shows in *The Woman Warrior* that whiteness and Americanness may be synonymous not only in white mentality, but also in the perception of first generation immigrants—in this case first generation Chinese Americans. While Kingston's later works, *China Men* (1986) and *Tripmaster Monkey* (1989), make a concerted effort to anchor Chinese Americans in the fabric of Americanness, *The Woman Warrior* shows the people who do not necessarily unequivocally identify themselves as Americans and they are aware that a significant portion of American society denies them such an identification. The narrator herself grapples with self-identification, claiming that she "could not figure out what [her] village was," trying to "understand what things in [her] were Chinese" (6).[6] Brave Orchid corrects Moon Orchid when she identifies Chinese Americans living in Chinatown as Americans: "These aren't the Americans. These are the overseas Chinese" (157). For Moon Orchid, their long time residence in the United States suffices to make them Americans. If on this occasion Brave Orchid identifies Chinese Americans living in Chinatown as the Chinese, at a different point she draws a distinction between the Chinese and Chinese Americans living in the United States. After reconciling herself to her permanent residence in the United States, she declares that she does not trust the Chinese: "They're Chinese, and Chinese are mischievous.… I'm too old to keep up with them. They'd be too clever for me" (126).

"At the Western Palace" explicitly defines the United States as the "ghost country" (176) and as "the land of ghosts" (178). The narrator reaches for the term

6 The narrator's attitude diametrically contrasts with that evinced by the protagonist of *Tripmaster Monkey*, Wittman Ah Sing, who is disenchanted with himself after saying: "We came from the Tropic of Cancer" (42).

"the land of ghosts," depicting the encounter between Moon Orchid and her husband. "The land of ghosts" signifies the land of people who significantly compromised, if not totally breached, the ties with other human beings, especially those whom they should particularly treasure on account of pre-existing bonds. As mentioned earlier, Moon Orchid's husband is an example of a ghost-like figure because of the irreverent attitude towards his former wife. In her discussion of Moon Orchid's and her husband's estrangement, the narrator stops short of laying all the responsibility on the husband. Instead, she accentuates the power of the United States to estrange people from each other: "Her husband looked like one of the ghosts passing the car windows, and she must look like a ghost from China. They had indeed entered the land of ghosts, and they had become ghosts" (178). The above passage illustrates the extent of Moon Orchid's and her husband's estrangement from each other. In the context of the passage, being a ghost equals being a stranger to someone else. The image of "ghosts passing car windows" implies a very transient contact marked by impersonality and the lack of involvement as well as recognition. If both Moon Orchid and her husband are ghosts, both are also transparent to each other. There is no sign of respect or recognition, let alone love, in the manner Moon Orchid's husband looks at his Chinese wife. His gaze is one of the features which in the eyes of his fellow Chinese American first generation immigrants makes him similar to white Americans. For first generation Chinese Americans, the gaze of white people serves as another manifestation of their rudeness, hostility and suspicion. Looking at Moon Orchid, her husband subjects her to a scrutinizing, inspecting gaze: "He looked directly at Moon Orchid the way the savages [white Americans] looked, looking for lies. 'What do you want?' he asked. She shrank from his stare; it silenced her crying" (177). An invocation of "savages" "look[ing] for lies" suggests an interrogation situation during the crossing of the American border or a deportation hearing. Smothering Moon Orchid's crying, her husband's inspecting, scrutinizing gaze has a disciplining power. As during the exchanges between the narrator and the racist employers, the eye contact and the verbal contact between Moon Orchid and the husband is very imperfect. Like racist bosses "impossible to meet eye to eye" (57), Moon Orchid's husband is not interested in establishing a meaningful visual or verbal exchange with Moon Orchid. He talks down at her authoritatively, frustrating all communication. His goal is to inform rather than listen to. Like the narrator during the afore-mentioned confrontation with the racist employers, Moon Orchid barely stammers out a few words.

The imagery employed during the thwarted reunion renders the estrangement of Moon Orchid's husband from his wife. Focalizing the narration through the viewpoint of Moon Orchid's husband and drawing the reader's attention to the discrepancy between the youthful appearance of the husband and the old age of Moon Orchid and Brave Orchid, the narrator claims that the front seat of the car served as a "barrier against the two women" (177). Unfolding in the cramped space of the car, the encounter symbolizes Moon Orchid's marginality and the marginality of the husband's former life in his overall life story. The cramped space of the car contrasts sharply with the expansiveness of the husband's workplace—high-rise chrome and glass clinic—as well as the broader setting of Los Angeles. The meeting itself is a far cry from what Brave Orchid had envisioned. According to Brave Orchid's design, Moon Orchid is

to make a theatrical entrance into the husband's house. She is to be dressed up as a beautiful, strange lady only to throw off her wig and reveal her identity in front of the husband and the second wife. Brave Orchid's plan founders because Moon Orchid does not share Brave Orchid's theatrical penchant and she has a more realistic outlook on the prospects of the reunion. It also turns out that the address procured by Brave Orchid is the husband's work address, not his home address. In "Necessity and Extravagance in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*: Art and the Ethnic Experience," Cynthia Sau-ling Wong argues that as a former doctor in China and a manual labourer in the United States, Brave Orchid is jealous of Moon Orchid's husband's success in the field of medicine on American soil (16). Therefore a fissure in his seemingly blemish-free American life would constitute a kind of psychological compensation for Brave Orchid.

Throughout the encounter with Moon Orchid and throughout the whole "At the Western Palace" chapter the husband's moral degeneration is blamed on his Americanization. The passages criticizing what is perceived as his typically American rude gaze are only examples of his Americanization. A series of statements focalized through Brave Orchid's and Moon Orchid's point of view characterize him as a typical American: "He looked and smelled like an American" (176), "He talked like a child born here" (177). Brave Orchid declares that he "turned into barbarian" because he married a new American wife, leaving behind his earlier wife and his parents (146). Moon Orchid's husband himself plays up his Americanness, claiming that their lifestyles and mentalities are irreconcilable. In his view, Moon Orchid would not "fit into an American household" (178), potentially antagonizing his "important American guests" (178). Insensitive as he is, he recognizes Moon Orchid's delicacy, arguing that one needs to be tough to make it in the United States (177). Without any visible qualms of conscience, he proclaims himself a good husband because he provided for Moon Orchid and "her daughter" (178). Asked by Brave Orchid why he did not definitely inform his wife that they would never be reunited, he reaches for a book metaphor, stating that his Chinese relatives "became people in a book [he] had read a long time ago" (179). Blaming the completeness of his new life for leaving his Chinese life almost completely behind, he has an impression that he "turn[s] into a different person" (179). The book metaphor functions differently in the rendition of Moon Orchid's husband than it does in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981). Unlike Moon Orchid's husband, the first person narrator of *Obasan*, Naomi, reaches for the book metaphor in order to recover the severed link with her Japanese American relatives, most of whom are already dead when she writes the narrative. Naomi fills the empty book pages of her dream with people physically lost a long time ago, while Moon Orchid's husband commits his Chinese relatives to the book he "had read a long time ago" with the aim of forgetting them (179). This kind of oblivious attitude also stands in sharp contrast to that of other Asian American literary characters who lost ties with their Asian ancestors and relatives. An example of such a character is Councilman John Kwang of Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker* (1995). Kwang weeps like a child while chanting a Korean song about a man who returns to his ancestral village only to see his relatives dead. Another Asian American character created by Chang-rae Lee, Frank Hata, the protagonist of *A Gesture Life* (2000), never leaves his Korean Japanese

past behind, mentally coexisting in different realities. A similar trope can be traced in David Mura's *Where the Body Meets Memory* (1995), when the narrator's Japanese American aunt looks in vain for the grave of her father, who returned to Japan, having spent World War II in an internment camp.

If looked at from a different perspective, the story of Moon Orchid's husband is one more variation on Werner Sollors' seminal distinction between consent and descent. The wife left behind, often chosen by a man's parents, symbolizes the past and descent, while the self-chosen American wife stands for consent representing the new vibrant life full of possibilities (Sollors 157). While, according to Moon Orchid's husband, Moon Orchid would not fit into his American household, the second wife apparently does because she is younger, better looking and can speak English.

An explanation of the title of "At the Western Palace" chapter comes in Brave Orchid's tale of the Emperor of the Earth and his four wives. Just as in the "White Tigers" chapter, recounting the Woman Warrior's trials in the mountains of the white tigers, the West is associated in Brave Orchid's tale with gold, the symbol of the quest for power. The Empress of the West longs for power unlike the Empress of the East, who is "good and kind and full of light" (166). Brave Orchid compares Moon Orchid to the Empress of the East, who will emerge from the dawn to raid the land of the Empress of the West and reclaim her imprisoned husband. The palace functions in the tale as the place of isolation and incarceration rather than the place where on can unfurl their potential in the way Moon Orchid's husband does in the United States. If there is anything that Moon Orchid could liberate her husband from, these are the forces that compromised his humanity. Instead of liberating her husband, she becomes trapped herself. Overwhelmed by his insensitivity and her own displacement, Moon Orchid retreats into madness.

Like her husband, Moon Orchid also turns into a ghost, but her transition into a ghost signifies something else than it does in the case of the husband. While for Moon Orchid's husband being a ghost signifies partial dehumanization and desensitization because of the breach of ancestral ties, for Moon Orchid being a ghost represents estrangement from other people and from herself. In Brave Orchid's household, Moon Orchid's attitude to Brave Orchid's children literally approximates that of a ghost. Curious of all their activities, she trails them like a ghost-like figure, observing carefully everything they do and later relating it in the third person. As mentioned earlier, the third person narration magnifies Moon Orchid's distance from the environment in which she finds herself. Unnerved by supervision, children do not reciprocate her interest. Moon Orchid's haunting of the children is fairly innocuous and free of negative connotations of the term "haunting," being underlain purely by curiosity, which in the course of time turns into attachment. Although barely any communication transpires between Moon Orchid and the children, she still develops a sense of bonding with them. Estranged as Moon Orchid is in Brave Orchid's household, she sets her roots there, achieving a level of happiness, which she is unwilling to relinquish in order to pursue her husband: "'But I'm happy here with you and all your children,' Moon Orchid said. 'I want to see how this girl's sewing turns out. I want to see your son come back from Vietnam. I want to see if this one gets good grades. There's so much to do'" (165). The dynamic ghost-haunted changes when Moon Orchid lives in her

daughter's house, where she feels spied on by "Mexican ghosts," whom she believes to plot against her life. Moon Orchid's suspicions are most probably a figment of her strained psyche because it is difficult to imagine that she would be able to overhear the Mexicans conspiring against her if she speaks neither Spanish nor English, unless she deduces it from the situational context. Being under an impression that she is haunted, Moon Orchid resembles a ghost-like figure, trying to efface herself bodily in order to evade her purported pursuers. Like a woman in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," she crawls on the floor, furtively glancing outside her house lest she be noticed. Moon Orchid's ordeal in the United States changes her physically in such a way as to make her similar to a ghost also in her appearance: "Her… skin hung loose, like a hollowed frog's, as if she had shrunken inside it. Her clothes bagged, not fitting sharply anymore" (180). After being committed to mental asylum, she becomes a shadow of her former self, "[shrinking] to bone" (185).

Moon Orchid's story highlights the estranging power of the United States in *The Woman Warrior* on several levels. On the most immediate level, she is displaced from her previous environment, being puzzled at diverse aspects of the new environment. Yet she still has a sense of security in Brave Orchid's household, security which vanishes when she leaves Brave Orchid's home. Ironically, Moon Orchid's ties to her relatives grow looser after she moves closer to them in spatial terms. When Brave Orchid and Moon Orchid live on separate continents, they write to each other every fortnight. After Moon Orchid moves away to a different city in California, Brave Orchid does not hear from her for several months (179). Although Moon Orchid and her husband live in the same city of Los Angeles, they meet only once. Cheng Lok Chua finds it puzzling that "a neurosurgeon's wife [Moon Orchid] dies in a lunatic asylum" (148). It is even more puzzling that her neurosurgeon husband, together with another former doctor, Brave Orchid, who sets up the whole situation, are the root causes behind her mental collapse. Eventually Moon Orchid not only grows estranged from other people in the United States, but also from herself. This is how Brave Orchid interprets her madness: "Moon Orchid had misplaced herself, her spirit (her 'attention'…) all over the world" (181-82). That is why she chants to Moon Orchid her new address in order to bring her spirit home. The passage points up the importance of location in identity formation. Brave Orchid herself is the subject of a similar incantation in the narrative when she recovering from her encounter with the Sitting Ghost.

"At the Western Palace" chapter undermines what Ruth Frankenberg classifies as the "self-naming" power of whiteness (13). Throughout the chapter white people are referred to as "ghosts," "savages" and "barbarians." Such a representation recurs throughout *The Woman Warrior*, but it reaches particular intensity in "At the Western Palace". The portrayal of whites as savages and barbarians inscribes itself in the characterization of whiteness as dehumanized, desensitized, separate from humanity or at best as an inferior, uncultivated species of humanity. The rhetoric of "savages" and "barbarians" applied to white people reverses the colonial discourse applied to people of colour. Labels "savages" and "barbarians" are by no means uncommon in Asian American literature. The protagonist of H. T. Tsiang's *And China Has Hands* (1937) extols Chinese culture and civilization, looking down on American "barbarians" and "savages." The label also appears in Winnifred Eaton's (Onoto Watana) and Bertrand

W. Babcock's "Eyes that Saw Not" (1902). The narrator of Gish Jen's *Typical American* (1991) claims that according to the common perception in China, by coming to the United States, Ralph, gave himself over to barbarians. Similar rhetoric appears in the opening chapter of *The Woman Warrior*, "No Name Woman." The No Name Woman is expected to cherish traditional ways, which "her brother, now among the barbarians, could fumble without detection" (9).

The Chinese immigrating into the United States are in danger of losing their cultivated polish and following in barbarians' footsteps. Barbarian features manifest themselves in "At the Western Palace" primarily through one's sight and speech. As already mentioned, Moon Orchid's husband has "rude American eyes" and stares directly into Moon Orchid's eyes "the way the savages looked, looking for lies" (177). The gaze problem also pertains to Brave Orchid's children and Moon Orchid is under an impression that they "fix" her with their gaze (154). Since they look people directly in the eye, Moon Orchid has suspicions about their good manners, comparing them to animals: "Even the girls stared at her—like cat-headed birds" (154), "They were like animals the way they stared" (155). Even if Chinese immigrants do not lose their cultivated ways, America still transforms their gaze. The narrator draws such conclusions after comparing her mother's (Brave Orchid) gaze in the college graduation group photograph taken years before her immigration into the United States with her gaze after settling in America. Before immigration, Brave Orchid's and other immigrant's gaze is stretched far into expanses of space and time: "my mother's eyes are big with what they hold—reaches of oceans beyond China, land beyond oceans" (70). "The land beyond oceans" to which Brave Orchid looks forward holds the promise of a reunion with her long gone husband and of the children that were still to be born. Similarly, the gaze of other immigrants is full of expectation for the future in the Gold Mountain, as they called America. According to the narrator, "that far gaze lasts only a few years after a Chinese emigrates" (71). While already in the United States, immigrants can no longer dream of the grand future, but have to focus on survival, arduous labour, providing for their family, the mundane present rather than the grand future that was to be. If first generation immigrants like Brave Ochid and her husband think of the grand future, it is usually in the context of their children and their prospective success.[7] Depicting her mother's gaze in the United States, the narrator claims that "in America [her] mother has eyes as strong as boulders, never once skittering off a face" (70). "Boulders" imply the solid, down-to-earth disposition of Brave Orchid, who usually rests her gaze on something solid, that is, something within reach. She still can see the

7 Real life immigrants interviewed by Victor and Brett de Bary Nee in *Longtime Californ'* claim to be fulfilled if their children succeed. A further fiction illustration of such a situation can be traced in "Two Lives for One," a short story by a Korean American author, Shin Yung Oh. A Korean American college student, Christine, is acutely aware that her parents sacrifice their own lives in a dry-cleaning shop to secure her future. Helping in the shop, Christine quarrels with the customers complaining about the quality of the service. Christine's parents contrast in their mentality with Brave Orchid, who chastises her children for following ghosts' ways. Christine's parents, on the other hand, tell her that she should try to become similar to their customers in order to succeed. Christine is evidently split between her loathing for the customers and her parents' expectation that she should become like them.

land behind the oceans, but now she looks in a different direction, towards the relatives left behind in China (70). The "gaze" metaphor employed by Kingston to illustrate the perspectives stretching before immigrants in the United States parallels the "horizon" metaphor employed by Zora Neale Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The far gaze of immigrants before immigration corresponds to the sight of the horizon, which Janie, the protagonist of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is anxious never to lose. The horizon metaphor with its implications of the expansiveness of the gaze represents the wide spectrum of opportunities and yearnings that Janie hopes to see before her.

"Barbarian" features also reveal themselves through speech. Brave Orchid grumbles about her children's "barbarous mouths" (140). According to Brave Orchid, her children resemble white people in their lack of respect for the spoken word. They share white people's propensity to speak without prior consideration, uttering words which do not necessarily carry much weight and could just as well remain unspoken: "Ghosts are noisy and full of air; they talk during meals. They talk about anything" (214). Unlike Chinese Americans, white people do not cherish silence. Brave Orchid does not allow her children to talk during meals, except in English, which she perceives as the ghost language. While Brave Orchid herself is a "champion talker" (235), she believes that all her statements serve as an instruction.

The most estranging picture of the United States and its citizens is registered through the eyes of Moon Orchid, when she observes and tries to interact with Brave Orchid's children. Her pronouncements on Brave Orchid's children continue the process of the marking of Americanness as an extension of whiteness. Time and again Moon Orchid is emphatic about the fact that Brave Orchid's children were "raised away from civilization" (155), among "savages," "in the wilderness" (156). To her surprise, they are familiar with a watch, thermometer and the library. Touching the children, Moon Orchid checks if they have substance or are ethereal, having grown up among American ghosts. In her ethnographic approach, she also smells them, evaluating their smell as markedly different. For Moon Orchid, the children look like "sweet wild animals" or "like Indian[s], both terms vehemently contested by the children" (156). The narrator interprets Moon Orchid's advances towards the children as an attempt to establish how easy it is to "provoke a savage" (156). Testing the limits of the new environment, Moon Orchid sees herself as a pioneer "eager to work, roughing it in the wilderness" (156). Considering Moon Orchid's very delicate construction, the term "roughing" is a misnomer. The wilderness gets the upper hand over Moon Orchid, bearing out her husband's statement that she lacks "the harshness for this country" (177).

The vision of the United States emerging from "At the Western Palace" is that of the country prioritizing not only hard work, but also the pursuit of money, pleasure and the hedonistic lifestyle. The action of "At the Western Palace" unfolds at the turn of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, but the perception of Americans as giving a priority to financial rewards and personal pleasure reaches back as far as the 1930s, when travellers and immigrants from China voiced their impressions of the United States. An anonymous Chinese student from Columbia University, writing in 1932 under the penname Gongwang, identified American culture as "the culture of the dollar and the art of sexual intercourse; at heart, it is nothing more than seeking pleasure" (Gongwang in Arkush and Lee 150). In his 1936 article "Impressions on Reclaiming

America," Lin Yutang expressed similar views, claiming that Americans translated the value of a human being into their property ownership, into how much one owns rather than how one approaches other people (Lin Yutang in Arkush and Lee 160). Drawing attention to the accessibility of goods in the United States and American engrossment in capitalism, Lin observed that the American pursuit of happiness equalled the pursuit of property ownership, of amassing ever more goods: "Therefore we have life, prosperous life, under American democracy, because there are vast numbers of cars, magazines, and radio receivers" (163). Lin emphasized the availability of goods to "the ordinary man," who is "the cornerstone of American democracy" (163).[8] A proliferation of goods struck some Chinese travellers to the United States as emblematic of American uniformity. Yin Haiguang, a pro-Western, iconoclastic, Taiwanese professor, who spent several years at Harvard in the early 1950s, approved of American political liberalism, but evinced disenchantment with uniformity, which he found pervasive in the United States. Yin traced uniformity both in the material culture of the United States and American people themselves, whom he perceived as indistinct. Voicing his criticism, Yin says: "What America has most of are automobiles and what it has least of, I think, are things like style" (210). Yin attributed Americans' perpetual lack of "personal style" to the mentality and lifestyle of advanced industrial civilization (212). In the afterword to an overview of Chinese essays on the United States, spanning the period between 1848 and 1987, Arkush and Lee note that China criticized the United States primarily for racism, prejudice, loose family ties, hedonism and disrespect for the elderly (301). Attributing greater ethnocentrism to Americans and lesser respect for Chinese culture, Arkush and Lee argue that Chinese immersion in American society and culture was much deeper than that of Americans in Chinese society and culture, which they link to the fact that travellers to China stayed mostly in the ports dominated by foreigners (303).

"At the Western Palace" captures one of the most sinister faces of whiteness and Americanness hidden under the overarching ghosthood metaphor in *The Woman Warrior*. The ghosts of "At the Western Palace" signify a significant breach of the link with humanity. The dehumanization of whiteness reaches its apogee in "At the Western Palace." Assuming an impersonal, third-person stance for the chapter, the narrator magnifies the estranging quality of the American environment, in which human touch gives way to pervasive mechanization, the pursuit of materialism and hedonism. Toughness, sturdiness and solidity are the hallmarks of the American, Western world as presented by the narrator. The solidity of the eponymous Western Palace contrasts with the fragility of Chinatown. Fragile figures like Moon Orchid find no foothold in the solid Western Palace and the Chinese Americans who survive need to painstakingly guard their humanity lest they forfeit it in the land of ghosts.

8 The above cited passage corresponds to the fragment of *The Woman Warrior*: "America is full of machines and ghosts" (163). Still, if Brave Orchid and the immature narrator are suffocated by machines, Lin perceived technology as a prerequisite of American prosperity and life comfort. He was free of the terror of machines and ghosts, but his appraisal of the "vast numbers of cars, magazines and radio receivers" still strikes an ironic chord.

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"They Look Like They're Trying to Pull Up Nails with Their Heels": Ricardo Güiraldes's Response to Cultural Appropriation in *Don Segundo Sombra*

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Abstract: Cultural appropriation has often been linked to American treatment of indigenous cultures. In *Playing Indian*, for example, Philip J. Deloria investigates how images of Indianness, however inauthentic, stereotypical, or completely ethnocentric, work to help white Americans come to terms with their history of conquest and possession. While the term cultural appropriation has been linked to the conflict between dominant and indigenous cultures as Deloria suggests, it is used far less frequently with respect to American and Latin American cultural identities. Yet, the preponderance of movies and literary works in which Americans follow the same rubric—use Latin American culture to define American cultural identity—evoke the same sense of loss on the part of Latin Americans, in this case, Argentines. For over a century, for example, the gaucho has been examined, evaluated, and reevaluated by Argentines within gauchesque literature to make sense of modernization, notions of civilization versus barbarism, and what creates *argentinidad*, or what it means to be Argentine. Ricardo Güiraldes sought to respond to the cultural appropriation and misrepresentation of the gaucho, specifically that gaucho culture could be taken up by anyone and used for any purpose, no matter how benign; and that gauchos were a part of the past, eschewing modernization in forms such as industrial ranching and technology when, in fact, they embraced it. In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes addresses these issues. Rather than permit cultural appropriation and ethnocentrism to remain unremarked upon, Güiraldes demonstrates that gaucho culture has remarkable qualities that cannot be imitated by novices, both foreign and native. He then examines gaucho culture, particularly the link between frontier life and economic displacement, in order to champion the gaucho and *argentinidad* as the models for Argentines to follow.

Keywords: Ricardo Güiraldes, *Don Segundo Sombra*, gaucho, *argentinidad*, cultural appropriation

I

When thinking about the Argentine gaucho, a nomadic cow herder from the pampas region of the country, a particular idea about his identity emerges: that he is interchangeable with the American cowboy or the Mexican vaquero. In fact, many American films like Douglas Fairbanks's *The Gaucho* (1927), *The Gay Gaucho* (1933), and Gene Autry's *Gaucho Serenade* (1940) do just that—confuse gauchos with vaqueros or even cowboys. In American literature, the tendency is not to exchange the figure, but rather, juxtapose the superiority of cowboy culture over gaucho culture.

Either way, defining the Argentine gaucho as something he is not in order to define or explore a culture outside of the figure is a form of cultural appropriation, in the case of Fairbank's and Autry's movies, or both cultural ethnocentrism and appropriation in literary works like Frederick Faust's *The Gentle Gunman*. In *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law*, Susan Scafidi defines cultural appropriation as:

> the taking [of] intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission. This can include unauthorized use of another culture's dance, dress, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional medicine, religious symbols, etc. It's most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive, e.g. (9).

Cultural appropriation has often been linked to American treatment of indigenous cultures. In *Playing Indian*, for example, Philip J. Deloria investigates how images of Indianness, however inauthentic, stereotypical, or completely ethnocentric, work to help white Americans come to terms with their history of conquest and possession. In addition to this, in *Indians in Unexpected Places*, Deloria draws attention to the unidimensional portrayals of Native Americans in the modern era when, in fact, Natives were equally as engaged with exploring and finding themselves in a modern world (6).

While the term cultural appropriation has been linked to the conflict between dominant and indigenous cultures as Deloria suggests, it is used far less frequently with respect to foreign and Latin American cultural identities. Yet, the preponderance of movies and literary works in which non-natives like Americans follow the same rubric—use Latin American culture to define American cultural identity—evoke the same sense of loss on the part of Latin Americans, in this case, Argentines. For over a century, for example, the gaucho has been examined, evaluated, and reevaluated by Argentines within gauchesque literature to make sense of modernization, notions of civilization versus barbarism, and what creates *argentinidad*, or what it means to be Argentine. While nineteenth-century gauchesque literature portrayed the gaucho negatively, thus forcing him into a life of crime and outlawry in famous works like José Hernández's *Martín Fierro* and Rafael Obligado's *Santos Vega*, by the turn of the twentieth century, Argentine authors turned to the gaucho as a means of defining *argentinidad* in Leopoldo Lugones's *La Guerra gaucha* and Ricardo Güiraldes's *Don Segundo Sombra*. For these authors as well as some filmmakers like Eduardo Martínez de la Pera in *La Nobleza gaucha*, the gaucho was uniquely Argentine and, as a result, could not be interchanged with Mexican *vaquerismo* or American cowboy culture. Certain works within the Argentine gauchesque, like Ricardo Güiraldes's *Don Segundo Sombra* as a consequence, can function as a contestatory space against foreign colonialism and cultural appropriation.

Ricardo Güiraldes sought to respond to the cultural appropriation and misrepresentation of the gaucho, specifically that gaucho culture could be taken up by anyone and used for any purpose, no matter how benign; and that gauchos were a part of the past, eschewing modernization in forms such as industrial ranching and technology when, in fact, they embraced it. In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes addresses these issues, thus making his novel a contestatory space against foreign colonialism and cultural appropriation. Rather than permit cultural appropriation and ethnocentrism to remain unremarked upon, Güiraldes demonstrates that gaucho culture has remarkable qualities that cannot be imitated by novices, both foreign and native. He then examines gaucho culture, particularly the link between frontier life

and economic displacement, in order to champion the gaucho and *argentinidad* as the models for Argentines to follow. In addition to this, he reshapes gauchesque literature by creating a setting that is a modern one, full of foreign investors, industrialized ranching, and natives that become complicit in their own subordination. In the midst of all of this is Don Segundo and his apprentice, Fabio Cáceres who try to hold onto gaucho culture despite the negative forces around them. For Don Segundo and Cáceres, gaucho culture represents what it means to be Argentine, one of the primary reasons why imitation of the gaucho proves meaningless. Imitations merely define the culture appropriating them, rather than the originating culture. By reading *Don Segundo Sombra* as a contestatory work in relation to cultural appropriation, ethnocentrism, and economic displacement, it becomes apparent how damaging these notions of cultural inferiority and appropriation can be, most obviously for the cultures that get rewritten in favor of untruthful narratives.

II

Güiraldes's tale of modernized gauchos was produced in the 1920s. Before World War I, Argentines imitated an American approach to the social changes of immigration and urbanization as they incorporated American pseudo-scientific theories regarding race and class into law. But the outbreak of war exacerbated economic problems that had remained latent for decades. Despite Argentina's successful beef business in the 1890s, the nation could not retain control over its resources during the first few decades of the new century. Contrary to its vision of itself, "viewed in the long term, the Argentine economy was closer to the rest of a more volatile and impoverished Latin America than it was to that of the wealthy United States" (Rodriguez 252). By 1909, as David M.K. Sheinin records, many American meatpacking companies like Swift and Company had bought out several Argentine packing plants, thus curtailing Argentine control over their one consistent export. This led Argentine authorities to exclaim that "trouble comes from the United States" (76). While Argentine politicians had encouraged U.S. investment in the completion of the railroads in Argentina in the nineteenth century, by the 1920s, many Argentines worried about American economic control. This concern originated with Argentina's economic collapse at the onset of World War I. At first, Argentine president Hipólito Yrigoyen's (1916-1922) decision to remain neutral during the war did not affect U.S.-Argentine relations because Yrigoyen supported continued trade with the U.S. But trade did not occur equally between the two countries, and Argentina remained painfully dependent on the northern nation (76).

As the war progressed, Americans' vested interest in Argentina's social problems changed their views on Yrigoyen's neutrality. At first, Americans looked askance at the growing German population in Argentina, mostly landowners in Buenos Aires, along with German firms in Comodoro Rivadavia that traded in hides and wool. It saw this German presence as an indicator of Argentine pro-German sentiment. In this context, however, U.S. anti-German sentiment was rooted as much in Germany's capacity to imperil U.S. trade in Argentina as it was in the war. Once Americans recognized that Germany was powerless to alter the mechanisms of established trade, anti-Bolshevism replaced U.S. anti-German sentiment (49).

As a result, Americans took an active role in interpreting and controlling Argentina's social ills. Latin Americanist Robert J. Alexander explains that Argentine worker unrest became perceived as communist activity because immigrants formed the bulk of the urban working-class, and immigrants from Italy, Spain, and Central Europe at times brought radical ideas with them (147). Worker unrest had long been a problem in Argentina, not because of adherence to leftist politics, but born of rights abuses in factories and other industrial settings. Marginalized as anarchists in the 1910s, labor organizations in the 1920s became known as communist. Labor unrest increased after World War I because of unprecedented levels of unemployment and inflation, which impacted Argentina's working class to the greatest degree (Deutsch 37). In *Las Derechas*, historian Sandra McGee Deutsch explains that during the war years, salaries dropped 38 percent, while the cost of living rose 71 percent (80). As labor unrest increased in Argentine cities, Sheinin notes, Americans criticized Yrigoyen's "ambivalence toward labor activism during the war" (51). But Yrigoyen's attitude was not ambivalent. As Deutsch argues, he was called the "dictator of the masses" by the Liga Patriótica Argentina (LPA) and other rightist factions because he routinely employed a humanitarian perspective with the working class and he regulated both work hours and the distribution of pay in national currency (Deutsch 153). Because Yrigoyen seemed to favor workers' rights, Americans worried about the safety of their goods, particularly if cargo would be unloaded and distributed upon arrival (Sheinin 52). The result was the U.S. State Department's reliance on the LPA, an anti-labor organization comprised of police, military, and bourgeoisie, which violently suppressed labor unrest by adopting, as Sheinin puts it, the "fascist postures of Primo de Rivera and Mussolini" (52). Americans tended to support the LPA's unconstitutional tactics, rather than Yrigoyen's relaxed attitude towards labor unrest. In turn, the LPA made efforts to create political ties with similar groups in the U.S (Deutsch 166). Overall, however, the LPA encouraged what Deutsch calls "nationalistic solutions" to foreign exploitation (Deutsch 101).

It was in this context of economic and political instability that Argentine writers like Ricardo Güiraldes reevaluated Argentine society, especially in the treatment of industrialized ranching on the frontier. Güiraldes refused to present the gaucho as an extinct figure displaced because of the effects of modernization. In *Vida y obra de Ricardo Güiraldes*, author José R. Liberal Villar argues that Güiraldes believed "to evolve does not mean to disappear" (97). Instead, Güiraldes modernized the gaucho as a symbol of *argentinidad* and the foreigner as an insatiable materialist. As Villar points out, Güiraldes's gauchos, like Don Segundo, find foreign culture slowly encroaching upon their space and dislodging their traditional way of life (149). As a result, modernization had to be addressed, particularly as it influenced new agricultural methods, such as breeding and fattening techniques, which, as Charles Bergquist suggests, altered land use and the labor systems of the pampas as they increased the rate of production (93). Alterations like this had not lived up to the grand expectations of nineteenth-century thinkers like Domingo Sarmiento, who saw this as the ticket to Argentine power. This caused intellectuals like Güiraldes to reevaluate Argentina's role in the world market; indeed, in *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes presents Argentine dependency on foreign capital and ideas as one cause for its failure.

In particular, Güiraldes explored the connection between U.S. economic expansion and long-standing beliefs regarding class and race. As a member of a wealthy landowning family in Buenos Aires, Güiraldes was aware of beliefs about others deemed unfit to participate in the modern nation. Güiraldes's family also owned a ranch, La Porteña in San Antonio de Areco, which likely meant he recognized the importance of autonomy and the pitfalls of blindly following American models. In this, Güiraldes would not have been alone. As Deutsch points out, Manuel Carlés, a member of the LPA, drew a connection between foreign investment and the leftist threat associated with immigrant worker unrest, which threatened Argentine autonomy (49). In its efforts to modernize its economy and become a world power, Argentina had adopted American approaches to bolstering trade. By the 1920s, however, many Argentines recognized that the nation did not control the modernized system it attempted to create. Instead, American companies dominated Argentine economics, particularly in the steel and agricultural industries. As a result, Argentina remained economically dependent on the U.S. Furthermore, by imitating an American economic system, more powerful Argentines had lost their culture, thus becoming, according to Justin Piquemal Azemarou's "muñecas" ("dolls") controlled by foreign powers (79).

Güiraldes's corrective to a weakened Argentina was a return to a version of *argentinidad* that was seemingly absent in 1920s culture. While Güiraldes allegedly deplored racism in all of its forms, he resented foreign ranchers' obsession with money, as well as foreign businesses that proliferated throughout cities like Buenos Aires. Although his wife insisted in an interview, "Ricardo was never against anyone as long as they similarly despised pride," and "Ricardo treated [foreigners] in general with sympathy," his depictions of foreign capitalists—whom he must have seen as prideful—are largely unsympathetic (Azemarou 117). Güiraldes blamed upper-class foreigners as well as the Argentines who imitated them for Argentina's national problems. By returning to *argentinidad*, which for Güiraldes included hard work, loyalty, manliness, and individualism, Argentines could control their own destiny. He found these traits best represented by the figure of the gaucho.

III

In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes describes a young gaucho who travels from ranch to ranch, looking for work, adventure, and his own identity. He repeatedly juxtaposes the noble qualities of two cow herders, Fabio Cáceres and Don Segundo Sombra, against the greedy materialism of foreigners searching for financial gain on the Argentine frontier. In the 1920s, Argentine ranch land was frequently bought and sold by both Argentine and foreign buyers. Furthermore, according to Bergquist, foreign workers outnumbered natives two to one during this period (89). Yet, these statistics are seemingly absent from Güiraldes's narrative. Rather, foreign investors proliferate the landscape of *Don Segundo Sombra,* demonstrating the effects of economic dependence. For Güiraldes, a foreign presence always hailed to an Argentine loss, starting with economics and eventually ending with culture. Instead of a basis for shared values, the gaucho became a symbol of resistance to first, foreign investment and then, cultural appropriation.

Don Segundo Sombra begins with the perspective of fourteen-year-old cowhand Fabio Cáceres. Unlike many gauchesque texts, which were largely written in third-person, this novel's first-person narration is a way to signal that Cáceres's quests throughout the novel are part of a search for his identity. Güiraldes's manipulation of the gauchesque was so novel that critics like Javier Lasarte Valcerel have considered him to be an avant-garde writer who incorporates traditional literary structures only to disrupt them (52). For several decades, gauchesque writers made these subtle alterations to the genre (Garganigo 198). Although Güiraldes uses a first-person narrator, it does not mean that his novel is merely an individual's story. Rather, the deployment of the figure of the gaucho in and of itself is an exploration of "identificación cultural," rather than an individual experience (Alcalá 80). In addition to this change, Güiraldes based the titular gaucho in his novel, Don Segundo, on a historical figure, Segundo Ramírez, who Güiraldes met on his family's ranch. Villar insists that he used encounters with living people as his inspiration instead of inventing his characters out of the "cloth of the imagination" (96). Other critics, however, like David Sisto, have argued that Güiraldes was inspired by fictional sources (75). Either way, *Don Segundo Sombra* departs from earlier gauchesque novels as it blends history and fiction. For this reason, G.H. Weiss argues that the novel represents "the entire process of historical change [in Argentina] even though it speaks but of the present moment" (150).

Güiraldes begins his novel with a romanticized version of both the frontier and gaucho culture which is embraced by Cáceres. According to Robert DiAntonio, Güiraldes envisioned the pampas as a "place of refuge" and raises the boy-man-wilderness relationship to a mythical level (140). In this transition, Güiraldes transforms boy to man. Regardless of era, Latin American literature has been dominated by the theme of the search (Eyraguirre 130). Güiraldes accomplishes this by dividing the novel into three parts: "departure, quest, and return" (Weiss 355). Cáceres's main goal throughout the narrative is to find himself and a sense of cultural belonging in a world that has become increasingly convoluted. In contrast to the suffocating religious atmosphere of his aunts' home where he grows up, Cáceres finds his sense of purpose through his manly adventures as a cattle herder.

In contrast to Hollywood films and literary works that champion American cultural superiority when juxtaposing the cowboy against the gaucho, Güiraldes reverses this trope by blaming Argentine rootlessness on foreign investment that displaces Argentines. For Güiraldes, foreign investors prioritize money over cultural identity like the gaucho's *argentinidad*. Although G.H. Weiss suggests that Güiraldes's text demonstrates a longing for universal brotherhood as his characters search for the similarities among people (353), Güiraldes accomplishes quite the opposite when he pits gaucho nobility against the barbarity of foreign control in Argentina. Because the frontier has already been corrupted by the extension of foreign capital to its major ways of life, Güiraldes begins with the consequences of this: many Argentines, such as Cáceres's aunts, have lost their Argentine roots. As a young boy, when Cáceres is taken away from his mother and placed with his aunts, Asunción and Mercedes, he finds that in contrast to the warmth he experienced from his mother his aunts verbally abuse him, considering themselves to be superior as pious church-goers. They refer to Cáceres as "dirty, lazy," and "good-for-nothing" because the narrator attempts to

embrace Argentine culture, instead of foreign models (Güiraldes 6). Cáceres states that, "I went to school for three years. I don't know why I was given my freedom. One day my aunts simply claimed that it wasn't worth the trouble to continue my education, and they began to send me on a thousand errands that kept me on the streets almost all day" (6). Uninterested in reciting the rosary, the narrator is unable to conform to his aunts' version of society. Without the ability to be guided by his caregivers, Cáceres cannot find himself or financially survive. Even young boys like Cáceres suffer when Argentines like his aunts reject their own cultural origins.

Foreigners and their investments are only one source of contention for Güiraldes. Güiraldes also critiques everyday Argentines who disparage their culture; the church becomes a symbol of this disparagement in figures beyond Cáceres's aunts. Before a cockfight, for example, Don Segundo and Cáceres enjoy lunch at a restaurant in Navarro. Because it is Sunday, the townspeople are dressed in their finest clothing, which causes them to look down on the humble dress of the gauchos. Cáceres notes that these church-going Argentines "glanced at us out of the corner of their eyes, observing, though pretending not to, the rough, unpolished presence of my padrino [Don Segundo]" (85). But even more than religion, Cáceres's comment critiques Argentine class pretensions tied to assimilation to foreign norms. Even the waiter approaches them, full of judgment: "the waiter greeted us with a sly smile we didn't understand. Perhaps it seemed to him an excessive extravagance, this business of two cowhands having lunch in the 'Fonda del Polo'" (85). After two days spent herding cattle, Don Segundo and Cáceres attempt to experience Navarro's culture, yet they find themselves entirely alienated from their own country in a town where Argentines privilege foreign materialism. Through his depiction of the gauchos' reception at a fine-dining restaurant, Güiraldes demonstrates that Argentina's loss of its natural resources via foreign investment in industrial ranching, for example, creates an even deeper, more significant loss: that of culture. As a result, Güiraldes associates the upper class with cultural emptiness. Despite the gauchos' humble dress, they behave civilly, and indeed nobly, in opposition to the pretentious townspeople who, it is implied, should return to Argentine cultural origins.

Güiraldes counters foreign cultural superiority when he describes the negative effects of foreign influence on Cáceres's aunts and the people of Navarro. While these minor characters view Argentine heritage through a foreign lens—barbaric and unformed—Güiraldes's protagonists reverse this presumption by categorizing foreign influence as empty and uncivilized. In the scene at the restaurant, for example, Cáceres observes the following:

> In the center of the room, three locals were talking in harsh, loud voices, calling attention to their peasant or shopkeeper faces. Near the door an Irish couple were wielding knives and forks as if they were pencils; the woman had freckles all over her hands and face, like a tero egg. The man was looking around with fish eyes and his face was full of bursting veins like the bell of a freshly skinned lamb. (86)

The gauchos recognize the foreigners' uncouth behavior as an outgrowth of their materialistic gluttony. In making a connection between behavior and capitalism,

Güiraldes presents a reason for cultural abandonment. While foreign investment on the frontier promises economic boons, it only does so for foreigners. Yet captivated by the illusion that they too may gain wealth, Argentines have relinquished both their resources and their culture. As observers, the gauchos describe the effects of foreign investment in Argentina, and they are presented in opposition to it. In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes describes the Argentine and the foreign as utterly divided.

In order to rectify the divide between foreigners and gauchos and show what is at stake for Argentina as a nation, Güiraldes presents additional examples of immigrants using the Argentine frontier for financial gain with little regard for culture and tradition. As Azemarou points out, Güiraldes believed that the immigrant "considers the native as simple and only useful for economically improving the life of the immigrant" (109). As a result, Güiraldes uses example after example of negative foreign influence in *Don Segundo Sombra.* Cáceres, for example, notes that: "behind us sat a rosy-cheeked young man with the eyelids and runny tear ducts of a tired old horse. Judging from his clothes and the way he acted, he must have been the representative of some grain company…. At the same table, a man was having a conversation about the price of hogs, and the grain dealer was offering his opinion with thick German r's" (Güiraldes 86). The men who own the companies are foreigners, while the men who work for them are Argentines. Their conversations about business demonstrate Argentine loss of economic resources. The native Argentine workers are described as "tired" with "runny tear ducts," thus suggesting the hardships they face and the limited financial rewards garnered for their services. Gauchos are completely absent from the conversations that Cáceres overhears. They pass entirely unnoticed by foreigners because international investors are solely interested in the frontier's financial possibilities, rather than alleged symbols of its past.

Güiraldes's novel sheds light on both the process and the implications of first, resource control, then the inevitable rejection of culture. In one scene, for example, Güiraldes provides an explanation for why Argentines reject their culture. At an auction attended by Cáceres and Don Segundo, the auctioneer connects financial gain to the nation's future in an effort to appeal to both foreign capitalists and the Argentines who mimic them: "the auctioneer made a speech full of words like 'national cattle trade,' 'magnificent future,' 'grand transactions,'… and he opened the sale with an 'exceptional lot'" (95). Because the audience consists largely of foreign ranchers, the auctioneer's rhetoric suggests that Argentina's "magnificent future" will be experienced largely by them, rather than by Argentines: "all around the cart, on foot or mounted, were Englishmen from the packinghouses, clean-shaven, ruddy, and plump as well-fed friars" (95). Cáceres, however, observes that the Argentines at the auction greedily covet what had been left behind by foreign business owners: "the local butchers were there, too, on the lookout for a bargain, looking like boys who might try to steal off with the entrails" (95). Convinced that they can be a part of the "magnificent future" detailed by the auctioneer, the Argentines settle for the leftovers of foreign capitalists. Cáceres recognizes their disenfranchisement, and Güiraldes uses the auction house scene to contextualize why Argentines have become complicit in their economic and later, cultural disintegration.

After establishing the economic displacement caused by foreign investment on the frontier, Güiraldes turns to direct examples of foreigners "playing gaucho," or

explicit examples of cultural appropriation. Güiraldes describes the Italians as ridiculous simpletons to illustrate that culture cannot be solely understood by changing one's clothing or learning new dances; its cultural history and meaning must be understood as well. At the same time, foreign misunderstanding and degradation of Argentine culture exacerbates its decline. Five years after the auction, for example, Cáceres attends a country dance, characterized by gaucho songs, competition for attractive women, and dancing. The richness of this Argentine cultural milieu is undermined, however, at the chapter's end when two Italian immigrants attempt to imitate gaucho dances. Observing them, Cáceres says to his friend Pedro, "sonovabitch if those aren't phony gauchos, they look like they're trying to pull up nails with their heels!" (73). In contrast to Cáceres's engagement with it, the Italians approach Argentine culture, represented by the gaucho, only superficially. Cáceres suggests that the gaucho cannot be imitated by others, and that, by extension, Argentina should cast off its foreign dependency and embrace a new nationalism. In each example of gaucho interactions with foreigners, Güiraldes changes the nationality of non-natives in order to demonstrate that immigrants in Argentina share the same types of motivation: economics at the expense of culture.

After providing examples of the negative effects of resource control and cultural appropriation, Güiraldes turns his focus to Cáceres's identity formation. By doing so, Güiraldes privileges the symbol of *argentinidad*, Cáceres's growth from boy to gaucho, thus removing any foreign influences that intrude upon his life. When he is barred from a sense of belonging in his own home, for example, Cáceres descends upon the gauchos' meeting place, the *pulperías* (country stores):

> And, sitting in the bigwigs' hotel, I gave myself the luxury of ordering a bottle on my own so I could treat everyone. Then I told them something I'd recently learned, perhaps about Melo's sorrel, or the fight between the half-breed Burgos and Sinforiano Herrera, or the shamelessness of the immigrant Culasso who'd sold his twelve-year-old daughter for twenty pesos to old man Salomovich, the owner of the local brothel. (8)

The *pulpería* is a site for gaucho oral storytelling, and this tradition is made even more distinctively Argentine when it is used to critique non-Argentines, such as Culasso, as heartless materialists who sell members of their own families for profit. A story like this one serves as a lesson in culture for Cáceres, who wants to be a gaucho—in order to do so, he must reject the depravity associated with foreign cultures and capitalism.

In order to truly understand gaucho culture, Cáceres must quit "playing gaucho" like the Italians at the dance, and immerse himself in gaucho life and work. In this, Don Segundo becomes his entry point. After he meets Don Segundo, they begin working for an English rancher. This seems to give Cáceres the means to inculcate himself into the gaucho role, but he eventually realizes how much power the English rancher holds over him. Don Segundo, Güiraldes's stable representative of *argentinidad*, gives Cáceres the following advice: "when I was your age, I did what I wanted without asking anyone's permission" (31). Following this, Cáceres narrates: "taught my lesson, I went off by myself, trying to resolve the tension that was growing from my longing to get away and my fear of disappointment" (31). The tension that

the narrator feels is between his effort to remove himself from his aunts, with their dependence on foreign religious and class pretensions, and his fear of doing so. Cáceres learns that without autonomy from foreign influence, however, he has merely replaced his aunts' authority with the English rancher's validation. His path forward is via Don Segundo, who offers him a model of *argentinidad*. As a result of Don Segundo's tutelage, critic Jorge Aquilar Mora calls him a "padre simbólico," or a symbolic father, to both Cáceres and the reader (229). Don Segundo is in Juan Pablo Spicer's words, "un hombre experimentado en la vida," or a man experienced in gaucho life, and he can help shape Cáceres's cultural identity through his instruction (367). The lessons learned as a gaucho, about honor and autonomy, lead to the development of traits lauded in Argentine national character (Weiss 354). By listening to Don Segundo's advice, Cácares turns toward *argentinidad* and away from foreign influence. As "master of the frontier" the gaucho character claims his rightful place in Argentina and rejects foreign influence (Taylor 233).

Güiraldes's use of gaucho oral storytelling further emphasizes his novel's embrace of *argentinidad*. Towards the end of the text, for example, Don Segundo tells an allegorical story. The main character, an old man named Misery, provides a silver shoe for Jesus's horse. Jesus starts to leave with his companion Saint Peter, but then he reconsiders, thinking that they owe Misery for his efforts, especially given the old man's poverty. They return in order to give Misery three wishes. Saint Peter instructs Misery to "ask for paradise," but Misery ignores him. At first, the fulfillment of Misery's wishes renders him a trickster figure that distracts Lucifer from creating evil in the world. Eventually, however, instead of enjoying this placid state of affairs, the town's elites find the lack of vice unacceptable: "it ended up that lawyers, prosecutors, justices of the peace, quacks and other doctors, all those in authority who live off the misfortune and vices of the people, began to waste away from hunger and were dying" (Güiraldes 162). Don Segundo's tale about Misery helps Cáceres find his way in a convoluted world and thus begin to form his individual character. Although Don Segundo's tale directly criticizes members of the upper classes who exploit others for personal gain, at the same time, *Don Segundo Sombra* overall speaks to everyday citizens (Eyzaguirre 131). By doing so, Güiraldes emphasizes that true *argentinidad* comes from a community's experience that is oftentimes marginalized by cultural and capitalist exploitation.

Although literary scholar Theodore Murguia states that Güiraldes's representation of the pampas is one of the past (88), the focus on the effects of cultural exploitation and capitalism on the frontier suggest otherwise. At first, industrialized ranching changed the way gauchos performed their jobs. In an effort to increase production rates to garner the most profit, gauchos who performed industrialized ranching work faced increased risks. In the novel, Cáceres observes "we hired ourselves out as hands for a herd of six hundred steers that a rancher was sending to the stockyards. According to experts, we had about twelve days on the trail ahead of us, assuming good weather and a healthy herd" (Güiraldes 181). In contrast to traditional work, when gauchos had months to transport herds, Cáceres's employer demands that he speed up transportation. Despite the changes imposed by industrialized ranching, however, Cáceres and his crew easily adapt and survive by relying on the skills

cultivated by frontier life: "we had ahead of us the assurance of a peaceful night, and that made us happy again and full of jokes" (181). Weiss observes "the man of the Pampa must not give up his vigorous way of life, for it is in this life, not in commercial activity (for which Güiraldes expresses contempt on more than one occasion), that the health of the individual and of the nation lies" (152). Although Cáceres must face conditions wrought by modern capitalism in his work, his *argentinidad* is never compromised because he relies on it to survive an industrialized frontier.

This experience with industrialized ranching leads to a unique identity transformation for Cáceres by the end of the novel, when he maintains his gaucho lifestyle and his *argentinidad*, while simultaneously becoming a wealthy landowner. Cáceres eventually inherits his wealth and his land from his absentee father of the same name. By ending the story this way, Güiraldes demonstrates that economic success can be fostered from within the nation, rather than through dependency on foreign capital. Cáceres thus becomes a class equal to the ranch owners for whom he used to work, yet he remains a cultural superior:

> It seems unbelievable, but instead of being happy with the riches that were coming my way at the hands of destiny, I felt sad because of the poverty that I was going to be leaving. Why? Because behind those old ways were all my memories as a wandering herder and, even more, that unlimited will to keep on the move, which is like an ever increasing thirst for the open road and a yearning for possession of the world. (191)

By foregoing property, wealth, and material items, the gaucho owns the world. Yet by inheriting the kind of wealth that he had previously rejected, Cáceres is reminded of those he once criticized: materialistic foreigners. He states that, "I also remembered our lunch in the restaurant. There were some foreigners—big, gross, garrulous men—from what country?" (191). Güiraldes sees the gaucho remaining entirely distinct from foreigners, even when he grows to share their class status. Although Cáceres fears that through wealth he "had stopped being a gaucho" (187), he also asserts that "to die according to the law I've lived by and grown up with is worth a whole lot more to me than all the lovely things that destiny graces me with today, because I'm not like some snake that goes around changing his skin or improving his clothes" (192-3). In detaching the gaucho from his working-class status, Güiraldes modernizes the gauchesque in an effort to revitalize *argentinidad* for a modern age. At the same time, he provides a financial model for Argentines to follow: self-reliance when it comes to controlling or mining frontier resources.

Indeed, rather than portray gauchos—and by extension, *argentinidad*—as things of the past, Güiraldes suggests that they continue to be relevant. Cáceres notes that the gaucho is always characterized by his ability to survive. He remarks that, "the daily struggle of existence doesn't give him [the gaucho] any time to waste over defeats; either he carries on, or he lets go of everything at the point when he doesn't have an extra bit of strength left to face life… because there's no escape from the pampa for the weak" (180-81). Don Segundo replies "'I can't do anything worse than die… and death neither frightens me nor makes me skittish'" (180-81). Despite the impact of modernization on the frontier, the survival and adaptability of the gaucho

suggests that *argentinidad* will be maintained and will triumph over foreign influence. Güiraldes always expresses concern for Argentina's future in his works (Weiss 149). As a result, *Don Segundo Sombra* is a novel that deals with the future by revisiting a national tradition and appreciating its value (Schulman 879). Güiraldes argues that Argentina has a future as long as gaucho tradition and *argentinidad* remain alive. In the face of modernization, Güiraldes insists, it is still possible to resist by employing Don Segundo's advice: "if you're really a gaucho, you don't have to change, because wherever you go, you'll go with your soul leading the way, like the lead mare of the herd" (193).

Adhering to Don Segundo's philosophy solidifies Cáceres's Argentine identity at the end of the novel, when he states:

> Who is more owner of the pampa [the frontier] than a herder? A smile would come over me, just thinking about all those ranchers, stuck away in their houses, always in a panic, worrying about the cold or the heat, or frightened by whatever danger a recalcitrant horse, an emboldened bull, or a strong windstorm might inflict on them. Owners of what? Some little patches of dirt that would figure as theirs on some map. But the pampa of God had been very much mine, for the things of the pampa were friends of mine by right of strength and skill. (193)

Güiraldes's coming-of-age story describes more than one boy's transformation into gaucho. Rather, the novel makes possible an understanding of the effects of cultural appropriation and foreign control of Argentina's resources. Weiss argues that by the novel's close, Cáceres becomes "the national personality of Argentina" (149). By adhering to Don Segundo's didactic instructions even as he adapts to new economic realities, Cáceres functions as a model for Argentines to follow, and, as Weiss insists, Cáceres lifts Argentina "to a higher plane in the realm of the spirit" (149). For this reason, when Don Segundo leaves Cáceres to resume his nomadic lifestyle, the young man notes that what was leaving him was "more an idea than a man" (Güiraldes 297).

In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes critiques foreign control of natural resources and culture through the struggles of Don Segundo and Cáceres on the modern frontier. Cáceres's coming-of-stage story provides a model for Argentines to follow. By maintaining *argentinidad*, even in a globalized economy, Güiraldes suggests that Argentines can resist foreign cultural and economic influence and increase their autonomy as a nation. By portraying a culturally and economically devastated country with foreign capitalists to blame, Güiraldes shows what is at stake for Argentines: control over their resources and their ability to self-represent. Throughout the novel, Güiraldes pits gauchos against those who seek to misrepresent or devalue *argentindad*. Only through the true representative of *argentinidad*, the gaucho, can natives truly define themselves.

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Ada Wawer

Zig Jackson: Postindian Warrior of Fine Art

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Abstract: The article is a discussion of contemporary photographic works featuring Native Americans. The argument is framed through references to the conventions of representations of Native people in photography, on the one hand, and the critical discourse of Gerald Vizenor and the notions of the "Indian" and "Postindian," on the other. The article focuses on the artist, Zig Jackson, who is described as a Postindian "warrior of survivance" and whose practice is analyzed as an attempt at the deconstruction of the popular image of the "Indian."

Keywords: photography, Indian, Postindian, Native Americans

How to construct and perform the identity of a member of a marginalized group? How to build an oppositional identity? Can one create Native presence through denuding popular representations of a colonized group as the ultimate absence? These questions are tackled by both Native American academics and artists. This text analyses photographic works by a contemporary artist, Zig Jackson, whose works were shown at an exhibition called *Contemporary Native Photographers and the Edward Curtis Legacy* in the spring of 2016. As the description for the exhibition claimed "It will ask visitors to consider Curtis' continuing influence on the interpretation of Native American culture while highlighting contemporary reactions to his role within the history of representation of indigenous peoples" (*Contemporary Native Photographers*). Zig Jackson's work challenges the conventions of the portrayal of indigenous nations that are so widespread in the mainstream culture and that have their roots in the ethnographic tradition of the nineteenth century. I will argue that the examples discussed can be seen as survivance narratives that are, as Gerald Vizenor describes them, "renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry" (*Native Liberty* 85).

Photography as a Tool of Cultural Appropriation and the Postindian Way Out

The Edward Curtis reference in the title of the exhibition acknowledges how *The North American Indian* still holds a firm grip on public imagination, not only in the US but also elsewhere, which is visible for example in publications such as National Geographic. Curtis's work came about at the time when numerous anthropological expeditions set out to record, for scientific purposes, and for posterity, the last remnants of the "almost extinct [Indian] civilization" (Morgan 289). That endeavor was prompted by the nostalgic feelings for the gone by innocent days at the beginnings of the European colonization of America. This was a reaction of the dominant society to the transformations of Native communities in the nineteenth century even though the changes were called for and seen as unavoidable and beneficial by the mainstream society. The paradox of the situation was that the ethnologists' vision of the Native

culture often did not match existing reality. The Natives were no longer involved in inter-tribal warfare, they did not hunt buffalo, and in daily life, they relied on modern devices. Therefore, in order to emphasize the exotic aspect of their culture, the photographic images were often staged and enacted, rather than simply snapped when the photographer casually wandered around the reservation land. Thus, despite photographers' assertions about the accuracy and usefulness of his photographs as scientific evidence, the pictures did not document reality but rather constructed it in agreement with the pervasive mood of the time.

Edward Curtis's multi-volume *The North American Indian* is the most well-known project that aimed at recording the "vanishing race". The work was funded by John Pierpont Morgan and received extremely favorable and encouraging comments from president Theodore Roosevelt, who provided volume 1 with a foreword. Given Morgan's and Roosevelt's involvement in the project, the political and ideological entanglements of the undertaking cannot be denied. Curtis attempted to produce an earnest ethnographic record, in order to chronicle the lives of Native American tribes. But at the same time, he displayed a helpless urge to romanticize indigenous people and make them appear as "noble savages" who are soon to disappear because of the natural order of things, at the time when they were being intensely marginalized. Consequently, deflecting attention from the real and tangible predicament in which Native Americans were, and ignoring their efforts to adapt to the new way of life, while at the same time preserve their traditions.

Curtis's images can hardly be seen as ethnographic documents, which he persistently claimed they were, chiefly because they were heavily influenced by a dominant photographic aesthetic trend of the time, namely pictorialism (Gidley 182). The movement arose in response to popular claims that photography was just a mechanical way of recording reality, not a true art form. The proponents of the style therefore wanted to demonstrate that images produced by cameras can indeed attain the lofty position of works of art (Marien 136). Thus, rather than making "straightforward" photographs, they produced pictures that would resemble paintings or drawings. Their works were usually slightly out of focus, a bit murky, featured dramatic light effects, and exhibited brush strokes or other noticeable signs of manipulation. All these elements can be seen in the majority of Curtis's photogravures which defies Curtis' assertions about accuracy and preciseness. The images promote a vision of sentimental evanescence. Curtis's main, though to some degree unconscious, objective was to create spectacular and picturesque images. Yet, he presented his work as simple ethnographic documents that as he claimed mirrored the reality of Native life.

What is even more frequently leveled as criticism against Edward Curtis's methods, are the accusations of various types of manipulations that he deployed to get perfect photographs that would correspond to his vision. According to Lyman, "Curtis trumpeted the need to catch real 'Indianness'… but he knew that much of what he thought as 'Indianness' did not exist, and in that knowledge, his work tended toward deception" (149). In the process of the production of this falsehood, he would provide costumes, issue wigs to cover their short hair and supply them with accessories (usually, historically inaccurate) they were to pose with. These were to attest to the Indianness of people documented so that they could stage scenes that he imagined,

which often did not correspond to the actual Native histories or traditions (Lyman 90). Curtis also cropped his pictures and retouched them in order to eliminate the evidence of modern life, especially material objects of Euro-American cultures (Lyman 63). Furthermore, his subjects were mostly photographed outdoors, in a pristine looking natural environment, which together with the captions that preferably referred to events and customs of the distant past, situated Natives in some unspecified, mythical times gone by, and obliterated any suggestions for the cause of their difficult situation.

In *On Photography* Susan Sontag writes "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power" (4). The appropriation of Native American iconography is very much true if one looks at such examples as Curtis's monumental project. From its inception photography was used as a tool of cultural dominance, and control over the marginalized group identified as the Other, and its use for political purposes is clearly visible now. Most of the pictures that reached a wider audience, produced, in Gerald Vizenor's terminology, simulations that existed, or presumably still do, in the absence of the tribal real.

In his book *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*, Gerald Vizenor examines the most important issues about Curtis's photographic project. Vizenor notes that the photographer was brought up in a society pervaded with tragic narratives on Native Americans, therefore his own work was influenced by them and was based on the premises that identified Native people as less developed, and so motivated and justified U.S. expansionism. In his portrayal of the "vanishing race," he overlooked all resistance and survival of indigenous people. But, the main problem with Curtis's photographs has been that even though the images were pictorialist the photographer showed them as ethnographic records and studies, and that subsequently they were received and treated as such by their viewers and readers creating a mythical image of the "Indian."

Vizenor's *Manifest Manner: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* discusses the emergence of the notion of the "Indian" and his own coinage "Postindian" which is aimed at destabilizing the former term. He writes that the "Indian" is a colonial concept used to refer to a whole lot of indigenous people, despite their tribal identity, to which there is no equivalent in any of the tribal languages since Native people never perceived themselves as a unity having belonged to different nations (*Manifest Manners* 11). For Vizenor the idea of "Indianess" is a simulation understood in the Baudrillardian meaning of the word as a "negation of the sign as value… the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference" (Baudrillard 170). This particular simulation which does not refer to any reality whatsoever yet keeps up the pretence of being representative of particular groups of people populating the U.S., has been employed in the service of imperialistic purposes of the European colonists since Christopher Columbus's arrival in America as Native Americans were excluded from civil society and existed outside the U.S. constitution, and is still present in the mainstream culture.

For Vizenor the answer to the Euro-American "simulations of domination" is the Postindian. The very term alludes to postmodernism theories, most notably deconstruction, which Jacques Derrida defines in *Of Grammatology* as movements

that "do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures" (24). As the term "postmodern" departs from the notion of modernism and is defined as something that comes after, derives certain features from that movement, yet is in many ways the opposite of that strand in art, so similarly "Postindian" can only be defined in relation to the word "Indian." The Anishinaabe writer acknowledges the impossibility of the critique of the notion of an "Indian" that does not start with the term itself. He refers to Derridian logic of paleonymics, recognizing the series of connected significations that a term entails, the contradictions contained in that system, the ambivalence and inadequacy of the existing term, and consequently offering a new understanding of that old concept. His coinage implies that the diverse tribal cultures could only be perceived as a unity from the colonial perspective. Only the play with the word and with the simulations that come with it might prove effective in showing the specificity of "Indian simulations" and so undermine them.

The Postindian lays bare and unsettles the mainstream conventions of supposed representation of Native people, with the use of humor, theatrical performances, circulation of new stories, what Vizenor generally calls the "simulations of survivance" (*Manifest Manners* 5). The term denotes Native survival and resistance against the hegemonic cultural structures (*Native Liberty* 24) and is inspired in its construction by Derrida's term *différance*, also a blending, of differ and defer, and a pun that characterizes and performs the situation in which all identities and meanings are possible as they are acknowledged and left over to be used in other contexts, and thus alters the traditional definitions of identity and difference. The simulations of survivance are any voices and acts that tease the prevailing and powerful simulations and tell fresh stories of indigenous people without offering any essential definition of the Native identity and without claiming its ultimate authenticity. These performances are often characterized by the hallmarks of postmodern art listed by Ihab Hassan, such as play, parody, irony, chance, deconstruction, performance and metonymy (91), and are aimed at creating the sense of Native presence rather than at being representative and focusing on the referential quality of images or texts produced, thus they are seen as strategic tactics (*Native Liberty* 159). The "Postindian" precludes any attempts of seeking ethnographic truth about the "Indian."

Entering Zig's Indian Reservation

One of the most important artists that use the repertoire of tools of "warriors of survivance" is Zig Jackson, a contemporary photographer of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara descent, who makes the issues of identity making and representation the main subjects of his works. His series of black and white pictures *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation* shows him wearing what looks like a traditional headdress, and posing with a sign which says "Entering Zig's Indian Reservation" and a smaller one which states "Private Property; open range cattle on highway; No Picture Taking; No Hunting; No Air Traffic; New Agers Prohibited, without permission from Tribal Council." He put up his sign in various places, in front of the San Francisco City Hall, next to the Golden Gate headland, against the view of the San Francisco downtown or in a city

park. The series shows nothing even somewhat akin to what is usually presented in popular anthropology publications and builds upon the notion of performativity.

In *Performativity and Performance*, Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky and Andrew Parker sketchily describe how discursive processes impact our lives, and especially lives of those who belong to marginalized groups, who are discriminated against and cannot enjoy the same rights or treatment as others. They highlight the illocutionary force of words, their capacity to do things, especially if the discourse is in the hands of those who are powerful. They also remark, how in the very nature of performative acts resides a great potential for countering those abuses of power (2-3). Performatives lack the quality of being, either true or false, as they perform an action, rather than describe it. Yet, some of the performative statements might come out as, what Austin calls, "infelicities" (20) which means that somewhere in the context in which the phrase was uttered certain required expectations and conditions were not met. As a result of this, the action declared cannot be successfully performed. Those "unhappy" utterances are what later scholars focus on. They see them as the instances that show the underlying quality of all language, its citational character ("Signatures Event Context" 317), and what comes with it, the nature of identity as non-essential, based on repetition and performative acts that are promulgated by various media in cultural production. What is crucial, is the fact that these performances produce a series of effects, and that this illocutionary power can be turned back on itself by repeating the oppressive models to disclose their deeply rooted tradition of practice.

Jackson commits an "unhappy" performative act when he erects the "Zig's Indian Reservation" sign in various important places and makes the photograph. Putting up a road sign usually means designating a restricted area as a place with a concrete name and societal structure, and assigning it under specific jurisdiction. The usage of a sign, be it a board with a name, a flag, or a coat of arms, labels a place as belonging to someone. The action of setting up the sign can be compared to Austinian example of naming a ship (11). Yet, in this situation, the performative act of naming cannot be successfully executed. Zig Jackson is not a government official, the name does not refer to any geographical location, and the area of downtown San Francisco was never allocated to be governed by a tribal council. The act "etiolates," weakens and alters (Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick 4) the official performative acts of naming, and brings attention to the arbitrariness of land allocation and the suppression of Native voices when the US frontier was being advanced, as well as resists the popular depictions of Indian Reservations, as places of poverty and crime.

The artist approaches the subject of reservations completely differently than mainstream press photographers do as he uses the strategy of catachresis to abuse the stereotypical enactments of "Indianness" in various media. He puts on a headdress and poses staring seriously and pensively into space, against an impressive natural landscape, to invoke the classic and defining presentation of Native Americans, the monumental pictorialist project created by Edward Curtis. The artists' intervention exceeds the conventional forms of portrayal, because the rest of his clothing is not "traditional," in one of the photos he is sitting on a bench in a natural and relaxed position, and in most of the pictures the cityscape enters into the images unsettling the romantic and heroic sentiments. He uses formulaic metaphors and makes them ambivalent. The old names

and images introduce new concepts, and destabilize the signification system linked with the familiar and long-established notions, such as the "Indian."

The same goes for the list of prohibitions. They all involve catchphrases associated in the popular imagination with "Indianness," and with how the "Indian" identity is perceived or constructed in the public discourse. They use one of the most widespread symbols for Native victimry, buffalo killing. They talk about photography, which was widely used as a tool for establishing Native Americans as Others. They mention the superficial contemporary fascination with Native way of life, through the quizzical reference to trends commonly clustered under the name New Age that often appropriate Native traditions. The prohibitions lack the illocutionary power that traffic signs possess, as there will be no consequences for the rule breakers and because these practices were or are accepted on Native land. Yet, being the "infelicities" or "unhappy" utterances, as they are performed theatrically, they aim at what Spivak describes as "'reversing… and seizing the apparatus of value-coding" (228). This strategy acknowledges that it resides in the oppressive power structures and cannot operate outside of them to be effective, and tries to deconstruct them through irony and play.

Postcolonial critics and artists often refer to or make use of the theories of performativity, as it offers a revision of how identities are constructed, and by that provides an apparatus for deconstructing the conventional or prescribed identity formation schemata. Zig Jackson as the "postindian warrior of survivance" and his work *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation*, uses conventional metaphors and non-normative "unhappy" enunciations. Through this, the citational quality of communication is exposed, the deep rooted ironies of the clash of two cultures are investigated, and the dominant imagination is reclaimed and de-mythologized.

Indian Photographing Tourist Photographing Indians

Another series created by Zig Jackson, *Indian photographing tourist photographing Indians*, literally does what the title states. It depicts tourists who take pictures of Native people wearing fancy dress during events such as fairs and parades. This body of work, both funny and painful, shows the ongoing tendency of white Americans to treat Native Americans as exotic objects worth documenting in their traditional attire and presenting them as romanticized figures from the past in pictures akin to the tribal portraits made by Edward Curtis. The images very directly play with the convention of who is the possessor of the gaze, who looks at who and how, as well as who is in charge of creating a visual record and thus producing a narration. They bring to the foreground, what is always implied but brushed over, the politics of looking, and so they stand against materials like Erika Larsen's "People of the Horse" or Aaron Huey's "Pine Ridge" that under a guise of documentary photography obscure the bias inherent in them.

Susan Sontag wrote that "To photograph people is to violate them, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (14) and Jackson's photographs draw attention to that very act, revealing the mechanism that is often taken for granted uncritically, rendering the

specificity of a point of view transparent, and questioning the hierarchy involved in the production of visual documents that show Native Americans by white Americans. Jackson makes pictures of people who were not expecting to be photographed, catching them in clumsy poses, picturing them from unusual perspectives, from the side or from the back, where their faces cannot be seen. He departs from the traditional rules of composition, not placing the subject of his photographs in a central position, as well as not avoiding having a tilted image. He defies the formal conventions used in the pictures of Edward Curtis. The images do not look like studied documentary photographs made with high quality equipment but rather like snapshots taken casually by a passer-by. His work undermines the primacy of the white western subject by exposing a particular standpoint implicit in the majority of photographic representations of Native Americans in place of the "invisible point of super-objective perspective" (Said 167) that is a default for the narration of world history in the West.

Through that Jackson overthrows the "imperial gaze," which Ann Kaplan defines as an approach that strips the colonized people of their subjectivity, treating them as objects, and hence dominating them. The white western subject is the one defining how the Other is supposed to be represented and does from its position and in accordance with its own presuppositions and interests while at the same time denying the privilege it enjoys (Kaplan 78). It also fails to acknowledge that non-white and non-American cultures have their own integral cultures (see Said). In Jackson's playful images this dynamic is reversed and the refusal to "mutual gazing" (Kaplan 79) is challenged as the photographer, the looking subject, returns the gaze, scrutinizes the non-Native picture takers, and presents them not only as objects to be looked at but also as awkward and ridiculous looking in their photographic endeavor as they unabashedly point their cameras that look strangely stuck to their faces at people who do not seem to care about them since they are preoccupied with the events taking place.

Indian Photographing Tourist Photographing Sacred Sites

A very similar idea drives Zig Jackson's work *Indian photographing tourist photographing sacred sites*. The images show people taking pictures of tourist attractions associated with Native Americans, such a Mesa Verde National Park or Monument Valley, laying bare the mechanisms involved in the creation of the dominant fantasy of the "Indian" as a child of nature, coming from the past of mankind, or in Vizenor's words the "simulations of domination." Apart from playing with the photographic gaze and the power relations implicit in it, the pictures disclose how present-day tourist photography falls back on the imperialistic imagination that emphasizes the "indigenous nature, settled lives, and picturesque appearances" (Price 29) of the colonized peoples. The series resists the essentialist discursive practices that paint Native American cultures as ancient and stress the cultural continuity above all else. The use of monochromatic grainy film and the unglamorized, amateur like, point-and-shoot style of framing reinforces the defiance against the representational tendencies that have not been initiated or propelled by Native Americans but imposed from the outside, and against the commercialization of Native culture epitomized in glossy, over aestheticized images published in various magazines.

All this is done with an ironic trickster twitch to it. The comical quality is brought about by the fact that the tourist in the photographs seem unaware that they are being observed as the photographer is standing at quite some distance from them, either not in front of them but on the side or behind them. The normal scheme of tourist photography is disturbed when those who are supposed to be creating a visual record are instead the ones who become the subject matter of someone else's images. The point of view of the invisible photographer can be seen as a trickster voice, a voice of a jester who defies the accepted behavior codes and upsets the established order of things. Gerald Vizenor writes that trickster is "chance and freedom in a comic sign; comic freedom is a 'doing' not an aesthetic presence… the trickster is outside comic structure, 'making it' comic… a 'doing' in narrative points of view, and outside the imposed structures" ("Trickster Discourse" 10). The narration brings out the absurdity of the acquisitive tourist obsession with recording the sighted locations and teases the popular commercial representations of Native culture in magazines and travel guides.

Commodity Series

A slightly different approach is taken in Jackson's *Commodity Series* that takes as its subject matter commodity food, that is products distributed through federal programs among Native American families living on or near reservations. Some of the photographs are accompanied by sketches, illustrations cut out from other sources, and hand-written text. In this series, Jackson draws on his own experience of living on Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and relying on food packages. With the use of banal food items, he tackles the imperialistic history and the relationship between the U.S. government and Native peoples, touching upon the serious subject of the colonial acquisition, exploitation of the American land, and the paternalistic attitudes that were adopted by the hegemonic institutions to justify and uphold the domination over indigenous people. As in other of his works Jackson does it in a comical way, alluding to various images from popular culture and art history.

The straightforward photograph of a generic tomato sauce is a clear reference to Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*. Both works are realistic depictions of food tins and show them from the front, in high contrast, with all the details printed on the label legible for the viewer. They also share the exact same composition, with the can being the only thing in the picture positioned exactly in the middle and occupying nearly all of the almost square canvas or background. The symbol of postmodern art, the canvases displaying soup cans, subversive in their repudiation of high art, were read as a contemplation on mass production, commodification of all aspects of life, the society viewed as a spectacle, and the death of referentiality, yet, according to their author, with no intention to criticize American consumer society. However, in the Native artist's work, the pictures are not as commercial-like, not as flawless, and not as repetitive as if they were massed produced. The scrapbook character of the two of them gives them an additional defiant element which Warhol's artwork lacks. His paintings were a form of protest against high art embodied in Abstract Expressionism (Danto 76) but they lacked any political or social dimension that the *Commodity Series* carries.

Warhol stressed the depthlessness of his images as he commented on repetition in his artworks "I want it to be exactly the same. Because the more you look at the exact same thing, the more the meaning goes away" (55). Frederic Jameson picked up on this theme in his discussion on postmodernism and its defining superficial quality as he wrote on *Diamond Dust Shoes*, "There is in Warhol no way to complete the hermeneutic gesture" (8). If one is to read Jackson's photographs using the dominant critical strand on Warhol's art, then one is to see the government commodities as the locus of the Native absence. This is emphasized by the images of people in traditional Native attire evidently cut out and pasted from printed sources and the colorful sketch of a buffalo and a horse, two animals most frequently identified with indigenous tribes, and also reinforced by the brilliant use of a container which carries with it ambiguity of whether it is filled with something or is empty. The likenesses of tomato sauce cans and food items given out to reservation inhabitants are to be seen as not pointing to anything, that is not being symbolically read as the characterization of Native people through the colonial eyes by the products that attest to the US government appropriation of Native land and the subsequent tragic narratives that include depictions of the reservation poverty.

Just as the best known pop artist portrayed Russell Means in his series the *American Indian*, so does Zig Jackson make a self-portrait in a headdress and put it on a tin can with commercial type lettering saying "100% Indian." Vizenor compared Warhol's silkscreen images to Magritte's painting of a pipe that has the words "This Is Not a Pipe" written over it and stated that those portraits were an epitome of the absence of a tribal real (*Manifest Manners* 18). Jackson denies the possibility of defining Native Americans through the lens of what Vizenor would call the "long gaze of Christopher Columbus" that is the perspective of those who "recount manifest manners and mistaken colonial discoveries" ("Manifest Manners" 225). The can picture undermines both the images of Native Americans used for commercial purposes but also such simulations as present in Warhol's art.

The ironic inscription, which is the exact opposite of the one from Magritte's *The Treachery of Images,* elevates the sense of the absurd to its peak, as it literally suggests that the Indian from the label can be found inside. The ridiculousness of that possibility exposes how ludicrous the assumption ingrained in the imperial gaze that the marginalized group can be represented by those belonging to the majority and not to the group in question is. The vision of a person contained in a food can is extremely morbid and points to the genocidal actions of the colonizers. At the same time, it avoids painting the Indigenous nations as victims because of the humoristic approach taken, the playful and nonsensical quality of the images, and the confident pose of the figure with sunglasses and regular 90s clothing on the front which is far from being the Curtisian Indian despite the headdress.

In other images, the droll grotesque element is brought about by the personal notes hand-written next to the food distribution program cans. Some of them are instructions on how to use the luncheon meat, while others are cynical comments that ask questions such as "I wonder if the U.S. government used Indians to test this food on." This text also provides an account of a lived experience that is missing from narratives on reservations produced by non-Natives as the artist recounts in his bio

how he used to sketch on and play with empty commodity boxes as a child (Jackson). The scribbles are a personal jest and a record of thoughts of a Native individual navigating the path of postcolonial identity-making. Jackson's photographs are very equivocal and cannot be read in one way. On the one hand, they refute the domination epitomized in the commodity boxes but simultaneously acknowledge that this is a point of departure from where oppositional identities can be built.

The canvases with branded items created by Warhol were seen as universal since the artist himself asserted that these are products that could be found in any household around the U.S. In a response to the supposed universality of the paintings and prints, Anthony Grudin remarks that the images were actually the opposite of it as they were class and race specific, which he proves by researching the advertisement strategies used in the 1950s and 60s (17). As Jackson draws on Warhol's commercial illustrations used in advertising and puts non-branded goods in an analogous context, he manages to highlight, by contrast, the incompleteness and partiality of the postmodern art project that marginalized Native perspective, and also brings attention to the problem of cultural appropriation for marketing purposes. The *Commodity Series* shows the paradox of how, on the one hand, Native Americans were in the eyes of PR specialists only associated with generic products, as they were not seen as potential customers, while at the same the image of an "Indian" and such attributes as headdress and tepees, often linked in the popular imagination with them, has been used as logos or marketing tools for a multitude of companies to sell everything from flour and washing powder to cigarettes and guns. This trend is still apparent as "Indian simulations" are frequently used in commercials and the fashion industry.

Gerald Vizenor writes in *Manifest Manners* "The postindian antecedes the postmodern condition; the resistance of the tribes to colonial inventions and representations envisioned the ironies of histories, narrative discourse, and cultural diversities" (167). He also adds that "postindian warriors of postmodern simulations would undermine and surmount, with imagination and the performance of new stories, the manifest manners of scriptural simulations and 'authentic' representation of the tribes" (17). This is exactly what is done by Zig Jackson as he disrupts the imagery that is produced by the dominant strategies of representation and contests their supposed authenticity of depiction, their claim to factuality, and their disinterested and unbiased point of view. He does it through the production of alternative histories, revision and deconstruction of hegemonic structures and the images they construct in social sciences and mass media, denouncement of exploitation tools, sharing of individual visions and stories, all done with irony and suspense, hence creating Native presence in visual culture, which is almost completely absent from most of the mainstream press or popular anthropology publications.

Zig Jackson's artworks presented at the Portland Museum of Art can be seen as narratives of survivance and their author as a postindian warrior. Vizenor repeatedly stresses, both in his critical works and novels, the importance of humor in the narratives of survivance. Seriousness is treated as a quality characteristic for the narrative of dominance and hegemonic histories. He writes "comic works make no attempt to actual representation. Laughter, in this case, is hostile to the world it depicts. It is free as tragedy and lamentation are not" (*Manifest Manners* 83). Comic elements

are present in all the works discussed above as they tease, exaggerate and defamiliarize the tradition of portrayal present in the works of the nineteenth and early twentieth century photographers but also contemporary image makers that construct indigenous nations as the Other and are vital for the metanarrative of the U.S. national identity. The parodic character of the Native artist's work makes possible the repudiation of essentialism and is vital for them as for trickster stories, which they undeniably are. The oppositional identity is created in the realm of fine art and it allows for the subversion of the visual tradition of representation of Native Americans that grew out of the attitudes encapsulated in the phrase Manifest Destiny and was partially created and upheld by ethnographic photographers such as Edward Curtis.

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Death of a Celebrity: Kobe Bryant and Post-Millennial Sensitivities

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Abstract: On Sunday, January 26, 2020, Kobe Bryant—a retired star of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball franchise—died suddenly and tragically in a helicopter crash. Following his death, Bryant was instantaneously mourned and celebrated as a basketball legend, an inspiration, a role model, a family man, and a Renaissance man; he was secularly and medially canonized. This study analyzes the secular canonization process and aims at extrapolating the post-Millennial element of the narratives of the tributes to Bryant. The article looks into how the reaction to the death of Bryant, who, although a Millennial himself, seemed to embody the post-Millennial image of post-Millennials (Generation Z) i.e., competitive, spontaneous, adventuresome, and curious, reflects the self-image of post-Millennials i.e., loyal, compassionate, thoughtful, open-minded, responsible, and determined.

Keywords: Kobe Bryant, media, post-Millennial, secular canonization, celebrityhood

Introduction: The Tragedy on January 26, 2020

On January 26, 2020, at 8:24 p.m. European time, TMZ posted the story that Kobe Bryant, at the age of 41, had died in a helicopter crash in Calabasas hills, California. Actually, the first TMZ's news mentioned "Bryant, and five others die in a helicopter crash." The news item was taken down by TMZ after it had been reported that nine people lost their lives in the fatal accident. Then, as the story was developing, and it was revealed that nine people had died in the crash, the manner in which the event was being reported was still "Kobe Bryant among 9 killed" (Jacobo) or "Kobe Bryant and others" ("Kobe Bryant, All Others Aboard Helicopter Died Immediately in Crash, Autopsies Show"). However, as soon as January 27, James Corden, the host of CBS's *The Late Late Show with James Corden,* was among the first TV personalities who, on his show, talked about nine lives lost and each of them being a tragedy.[1]

1 The reaction of the late-night talk show hosts to the news of the crash seemed to give the lie to CNN's claim that "the story… stunned the world on Sunday" (Darcy) as the story was, for the most part, covered only by the LA based shows. Corden sent his thoughts and prayers to all the families who lost their loved ones in the crash; Stephen Colbert used the opportunity to call for regulation changes and the need to install black-boxes on helicopters, which is not a practice in California; and most emotional of the three, Jimmy Kimmel, instead of his usual show, played clips of Bryant's previous visit to the ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* in an hour-long tribute. At the same time, the major shows based in New York were silent on the story. Neither Seth Meyers, in his *Late Night with Seth Meyers* on NBC, nor Trevor Noah of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* mentioned Bryant in their Monday shows. The exception was Jimmy Fallon, who opened his *The Tonight Show* with recalling a beer run with Kobe in the nineties. Similarly, Bryant's death was not addressed on SNL show on the following Saturday, although that week's host, JJ Watt, ended the show wearing Laker's jersey with 24 on it and shouting out "Kobe!"

The linguistic manner, in which the news of Bryant's death was reported, immediately introduces a broader aspect of the subject matter, which is the post-Millennial narrative of the process of secular canonization of Kobe Bryant; the process in which Bryant's celebrityhood and post-Millennial sensitivities were factors. The objective of this study is to analyze the process of the said canonization. The subject of the textual analysis is the discourse of the reaction to Bryant's death featured on traditional media, social media, e.g., tweets or memes, as well as in the direct reactions of fans and the members of the NBA family. The analysis will cover the period from the first announcement by TMZ, which came minutes after the crash, to February 24, 2020 and when the Lakers organization paid an official tribute to late Bryant… and beyond.

Kobe Bryant's Profile

Ever since his first game in the NBA in 1996, Kobe Bryant was a polarizing figure. His desire to become the greatest player in NBA history was at the same time admired as it was seen as a display of arrogance, especially by the generation of fans of Michael Jordan, whom Bryant hoped to dethrone. These fans hated him with a pure hatred typical of that of "Passionate sports fans [who] not only hate their enemies, they *despise* them" (Delaney and Madigan 174), much as Boston Celtic fans hate the Lakers—the team Bryant joined in 1996, straight from high school. To those fans, there was a lot about Bryant, which made it difficult to truly appreciate him: his feuds with his teammates, coaches and the Lakers management; his claim to be "a Laker for life" and to "bleed purple and gold" only after his requests to be traded were denied; or when he changed his jersey number from 8 to 24, both numbers now retired by the Lakers, which was seen, both, as means of reinventing himself and as an arrogant way of saying "I am better than Jordan."

There is no more hate towards Kobe Bryant in the basketball fandom and the attitude towards him did not change with his death. It had been a gradual process during which Bryant managed to win five NBA championships, 2008 NBA Most Valuable Player award, and two NBA Finals MVP awards in 2009 and 2010. He was also an 18-time All-Star, a 15-time member of the All-NBA Team, a 12-time member of the All-Defensive Team, all of which made him one of basketball legends. Roland Lazenby's *Showboat: The Life of Kobe Bryant* portrays Bryant as a difficult person who had matured and changed over the years. The book helped the readers understand how driven and motivated Bryant had been in basketball, which even the Celtics fans had to respect. Bryant retired in 2016 and the same drive, commercially sold as Mamba mentality, and meticulous approach he had had for basketball translated into his post-NBA life. For example, as Bryant was inching retirement, he published a poem entitled "Dear Basketball" in *The Players' Tribune*. The poem became a basis for an animated short film directed and animated by Glen Keane, with music by John Williams – the Academy Award winning composer. Bryant, who narrated the film and supervised its production, was awarded, as a producer, by the Academy of Motion Pictures with an Oscar for Best Animated Short Film in 2018. Jordan never got an Oscar for *Space Jam.*

Nevertheless, Kobe Bryant's legacy is a polarizing one because of one episode of Bryant's life which his fans tend to overlook—the 2003 rape allegations. That year,

Bryant was accused by a nineteen-year-old hotel employee in Colorado of raping her. During a press conference two weeks after the accusation, Bryant, confessed, while holding hands with his wife Vanessa, to having extramarital sexual intercourse with the woman whose name remains undisclosed. "Bryant admitted that he preferred rough sex and had grabbed her by the neck" (Lazenby 898), however, he claimed the intercourse was consensual. The case never got to criminal court as a settlement of undisclosed financial number was reached in a civil court, after which Bryant issued a public statement saying: "Although I truly believe this encounter between us was consensual, I recognize now that she did not and does not view this incident the same way I did. After months of reviewing discovery, listening to her attorney, and even her testimony in person, I now understand how she feels that she did not consent to this encounter" (Draper), which, in fact, is an admission of having a non-consensual sexual intercourse, i.e., rape.

The attitude of basketball fans towards Bryant must be conflicted just as Bryant himself was conflicted, or as Lazenby puts it: "Bryant… had his conflicts, but his manner and graciousness meant that despite all the public tribulation and negativity of his life, he was building a base of growing admiration in and around the game" (1020). A great basketball player, an Oscar winner, a devoted father who was difficult, arrogant, selfish and potentially a rapist—this was the portrait of Kobe Bryant, which had been painted in the course of twenty-four years.

Seemiller and Meghan, in their study on "Generation Z" present a twofold characteristic of post-Millennials, which includes the way post-Millennials see themselves as well as their view of their post-Millennial peers. In the study, post-Millennials see their peers as "competitive, spontaneous, adventuresome, and curious" (13), while their self-image is that of "loyal… compassionate… thoughtful… open-minded… responsible… determined" (8-11). Bryant, although a Millennial (Dimock) himself, embodied some of those qualities. As a basketball player, Bryant was known to be hyper-competitive, determined and curious, and, as a public figure, he could also be described as spontaneous, adventurous and curious—be it in a positive (storytelling) or negative (rape accusations).

However, when it was revealed that Bryant had rented the helicopter to go to a basketball game of his daughter's team, the team he had been coaching, and that his daughter, Gianna, as well as other girls and their parents were on the board when the helicopter crashed into the hills of Calabasas, there was a major shift in the narratives of Bryant's legacy—not as a basketball star, but as a man. At that point, the narratives moved from memories of a competitive, driven and ruthless basketball assassin to a loving father, and Bryant's special relationship with one of his four daughters—Gianna, who was dubbed "heiress" to Kobe's basketball legacy, and who "didn't get to live her full life or achieve her grandest hoop dreams" (Fader), was continuously emphasized. Bryant was even hailed as the champion of female sports due to him coaching his daughters' team and his support to the WNBA.

Such narrative shift of reporting is not surprising for two reasons. One, the common "do not speak ill of the dead" principle, which is a colloquial manner of describing a psychological response which makes the mourners to remember only the good things about a lost one. For example, in May 2020, one of Bryant's former

teammates, Jeremy Lin, during his visit to an *Inside The Green Room* podcast, told a story of how injured, i.e. not playing and not practicing, Bryant made an appearance at a Lakers practice. Lin recalled:

> He comes in… sweatsuit, he has a sling for his hurt shoulder, and he has these shades on… and Carlos Boozer says 'Kob, good to see you bro… we haven't seen you in a bit, how come you came today' and [Kobe] was just stonefaced, and he was like 'I just came by to say bye to some of you bums who are going to get traded tomorrow.' (Fernandez)

Had this story been publicized during Bryant's playing days, it would have been yet another example of his arrogance and pettiness; three months after his death, the story is yet another good-natured anecdote on Bryant's distaste for losing, laughed off by Lin and the podcast's hosts. The second reason is that Bryant was a fixture of a celebrity culture, in which celebrities function as "an apparently privileged group" (Redmond, Holmes 90), especially athletes, such as Kobe Bryant, who are "accustomed to a culture of individualism, where individual players and star-performers are regularly singled out for special attention and treatment" (Smart 41).

On the other hand, the sensitivity of post-Millennials is that of a compassion and thoughtfulness, which while encouraged mourning Bryant, to a certain extent denied him his privileged status. While to some a basketball star legend lost his life on January 26, to others a father was killed in a crash with his daughter and their friends and the pilot. The complex character of Bryant's persona and his past juxtaposed with the hagiographic narratives which followed his premature death resulted in a discrepancy in how he was viewed by post-Millennials and by his peers. In other words, the question of Kobe Bryant's legacy is that of conflicted emotions Bryant's persona has evoked.

Secular Canonization of Kobe Bryant

What immediately followed the early news of Bryant's death was a series of tributes to the basketball legend. The first tributes came from the NBA players, who had games scheduled that Sunday, many of them visibly shaken by the news. These players used Bryant's jersey numbers to honor him; the games began with players violating the 8-seconds and 24-seconds rules, which was followed by standing ovation from the spectators. Tray Young of the Atlanta Hawks even managed to change his own jersey to one with number eight on it. Those who did not play that day, as well as the retired NBA stars and anyone involved with the NBA took to traditional and social media expressing their shock and despair. The Lakers canceled their Sunday game, then held a tribute on Friday night which included a speech by LeBron James. There was a palpable sense of loss in the NBA on January 26—the league lost one of its great ones.

An important aspect of the story was the timing. The day before the crash, LeBron James (now of the Lakers) passed Bryant as the third highest scorer in NBA history. That same day, Bryant posted his congratulations to James on Instagram and Twitter and the two had a talk on the phone on Sunday morning. The social media posts proved to be Brant's last ones—just hours later he was dead. There was a time

in twenty-oughts when there was a discussion whether Kobe Bryant was actually a greater player than Jordan. Then came Lebron James and the G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Time) debate shifted to James vs. Jordan, and Bryant was somewhat forgotten. Bryant's premature death and the tributes to him as an inspiration, a role model and a basketball legend reminded people of his basketball greatness and brought him back to the conversation. Even more than that, in his death, Bryant became a symbol of basketball. When the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced, on February 14, that it would induct Bryant posthumously and one year before he was eligible to be an inductee (Lyons), suggestions were expressed that the NBA should change its logo featuring a silhouette of a legendary Laker, Jerry West to one featuring a silhouette of another legendary Laker, Kobe Bryant. One fan, Nick M, actually started a petition and is still collecting signatures to change the logo. As of December 2020, he has collected more than 3 million signatures; his goal is 4.5 million ("Sign the Petition"). For a brief moment, Bryant was basketball, and basketball organizations of different sorts paid honors to a great player whose only connection with their programs was the game of basketball. For example, Moravia athletic director, Todd Mulvaney, told *The Citizen*—a local newspaper in Auburn:

> I was devastated when I heard the news and still am. I was a huge Kobe fan. He's a (Michael Jordan) disciple. What he's done for the game, he's like an ambassador. I don't know Kobe, but I feel like I did. It's a sad time for all of us that are in the basketball community because Kobe meant that much to a lot of people. (Ritzel)

and on February 4, an Italian team NPC Rieti, for which Bryant's father had played, retired Kobe Bryant's 24 jersey number ("Italian Team Retires Kobe Bryant's No. 24 in Tribute"). Then, in April 2020, ESPN released *The Last Dance* and Jordan was "the man" again.

The flood of tributes, which broke out on Sunday, January 26, focused on him as a basketball legend and basketball's great and featured a blend of sports and music. Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was taking place at Staples Center (home of the Lakers) the day Bryant died, and thousands gathered in front of the arena not so much to get a glimpse of their favorite musicians, but to hold a vigil in honor of Kobe Bryant. The Grammys ceremony took on a somber tone, and a number of tributes to Bryant were included in the ceremony. Alicia Keys and Boyz II Men opened the ceremony with a performance of *It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday*; Lil Nas X, Lizzo and DJ Khaled also incorporated tributes to Bryant into their performances. Apart from the Grammys ceremony, musicians used their platform to commemorate Bryant. For example, Lil Wayne added a moment of silence on his recent album *Funeral*; Guns N' Roses, while performing a concert in Miami, dedicated *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* to Bryant and all the victims of the crash ; Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth performed *See You Again* at a Lakers game. Kid Rock, however, decided to honor Bryant not with music but with his rifle which he named after Bryant and then subsequently Rock shot a deer in Bryant's honor.

Athletes of various sports expressed their admiration of Bryant mostly by posting tributes on social media and customizing their sports apparel, equipment and,

naturally, their sneakers. There were also other forms in which athletes honored Bryant and his daughter. For example, the PGA Tour star Justin Thomas announced Thursday that he would auction off Kobe Bryant-themed wedges he used at the Phoenix Open to benefit the MambaOnThree Fund (Chiari). There were even attempts to find Bryant's supernatural impact on the sports being played after his death, as was the case with a putt by Tiger Woods.

> Some might think there was a higher power at work when Tiger Woods strode down the first hole at Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles Thursday. Close to where basketball great Kobe Bryant died in a helicopter crash last month, Woods fizzed his second shot into the green to leave an eagle putt of 24 feet eight inches. Remarkably, those are the two jersey numbers worn by Bryant during his glittering 20-year career with the LA Lakers. (Hodgetts)

The blend of athletic and musical displays of appreciation for late Kobe Bryant continued during the Super Bowl LIV played on February 2 and throughout the NBA All-Star weekend held two weeks later. In football, the players of both the Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49ers customized their clothes, uniforms, and cleats to pay tribute to Bryant. There was a minute of silence for Bryant and the crash victims before the game, during which players and coaches lined up on opposite 24-yard lines, signifying the Bryant's jersey number (Stephen). The halftime show featuring a joint performance by Shakira and Jennifer Lopez included a number of subtle tributes, such as: a giant cross, which lit up in purple and yellow (the colors of the Los Angeles Lakers) during *Let's Get Loud* song performed by Lopez, her daughter, Emme, and a children's choir. However, to some these tributes felt too subtle and, via social media, they expressed their disappointment. One Twitter user posted, "So Jennifer Lopez and Shakira used that they were doing a tribute to Kobe Bryant as an excuse to get their views up during the halftime show not only that but then they proceeded to do NO Kobe Bryant tribute like they said they would...but are we surprised?" (@piccoladiamond).

The NBA, with help from musicians, honored Bryant in a number of ways during the 2020 All-Star weekend (February 14-16) in Chicago. On Saturday, the league's commissioner, Adam Silver, announced that the league's All-Star Game Most Valuable Player Award has been permanently named for The NBA All-Star Game Kobe Bryant Most Valuable Player Award'; Queen Latifah opened the All-Star weekend with a performance in honor of Bryant with a rendition of *Love's in Need of Love Today*; Dwight Howard displayed number 24 on top of the iconic Superman symbol during the Slam Dunk contest. On Sunday, Jennifer Hudson performed a song dedicated to Bryant and the other victims of the crash prior to the actual All-Star Game; during the game itself, players of one team wore number 24 on their jerseys in honor of Kobe while the other team wore number 2 in honor of his daughter, Gianna. Team LeBron's Kawhi Leonard, who was named All-Star Game MVP, said "Words can't explain how happy I am for it. Able to put that trophy in my room, in my trophy room, and just be able to see Kobe's name on there, it just means a lot to me. He's a big inspiration in my life. He did a lot for me" (O'Brien). There were others honoring Bryant and the tributes were posted and commented on with a ubiquitous *#MambaForever* on social media. And, of course, there were customized sneakers.

Sneaker culture was one of the major and obvious forms of paying respect to Bryant, who during his career had had his own lines of signature Adidas and then Nike basketball shoes. On January 26, hours after news of the helicopter crash had been reported, players across eight NBA games that day took the court wearing pairs of Bryant's sneakers. Similar tributes could be observed throughout the NBA (and other leagues as well) since the fatal Sunday. For example:

> In their first home game after Kobe Bryant's untimely death, the Washington Wizards won the opening tip against the Charlotte Hornets, and the basketball found its way into the hands of Isaiah Thomas.
> … Thomas dribbled in place for eight seconds before his team was sanctioned for an intentional eight-second violation. Following the turnover, the Hornets inbounded the ball and dribbled out their own intentional 24-second shot clock violation, as the crowd at Capital One Arena chanted—'KO-BE! KO-BE! KO-BE!'—all while Thomas stood by himself, staring down at his sneakers. On his feet were a pair of 'Finals MVP' Nike Zoom Kobe 4s—the same pair Bryant wore the night he and the Los Angeles Lakers claimed an NBA title in 2009. (Dodson)

On Tuesday, March 3, the Lakers and 76ers met up for the first time since Bryant's passing. The game was in Los Angeles and the 76ers coaching staff used this as an opportunity to pay their respects to Bryant—all of the team's coaches wore Kobes during the game (Barnewall). Brooklyn Nets point guard Spencer Dinwiddie announced that his Mark II signature shoe will honor Kobe and Gianna Bryant, and that the proceeds from the first nine days of the sneaker's sales will be donated to the MambaOnThree Fund, started by the Mamba Sports Foundation to help families of the crash victims (Daniels). LeBron James, for the first time since he entered the NBA in 2003, played a game in another player's signature shoes—Kobes, and the San Antonio Spurs star DeMar DeRozan even made a pledge: "I'll never play in another player's shoes as long as I'm in the league from now on. That's how much I love Kobe's shoes" (Dodson).

DeRozan spoke as a player but also as a fan, one of multitudes of fans, who honored Kobe Bryant in more or less traditional forms of eulogies. Already on Sunday, January 26, outside the Staples Center, there were candles, flowers, pictures, and all sorts of memorabilia laid in front of the Staples Center, which, at that point began to be referred to as "the house that Kobe built" (Anderson). "Every item that was left at the Kobe Bryant memorial outside the Staples Center came with a handwritten note. In total, those who gathered outside the Los Angeles Lakers' homecourt left 1,353 basketballs and over 25,000 candles, as well jerseys, flowers, shoes, paintings and stuffed animals" (Mathur).

Various Kobe Bryant fans used the means at their disposal to honor and remember him in different, more or less traditional manner. For example, a nail artist, Audrey Noble, blogged about using fingernails as a tribute to Bryant and posted photos of her work explaining: "Never did I think I could mesh my love for beauty and Kobe together, but after his passing, I found myself saving beautiful nail art dedications to him on my Instagram. Sports, a lot like beauty, transcend any box you might want to put them in" (Noble). Also, already on January 26, 2020, the first murals appeared, and this form of honoring Bryant took on a life of its own. In the weeks following

Bryant's death various forms of pictographic works of art were created by Bryant's fans all over the world. There were the graffiti ones in Los Angeles and other American cities ("Murals Paying Tribute To Kobe Bryant Around L.A. And Where To Find Them"), a sand artwork on an Australian beach (Coë), and a street basketball court one in the Philippines (Roy). The online community of teachers of English language honored Bryant by offering English lesson activities worksheets about Bryant ("Find the Mistakes: Kobe Bryant"). A fashion model, Olivia Culpo honored Bryant when she walked the runway at the Philipp Plein fall 2020 show during Milan Fashion Week on February 22. The model wore a purple and gold basketball jersey that had Bryant's jersey number 24 on the front. However, not all tributes were welcomed. For example, when another model, Jordyn Woods, posted a workout video on Instagram, she was attacked for using the Mamba Sports Academy gym to get extra attention. Comments to her post included, "This seems very clout-ish, Mamba Sport Academy? Since when…?" one user wrote, and another follower chimed in "I agree with you. It was totally timed. Thank u for saying what we were all thinking" (Bombay).

Another form of tributes, which is unique to the Internet as a medium, were Internet memes, some of which plainly paid respects to the late star while other expressed admiration in a humorous manner typical of the medium. The main theme of the memes was the assumption that, in the afterlife, Bryant is in heaven. There, he still plays basketball, which annoys other residents (including God) as Bryant uses of their halos as a rim. Other memes reflect two characteristic aspects of the medium: 1. Bryant's tragic death is used as a comment to current events, in this case as yet another example why 2020 is the worst year ever; 2. The use of humor that is very dark and could be viewed as in poor taste and disrespectful—one comment to a giant grass mural of Kobe Bryant reads, "he would need a helicopter to see it."

Internet memes as a modern form of communication, as well as all the other forms of tributes reflect a significant characteristic of the Generation Z, which is existing through the prism of technological communication tools. As Dimock puts it: "In this progression, what is unique for Generation Z is that all of the above have been part of their lives from the start.… Social media, constant connectivity and on-demand entertainment and communication are innovations Millennials adapted to as they came of age. For those born after 1996, these are largely assumed" (5). In addition to memes, and Facebook and Instagram posts publicizing the tributes, there were even social media trends. For example, after a touching story about Bryant's love for his daughters was told by ESPN's SportsCenter anchor Elle Duncan, #GirlDad became a trend on Twitter and hundreds of posts using the hashtag were posted by celebrity fathers and non-celebrity ones (Carter).

Devil's Advocates

The above mentioned hailing of Bryant as a role-model champion of women must have resulted in the 2003 rape case to resurface. Soon after the media and people involved in female athletics (be it high school varsity coaches or WNBA stars) began praising Bryant for how much he did to promote women in sports with him coaching Gianna used as a token of his support for female athletes, a number of women brought back

the topic of the 2003 rape allegations. There was a school principal from Washington Camas High School, Liza Sejkora, who, in a now-deleted Facebook post, wrote as soon as on January 26, "Not gonna lie. Seems to me that karma caught up with a rapist today," after which she was forced to take an absentee leave due to a backlash from school's student and Internet community. Sejkora did apologize saying she regretted writing the post. "I have some personal experience that generated the visceral reaction. This was a situation where I didn't think before I posted, and I'm terribly regretful about that" (Mansell). Nevertheless, the backlash continued, and she eventually resigned from her post.

Abigail Disney, on January 29, tweeted, "I haven't said anything about Kobe so far because I felt some time needed to pass before weighing in. But yes, it's time for the sledgehammer to come out. The man was a rapist. Deal with it" (@abigaildisney), and much like Sejkora was accused of being insensitive and spiteful. So was an actor, Evan Rachel Wood, who had tweeted: "What has happened is tragic. I am heartbroken for Kobe's family. He was a sports hero. He was also a rapist. And all of these truths can exist simultaneously" (Ritschel). Again, it was too soon for such comments as evidenced in one of the replies: "Would it kill you to have some empathy for the family who are grieving not only Kobe but their daughter as well? It hasn't even been 48 hours yet" (Ritschel).

These three women openly called Bryant a rapist, however, within one week form the crash, the hysteria over Bryant's death reached the point when even mentioning the 2003 allegations resulted not only in criticism but also in threats. Such was the case when Gayle King interviewed a WNBA star, Lisa Leslie, about her relationship with Bryant for CBS's *This Morning*. During the interview King asked Leslie about the 2003 allegations, which part of the interview, as King claims, was tweeted by the network out of context. The response to the clip included aggressive tweets from two recording artists: 50 Cent and Snoop Dog, and a message from LeBron James. James tweeted: "Protect @LisaLeslie at all cost! You're a real Superhero!! Sorry you had to through that s*%#!!! We are our own worse enemies! #Mamba4Life" (Heller), which meant accusing King of unfair questioning. 50 Cent's comments to the clip included statements such as: "Then how would you see it, Gayle? How the fuck would you see it, bitch?" (Heller). Snoop Dog's Instagram video was the most emotional and aggressive of the three. In the clip he posted, Dog rants:

> Gayle King. Out of pocket for that shit. Way out of pocket. What do you gain from that? I swear to God, we're the worst. We're the fucking worst. We expect more from you, Gayle. Don't you hang out with Oprah? Why ya'll attacking us? We your people. You ain't coming after fucking Harvey Weinstein, asking them dumbass questions. I get sick of ya'll. How dare you try to tarnish my motherfucking homeboy's reputation, punk motherfucker? Respect the family and back off, bitch, before we come get you. (Heller)

King referred to the story as jarring and Snoop Dog issued an apology.

By February 8, two weeks after Bryant's death, the state of denial about this particular episode from Bryant's life lead a New York Post journalist, Phil Mushnick, to pen an article entitled "Is it safe to speak the truth about Kobe Bryant?" in which he wrote:

> Since the sudden, tragic death of Kobe Bryant two weeks ago, I've thought of the many men who, in just the past three years, have had their careers and reputations destroyed or seriously stained by allegations of sexual harassment or assault.…
>
> Some accusations are of alleged acts decades old.
>
> Guilty as alleged? Who knows? But the accusations will chase them the rest of their lives.
>
> Thus I wonder what their thoughts are on the instant and continuing posthumous deification of Bryant.

Phil Mushnick goes on to describe the allegations and Bryant's apology and how Bryant never suffered any consequences of his 2003 deed, and finishes his article with: "So here it is: Kobe Bryant was a great basketball player who loved his kids. Many of us have half of that covered. But he was not what he has become—what the nation and most media insisted he become—since Jan 26." Similar sentiment to Mushnick's was shared by a journalist, Marcos Bretón, who, on February 8, in his opinion column "We should be able to talk about Kobe Bryant's rape case without receiving death threats" described the hate and threats of, as he referred to them, "Bryant avengers" aimed at Felicia Sonmez of the Washington Post, and Gayle King of CBS, who had dared to talk about Bryant's past (Bretón). Bretón's opinion on the matter is similar to that of Mushnick's as he writes:

> Michael Eric Dyson recorded an almost 10-minute passionate and nuanced video on Instagram not only elaborating on how Bryant dealt with the case, and grew as a human being after it, but also criticizing the reaction to the recent reports about it, and defending Gayle King and Oprah Winfrey. Bryant was complicated. The emotional response is, too.

However, unlike Muschnick, Bretón admits that he feels the tragic loss, but he wants Bryant's story to be told in full.

Muschnick, Bretón, Sonmez, King, Wood, Disney and many others may have played the role of the devil's advocates in the process of, as Mushnick put it, "posthumous deification of Bryant" but their voices were drowned in the chorus of glorification voices of people of sports, media, entertainment and fans. And when during the Celebration of Life Memorial Service on February 24, Bryant's widow, Vanessa Bryant, in her eulogy stated that Bryant was a husband she had not deserved, Bryant's shameful past was buried with him.

The Post-Millennial Saint

The Memorial Service at Staples Center dubbed Celebration of Life was a culmination point of honoring Bryant as it cumulated all the previously described forms of tributes. The ceremony was broadcast by major television stations, there were thousands of fans outside and inside the Staples center, the service was hosted by ABC's Jimmy Kimmel, Beyoncé performed two songs for Kobe, whom she loved, so did Alicia Keys and Christina Aguillera. There were numerous NBA stars of past and present, as well as other celebrities from all walks of fame in the audience. The eulogies delivered

by Vanessa Bryant, Sabrina Ionescu, Diana Taurasi, Rob Pelinka, Geno Auriemma, Jimmy Kimmel, Shaquille O'Neal, and Michael Jordan all glorified different aspects of Bryant's great personality.

The Celebration of Life, which was organized by Vanessa Bryant and the Mamba and Mambacita Sports Foundation was meant as the celebration of Kobe and Giana Bryant, as well as the seven other victims of the crash, which was somewhat undercut by the fact that on the day of the ceremony, Vanessa Bryant filed a lawsuit against Island Express Helicopter Inc. for negligence on the part of the pilot who died in the crash, and she was seeking compensatory and punitive damages (Pettersson). In response, a representative of Ara George Zobayan (the pilot) filed court papers that circumstances surrounding the fatal flight were caused by the passengers' own behavior and their decision to fly on that day (Pagones).

While all victims of the fatal helicopter flight were honored and remembered the focus of the Celebration of Life was on Gigi, and even more so, Kobe Bryant. While Vanessa Bryant talked about Gianna as her wonderful and loving daughter, in other eulogies she was remembered mainly for how much she resembled her father in her individualism, determination and love of basketball—the sport in which she was meant to accomplish as much for herself and women in general as her father did in the NBA. One of the most moving moments of the ceremony was when a WNBA star, Diana Taurasi, said of Giana's basketball skills: "I mean, who has a turnaround fadeaway jumper at 11? LeBron barely got it today" ("Kobe Memorial: Read all the speeches"). The joke brought laughter to the people gathered at Staples Center and perfectly reflected the competitive spirit of sports, of basketball, the one Gianna inherited from her father and that of post-Millennials according to post-Millennials.

Kobe Bryant's special relation with Giana was a constant feature of all the eulogies that night, as was the downpour of praises of Bryant himself as a basketball player and a human being. In Vanessa Bryant's words, to her, Kobe was a "sweet husband, and the beautiful father of our children. He was mine. He was my everything.… He was the most amazing husband. Kobe loved me more than I could ever express or put into words.… He was charismatic, a gentleman. He was loving, adoring and romantic" ("Kobe Memorial: Read all the speeches"). Shaquille O'Neal remembered Kobe as a loyal friend and a true renaissance man and even though their relationship was complex, Kobe was O'Neal's little brother ("Kobe Memorial: Read all the speeches"). Bryant was also remembered as a little brother by Michael Jordan, who praised Bryant's passion which at times aggravated him but also made him love Kobe, who had a way to get Jordan, as evidenced by the tears and a joke that even then Bryant turned Jordan into another "crying Jordan meme" ("Kobe Memorial: Read all the speeches").

Similar praises and anecdotes were told by all the speakers at the Memorial Service, but perhaps the most glorifying one came from Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka. Pelinka said that Bryant had texted him on the morning of January 26 asking if he knew a baseball agent. Bryant said he wanted to help secure an internship with the agent for a friend's daughter. Pelinka's comment on his last interaction with Bryant was: "Kobe's last human act was heroic. He wanted to use his platform to bless and shape a young girl's future. Hasn't Kobe done that for all of us?" (West). A few days

later, a baseball agent Scott Boras decided to honor Kobe Bryant's final request and create an internship for Alexis Altobelli, the daughter of John Altobelli and the sister of Alyssa and Keri, who all had died in the crash. Pelinka's narrative and Boras's reaction transformed a simple act of using one's contacts into an act of heroism, which does not diminish Bryant's noble intentions, however the manner the story was presented was hyperbolic and hagiographic.

However, the Celebration of Life was not the culminating point in the process of canonization of Kobe Bryant. Soon after the ceremony was over and the social media comments on the event quieted down, America moved on, first, to Coronavirus pandemics crisis and then to the death of George Floyd and its aftermath, and, in the midst of the wave of protests following Floyd's murder, the narrative deification process of Kobe found it climax.

On June 12, 2020, Netflix released *8:46*—a special by Dave Chappelle. It was not so much a comedy special as Chappelle's reflections on Floyd's death, police brutality and the reality of being black in America. At one point of the monologue, Chappelle makes a claim that Bryant saved the nation from itself on the night of the last game of his career. After recounting a story of how a black, former military man killed five (although Chappelle mentions nine) white police officers in Dallas in 2016, Chappelle says:

> The night that those nine police officers were killed felt like the end of the world. The only reason that it wasn't the end of the world, in my opinion, is because at the very same time that was happening, Kobe Bryant was playing his last game as an LA Laker. And as scary as all that shit was, I kept flipping back to see if Kobe would drop 60. And he did. Oh, and he did.… And I watch this n***a [Bryant] dribbling and saving this god-damned country from itself. ("8:46 - Dave Chappelle" 23:32–24:12)

Chapelle's reasoning is that on that night, when the police officers were murdered in an act of retribution for a death of yet another black man from the hands of the police, the only thing that prevented the riots, was the fact that America was watching Kobe getting sixty points for the last time in his career. In fact, Bryant's final game took place three months before the police officers were killed at a protest in Dallas, which was the incident Chappelle referred to. In his special, Chappelle merges the two events into a one night timeframe and changes the number of officers killed, which makes it possible to perceive his comments the way Tyler Lauletta of *INSIDER* did; Leuletta wrote that "[Chappelle] speaks to a larger point of sports offering relief in a time of national distress" (Lauletta).

However, Chappelle's narrative, while beatifies Bryant as a miracle-maker and a savior and expresses the comedian's admiration of Bryant—"I loved Kobe Bryant. He died, the night, the day I won a Grammy, he died. That's why I didn't show up at the Grammys. Because Kobe died. They had both of his fucking jersey numbers hanging up, 8, 24. That's my birthday. I cried like a baby" ("8:46–Dave Chappelle" 24:12–24:33)—also carries a dangerous subtext. If it were true that Americans did not react to the killings of unarmed black men and, in consequence, police officers, because they were watching a basketball game, which in itself was a spectacle "prepared by the

league, the team and the player" (Muniowski 226), that means that America is a society of spectacle as proposed by Debord; a society which chooses *panem et circenses* over social issues. It is ironic that Chapelle's comments came in the same monologue in which he stated that it is not the time for celebrities to speak for the street as the street was speaking for itself.

Conclusions

Who gets to be a secular saint in the Post-Millennial age? Are there any candidates "better" or as deserving as Kobe Bryant? On Friday, February 14, three weeks after Bryant's death, two former volleyball stars Carrie McCaw and Lesley Prather and their twelve-year-old daughters, Kacie McCaw and Rhyan Prather died in a car crash which happened when they were traveling to a club volleyball tournament in Kansas City (Silverman). Their death, so similar in circumstances to the Calabasas crash, was reported on but it was not the breaking news as in the case of Bryant. Arguably, the combination of being an athlete and dying tragically is not enough for one to be canonized by the media if one was not a celebrity and a household name.

It would seem that being a public figure, or even a celebrity (sic!) is a required condition, just as theological obedience is when it comes to the saints of the Catholic Church. The secular requirement was not met by the Wuhan doctor who tried to warn the world of the impending threat of the coronavirus pandemics. The very pandemics that almost two months later made Americans question the privileged status of NBA stars as evidenced in TIME magazine's article "Why Can the Utah Jazz Get Coronavirus Testing, But I Can't?" (Gregory). Doctor Li Wenliang died on February 7—two weeks after Bryant's death. Had he been a celebrity-physician, perhaps Dr Wenliang could have become a post-Millennial martyr saint.

There were other martyrs and heroes who lost their lives in 2020 alone. George Floyd was murdered on May 25—four months after Bryant's death and his death sparked a social movement which hopes to combat systemic racism in the United States. Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by a police officer on August 23, which led NBA players to suspend Playoffs as a form of protest against police brutality. Chadwick Boseman's premature and tragic death after four years of battling colon cancer, during which time he portrayed heroes on screen (actual—baseball's Jackie Robinson, and fictional—Marvel's Black Panther), immediately led to him being referred to as a "superhero on screen and off" (Penrice).

The stories of Wenliang, Floyd or Boseman, each have a narrative potential for a post-Millennial hagiography; however, it is the Bryant's story which captures the zeitgeist of the post-Millennial age. Seemiller and Grace, in their study of Generation Z, somewhat optimistically and perhaps romantically predict that:

> Generation Z sees the world through multiple screens, but… they recognize that societal issues are much larger than just themselves. With their loyalty, determination, and responsibility as well as realistic outlook on life inherited from Generation X, this generation is committed to those around them and motivated by making a difference. Add to that their characteristics of care and compassion, and you can expect Generation Z to use both their heads and their hearts to solve the world's problems. (17)

The process of Bryant's secular canonization reflects the characteristics of post-Millennials mentioned above. First, the multiple screens; every mural, every customized apparel or a shoe, every expression of admiration of late Kobe Bryant, which have been mentioned in this paper, and multitudes of other, have been publicized through social media. The clash between the critics of Bryant's shameful past and those who would not have his name tarnished reflected both, loyalty and determination as well as realistic outlook on Bryant. His devotees used their hearts; the devil's advocates used their minds. Ironically, both sides emphasized the same societal issue—women's rights. Bryant was hailed as a father and a champion of women in sports by the fans, and the MeToo representatives attempted to remind the public of his dark past. One coin, two sides. Both sides also expressed care and compassion.

Kobe Bryant though flawed, or perhaps because of his troubled past and difficult personality, to many, embodied the strive for excellence, which is at the core of the American Dream, which combined with his celebrity status and his tragic and premature loss of life made him for a perfect character of a narrative of a post-Millennial saint. The question remains whether this narrative, this created in real time by both, traditional and social media, hagiographic tale of Kobe Bryant has a potential of becoming one for posterity or one of the short-lived Instagram posts. As soon as in February 2020, The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame announced that they would posthumously enshrine Bryant into its ranks. By doing so, the organization chose to ignore its own rule that states that a period of five years must pass since a player's retirement for them to be eligible to become a Hall of Famer. The enshrinement ceremony of Class 2020 is set on May 13-15, 2021, and it is fair to say that Kobe Bryant' spirit will hover over the event and his legend will continue.

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Coming Back Home to Oppressive Mississippi: A Figurative Study of Jesmyn Ward's *Men We Reaped*

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to discuss the figurative aspects of Jesmyn Wards' *The Men We Reaped* (2013). In her memoir, Ward demonstrates the connections between the systemic racism in the US South and the tragic stories of five African-American men who were close to her, and who died between 2000-2004. The tragic loss of these lives is presented through a number of figurative images which present the region through the metaphors of predatory animals, physical burdens and uncanny doubling. Also, the article reflects on how Ward coped with the trauma of loss through her writings, and how, in numerous interviews, she justified her decision to return home to Mississippi and to settle there, in spite of the systemic racism and the trauma of loss.

Keywords: Jesmyn Ward, Southern literature, Mississippi, figurative analysis, *Men We Reaped*

Bodies tell stories.
Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones*

In a 2016 interview with Danille K. Taylor, Jesmyn Ward explained her key preoccupations as a writer: "How does the past bear fruit? And why are we often so blind to it? I find myself writing around that question again and again with different sets of characters" (267). In Ward's novels, her portrayal of the South and its inhabitants invariably features a region afflicted by a dense nexus of social, economic, historical and natural factors. Her debut *Where the Line Bleeds* (2008), set on the rural Mississippi Gulf Coast, explores the fears that twin African-American brothers have over their uncertain future in adulthood. Next, *Salvage the Bones* (2011) which won the National Book Award for Fiction, dramatizes the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi black community. And her latest work *Sing, Unburied Sing* (2017), demonstrates the haunting legacy of slavery in the South in the form of a road novel. Similarly, Ward's memoir *Men We Reaped* (2013) follows this pattern. It is an account of a personal loss—a story of five African-American men who passed away in different, tragic circumstances over the span of 2000-2004, and who were her friends and family members. In each case, the tragic deaths are inevitably connected with systemic racism of the South and social adversities that the members of the African-American community in Mississippi are forced to struggle with. Yet, in spite of the painful memories evoked by Mississippi in connection with this loss, Ward decided to return to the South, not only in her novels, but also physically, and to settle down back in her hometown. This paper seeks to explore the narrative ways in which Ward presents her ambivalent approach to the region through figurative images of predatory animals, physical burdens and doubling.

Southern Homecomings

The theme of a departure from home and a subsequent return played an important role in the literature of the American South in the 20th century. Arguably, Thomas Wolfe's eponymous sentiment that one "can't go home again" can be viewed as one of the central tropes of Southern writing. In Wolfe's novel, George Webber, a budding author currently living in New York, writes a book *Home to Our Mountain* in which he exposes inner conflicts and pruderies of the Southern community of Libya Hill. This publication causes an uproar among his former neighbors and Webber becomes a pariah—he almost literally "cannot go home" due to the scandal associated with what the community views as a treacherous exposition of Southern ways to the outside world. The conflicts of Wolfe's novel becomes emblematic of the ambivalent attitude among Southerner expats towards their former home, towards the idealization of the region and its mythologies, and towards the role of memory and self-reflection in the perception of the past.

Jerry M. Burger's research into the psychological aspects of homecoming sheds vital light on all these processes. In *Returning Home*, Burger stresses the epistemic importance of returning home, as well as the tremendous popularity of sentimental journeys in contemporary America. Visiting home, even for a brief period, triggers strong emotional reactions among vast groups of Americans, often combining contrastive feelings of joy and pain. Burger's series of interviews with people who came back home demonstrates that apart from being a confrontation with childhood memories and traumas, the act of homecoming is oftentimes an emotional process of healing and personal growth. It is also sensual journey, as moving back home means the evocation of smells, tastes and sounds known from childhood. As estimated by Burger (8), nearly 20% of those who returned home cried during the experience, as they confronted their past with their present moment, struggling to grasp how the uprooting from home, and then a journey back reflected on their sense of identity.

In the South, these processes are of particular significance, given the scale of migrations from the region. Robert Coles, Pulitzer-winning psychiatrist and journalist, in one volume of his study *Children of Crisis* tellingly entitled *The South Goes North,* explored the motivations and troubles of Southerners who migrated massively from the impoverished southern states in the late 1960s, hoping to begin a new life in the ghettoes of cities in the North, such as Chicago, New York, or Boston. Coles based his study on numerous interviews and this qualitative sociological approach allowed him to paint a portrayal of motivations driving Southerners to leave their homes, of which economic struggles, sense of hopelessness and oppressive racism were among the prevalent ones. The extent to which these factors were present in the South, and the ways in which they determined the life in the region could often only be assessed from the outsider's perspective, after one has already left the region and settled down somewhere else.

For a host of Southern authors like Richard Wright, Robert Penn Warren, Dorothy Allison, or Alice Walker it was exactly the act of leaving the region that allowed them to reflect back on the South from a fresh position, and to understand the burden associated with their Southernness. The full scale of regional paradoxes

became apparent only upon the painful process of cutting the umbilical cord with their home state. In *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, observes that a plethora of memoirs that emerged from the poor South, gave rise to an entire "social history of remembering in the South" (3). These memories, among which one may include Harry Crews's *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place* (1978), Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992), or Rick Bragg's *All Over but the Shoutin'* (1997), tell the tales of Southern racial, social and economic struggles. In these autobiographies, the South is no myth, it is no abstract, complex, or rural idealization, rather it is an actual space of trauma and confusion, whose racial restrictions and economic struggles force Southerners to question the principles of their upbringing, their family network, or, very often, to change the place of residence.

In *Writing the South*, Richard Gray points out that it is not so much that that these generations of expat writers have written *about* the South, but that they have effectively written the South. On the one hand, their texts have shaped the image of the region in the general public, but, on the other hand, the processes of artistic examination and appropriation interred in these works allowed their authors for a deeper, auto-reflexive insight into the region's paradoxical culture, effectively constructing it. According to Gray, the "vital importance of the Southern image springs from the fact that it represents what the poet Wallace Stevens would call an idea of order, a structuring principle [or] a set of structural possibilities" (xii)—these principles become best visible from the vantage point of someone who is no longer part of the southern society, and who can study its paradoxes from a safe distance, as happened often in the works of African-American writers, like Richard Wright who in his memoir *Black Boy* (1945), paints the image of childhood on a farm in Mississippi afflicted by hunger and abuse, the level of which and the full impact of which he became aware only when he moved to Chicago. So, Jesmyn Ward's memoir follows a long tradition of Southern writing in which the act of homecoming becomes a vital element of the fundamental critique of the region.

Narrative Ruthlessness

At a literary event "Writing for the Broken World," hosted November 15th 2015 by Brown University, Ward stressed that the writing of *Men We Reaped* was for her not only a personal "healing process," but also an attempt to understand the source of deaths occurring around her in such a short span of time. Ward's artistic and personal goal was to name and pronounce the Southern "plague," which has been irreversibly bound to the life of the African-American community in the South, afflicting it and abducting its members one by one. In the memoir, her personal trauma merges with the trauma of the collective, as Ward paints a picture of a Mississippi community bereft of job prospects and hope, perpetually in danger from threats which are inalienable from the region, "self-medicating" with abusive substances to numb emotional pain and abjection. The South is a place of pain, loss and menace.

And yet, in spite of all this, Ward consistently calls the South "home" and talks about it with allegiant affection. To her, notwithstanding all its threats and trepidations, it is a place worth returning to. In fact, in *Men We Reaped,* there is a dual

act of homecoming. On the meta-literary level, as stressed by Ward, each act of writing about Mississippi was effectively a revisiting of home, her friends and family and past experiences, which are perennial for her thoughts, ambitions and identity. As she described the South in an 2012 interview for Sydney's Writer Center, "that's home and I feel the responsibility to write not only about that place but also about people who inhabit that place." Ward's writing is a mental return to the place and to the community which resides in Mississippi in spite of what the region befalls on them. The second homecoming is her actual, physical return, first from Stanford, where she studied media and communication, and then from New England, where she found better professional career prospects than in Mississippi. Her return to DeLisle was symbolic, an outcome of a decision regarding what she identifies herself with and where she intends to put down roots and live with her family—even in spite of how "the history of racism and economic inequality and lapsed public and personal responsibility festered and turned sour and spread [all through Mississippi]" (8). Through both acts of homecoming, the meta-narrative one and the physical one, Ward manages to counter the oppressive narratives of exclusion and helplessness.

Apart from being an answer to a longing to be with her family, Ward's homecoming becomes an epistemic act. To understand her own imperative to return to the South, as well as her desire to explore her deep personal ambivalence towards the region, in *Men We Reaped*, Ward seeks to name and to describe the ephemeral oppressiveness of her hometown—the "plague" of death and despondency which afflicts the black community in DeLisle. Thus, the figurative images of menacing, predatory animals and of oppressive heaviness, as well as the narrative strategies of doubling and chronological reversal she employs allow her to identify the Southern threat and to confront it. In this sense, they constitute the ultimate therapeutic "self-medication"—by exploring the Southern oppressiveness, and by proclaiming it to the world through her writing, Ward can understand the hold hot and oppressive Mississippi air has over her, and claim her return home, as her own, independent act of will.

In an interview for *The Paris Review* from 2011, Ward discussed social engagement of her writings. As she explained, when she finished the manuscript of *Salvage the Bones*, she felt that it was not "political enough" and that it required a genuinely non-compromising account of the South's oppressive reality: "I realized that if I was going to assume the responsibility of writing about my home, I needed narrative ruthlessness. I couldn't dull the edges and fall in love with my characters and spare them. Life does not spare us." While working on her second novel, she realized that as an author, as much as she wanted to, she was in no position to save her characters, simply because the very lives of people around her were rarely salvageable from the brutal circumstances of their lives as African-Americans in Mississippi. Because of that, the South of *Salvage the Bones* is a site of both sustenance and harm, and the image of bleeding landscape mirrors the social injury experienced by the residents of Bois Sauvage, where Esch Batise and her family live. As noted by Esch Batiste, narrator of *Salvage the Bones*, it is "Bodies [that] tell stories" (83).

This policy of "narrative ruthlessness" is likewise palpable in *Men We Reaped*, in how Ward describes the lives of those close to her whom she lost. And she aimed to be as realistic as possible in her account, purposefully writing against the communal

compulsion to sanctify those who passed, and to downplay how embattled they were, often pushed to become engaged in illegal actions. As she recalled at a meeting at Politics and Bookstore in 2014, often having written one paragraph she would look at the wall and think "I can't believe I have written this." This dedication to be ruthlessly realistic in the depiction, however hard it could be for personal reasons, come from Ward's reading of Kiese Laymon's *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America.* Laymon's notoriously non-compromising text, as she claims, helped her to "stop fighting the process" of writing, and express her hyperbolic, conflicted relationship with the South, a place that was both homely and brutally threatening.

In general, the decision to write *Men We Reaped,* stemmed from Ward's realization that she was "writing around" her personal trauma. Prior to her working of the memoir, the characters in her novels were often young African-American males, confronted with the oppressive circumstances of everyday existence, literally losing the fight for their lives. The compulsion to create such characters haunted Ward, until she apprehended that it was a direct outcome of her personal trauma and of a sense of constant threat she was experiencing—as she recalls in a 2013 interview for NPR: "Every day, I woke up with that feeling of dread and that just overwhelming sensation of loss, and then of course that fear—who's going to die next?" This anxiety and powerlessness against the ephemeral threat, the "plague" of the South, made her feel perpetually "under siege," and compelled her to confront it openly through her writing. These processes left a lot of marks on the figurative fabric of *Men We Reaped*, and the study of these marks may better understand her ambivalent position towards the South, and the imperative to return to it.

In *Men We Reaped*, Ward constructs a reversed chronological narrative about five black men close to her, who perished during the time span of 2000-2004: Roger, who died from a heart attack caused by a combination of cocaine and pills, Desmond who was murdered when he decided to testify in court against a drug dealer from New Orleans, C. J. who died in a car accident, Ronald who struggled with depression and committed suicide, and Joshua, Ward's brother, who passed away in a car accident caused by a white driver let off with a token sentence. This series of personal tragedies is presented in reverse by Ward, leading up to the demise of her brother, which in real life was chronologically the first in the sequence of tragedies. As explained openly by Ward in a 2020 podcast for the National Endowment of Arts, the reason why the memoir turns the actual chronology around is that she wanted the book to "end in the heart," in other words, to make her readers experience the irreversible building up of expectation of disaster she herself experienced her entire life. She wanted the reader to sample the premonition that tragedies, like death, are pending, and that one cannot stop them.

At the same time, Ward stresses that what the personal tragedies she describes are part of a larger tragic story of her community in the South, and of the entire, historical African-American experience in the region. What the presence of the plaguing oppressiveness visibly and palpably leads to are heart-breaking tragedies and the loss of lives, but where these tragedies originate from is much harder to grasp and explain. And the meta-narrative homecoming Ward undertakes in the memoir is partly an attempt to determine the indeterminable—a journey back to her hometown,

to confront not only her haunting pain, but also the Southern threat itself, in various metaphorical shapes of which the figurative wolf is the most prominent.

Yet Ward's exploration starts with a title, one which she adopts from a passage where Harriet Tubman described a desperate assault made on July 18th 1863, by the soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry of the Union Army on Fort Wagner, a Confederate stronghold located on Morris Island, in the vicinity of Charleston harbor. Almost half of the unit, which consisted entirely of African Americans, perished in the attack, and the assault ultimately failed. In her account, Tubman describes how everyone present during the battle was overwhelmed by the tumult of artillery and horrified by the slaughter: "We heard the thunder and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling and that was the blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men that we reaped" (Humez 135). Ward endows Tubman's words with a new meaning. Her overwriting builds on the original sense of tragic loss included in the description which dates back over a century and a half, yet in her text Ward builds a trope, a palimpsest of continuity, stressing the permanence of the African American experience. She constructs the metaphor of the African American experience which is historically permeated with pain and loss, and one which is perpetuated in the new millennium. The historic undercurrent is particularly visible in how the pronoun "we" functions both in Tubman's account and in the title of Ward's memoir. In the text by Tubman, the pronoun on the one hand designates all those survivors of the battle, left to collect the bodies of the dead, on the other hand, the pronoun is bound with the collective African-American experience of slavery and affliction. This figurative image of the harvest of the dead during the Civil War is adopted by Ward to talk about her private experience, which essentially becomes the experience of the community of DeLisle, and then, further, of the black community in the South in general. Yet, while in Tubman's text, the South becomes the carrier of black bodies which are left to be picked up by the few survivors, in Ward's text, the South itself comes alive and transforms into a predatory specter which snatches people away, leaving the families destitute and grieving.

"Somebody Died Here"

William Faulkner once talked about a "pollen of ideas" present in the South, one which fertilizes minds of those who breathe the Mississippi air with a specific set of logic (30). In that image, the South's figurative presence is ephemeral and pervasive, but not as nearly as threatening as in Ward's animalistic images of Mississippi, which when juxtaposed with Faulkner's images from the 1930s, demonstrate the Mississippi idiom which in spite of the eighty years of progress and integration separating these two works, has only grown more ominous and oppressive for an African-American writer. As Wards writes, "I knew that I lived in a place where hope and a sense of possibility were as ephemeral as morning fog, but I did not see the despair at the heart of our drug use" (34). This elusive, and omnipresent constrain of Wards' home state is visible in how, in the memoir, she struggles with the pronouns which stand for the agents of the Southern oppressiveness, the spreaders of the endemic Mississippian "plague," whose identity often remains hidden or undetermined. Right after Rog's death, his

sister called Jesmyn and told her: "They killed my brother" (37) and later a friend of his added: "They're picking us off, one by one" (38). The narrator of the memoir struggles to identify the people behind the pronoun "they," and is disquieted by its ominous indeterminacy. The metaphor of "picking off" used by Rog's sister evokes the image of a pack of predators following their prey and attacking it unawares, gnawing it and jumping away, those indeterminate "they" work systematically and under cover of state institutions and the social decorum.

The ephemeral, yet oppressive manifestation of the past likewise marks its presence right at the beginning of *Men We Reaped.* Ward's memoir opens with a ghost story. The narrator recalls how her brother Joshua and her two sisters, Nerissa and Charine told scary stories as pastime: "Joshua insisted that there was a ghost in the house, and at night we'd lie on our backs in the TV-less living room… and wait for something to change, for something that wasn't supposed to be there, to move. 'Somebody died here'" (1). The proclamation "Somebody died here" echoes in the narrator's mind, and symbolically marks the inception of a haunting sense of anxiety and threat. While making up a ghost story, Joshua was unwittingly tapping into something more than just scaring people for fun, suggesting the presence they did yet not know was inherent in their home, and that would pervade their lives. Retrospectively, Ward looks at these words as fatidic, for they indeed highlighted the proximity and the inescapability of the threat which followed and afflicted them for the rest of their lives.

In her *Southscapes,* analyzing black Southern authors, Thadious Davis posits that the South functions as "stark geographic metaphor," one that remains "alive in memory and in blood, but dead too in the literal skin of animals and in the material body of the mother" (1). In Ward's account of her personal loss and of her homecoming, the geography of the South has a dual nature, merging the untamed life force of the landscape and the death brought by its pervasive hauntedness. This dual paradox of Ward's spatial trope is not only visible in the descriptions of the landscape, but also in the very names of the places she sets her novels in. Such names as "Bois Sauvage," savage, untamed woods, tap on the ambivalent nature of the region, in which the visceral "skins" and "material bodies" are barely covered by the painfully slowly progressing veil of social change. The circumstances of Ward's novels peek under this veil and expose the dark, predatory nature of the Southern space.

For Ward, this untamed nature of the Mississippi landscape is organically connected with the racial "plague" which afflicts its inhabitants, and which compels them to live lives of struggle. As she explains, there is certain "rawness to the art" that comes out of the notion of Dirty South. "To express what it means to be born and grow up into the cycle of poverty that has bequeathed to so many of us. And finally to reckon with what growing up in this place has affected us, and how we fight against it, sometimes foolishly, sometimes foolhardily, but always with a kind of courage born of desperation" (267-68). In a 2013 interview for *The Toast*, Ward commented on how these topics remain to be problematic in the public debate: "I'm fairly pessimistic about the possibility of people in the current South having complicated conversations about race because we're so conditioned to respond quickly and emotionally, with all the vitriol that's been bred into us, when race arises. I don't think this is a conversation that we can avoid for long, however, because our past is our present and our future,

in some respects"—yet, in spite of all that she proclaims: "I moved back. I still live here." In this way, Ward becomes the oppugnant to the selective embrace of history and culture in the South, and the pervasive denialism that the southern "plague" is so notoriously endemic. Her writings and her decision to move back to Mississippi, both aim to name the threat and to counter these narratives.

Ward's growing up, as she describes in her memoir, was a constant education into the cultural semiotics of race. Her mother worked as a housekeeper for a wealthy white family, and when her grades began to slip, her mother's white employer offered to cover the fee for her education in a private school—a kind gesture, which, as Ward sees in retrospect, also bound her mother to her employer. As Ward recalls, that was the moment when she became most directly aware of the racial paradoxes of the South, not only through bullying she was exposed to as the only African-American girl in that private school, but also through what she saw as the parallel existence of two Southern worlds—the threatening and oppressive reality of the black community and the reality of the White community, which was much better endowed with opportunities. In particular, Ward recalls (202), how later, when she was already in college, she encountered W.E.B. Du Bois's works and the term "double consciousness." She identifies that moment as formative for her perception of the region's fundamental duality. This notion became best illustrated when Ward recalls how she was sitting in her mother's employer's room, as her mother was finishing the cleaning of the house: "I was very conscious in that moment of my dark skin, my overbite, my irascible hair, the way my hands itched to help my mother"—and while her mother was cleaning, the white owner of the house asked her about her college plans, engaging her as an "intellectual equal" (203).

The schizophrenic duality of that experience gave Ward an insight into the gap between these two Southern macrocosms, into the endemic, Southern "reconciliation of opposites" (1), as described by Hugh C. Holman. This binarism had very tangible demarcation lines of school and home, and Ward recalls how mother caught her once in the mental transition moment when she moved between the two worlds which both had their own languages and their own codes of behavior. When Ward's mother picked her up from school and listened to her daughter's description of a school project, she scolded her: "stop talking like that." In hindsight, Ward interprets her mother's reprimand as a series of implicit questions: "Why are you speaking so properly? As in: Why do you sound like those White kinds you go to school with, that I clean up after? As in*:* Who are you?" (208). She recalls how she had to "switch" back to another language when coming back from school, becoming painfully aware of the linguistic division lines in the South. This constant moving in between the realities of the private school she had access to purely by a stroke of luck and of the quotidian reality of her mother's chores was a fundamentally confusing and triggered a crisis of identity in Ward.

Ward also recalls how this sense of oppressive duality, of a hyperbolic paradox inherent in the South, affected the way she viewed herself and initiated a habit of self-loathing, due to her racial background. As she says, her brown skin was an "actual physical indicator of otherness" (186). The abuse Ward experienced at the nearly all-white school was a painful reminder of this "otherness." Once, another student began

taunting her, sitting provocatively on her desk, by telling a deeply racist and offensive joke: "A nigger, an oriental, and a Polish man walk into a bar" (192). Ward was livid and she imagined herself assaulting that student in response—she wished to "lunge at him, to grab his throat… to see him turning blue" (192). That bully from school was much more tangible that the ephemeral Southern "plague" she would be confronted with later in life. The elusive, predatory "wolf" that snatched people she loved from her was much more ominous exactly because he could not be in any way confronted. This does not change, however, that her imaginary act of retaliation for the offensive and provocative behaviour was desperate, for all the time she was painfully aware of how futile all her emotions and actions were against social issues so strongly enrooted in her Southern macrocosm.

"I Think of DeLisle as the Wolf"

In the entire book, it is very clear that Ward's South is haunted by the "plague," which regulates the life of the black communities in the region, shaping it and impacting most of its aspects. The story behind the name of Ward's hometown is emblematic of the figurative representation of that regional force. Early settlers dubbed DeLisle, Wolf Town. As Wards explains, "When people ask me about my hometown, I tell them it was called after a wolf before it was partially tamed and settled. I want to impart something of its wild roots, its early savagery. Calling it Wolf Town hints at the wildness at its heart" (9). That early moniker, before it was rebranded, hints on a nebulous, dangerous element concealed deep in the town and its natural surroundings. It evokes the figurative image of a predator in the dark, a figurative representation of the region inequalities and adversities as a hungry beast. The implications of the name are ominous, as it points to the existence of danger that may be temporarily dormant, but that never goes away, one that is endemic in the landscape of Mississippi, interred in the Southern landscape.

This feeling of anxiety was an inalienable element of Ward's life in DeLisle. In the wake of the threat, the sense of safety was ephemeral and could at best be achieved temporarily. Ward recalls an encounter with an unidentified animal near DeLisle, in the middle of the night: "The creature loped out of the woods before us, and we startled and shouted, and it looked at us and loped back into the darkness… this wild thing that looked at us like the intruders that we were before we drove away from it to more well-travelled roads, away from the place that was everything but dead end, that place that seemed all beginning, a birthplace" Wolf Town" (10). That episode become symbolic to her, giving her sense that the dark, vast space of southern landscape abounds in anonymous predators, who reveal themselves only for a moment, to grab the prey. And this ominous presence of a fatal threat, ready to snatch away the members of the community, to control and to pursue them, makes it impossible to experience any sense of permanence of safety. The figurative representation Ward paints of a life of an African-American in DeLisle is that of a perpetual anticipation of danger, of existence marked by fear and the lack of perspectives. This predatory, primordial menace that is hidden behind the masque of a new town name may be covered-up, but it remains invariably ravenous and permanent. And in her imagery of her Southern hometown,

Ward demonstrated how her dear ones were consumed by this ephemeral threat that is in the very town and its surroundings.

Ward proclaims ominously that "men's bodies litter [her] family history" (14). And to her, it is the sense of loss and personal grief that is the hardest: "The pain of the women they left behind pulls them from the beyond, makes them appear as ghosts. In death, they transcend the circumstances of this place that I love and hate all at once and become supernatural. Sometimes, when I think of all the men who've died early in my family over the generations, I think of DeLisle as the wolf" (14). These words remind one of Patricia Yeager's discussions of the somatic hybridity in the South, of how in the region the bodily "amalgamat[es] with its environment" (248). In Ward's book, it is the body of the predator who is landscape, and the landscape who is the predator. In this sense, a perpetual sense of a threat becomes organically embedded in the landscape, inseparable from it, just like historical implications are inseparable from the palimpsestic use of Tubman's text in the title of Ward's memoir. Thus, members of Ward's family, effectively are "children of history and place" (15), whose lives are from inception marked by the threatening, animalistic oppressiveness of the region.

In *Men We Reaped*, Ward stresses the "endurance demanded of women in the rural South" (19) due to the wounds inflicted to the society by the phantom wolf. Her mother was one of those women who showed a great deal of resilience in confronting life circumstances which were the direct outcome of the endemic Southern "plague," which snatches away young men from the black community, or which compels them to leave their families and to terminate their relationships. Ward recalls how she was affected by her father's departure, and how his leaving contributed to her identity crisis: "His leaving felt like a repudiation of the child I was and the young woman I was growing into. I looked at myself and saw a walking embodiment of everything the world around me seemed to despise: an unattractive, poor, Black woman.… This seed buried itself in my stomach and bore fruit. I hated myself.… I was something to be left" (135). The sense of objectification and of abandonment provoked the sense of self-loathing she was programmed to have by the dual system of oppressiveness. In a lot of ways, Ward's father is the sixth black man in the memoir, who may not be a fatal victim of the predatory "wolf," but whose disappearance from Ward's life visibly exacerbated the narrative of loss and abandonment. Ward's father fate, his life choices, aspirations and struggles were all tied to Mississippi and in this sense he is yet another victim of the "plague" that Ward seeks to name and confront.

In her recollection of her father, Ward observes how his treatment of her brother Joshua was different from his treatment of his daughters. She recalls how her father was generally patient, calm and understanding, but also how with "Joshua his patience was thin." One of the ways in which this behavior could be explained was that her father believed that there was no space for error or weakness in Joshua's behavior precisely because he was a boy: "My brother would have to grow up and be a black man in the South. My brother would have to fight in ways that I would not. Perhaps my father dreamed about the men in his family who died young in all the wrong ways, and this forced his hand when he woke to my brother standing next to my parents' bed: pink-mouthed and grinning, green to the world, innocent" (52). This awareness of the dual standards for African-American and white macrocosms of the

South, of continuous separation in spite of surface equality, and of the extent to which the Southern oppressiveness predetermined a number of aspects of his life.

Chronic pessimism and anhedonic hopelessness were direct consequences of the Southern wolf's enduring presence. Ward recalls when C.J. told her "I got a feeling I ain't going to be here long" (120). The Southern oppressiveness, a network of forces beyond his control, shaping his life in ways he cannot influence in anyway is overwhelming and prophetic of tragedies. C. J. is painfully tossed by the circumstances of life, as he sells dope between jobs, caught in a vicious "cycle of futility." Within the shadow of the wolf, life is so full of threats and uncertainties that it sucks the joy out of those afflicted by the Southern "plague." Ward's describes the mental state of such individuals as life contaminated by death: C. J. "looked at those who still lived and those who'd died, and didn't see much difference between the two; pinioned beneath poverty and history and racism, we were all dying inside" (121). The life threatened by the figurative wolf, and controlled by the Southern karma, has "no American dream, no fairy-tale ending, no hope"—it is a life deprived.

In *Men We Reaped,* Ward consistently constructs the metaphor of the wolf as a figure to internalize the sense of threat accompanying her life as an African-American in Mississippi. The ephemeral nature of the wolf, and its physical air-like elusiveness translate into its ever-presence, which haunts generations, families and social circles. Ward's mother "felt the confines of gender and the rural South and the seventies stalking her, felt that specter of DeLisle out in the darkness, the wolf cornering her in her mother's house, which had no heat in the winter, no air in the summer" (19). The elusiveness of the figurative predator also makes it impossible to pin it down, and to put a face on it. It is as evanescent as the subtle rules of Southern etiquette which maintain racism, and equally formative for the life of the community. The elusiveness of the figurative wolf merges with the anonymity of its avatars, the people who are physically responsible for the deaths Ward describes in the memoir. It is the faceless murderers, like the one who killed Desmond right in front of his house, whose anonymity is particularly painful for the narrator: "We did not know the murdered would remain faceless, like the great wolf trackless in the swamp, and the police's search would be fruitless" (79). But their anonymity is symbolic in the sense that these actors are part of something greater, of an overpowering presence, not only organically merged with the landscape, but at the same time, a being with a presence of its own, menacing and rapacious. This predatory emanation of the Southern oppressiveness was also present in the form of dark fog, when C. J. perished in a car accident, when his damaged vehicle caught on fire. Ward's cousins "stood by helpless, hollering for help into the cold white night, their cries swallowed by the Mississippi fog" (125). This accident leads her to conclude bitterly, that in the world controlled by the oppressiveness, and haunted by the wolf, "our lives are our deaths" (128).

The Burden of Homecoming

In an interview from 2018 for New York Times Events, Ward recalls how she was often asked why she decided to return to Mississippi in spite of everything that had happened in the South to her and to her community. As she admits, her mother told her

bitterly: "I wish you would have stayed away." In response to all these reservations, Ward observed that a lot of black Southerners were in the same situation as she was—they felt longing for home and returned, especially having left after the region after it was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Later still, some sort of magnetism pulled them back. As explained by Ward, in spite of how the South afflicts them, "[t]hey're coming back to the same struggle." And that is exactly what she did in 2002.

Ward's justification for the decision to return to the South stems from her need to counter the narrative of pessimism and helplessness. As she stresses in that interview, "one of the reasons why I decided to come back to Mississippi is because I wanted to serve as an example in some way. So [other members of the community would] see that being successful and gaining access does not mean you have to leave." But Ward's motivation is driven also by other factors. One simply concerns her appreciation for the scenic landscape of the South. In a number of interviews, she stresses the direct magnetism of natural beauty of Mississippi—of the familiar scenery which included swamps, rivers and forests. These made Ward "feel at home." Yet, another factor element of southern pull stemmed from the sense of community. Ward stresses that her network of friends and family spread all over DeLisle allows her to feel safer and connected and she always missed her community when she was away.

As far Ward's relationship with the region is concerned, she stresses that—always—"it's complicated." This ambivalence is figuratively expressed by the metaphors of weight and burden. As she explains in the podcast for National Endowment of Arts, "There's much about the South that I hate, that I find problematic, when I leave the South, Mississippi, there is a palpable weight that I can shrug off when I leave." When she drives out of the South, and when she drives back in, the sense of a burden appears and disappears like a psychosomatic compass, signaling her that she has indeed moved between the safe zone of America outside the South, and the South, the space of angst, haunted by the ephemeral wolf. As she explains, "When I am in the South, I feel the physical sensation of heaviness. And sometimes I'm not aware of it… I forget. I become very aware of the fact that I feel like that when I leave the South. When I get off at the airport, in San Francisco or in New York I feel lighter. And the reason I feel that is because it's because of the fear you live with, which is informed by the history of the place. And that's how the history is manifesting itself in the present." The past weighing on the present in such a palpable way is Ward's experiencing that in the South, the past is never dead, and it's not even past,

In the summer of 2004, Ward was driving from Michigan to Mississippi with her cousin Aldon. She recalls being down with flu at that time and having minor respiratory problems. Yet, the illness was not the sole reason why she was not able to breathe freely. The sensation of heaviness on her chest was a glaring symptom of her returning to the place of trauma, where she knew she could not let her guard down for fear of yet another tragedy. In *Men We Reaped,* Ward recalls that trip: "[m]y homesickness always meant that the thought of going home was exhilarating and comforting, but over the past for years, that sense of promise had turned to dread. When my brother died in October 2000, it was as if all the tragedy that had haunted my family's life took shape in that great wolf of DeLisle, a wolf of darkness and grief, and that great thing was bent on beating us" (21). The figurative wolf choking her and

the whole community, and the sense of both communal and personal traumas, and the memory of the history of her family all generated the palpable weight on Ward's chest, affecting her whole body, which becomes besieged the moment she enters the South, but also which refuses to let her go.

In the memoir, Ward describes how the idea of leaving Mississippi gradually sprouted in her mind. She wanted to "escape the narrative [she] encountered in [her] family, [her] community, and [her] school that [she] was worthless." When hearing about her plans and ambitions, her mother told her she has to stay and help with the upbringing of the children. With these words, Wards "felt all the weight of the South pressing down on [her]" and—as she explains—"it was then that I resolved to leave the region for college, but to do it in a way that respected the sacrifices my mother made for me. I studied harder. I read more. How could I know then that this would be my life: yearning to leave the South and doing so again, and again, but perpetually called back to home by a love so thick it choked me?" (195). The inner weight notoriously pressing on her chest was a direct source of the anxiety Ward comes to associate with the region. Her despondent thought is that she hopes "nobody dies this summer" (21) is the awareness that she cannot relax, cannot forget about the elusive menace, that she cannot fail to keep her guard up.

This anticipation of tragedy was an inalienable element of every act of homecoming. While she studied at Stanford University, between 1995 and 2000, during every winter and spring break, she always returned to Mississippi. Ward longed to see the South again, and she was homesick—during long conversations over the phone with her friends back home, she listened in to "the sounds in the background" (22), wishing she was there. She even "dreamed of the woods surrounding [her] mother's house" and she knew "there was much to hate about home, the racism and inequality and poverty," which is why she left"—yet "I loved it." During those short visits, she stayed in her mother's house. She recalls how she tiptoed to Charine's room, her sister was nine years younger than she was and laid with her, letting herself be weak and cried. Each of those homecomings was essentially ambivalent.

A Double in the Cellar

In the challenging processes of homecoming, and in the subsequent writing about her return to Mississippi, Ward attached significance to one particular memory. In the landscape surrounding Pass Chrisiana, when Ward was twelve, her brother had once discovered a man-made hole in the ground, which turned out to be an abandoned, hidden cellar in the midst of woods. Her brother's discovery attained a fundamental significance for Ward, as an emblem of an atavistic drive to escape from the pressure of the region's dark oppressions. The memory of that cellar, a "place where wind does not reach," kept returning to Ward when she was working on the draft of her memoir. As she recalls in *Men We Reaped*, "we found the plywood that had covered the top of the cellar gone, so what remained was a large, open ditch lined with pine straw, perfectly square and dark. Somehow, it was even more awful to see the dim recesses of that man-made hole, and my response was visceral. I felt as if I were down in it, as if my world had shrunk to its confines: the pine straw pricking my legs and arms,

the walls a cavern around me, tall as a line of trees, the sky itself obscured" (161). For reasons Ward could not initially explain, the image haunted her, and turned out to be an objective correlative in the process of confronting her trauma—of putting a name on it, and of writing *Men We Reaped*.

The fact that at the onset of her writing process Ward could not properly account for the haunting memory of the cellar, of why it became a "specter" in her life, demonstrates the extent to which her work on the memoir was an epistemic and therapeutic enterprise. Ward later reflects that the image of the hole in the ground, a hidden retreat, was particularly instrumental in the context of the racist bullying she had experienced in school and the constant threat of sexual assault. The obscure nature of the cellar, a grotesque *grotto* which attracts the mind with its interior separated from the outside world of trauma, and which lures with its hiddenness, reminds one of the escapist and healing role the cave played in another southern narrative of homecoming, in Dorothy Allison's *Cavedweller*—there, it serves as a symbolic space of female transfiguration, and of an internal discovery under the ground of Georgia. For Ward, in *Men We Reaped*, the cellar plays a different role. It is an element of the menacing encounter with the regional oppressiveness, a gateway to the primordial, natural settings of the South, which in the narrative figuratively metamorphose into the wolf-predator—and the murky interior becomes a "physical representation of all the hatred and loathing and sorrow I carried inside, the dark embodiment of all the times in Gulfport when I had been terrorized or sexually threatened" (161). In figurative terms, the dark hole in the ground can be identified as the very lair of the wolf of DeLisle.

Since the ominous hole in the ground is organically connected with the trauma of the South, it also becomes emblematic of the region's dualistic paradoxes. Ward associates the personal struggles of her friends and family, as well as her own sense of dissevered personality with the ambivalent nature of the cellar, as a gateway to the dark, primordial underbelly of Mississippi. Just as Ronald's "daemons" constituted the "debilitating darkness, that Nothing that pursued him," for Ward the cellar in the wood remains a "wide, deep living grave," which reflects back at the minds of all African-Americans: "I know that when [Ronald] looked down at his cooper hands and in the mirror, his dark eyes and his freckles and his even mouth, that he thought it would be better if he were dead, because then all of it, every bit of it, would stop." (174-75). For Ward, likewise, the cellar becomes the space filled with the voice of the dark passenger, an ominous double—the very same one who entices Ronald about the helplessness of his existence, corrupting his thoughts and removing the sense of purpose and hope from it.

In *Men We Reaped,* Ward herself employs these strategies of doubling to demonstrate how the region instilled in her the enduring sense of inadequacy and ineptitude, of how it brought her to the ground. She explains that the effect of being brought up in the shadow of the southern oppressiveness, and in gravitational pull of the black hole in the woods, one grows to accept racism and abuse as part of the surrounding reality, and one develops an extensive complex, verging on the sense of worthlessness. And it is this debilitating voice that effectively becomes her double. Just like in the case of Ronald mentioned above, his doppelganger-like "daemons" kept inciting in him to take his own life. As Ward recalls, the very same year she

and her brother discovered the ominous cellar, once she "looked in the mirror and… saw what [she] perceived to be my faults and my mother's faults. They coalesced into a dark mark that I would carry through my life, a loathing of what I saw, which came from other's hatred of me, and all this fostered a hatred of myself." The region's fundamental divisiveness incites a split in Ward's mind, a rift around which her traumas revolved, she began to see herself through the region's eyes, as her own Other. This split accompanied her through all stages of her life—when she moved between the world of the private school and her struggling household, when she experienced the sense of Du Bois's "double consciousness," watching her mother cleaning the apartments of white people both when she left the South, and then came back home.

As stressed by Ward, that depressive double from the mirror, soon to be haunted by the wolf, afflicted by the darkness from under the ground, was the outcome of historical processes that had taken place in the South. Split in two by the self-hate incited into her by the oppressive culture, Ward was afflicted by the living past in both a direct way and indirect way. But, also, she translated this personal sense of affliction and abandonment into the collective experience of her community—as she explains, "I thought being unwanted and abandoned and persecuted was the legacy of the poor southern Black woman" (x). And, just like with her return to the South, which she decided to undertake in spite of all odds, to work for the community and to combat the lingering hopelessness, also here, Ward succeeds in elevating her mother's suffering and hard work, demonstrating her feminine strength—as she explains, "I see my mother's legacy anew. I see how all the burdens she bore, the burdens of her history and identity and of our country's history and identity, enabled her to manifest her greatest gifts. My mother had the courage to look at four hungry children and find a way to fill them. My mother had the strength to work her body to its breaking point to provide for herself and her children" (x). The resilience and heroic endurance of Ward's mother against the affliction is her legacy, one which Ward wishes to cultivate by returning home.

"***Hello. We are here. Listen.***"

During a meeting with her readers in Shakespeare & Co. in Paris, in 2018, Ward portrayed a vision of the South unaffected by the regional oppressiveness. She explained that "[i]t would be nice not to feel in danger every time you encounter the police, it would be nice not to feel policed all the time," and she stressed that she "want[s] to live in a world where [she] does not have to worry that [her] eighteen year old nephew will be dead before he turns twenty one." This hypothetical future is very remote from the present reality, which, as she proves in *Men We Reaped*, is so fundamentally racked by death. As stressed by Ward, "[d]eath spreads, eating away at the root of our community like a fungus." The region, eclipsed by the "great darkness" (250) which bears on the community, pursued by the ephemeral wolf cannot give any semblance of safety and stability—in fact it is presently the very antithesis of this hypothetical future: "[the presence of racism] is why I choose the option of a life insurance plan at every job I work. This is why I hate answering the phone. This is why fear roots through me when I think of my nephew, who is funny and even-shouldered and quite, when I think of what awaits him in the world" (240).

In this context, Ward's decision to move back to Mississippi and confront both her personal trauma and the regional oppressiveness becomes a powerful symbolic statement of resilience. As she explains, "Yet, I've returned home to this place that birthed me and kills me at once. I've turned down more-lucrative jobs, with more potential for advancement, to move back to Mississippi. I wake up every morning hoping to have dreamed my brother. I carry the weight of grief even as I struggle to live" (240). This gesture of homecoming takes on a historical context—in which the pronoun "we" from the final words of the memoir, "*Hello. We are here. Listen.*" conflates with the "we" from the palimpsestic title of the book. It is Ward's attempt to confront the history of the region and to influence it, finally warding off the figurative wolf which has taken so much from her.

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REVIEWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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