





CREOLES, DIASPORAS AND  
COSMOPOLITANISMS



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THE CREOLIZATION OF NATIONS,  
CULTURAL MIGRATIONS, GLOBAL  
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

DAVID GALLAGHER

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## FOREWORD

No single term perhaps better captures the city of New Orleans than ‘lagniappe.’ That little bit extra is the characteristic symbol of hospitality and gratitude in the Crescent City, something which is and is not part of any exchange: you are never charged for it and yet it is always expected by members of the community, even for outsiders. This creole term fuses, in a Louisiana French orthography, the American Spanish word ‘la ñapa’ (something that is added) with the Quechua word ‘yapay’ (to pay or increase). At its core ‘lagniappe’ globalizes and localizes. It depends upon the generosity of individual merchants who add that thirteenth beignet to the dozen for free, and it embodies the confluence at least three linguistic and cultural traditions to forge a new one in a specific place.

A logic of three reappears in the thematic triad for the American Comparative Literature Association’s 2010 conference held in New Orleans, ‘Creoles, Diasporas, and Cosmopolitanisms,’ with each term further pluralized to encourage the most varied and inclusive possible perspectives from our participants. Each term in its own way explores the concept of ‘lagniappe,’ of what is supplementary, what is not included in the official price or in segregated and carefully tallied calculations of language, culture and literature. When the ACLA’s board, under Haun Saussy’s leadership as president, suggested my mother’s hometown as our venue, we hoped to bring our support to the still

hesitant economy of post-Katrina New Orleans. But our choice of location involved more than a desire to assist this complex, vibrant and often troubled location. For the ACLA, picking New Orleans served as a way of focusing the thoughts of more than 1,700 participants on those questions of exchange, multiplicity and hybridity which have defined both that most creole, diasporic and cosmopolitan of communities and have been at the heart of the ACLA and its members' work as well.

The choice of 'creole' as our first term was perhaps the easiest and most expected, a reflection in the most exact way of the location of the meeting. It also involved an exhortation to reconsider binary and brightly distinguished discriminations among cultures elsewhere. Such revisionist and nuanced critique has been at the forefront of much of the most energetic comparative work over that past twenty years in particular. Behind the term lies a complex history of class, and later of ethnicity and race. Both the Spanish 'criollo' and the Portuguese 'cria' emphasize that the creole person has been raised in one's house and is local. Despite the varied senses of the word, which has been used in so many colonial contexts for the past four hundred years, each usage also relies upon belonging with a mark of difference, based on that person's local birth and upbringing being combined with foreign ancestry. The languages and cultures that emerge from this foreignness, which is both at home and other at the same time, themselves represent linguistic fusions, whether based on Spanish or Arabic, Chinese or French. A conference such as the ACLA, with participants from more than fifty countries presenting work in more than sixty languages embodies 'créolité.' Some scholars focused explicitly on the regional creole cultures of Louisiana and Haiti, for example, but the conference as a whole invited participants to imagine the full range of applications for this idea, one that originates with enforced bodies and culminates in new grammars and cultural expressions.

For creoles to exist, diasporas must have taken place. In the current global moment, whether in our personal lives or our scholarship, diasporic experience is

registered as a defining rather than an eccentric feature of culture and identity. Indeed, while modern cultural interactions and exchanges have perhaps heightened the immediacy and frequency of transnational movement, scholarship refracts this dynamic process backwards so as to refashion our view of earlier cultural moments. They too are emerging as having been far from static. Behind the concept of diaspora lies a history of enforced movement, a scattering of people away from ancestral homelands. If the Transatlantic slave trade and the Jewish diaspora, for example, have been seen as paradigmatic cases of involuntary dispersal, along with innumerable other cases from around the globe, Benedict Anderson and others have invited us to construe the term more broadly. For Anderson, 'diaspora' captures the phenomenon of so many communities that are on-the-move without limiting itself to a single set of contextualizing factors for that movement. While at its core lies the concept of homeland, whether in the form of the Arabic 'ummah' or the German 'Heimat,' or construed in a myriad of other languages ('haaretz,' 'rodina,' etc.), the conference interrogated the experiences and implications of displacements of all sorts, whether of the Native American nations in the United States or of those who only recently left New Orleans itself after the hurricane. The idea of a human 'scattering across' has transformed from the initial Biblical and Hellenistic uses of the term, with the implications of exile, and immigration in the service of colonization and assimilation, to embrace a complex nexus of expatriation and community formation with its attendant competing desires for collective nostalgia as well as reinvention.

While the first two terms invited our participants to focus on the cultural experiences and their expressions in multiple media and contexts, the third term interrogated our vantage point. Not always a term with positive connotations, cosmopolitanism traces its roots back to Diogenes and then through Stoicism. At its core the concept relies upon a double life of local and global belonging, of being both a native of Sinope and a citizen of the world. Where the term has been most critiqued is in its reliance upon a shared ethical participation. Such

universalism, despite its hegemonic potentials, sought to resist nationalism and even patriotism. Relying upon a concept of sharedness in regard to morals, economics, and/or politics, earlier cosmopolitanisms aimed at a global inclusivity. At the same time, however, it risked the assimilation of otherness into a monolithic structure that might not fully register strangeness, localness, and the particular. Indeed this sort of cosmopolitanism might, in fact, incite resistance and even violence, as Frantz Fanon long ago warned and modern postcolonial critics have more recently reminded us. It is precisely because, however, of this debate among distinguished comparatists, especially since the events of 11th September, that we included and pluralized the term. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Judith Butler have invited us recently to interrogate both our obligations to the familiar and even the nature of the familiar itself. For Appiah, in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in A World of Strangers*, our obligation to strangers in no way eschews our obligation to the familiar, and yet Butler cautions us regarding the consequences of using familiarity as a criterion for the valuing others in *Precarious Life*. One of the most humane interventions in this debate, and one that has been echoed by a number of critics, appeared in one of Derrida's last works, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas, Derrida reprises the notion of cosmopolitanism as involving the making of ethical choices to support the other. For Derrida the foundation of all such ethical choices is hospitality. Hospitality not only does not collapse the familiar with the unfamiliar, or assimilate the other with the self. Rather it detects what is other within the self, even as it embraces its own strangeness.

For Derrida, like Kant before him, people cannot exist in isolation, and must, therefore negotiate and balance concern with the self with concern for the other. Hospitality, and the cosmopolitanism that accompanies this obligation, might be seen as the ultimate case of the ethics of the 'lagniappe.' Hospitality, like forgiveness, is the giving of something freely, valued by an ethical not a commercial system of weights. It is a tangible expression of the intangible, with no thought of instrumentality. It is simply a gift, of the sort that is exchanged in

certain creolized and diasporic places in the world in which cosmopolitanisms are at work. For three days in the Vieux Carré, colleagues at every stage of their career and intellectual life, and from all parts of the planet, formed and inhabited a city of refuge which sought to revisit old blending and migrations, and to imagine new cities. At its best any academic conference such as that organized by the ACLA embodies the principle of the ‘lagniappe,’ supplementing local careers, demanding geographical displacements and most of all creating a creolic, diasporic and cosmopolitan community that offers hospitality without conditions.

– Dr Elizabeth Richmond-Garza





## CONTRIBUTORS

Maya Boutaghou was an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at University of California Los Angeles (in the Center for ‘Cultures in Transnational Perspective’), teaching in Women’s Studies and Comparative Literature (2008-2010). She is Assistant Professor in Modern Languages and Women Studies at Florida International University (Miami). She completed her dissertation in Comparative Literature at the University of Limoges (France) exploring the link between the emergence of the novel and the construction of national and cultural identity in four colonized areas (Australia, Bengal, Egypt, Mexico) at the end of the nineteenth century. She is working on a book focused on plurilingual women writers in Egypt, India, Mauritius, and Algeria.

Harold G. Weisz Carrington is a Professor of Comparative Literature, who has been working at the Departamento de Literatura Comparada of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico since 1975. He has specialised in General Anthropology, Dramatic Literature and Theatre, Theatre and Fantastic Literature, Performance Studies, and Literature and the Body, and is a member of Sistema Nacional de Investigadores (National Research System) Level II (2009-2012). Harold G. Weisz is a writer sculptor, teacher and researcher, whose main research interests are Literary Theory, Philosophy, Anthropology and Art. He has published articles, books, poetry and contributed story-poems to *Talismanic Lens*, an art catalogue with paintings by Leonora Carrington and an essay by Ara H.

Merjian (San Francisco: Frey Norris Gallery, 2007). His publication record includes 'Le cerveau rituel', in *Internationale de l'Imaginaire*, 6/7 (Paris: *Maison des Cultures du Monde*, 1986), 'Mathematics of Introspection', *MéliMélo*, No. 8. (Tokyo, 1989), 'Subliminal Body: Shamanism, Ancient Theater, and Ethnodrama', in *Primitivism and Identity in Latin America: Essays on Art, Literature, and Culture*, ed. by Erik Camayd-Freixas and José Eduardo González (Tucson: The University of Arizona, 2000), and *Tinta del exotismo: Literatura de la Otrredad (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007)*, the result of a Fulbright Scholar award at San Diego State University during 2003/2004. Other works include 'Cuerpos y espectros' (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM, 2006), as well as a collection of poems in *Universo de familia*. Mexico: Impronta edit., Museo de Bellas Artes and Conaculta, 2005), as well as *Fuegos del Fénix* (Seville, Spain: Renacimiento, 2006).

Felicia McCarren teaches in the Department of French and Italian at Tulane University in New Orleans, and is the author of *Dance Pathologies: Performance, Poetics, Medicine* (1998) and *Dancing Machines: Choreographies of the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2003) both from Stanford University Press, and articles on performance, cinema, and new media. Her forthcoming book, *French Moves*, explores the urban dance of minorities in France, and recent publications include 'Téléphone Arabe: From Child's Play to Terrorism'; 'The Poetics and Politics of Post-colonial Telecommunications', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* and '52 days to Timbuktu (62 days to Rabat)', *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*. She is working on a new project on colonial and contemporary cinema in Morocco which received an NEH Summer Stipend in 2011.

Bill McBride teaches film, drama, and Biblical hermeneutics at Illinois State University and has published on a variety of subjects including African-American aspects of UFO art and music, chiasm, lex talio and money in the Book of Esther, Bakhtin's Marxist formalism, the apocalyptic bubblegum aesthetic of painter Kenny Scharf, a cultural study of circumcision and midrash, the mania for

symmetry in the works of Samuel Beckett, the figural logic of St. Augustine and Eric Auerbach, anti-Semitic aspects of the vampire legend, and is completing his cinema textbook: *Stylized Moments – Turning Film Style Into Meaning*.

Kelsey Lynore Craven is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literary Studies at Northwestern University. She is presently working on her dissertation, ‘Cruel to be Kind: The Body as Site of Political Agency in 20<sup>th</sup> century French and American Literature and Art.’

Jean-Marie Grassin is Emeritus Professor of the Département de Littérature Générale et Comparée at the Université de Limoges. He is General editor of the Dictionary of International Literary Terms (DITL), former President of the Société Française de Littérature Générale et Comparée (SFLGC), Chairman founder of the ‘Université de la Francophonie’, a global organization for cultural, scientific and educational cooperation, Coordinator of the French doctoral school in Brazil (including the research centre on the ‘Emergence of Amazonian culture to modernity’). He is Commandeur dans l’ordre des Palmes académiques, as well as being a specialist in the theory of emergence in social sciences (poetics, history, geocriticism) He is further President of honour of AMABRELA (Franco-Australian Association for the study of Australian Literature), and a former Fulbright scholar, who has completed a number of keynote lectures in various countries.

Melanie A. Marotta is a Lecturer in the Department of English and Language Arts at Morgan State University, and received her PhD in English from Morgan State University. Marotta has previously published an article in *Theory in Action* titled ‘Liberation through Acceptance of Nature and Technology in Octavia E. Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*.’ In her dissertation, *The Influence of Rural and Urban Areas on the Female Communities in the Works of Toni Cade Bambara, Gayl Jones, and Toni Morrison*, Marotta shows that culture, gender, class, ethnicity, and urban and rural environments greatly influence the formation of the identities of the female characters studied.

Jill Kinnear has held the position of Professor of Fibers at Savannah

College of Art and Design since 2009 when she moved to the States from Australia. Born and raised in Scotland, she received her initial degree in Textile Design from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art. Following a three year teaching contract in Papua New Guinea at the National Art School, she emigrated to Australia where she received both a Masters of Visual Art (Research) and PhD from the University of Southern Queensland. She worked as a full-time artist and designer in Australia for many years, fulfilling major public art and design commissions for State Government, such as the 330 square metre memorial artwork in glass for Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane. She also exhibited throughout Australia and contributed to international group shows in the UK, New Zealand and South Korea. Her work has been recognized through major design awards and grants, including the Design Institute of Australia's Design Excellence Award, a Churchill Fellowship, an Australia Council grant for new work and Arts Queensland funding. Her work is held in international collections including the National Museum of Scotland and the State Library of Queensland. Her experiences of emigration, cultural remembrance and sense of place continue to be central to her research and textile production.

Russell Stockard Jr. is currently Associate Professor at California Lutheran University, where he began teaching in 1991. His scholarly and teaching interests include cultural studies, disaster studies, diaspora studies, globalization, Latin American and Caribbean area studies, environment and media discourse and literature, social media and information and communication technology. He has written numerous opinion pieces for newspapers, hosted an interview program on KCLU-FM radio in Thousand Oaks for five years, has done multimedia presentations and photography, writes fiction and poetry, and blogs about public discourse, multiculturalism, technology, and civic engagement at Thick Culture and about disaster, travel, Haiti, and Hurricane Katrina at Three Suns. He speaks French, Spanish, and Portuguese and has a working knowledge of Haitian Creole. He has A.B. and A.M. degrees in history and literature from Harvard University, an M.B.A. degree from UCLA, and a PhD in communication in social and

economic development from Stanford University. Recent publications include: *Subverting Vulnerabilities and Inequality in Disaster Survival*, second author with R.L. Stockard Sr. and M. Belinda Tucker in *Narrating the Storm: Sociological Stories of Hurricane Katrina*, edited by Danielle A. Hidalgo and Kristen Barber (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 'The Social Impact of Gender and Games', in *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology*, edited by E. Trauth (Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing, 2006), *Gender, Race, Social Class, and Information Technology*, second author with Myungsook Klassen, in *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology*, edited by E. Trauth (Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing, 2006), *Dimensions of Sustainable Diversity in Information Technology: Applications to the IT College Major and Career Aspirations among Underrepresented High School Students of Color*, first author with Ali Akbari and Jamshid Damooei in *Diversity in Information Technology Education: Issues and Controversies*, ed. by G. Trajkovski (Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing, 2006), *The Networked Poetry of Time, Space and Connections: Globalization, Glocalization, Community Capital and the Online Black Diaspora*, in *@froGEEKS: Beyond the Digital Divide*, edited by Anna Everett and Amber J. Wallace (Santa Barbara: The Center for Black Studies Research, University of California, 2007), and 'Stretching Horizons: Upward Bound Programs in Stimulating Information Technology Education and Career Aspirations among Underrepresented Minorities: Key Findings from Qualitative and Quantitative Research,' an article submitted to *The Communications of the Association of Computing Machinery*, October 12, 2004. Lastly he is the primary author of *Computer Science Higher Education Pipeline*, with co-authors Myungsook Klassen and Ali Akbari, scheduled for publication in the *Proceedings of the Consortium of Computing Sciences in Colleges (Eastern)* (Baltimore, MD: Loyola University in Maryland, 2004).

William Welty is from Bowling Green, Ohio and is currently an MA candidate at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. He plans to pursue a PhD in Cultural Studies and his research interests include psychoanalysis and its

relationship to culture; film studies, particularly Alfred Hitchcock; and the interaction of postmodern philosophy with contemporary and Modern literature. In his free time, he enjoys bird watching and spending time with his pet rabbit Bonnie.

Dr Luis Manuel Calvo Salgado graduated from the Universities of Santiago de Compostela and Zurich and is now Oberassistent and Lecturer at the University of Zurich in the History Department. He has taught a wide range of modules on modern and early modern Spanish history as well as on methodology and historiography. His areas of research include religion in early modern Spain and twentieth century migration.

Sreyoshi Sarkar did her B.A, M.A and M Phil in English Literature at the University of Delhi, India and was affiliated to St. Stephen's College while completing her two former degrees. In 2007 she was appointed Assistant Professor in the English Faculty at Gargi College, University of Delhi where she has since taught undergraduate classes in English (Hons.), a B.A Programme and B. Com Pass amongst others. Her research interests include diaspora studies, Anglophone women's writing, war and literature and children's literature. She has presented papers on the same at various national and international conferences besides working on projects that focused on storytelling by children and English language textbook transactions in schools in Delhi, India. She is presently a 1st. year graduate student in the English PhD programme at The George Washington University, Washington D.C.

Andzhela Keshishyan is a graduate student at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Her research focuses on 20th Century Armenian-American literature and the role that the Armenian Genocide plays in constructing identity in the Armenian Diaspora. She is currently a teaching associate at CSUN where she teaches freshman composition. Lilit Manucharyan is a graduate of CSUN. Her Master's thesis is entitled 'The Representation of Women and the Transmission of Armenian Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century Armenian-American Literature.' They co-presented a paper entitled 'Redefining National Security: Women's

Struggle to Resurrect Their Nation After the Armenian Genocide of 1915' at a 2009 conference sponsored by the CSUN Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence, as well as a paper entitled 'National Identity in Twentieth-Century Armenian-American Diasporic Literature' at the 2009 American Comparative Literature Association conference. In 2010, Lilit was the presiding officer of the special session panel called 'Reconceptualization of National Identity in Diasporic Literature' at the annual PMLA conference, where Andzhela presented her paper, 'Refiguring Cultural Consciousness: Repression, Assimilation, and Identity in Nancy Kricorian's Zabelle.'

Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz is Professor of Philosophy at UACM (Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de Mexico). She obtained her PhD and M.A. in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, and a B.A. in Business Administration from the ITESM (Tec de Monterrey). Professor Rodríguez Ortiz has published in national and international journals mainly on border Mexican women writers, theories of borders, Chicano/a literature, border cultural production, and her recent research is on the concept of border. She has also published various chapters on other books in Mexico. Her research areas include: Border Studies, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Philosophy of Culture, Literary Theory, and Critical Theory.

Roxana Galusca was a PhD candidate in English at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor before moving to the University of Chicago. She wrote a dissertation on the use of cultural narratives of humanitarianism in contemporary U.S. anti-trafficking campaigns. Her research interests include transnational feminism, U.S. immigration, and women's rights. Her publications include: 'From Fictive Ability to National Identity: Disability, Medical Inspection, and Public Health Regulations on Ellis Island', *Cultural Critique*, 72 (2009), 137-63, reprinted in Turkish Translation in *Sakatlik Çalışmaları*, ed. by Dikmen Bezmez et alia ( Koç University Press, 2011), a review of 'Towards a Global Idea of Race by Denise Ferreira da Silva' *Atlantic Studies* 5.3 (2008), 405-6, a translation from Romanian, entitled 'The Adolescent Incubus' and 'The Book of Useless

Couplings' by Ovid Nimigean, *Club 8: Poetry*, ed. by Adam J Sorkin (Iasi: T, 2001) and she is revising an article 'Slave Hunters and Brothel Busters: Investigative Journalists as Anti-Sex Trafficking Humanitarians' for resubmission to *Feminist Formations*.

Kathryn Bell received her Bachelor of Arts in English with Concentration in Writing from Loyola University New Orleans. Her honours thesis title was 'The Next Generation: Conscious Evolution and Environmentalism in the First Contact Scenario.' Her research focuses on literature and film in science-fiction, post-apocalyptic fiction, and other related subgenres. She is currently attending Seattle University where she is pursuing a Master of Arts in their Existential-Phenomenological Therapeutic Psychology program.

Laurel Seely Voloder completed her PhD in Literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz in December 2010. Her dissertation was entitled, 'Cultural Discourses of Bosnian Identity from the Death of Tito to the Postwar Period'. She is currently conducting postdoctoral research in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Her publications include 'Sarajevo Cult Band SCH: The Politics of Future Noise', in Slovenian journal *Monitor ZSA*, 31/32, vol. XI/No. 1-2 (2009), 113-22, and a forthcoming book chapter with Professor Tyrus Miller on the historical Yugoslav avant-gardes in *Modernist Magazines: A Critical and Cultural History; Volume Three: Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming).

Emel Tastekin, is a sessional lecturer at the Arts Studies in Research and Writing program at the University of British Columbia, where she completed her doctoral studies in the English Department. Her research interests are nineteenth and twentieth-century histories of literary criticism in relation to the interpretation of monotheistic scriptures, with a particular focus on the historical-philological method and its function in Orientalist scholarship. Her dissertation *Another Look at Orientalism: Western Literature in the Face of Islam* examines the work of a German-Jewish scholar of Islam, Abraham Geiger, through Derrida's concept of 'Abrahamic hospitality' and through postcolonial theories on diasporic identities. Her current project deals with the literary aspects of religious discourses,



particularly the personal narratives of Western converts to Islam and the Qur'anic commentary of Muslim figures within modernity, to explore the rise of global Islamic discourses.

Orian Zakai is a PhD candidate at the Department of Comparative Literature working on her dissertation entitled 'Feminine Wounds: The New Hebrew Woman and Her Others.' Her collection of short fiction entitled *Hashlem et ha-haser (Fill in the Blanks)* came out in Israel in October 2010, and her research interests include twentieth-century Hebrew Literature, gender and Zionism, Post-Zionist critiques, and feminist post-colonial theory.

Sten Pultz Moslund is currently working on a postdoctoral project at the University of Southern Denmark about the role and significance of place in literature. He specialises in postcolonial literature and migration literature. His primary research interests are socio-cultural, discursive and phenomenological theories of place and their relevance for the experience of place in literature; a re-conceptualisation and differentiation of the concept of cultural hybridity; the political, aesthetic and philosophical implications of migration as represented in contemporary migration literature. Apart from a range of articles in the above areas, Moslund has published *Making Use of History in New South African Fiction* (Museum Tusulanum Press, 2003) and *Migration Literature and Hybridity* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010)

Naglaa Abou-Agag is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Alexandria University, Egypt. She obtained her PhD in Comparative Drama (English-Arabic) from Alexandria University in 2003. The topic of her present thesis is 'George Bernard Shaw's Social Realism in the Works of Modern Egyptian Dramatists with Special Reference to Numan Ashour.' She has since published a number of papers on comparative topics and postcolonial theory, as well as translating a number of short stories and poems into Arabic and into English. Her publications include: 'A Deconstructive Reading of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* and Youssef Idris' *The Acrobat*', in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Poetics of Comparative Literature*, organized by The Egyptian

Comparative Literature Association (ESCL) and The Higher Institute for Languages, edited by Ahmed Etman (Cairo, 2007), 130-52, 'Apollo in Retrospect: Tony Harrison's *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* and Ahmed Etman's *Goats of Oxyrhynchus*', in *Moqaranat (Comparisons) No. 2: The Proceedings of The International Symposium on Comparative Literature and Linguistics: Present and Future* organized by The Faculty of Arts, Cairo University in collaboration with The Egyptian Society of Comparative Literature (ESCL), edited by Ahmed Etman (Cairo, 2008), 379-401, 'Inhabitants of Different Worlds: The Voice of the Colonizer in D. J. Enright's *Academic Year* versus National Discourse in Edouard El-Kharrat's *City of Saffron*', in *The Proceedings of The Ninth International Symposium on Comparative Literature*, edited by K. Salwa, H.S. Gindi and N.S. El-Kholy (The Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, 2009), 323-42 and 'Mounira Thabet: Women's Rights': translation and introduction in *Women Writing Africa: The Northern Region*, edited by Fatima Sadiqi (Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 2009), 126-29.

Ali M. Meghdadi is a Doctoral candidate at the University of California at Irvine (UCI) in the Department of Comparative Literature. He holds a Master of Arts from Loyola Marymount University, a Master of Fine Arts in poetry from Otis College of Art and Design, and another Master of Arts in Comparative Literature from UCI. Primarily his work employs pragmatic theory and theological analysis to examine the humanizing effects of Iranian and American thinkers who work outside of their native countries. This analysis is underwritten by an ethical and political imperative to recuperate a spiritual sensibility in each culture through scrutiny of their texts that could potentially provide grounds for open exchange. Ali's ultimate interest lies in the advancement of communication technology that facilitates philanthropically founded international discourse. His work has appeared in various literary and academic journals, in *The Truth About the Fact*, *The Strip*, and *The New Review of Literature*. Following the ACLA Conference held at Harvard University in 2009, he contributed a book chapter entitled 'Manifesting Beowulf's Meta-Monsters to *Interpreting Great Classics of*

*Literature as Metatheatre and Metafiction*, edited by David Gallagher and with a Foreword by John T. Hamilton (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), pp. 91-98.

Eve J. Eisenberg is a doctoral graduate student in the English Department at Indiana University-Bloomington, in Indiana, USA. She holds a BA in Literature and a Certificate in Film and Video from Duke University, an MA in Teaching from Manhattanville College, and an MA in English from Binghamton University (SUNY Binghamton). Before returning to graduate school to pursue her PhD, she worked as a researcher and production assistant on several social-issue documentary films, and later taught high school English in the public education system in New York. While she focuses on African Anglophone literature, her interest in intertextuality often leads her to investigate writing from non-African spaces that resonates, in some manner, with African literature. Her essay in this volume represents a segment of her research into the concentric, rippling echoes of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in relation to representations of African spaces and peoples. Her dissertation inquires into the meanings and modes of intertextuality in African Anglophone literature, especially as regards African rewritings of canonical texts.

Ming Xie is Associate Professor of English at the University of Toronto. He was educated at the University of Nanjing, China, and at Trinity College, Cambridge University, England, where he obtained his PhD in English literature. His research interests include modernist and twentieth-century poetry and poetics, comparative intercultural theory, hermeneutics, theory and practice of translation. He is the author of two books: *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry* (New York and London: Garland, 1999) and *Conditions of Comparison: Reflections on Comparative Intercultural Inquiry* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), as well as numerous essays in scholarly journals and book collections. He is currently working on an edited collection on the subject of critical intercultural hermeneutics.

Jonathan Luftig is a Lecturer at Morgan State University. He holds a PhD

in Comparative Literature from State University of New York at Buffalo. His research focuses on nineteenth-century and early modernist literature in the context of European intellectual history. He is currently working on a book that focuses on the question of exemplarity in Kant, Wordsworth and De Quincey. His two most recent articles, on Yeats and Kant, have appeared in *Modern Language Notes*.

David Benhammou is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder with an M.A. in Asian Languages and Civilizations, applying for a scholarship to study for a PhD at the University of Tokyo, Japan. His research interests include modern Japanese literature and the relationship between literature and culture through time. He has published 'The Sheep and the Rat: An Examination of History in Murakami Haruki's *A Wild Sheep Chase*', (UMI Dissertation Publishing, 2010) and given a paper entitled 'The Zen of Light' in a Cross Disciplinary Consortium at The University of Colorado at Boulder Humanities Club, 2010.

Hanna Musiol is a doctoral candidate, Senior Teaching Assistant, and part-time lecturer in the Department of English at Northeastern University where she has taught composition, literature, and film courses since 2000. She attended School of Theory and Criticism at Cornell University and the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College, and is the recipient of several scholarship awards from Northeastern University, Cornell University, and Warsaw University. Her areas of interest include 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American literature and culture, American visual culture, and cultural studies, and she has presented her research on African American and Native American literatures, colonial modernity, consumerism, globalization and modernism at major professional conferences in the USA, being an active member of the Modern Language Association, American Comparative Literature Association, American Studies Association, and Cultural Studies Association. She is the associate editor of *Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, published by Blackwell Press in 2008, is a forthcoming contributor of two entries to *The Encyclopedia of American Women's*

*History* and published 'Cinematic Primitivism: Landscapes in Robert and Frances Flaherty's Documentaries' in *The Documentary Tradition* 38.1 (2007), has translated 'Rzęzenie Perkusji', a translation of Derek Mahon's 'Ghostly Rumble among the Drums', in *Dziennik Portowy* 2 (2001) and published an interview with poet Julia Fiedorczuk entitled 'Listopad nad Narwia' in *Dziennik Portowy* 1 (2000).

Ketevan Nadareishvili was born in Tbilisi, Georgia and is Associate Professor at Tbilisi I. Javakhishvili State University, Institute of Classical Philology, Byzantinology and Modern Greek Studies. His research interests include Ancient Greek tragedy, ancient literature in general, women issues, and Medea studies. Among his many articles, book chapters and chapters he has published two notable monographs, *The Portraits of Women in the Ancient World* (Tbilisi: Logos Publishing, 2003), *Woman in Classical Athens and Greek Tragedy* (Tbilisi: Logos Publishing, 2003), and a book chapter entitled Euripides' 'Helen' and Greek Roman – Similarities and Differences (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 109-117.

Michael Pittman is Assistant Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies at Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Albany, New York. He is the editor of *G.I. Gurdjieff: Armenian Roots, Global Branches*, the result of the Armenia-Gurdjieff Conferences he organized in Armenia from 2004-2007. He is also the author of *Classical Spirituality in Contemporary America: The Confluence and Contribution of Sufism and G.I. Gurdjieff*. In addition to Gurdjieff Studies and Sufism, Pittman researches and has presented on the work of Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, and the films of Iranian director Majid Majidi. He has also made two contributions respectively entitled 'Soul-Making in *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*' and 'Gurdjieffian Laughter: Demolition and Reconstruction' to *Proceedings of the All and Everything International Humanities Conference*, edited by Seymour Ginsburg and Ian MacFarlane and published in England by All & Everything Conferences in 2007.

Nelli Sargsyan-Pittman is a PhD candidate in anthropology at State University of New York at Albany. Her research focuses on gender and ethnic

identity negotiations in transnational settings. Her dissertation research examines the diverse ways Armenians negotiate their sexuality, ethnic and gender identities and the implications of these negotiations in the US Armenian diaspora and Armenia. She has published 'Contributing to the Synergistic Circulation of Knowledge' in *Anthropology News*, 52 (2) (2011), a joint chapter with Betsy Bowen and David Sapp entitled 'Resume Writing in Russia and the Newly Independent States' in *Business Communication Quarterly*, 69 (2), 128-43 and with H. Kajberouni, L. Hakobyan, R. Avetissyan, S. Kananyan, and D. Hambarzumyan, *A Guide to Critical Thinking: Textbook for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students Majoring in English* (Yerevan: Yerevan State Linguistic University Press, 2004.)

Erika Baldt is an English lecturer at Burlington County College in New Jersey. Her research interests include Anglo-American modernism and cosmopolitanism. Her work has been published in *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, *Interfaces*, and the collection *Reclaiming Home, Remembering Motherhood, Rewriting History: African American and Afro-Caribbean Women's Literature in the Twentieth Century*.

Eva R. Hudecova received her PhD in Comparative Literature (with a minor in Germanic Studies) in the Spring of 2009 and has been lecturing in the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. She is currently translating and writing an introduction to the Slovak author Michal Hvorecky's novel *Danube in America*, the first of his works translated into English. Among her publications are the following contributions to books: 'The Witness Who May Not Have Been There: Eastern European Authors Looking Westward,' in *East European Identities in the 19th and 20th Century*, Europa Orientalis 8, edited by Arnold Suppan and Richard Lein (Vienna/Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), pp. 197-206; 'Poland in Dorota Maslowska's Work,' in *New Directions in Travel Writing and Travel Studies*, edited by Carmen Andras (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2009), pp. 339-50 and 'Cosmopolitanism and Imagination in Central and East Europe before and after 1989,' in *The New Central and East European Culture*, edited by Stephen Totosy de Zepetnek

(Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2006), pp. 187-96. Forthcoming is her chapter 'The Emperor's 'New Europe: The Eastern European Search for Identity and Agency in a Contested Region,' in *Transatlantic Cultural Traffic: Beyond the Legacy of the Cold War*, edited by Letitia Guran and Anca Holden, which will be published by Transatlantic Publishing House.





## ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS

The following abbreviations are used in the texts and footnotes:

- AG            Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970)
- CPR           Kant Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929)
- FOC           Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1983)
- GS            German Studies and Kant in Particular
- K             Nuruddin Farah, *Knots* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007)
- KM            Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays

- xxxii Creoles, Diasporas, Cosmopolitanisms
- O Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (London: Penguin, 1993)
- PT Vita Sackville-West, *Passenger to Teheran* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2008)
- Q Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, ed. by Thadious M. Davis (New York: Penguin Books, 2002)
- TQ Tayama Katai, *The Quilt and Other Stories by Tayama Katai*, trans. by Kenneth G. Henshall (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981)
- U Futabatei Shimei, *Ukigumo: Japan's First Modern Novel*, trans. by Marleigh G. Ryan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972)
- WMJ *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen*
- Z Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun* (San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2009)

## INTRODUCTION

For Maya Boutaghou, while ‘creolization’ sounds like a creative process, multiculturalism seems to simplify the complexity of cultural edification leading to a questioning of the political response in Mauritius to ‘cultural diversity’. In Ananda Devi’s novels, Creole characters tend to embody the return of repressed chaos, whereas in a naïve reading of postcolonial theory, one can think about the ‘Creole’ character as a projected positive third space. Her paper analyzes the ambiguity between the political response to the diversity of ethnic and religious communities and its literary representation in some novels by Ananda Devi. Though it seems that in Mauritius, multiculturalism, as a political model, is the preferred system of bringing together different ethnic and religious groups (Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, Creole, European, African), this model does not allow for the total cohesion of the nation, but rather, it encourages communitarian conflicts and isolates ethnic groups (Jean-Louis Amselle, *Logique Métisse*, 1990). The case of Mauritian culture is particularly interesting because it links the politics of diasporas with the need of a recently established community to share the same public sphere. The aim of each nation is to avoid the violence of a multiethnic society that can lead to the implosion of groups and cultures. The goal of political thought is then to build the discourse that allows for harmony between the different members or groups within a larger society. This paper highlights the

question of 'becoming' Creole, which Ananda Devi's fiction stages through the depiction of the violence due to undesired ethnic plurality. In *Eve de ses décombres* [2006] and *The Green Sari* [2009], trans-ethnic transgression is shaped implicitly through a homoerotic relationship presented as the only way to reverse attempts to prevent inter-ethnic relationships on the plural island.

Harold Gabriel Weisz Carrington first discusses the concept of magical thought in detail, explaining that magical beings and characters often appear in literature, folktales and myths. Esu-Elegbara and the Trickster in the Yoruba tradition seem to travel from Nigeria, Benin, Brazil, Cuba, Haiti and New Orleans. Different cultures incorporate magical themes to understand their worldviews and lives. Scholars who work on these issues have tried to apply multiple epistemologies, from writers, literary critics, philosophers, anthropologists and psychologists, among others; each defined by a specific cultural make-up. He poses the question as to what kind of conceptual problems arise when rational models are used to analyze magical thought and myths. An ample scope of topical negotiations with otherness and alterity seem to work at the very core of magical thought, but then it seems that we are still defining our own knowledge and our own culture. He then turns to specific narrative examples in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys.<sup>1</sup> Within these novels a medley of contrasts is available, when Jean Rhys brings together an exotic construction of the zombie, and Toni Morrison undermines the epistemology of the exotic with a spectral entity that symbolizes alterity.

In 'Creolizing History of Science' Felicia McCarren points out that as flora and fauna, as people and their languages, 'creoles' are phenomena that particularly are particularly amenable to historical and scientific study of all types. Biological science has classified hybridity, but 'creoles' as living organisms and as languages have also served as descriptive models for the development of new sciences, and the relations between branches or sub-disciplines within a science. Having been open, then, to scientific study, these creoles also ask for an historical

account in the realm of the history of science, or more precisely, the interdisciplinary field called History and Philosophy of Science. McCarren illuminates how in work by historians and philosophers of science such as Serres, Latour, Galison, and Chang, the Creole shifts from being matter for the apprehension of science to a model for how sciences work. In moving from the history of biology that includes botany, zoology over to the history of physics she is not only tracing the history of the rise and dominance of particular sciences, wed to administrative power and funding, but also moving from a consideration of Creole as variant to be classified, toward Creole understood as a consensus, as the common shared language of different populations.

William McBride in *Le Rouge et le Noir et le Blanc: Niki Hoeky's Cajun Chiasm of Indian Masking and Native Funk* avails himself of the title of Stendhal's 1830 *Bildungsroman* to signify the colours of America's indigenous 'Red' people and those 'Black' Africans forcibly imported here, and add the colour 'White,' signifying the Cajun aspect of a unique composite musical language in order to analyze the chiasmic relationship between the Native American adoption of African rhythms (Native Funk) and the African American impersonation of indigenous tribal dress and dance (Indian Masking) all underwritten by the working class white aesthetic known as Cajun as exemplified by the 1966 top forty hit 'Niki Hoeky,' co-written by Yaqui Native-American brothers Pat & Lolly Vegas (later of Redbone) and New Orleansian white man Jim Ford. I uncover in Redbone's self-descriptive first song, 'Crazy Cajun Cakewalk Band,' the contested origin of the 'cakewalk' as a stereotypically African slave cultural practice mocking the masters' formal ballroom dancing, which in fact may have been first learned from Seminole dances witnessed by slave in Florida. Mocking and affectionate impersonation meld; both Red and Black have been intermingling easily from early on. After citing the distinction often drawn between Creole – a mixed racial heritage ranging from French, Spanish, African-American, Native American – and Cajun – descendants from the

Canadian or Acadian Diaspora, I take up the example of The Wild Tchoupitoulas, African American Funk originators (The Neville Brothers & The Meters) who practice Indian Masking, the yearlong tradition of creating and wearing elaborate feathers, sequin, and beaded Native American costumes in order to question (like the origin of the cakewalk): Does this practice originate from an affinity between Africans and Native Americans as minorities within the dominant culture or is there a racial antagonism not far beneath the surface? The dialectic is preserved with reference to Tennessee Williams' warm and easy intermingling via the multiple iterations of 'Niki Hoeky' by soul artists Aretha Franklin and Bobby Rush, country music queen Bobbi Gentry and pop artists Burton Cummings and P.J. Proby.

In 'Reading Otherwise, Speaking Otherwise: Lenny Bruce and Karen Finley in Hannah Arendt's *Polis*', Kelsey Craven explains that the word 'Creole,' although certainly utilized to signify a species of transplantation and ensuing hybridity, is rooted in the Spanish 'criar': to breed, to suckle, to raise. In short, it is to be naturalized, while remaining marked as one who was once foreign. But is such a state to be desired in view of late capitalism? Or to be more precise, is it not a depoliticized position to the extent that it can be so easily marked, and thus marketed? This chapter compares the idiomatic speech of two American performers of the past century, Lenny Bruce and Karen Finley, as well as their legal battles with state and federal governments, to better understand the nature of their offenses against the mass subject – or rather, to better understand the psychic requirements of naturalization within America. For what is so distinct about these two performers, beyond their combination of high and low, is their strident denaturing of self. That is, neither spoke for their specific class exclusively, but rather located themselves within the larger experience of self-alienated other (a necessary consequence of the mass subject), so as to speak from that non-space of ever-shifting register wherein politics is actually possible and identity is never fixed.

In 'Toward a global theory of creolization as an emergent process by opposition to multiculturalism as a configuration of identities', Jean-Marie Grassin's purpose is to build a theory of creolization and related notions as emergent process by opposition to multiculturalism as the interaction of distinctive cultures. Considerations will be based on the actual occurrences of the terms recorded in the extensive lexicographical surveys conducted on critical documents in view of the International Dictionary of Literary Terms ([www.ditl.info](http://www.ditl.info)). The semantic analysis of the contexts connected with the terms reveals a divide between, on one side, linguistic and cultural phenomena related to the idea of creolization as a 'combustion' (avoiding however the significative but somewhat controversial idea of 'fusion'), and to the other side a conception of 'multiculturalism' as a mixture or an interaction of distinctive elements. The difference of nature between these two principles can be compared in physics and chemistry with, on one side, water which gets properties of its own that are not those of its components, oxygen and hydrogen, and brine, on the other side, which retains the qualities of water and salt. Creolization produces new linguistic and cultural entities which are not determined by historical circumstances; they cannot be reduced to the interaction of their components. Their evolution cannot be predicted from past experiences nor from present conditions. As the Anthropophagist Movement in Brazil, creolization digests European elements into an original cultural body emancipated from colonial conditions. Neither European nor African (in the case of the Caribbean), they develop a dynamics of their own finding their place into the global landscape, and transforming it. Let us call this unique integration of two (or more) heterogeneous constituents, an 'emergent third' ('Tiers émergent'), neither determined by one source nor by the other, but acting beyond both of them in the outcome.

Melanie Marotta's contribution 'Acceptance of the Diaspora as Method of Escape in Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Midnight Robber*' indicates that by applying the concepts of restoration and renewal discussed by

William R. Jordan III in his essay, 'Renewal and Imagination: Thoreau's Thought and the Restoration of Walden Pond,' to Nalo Hopkinson's works, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998) and *Midnight Robber* (2000), it becomes clear that it is only through restoration and renewal achieved by an acceptance of diasporic culture that Hopkinson's communities can be successful. In *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Midnight Robber*, Nalo Hopkinson positions her female protagonists, Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan, in dystopias that dominate their identities. Unfortunately, the individual becomes more important than the collective in the dystopia. Both Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan are ineffective in combating the restrictive forces of their urban locales until they accept the culture of the Diaspora into their selves. Culture is a communal entity due to the sharing of beliefs and by the female protagonists freely accommodating its presence within their identities, they are accepting the task of passing that knowledge on to others. The examination for this study is as follows: Hopkinson shows that in order to escape the confining ideology of the urban areas the female protagonists, Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan, must accept the culture of the Diaspora into their identities which results in the reformation of their selves, 'restoration' of their communities, and the downfall of the dystopias, ergo the 'renewal' of the areas. Once Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan are able to pass this freeing knowledge on to others, the feelings of despair subside, and an emotional attachment to others is the result, ergo the community. Once the community is reformed, the city can be renewed. In Hopkinson's texts, 'restoration' of the community and 'renewal' of the city can only be achieved once detrimental constructs are escaped by the protagonists and hope returns.

For Jill Kinnear, 'Diaspora: Textiles As Paradox' is about the experience of migrant dislocation. This paper and the accompanying images of textile work draw on her personal experience of migration from Scotland to Australia and how the myths and memories of migratory experience and the journey between these geographical extremes become an analogy for the third space. The transitory (and transient) character of the journey becomes the homeland, the place between the



points of departure and arrival, a place of hybrid cross-cultural response, compromise and innovation, which has been referred to by various theorists such as Homi Bhabha. As a printed textile designer she is particularly interested in the role of textiles as a cultural signifier of history, place and identity. As an emigrant Scot, she esteems the role that traditional Scottish textiles, paisleys, and in particular, tartans, have played in the construction of a Scottish identity and mythology, and how tartan imagery has migrated along with its mythologies to every corner of the world. Air travel is often the mode of transport for migrants in their transition from east to west or north to south. At the point of embarkation in this journey of exodus, our intimate possessions and clothing, encased and encapsulated in baggage, are x-rayed. The airport has become the present-day place of embarkation and disembarkation, a no-man's land of arrival and departure. The airport and the plane seem like portals of Bhabha's Third Space, a place of passage unconnected to landmass through which the populations of the world are squeezed, a facilitator for transforming and changing perception and culture. Increasingly I see the baggage x-ray machine as an icon of this change; a transporter and transformer of culture. This paper examines how an artist presents the third space within the gallery environment as an analogy for the experience of migratory dislocation and Diaspora.

Russell L. Stockard Jr. in 'Ecocriticism and Postcoloniality in Digital Diasporas: Post-9/11 and Katrina' demonstrates that digital diasporas are a fusion of community and communication technology. Following Sarah Casteel and Elizabeth DeLoughrey, his paper explores the phenomenology of Diaspora focusing on the Hurricane Katrina disaster principally through the nonfiction novel *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers. While the storm creates its own disaster Diaspora, Eggers focuses on a Syrian immigrant who chooses to stay through the storm and, in doing so, conjoins *Zeitoun's* Middle Eastern Diaspora with that of his own family post-Katrina. It also stirs the concerns of postcolonial literature into a gumbo of the literatures of African Americans and the Gulf South, neither of

which are customarily linked to Diaspora. In doing so, he also looks for inspiration from John Cullen Gruesser, who argues in his book *Confluences* for a critical deterritorialization of postcolonialism, African American literary studies and the Black Atlantic. As the book is a meditation of sorts on the landscape turned to Biblical waterscape, it is imperative to merge ecocritical concerns with those of postcolonialism. The use of local TV, CNN, and the Internet as means to advance the narrative also serve as new tools for those affected by this disaster, tools familiar to this writer, whose family used them to try to find their father, who was missing following the deluge. *Zeitoun* is actually the subject of a post-Katrina local news story as he assumes the role of citizen rescuer. The theme of rescuer runs through Colum McCann's post-9/11 novel, *Let the Great World Spin*. In this version the rescuer operates in a diasporic setting created by the dissolution of empires, the latest of which is the U.S. Empire, signalled by the attacks on and the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center. In both *Zeitoun* and *Let the Great World Spin*, the protagonists are haunted by the spectre of the Lost Cause.

In 'Language, Diaspora, and Urban/Rural Space in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*,' William Welty first mentions that after World War II, when Flannery O'Connor was first beginning to publish, huge numbers of people were displaced from their homelands, as a result of violence, politics, the Cold War, and numerous other factors arising from increased globalization. These people flowed into the rest of the world, bringing with them their language, their culture, their religion. However, as capitalism battled with communism for control of the world, these *qualities* – language, religion, custom – became *commodities*. In other words, these markers of identity ceased to qualify identity as such, becoming only valued for their usefulness in marking difference. As the markers of identity become commodified and pluralistic, instead of qualitative and singular, individual identities are no longer differentiable from the mass, becoming *conflated* with each other and with abstract forms. This

commoditization and conflation of identity leads to inevitable violence, both internal and external, as Diasporas are forced to reckon with not only the loss of their homeland and the identities it provided, but also the lack of authentication of their identity in the new place.

In 'Nostalgia as a Manifestation of Cultural Resistance Testimonies of Galician Emigrants to Switzerland' Luís Calvo Salgado and María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar point out that nostalgia is one of the emotions best analyzed by cultural historians specializing in emigrant communities. Connected to the recollections of the past and the feelings of loss, in many cases complex and often ambivalent conceptions of the cultural and territorial identity are created. The most classic studies on nostalgia have touched on its socially created character and the fact that nostalgic testimonies often replace the relaying of facts, which are concealed by the emigrants due to its problematic nature. This 'illustrated' conception of nostalgia is seen as melancholic imagination, which should be reduced to its fundamental facts by the investigator. In contrast to that, this suggestion is based on testimonies of Galician emigrants in Switzerland. They show that it is possible to make ironic and even critical use of expressions of yearning for the country of origin. Connecting migrant studies with the history of emotions can provide tools especially useful in both areas. Emotions constitute one of the principal motors and mechanisms of the practical course of life. The verbal expressions of the emigrants make it possible to convey experiences of resistance in emigrant communities. This gives the interviewed individuals the knowledge that their stories make a contribution to illustrating relevant dimensions of the historical life of a community. The emotional mechanism of yearning does not only reveal relevant notions of the past. The analysis of the ambivalent feeling of nostalgia also reveals that it is possible for a certain cultural community to adopt a critical attitude towards the present.

In 'Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and the (Im) Possibility of the Diasporic Bildungsroman' Sreyoshi Sarkar shows how her novels chart a female rite of

passage from the home/ the protective female collective to foreign land which enables the realisation of the creative, emotional and sexual energies lying within. While initially her narratives seem to indulge in a nostalgic exoticisation of home/Kolkata/India therefore reinscribing both her and her protagonists within a 'homing desire' (Avatar Brah), there is soon a refutation of such romanticisation as home/s are considered stifling, punitive and limiting spaces and the diasporic female subject finds empowered pluralities outside home/s and hyphenations. As part of the South Asian immigrant experience the female protagonists' growth and sense of self is located in the dynamic, plural and infinite imbrications of the cultural, social and the personal that continuously reproduce dispersed female subjectivities at the borders of self and society. This paper reads Banerjee's five novels as parts of a continuum that in the process of tracing the development of its female protagonists towards emotional and artistic maturity also archives the author's efforts towards articulating her own subjectivity as a South Asian American woman and writer.

In 'Reconceptualizing National Identity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Armenian-American Diasporic Literature' Andzhela Keshishyan and Lilit Manucharyan argue that continued references to the Armenian Genocide in contemporary diasporic cultural productions act as a unifying force for the Armenian Diaspora, whose identification with their ancestral homeland is increasingly threatened as a result of integration into host cultures. Third-generation Armenian-American author and poet, Peter Balakian, suggests that such references help those who are far removed from the events of 1915 to orientate Armenia's tragic history within their own lives today. He writes, 'The journey into history, into the Armenian Genocide, was for me inseparable from poetry. Poetry was part of the journey and the excavation'.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, they focus on the extent to which memories of the Genocide echo throughout contemporary North-American diasporic poetry, literature and film, as well as how these references serve to coalesce the worldwide Armenian community's sense of national identity.

In 'Re-imagining the Concept of Border' Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz advances a theoretical proposition, predicated on comparative literature and intercultural philosophy, wherein the US-Mexican border serves as the linchpin for a discussion on limits to the very definition of self-identity. This proposition is understood to signify a performative act in which self-identity and the 'other' seek vis-à-vis representation. In this approach, the border makes possible the reconfiguration of objects and subjects of study, be they [literary] genres, countries, or citizens. The intersection of this theory with comparative literature derives from the identification of a formal aesthetic in the immigrant narrative that is defined by the nature of 'border literature,' and further delineated in the theoretical framework of cultural philosophy by the very existence of that border and by the ethical, political, social, legal, and moral implications thereof. Her paper summarizes her ongoing research, which is a long-term project on comparative literature and culture, evolving out of her work on the US-Mexican border. This proposal, from a comparative standpoint, rethinks border research and the philosophy of culture and configures a multicultural model for borders (any political border) on the basis of her research at the Mexican-US border.<sup>3</sup>

Roxana Galusca in 'Geographies of Sex, Work, and Migration: Ursula Biemann's *Remote Sensing* and the Politics of Gender' shows how Ursula Biemann in her video work suggestively titled *Remote Sensing* asks her audiences to question their spatial conformism and imagine alternative geographies able to capture the rhizom-like international migration of women in the twenty-first century. The filmmaker's focus is exclusively on the migration of women into the sex industry in an attempt to query juridical subject forms, and expose sexualized market exchanges that produce transactional subjects under late capitalism. The viewer is encouraged to reassess the disciplinary and regulatory, indeed biopolitical, impulse behind the 'technological geography' that rules migrant women's lives and bodies: the positivist measuring of routes, satellite images, biometrics at the border, monitored borders and circuits of migration. Instead, her

video attempts, and succeeds only to a certain extent, to complement satellite measurements with stories of sex workers' daily experiences, remote sensing with the eventfulness of women's migration. This essay uses Biemann's video work as a starting point for an analysis that aims to rethink women's migration for sex work in neoliberal capitalism as it has been theorized in feminist scholarship. More specifically, Galusca aims to interrogate the ways in which the liberal concept of gender becomes central to current accounts of sex work to the extent that sex workers' mobility across borders is rendered socially and politically illegible outside a gender violence framework. Galusca challenges those feminist examinations of sex work that take gender as the ultimate and unchallengeable analytical tool, to the extent that a gender-based paradigm is applied squarely on women's lives and expected to make comprehensible migrants' experiences. This approach to gender, she contends, pre-empts us from seeing practices and subjects that form and take shape tangential to categories of gender, in interstitial spaces that cannot be grasped and forced into our horizon of intelligibility by resorting to strictly or exclusively liberal notions of gender. She proposes a feminist analysis of sex work that regards gender as significant but insufficient to understanding women's lives, arguing that a real engagement with migrant sex workers' diverse experiences and the complex realities of the sex industry could elicit novel insights about gendered migration and work.

In 'The Cosmopolitan Evolutions of Octavia Butler, Larry Niven, and David Brin', Kathryn Bell uses the 'first contact' scenarios of Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy, Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye*, and David Brin's *Uplift* series to theorize a new kind of evolution resulting from the interaction of humans with another interstellar species. 'Ideological evolution' is a process defined by changes that occur to both groups' traditions and beliefs, while simultaneously preserving recognizable elements from both, so that a homeostasis results. Given science-fiction's allowance for extrapolation and experimentation, this genre provides an excellent testing ground

for transitioning socio-biological evolution into ideological evolution. In the case of Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy, in which humans are wholly absorbed into the alien Oankali by genetic manipulation with their DNA becoming a part of the next generation of human-Oankali hybrids, ideological evolution fails. Humans are essentially destroyed through a forced hybridization by the Oankali, which corrupts and fragments human history rather than providing for its natural development. Likewise, Niven and Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye* presents another example of failed ideological evolution; in this case, however, the humans retain a position of power over the alien species, the Moties. Threatened by the Moties' explosive population, humans choose to contain the Moties within an isolated solar system and, later, control their reproduction through sterilization. This behaviour effectively denies any balanced exchange of ideas and culture between the species. It is in David Brin's *Uplift* series that the potential for a successful ideological evolution is realized. Through the development of a galaxy-wide environmental ethos and the portrayal of clashing cultures evolving toward a balanced coexistence, Brin reveals a future in which generations of sapient species are propagated and supported. The exchange between one species and another then lays the foundation for what Bell refers to as a 'city of thought.' Galactic civilization of the *Uplift* series is a prime example of a city of thought, a cosmopolitan space renewed through constant flux. It performs in real time, and in microcosm, what the theory of ideological evolution claims to do on a grand, cosmological scale.

In 'The Construction of a Transnational Identity in the Work of Bosnian American Writer Aleksandar Hemon' Laurel K. Seely Voloder points out that Bosnian-American author Aleksandar Hemon belongs to Bosnia's first, and possibly last, truly cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic generation. Just as he and his peers were getting their start as writers and journalists, war came, and he found himself exiled to the United States. For Hemon there is no return home possible – his country (Yugoslavia) has been shattered into five separate states, and his language

(Serbo-Croatian) into at least three separate tongues (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian). Hemon has become an important voice among Bosnian Diaspora writers and artists, who constitute a crucial counter-discourse to the narrow nationalist definitions of language and identity propagated by home institutions. While most Bosnian Diaspora writers of his generation write in the now 'dead' language of Serbo-Croatian, Hemon has made the unusual choice to write his fiction exclusively in English, a language he did not learn until his late twenties. Seely Voloder examines the ways in which Hemon's choice of English, and the idiosyncratic style he has developed in his adopted language, have enabled him to interrogate issues of identity, depict the experiences of displacement and transcultural mixing, and develop an ethical mode of historiography that chronicles collective shifts and upheavals while never devaluing the experience of the individual. Issues explored include Hemon's defamiliarization and dialogization of the English language; the experimental use of language to construct unstable, nomadic subjectivities that present an epistemological challenge to essentializing notions of identity; and his identification with a literary tradition that includes other writers who crossed national and linguistic boundaries.

In 'Europe as Abrahamic: Nineteenth-century Paradigms Re-examined', Emel Tastekin draws our attention to the fact that the idea of Europe is a dynamic process, which throughout history constructed and deconstructed itself with various headings through ruptures in thought. At this moment in history, the Greek-Abrahamic or the 'Mediterranean' is being explored as the real matter at stake is the integration of Islam into Europe as posed by the challenge of Turkey's possible membership in the EU and the presence of Muslim minorities within Europe as the seemingly inassimilable religious others within. Tastekin introduces the work of a German-Jewish orientalist who pioneered the scholarly study of Islam Abraham Geiger (1810-74). Geiger, speaking from his diasporic subject position, was producing counter theories on the religious identity of Europe by



reacting to the biased philological categories of Indo-European and Semitic, and offering instead the category of 'Abrahamic' in his historical research. Working with Jacques Derrida's essay 'The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe' (1992) and the use of his term 'hospitality' elsewhere, Tastekin argues that Geiger's comparative and originary approach to Christianity, Judaism and Islam – by foregrounding their sameness through their common origins in Abraham – is hospitable in that it elevates Islam to the level of a respectable monotheistic religion, while also being violent in that it erases Muslim difference by making it a mere continuation of Judaism. He concludes with a warning note on converging headings like 'Abrahamic' for the invention of new paradigms to initiate cultural and religious dialogue with Islam within the Mediterranean Europe. With particularly Jewish difference in mind, Tastekin believes that some nineteenth-century sites of diasporic reconciliation and resistance can still be considered a vector in today's trajectory of change.

In 'Beneath Complexions: The Shape of the Daughter of Israel in *The Exiles* by Dvora Baron' Orian Zakai focuses upon Dvora Baron's 1956 novel *Hagolim (The Exiles)* which narrates the story of a group of Jewish settlers deported from Palestine to Egypt during War World One. The novel offers a commentary on the construction of the image of 'The New Hebrew Woman,' the modern Jewish-nationalist woman expected to be born with Zionism, negotiating the physical shape of this new figure between the dizzying adornment of cosmopolitan Alexandria and the ascetic Zionist culture. While in the first part of the novel, the space of Alexandria allows Baron to re-imagine the Hebrew woman entangling eastern and western femininities, the second part, depicting the return of the deportees to Palestine, unties this entanglement, reinforcing, through the shape of the feminine body, a dichotomy between 'Occidental' and 'Oriental.' The construct of 'the daughter of Israel' (*Bat Yisrael*), taken from traditional Jewish context, is then invoked as a model of European respectability and modesty, of a woman who is all-natural, contrasted to the artificial outlandishness

of the 'Orient.' The character embodying this old-new model in the novel, however, dies in Egypt due to complications related to the birth of her illegitimate daughter, and is then replaced as a wife and mother by a Jewish-Egyptian woman. In this narrative of replacement of women, Zakai reads Baron's critique regarding the limitations of the European Zionist framework in containing femininity. The New Hebrew woman eventually emerges in the novel as an absent model, unable to naturally produce its own daughters, and validated only through its mimics who end up replacing it. As she was the first woman-author to enter the Hebrew literary canon, the only widely acknowledged woman-author of pre-state period, Baron was often marked the feminine representative of her era. This contribution ties the opposition between adornment and naturalness to the critical discourse around Baron's work, tracing the ways in which this becomes a crucial axis for reading 'feminine writing.'

Sten Moslund in 'Intentional and Organic Hybridity and Different Speeds of Cultural Becoming' proposes Bakhtin's ideas of intentional and organic hybridity as a possible way of differentiating the concept of hybridity and getting around its unfortunate dichotomisation of impurity versus purity. It will break open the philosophical underpinnings of Bakhtin's concepts through a reconsideration of the standard notion that difference equals change and becoming whereas sameness involves a state of unchanging being. The post-colonial enunciation of hybridity formulated by Bhabha and Glissant, to name two proponents, will be exemplified as a form of intentional hybridity: a highly conscious form of hybridity that asserts hybridity as a force of cultural difference arriving to disrupt any form of sameness, and assuming that this disruption produces cultural newness at great speed. However, Moslund demonstrates in addition how the intensity of difference is inevitably tamed in intentional hybridity through acts of cultural representation and translation, slowing down its transformative force. Cultural representation and translation constitute the core of organic hybridity which Bakhtin characterises as the unconscious processes by

which difference is incorporated into a culture, causing it to change slowly over long stretches of time (as in the incorporation of foreign words into a language). Through Lotman and Deleuze Moslund explicates the mute processes of organic hybridity and examines what happens once intentional hybridity is conceived as pitted against the changing sameness of organic hybridity rather than a supposed homogenous cultural being, before finally dwelling on the role of local place experience in the formation of organic hybridities.

Naglaa Abou-Agag in 'Haunting Pasts and Evasive Present in Nuruddin Farah's *Knots*' comments that Farah throws doubt in his novel upon his protagonist's attempt to return to her homeland and create a new life for herself there. The uncertainty evoked in Cambara's question, once she is back in Somalia, whether 'she [is] the homing pigeon among the cats, or has the cat been put among the pigeons to flutter their dovecotes' permeates the novel and reaches its culmination at the end when 'no one gets to hear what Arda, Cambara's mother, and Bile, Cambara's newly found love have said to each other. Therefore, Cambara's present and future plans as well remain evasive and vague, leaving her helplessly dwelling in her past and wondering about the outcomes of her journey back to Somalia. Cambara, has led a life made up of continuous journeys; to Canada for university education, to Kenya to help bring her cousin, Zaak, to the new world through marrying him on paper, to Geneva where she meets her husband of many years, Wardi, back to Canada to prepare official documents for the reunion with her husband, and finally to Somalia to mourn the loss of her child, Dalmar, and to reconstruct her life. The motif of the journey in *Knots* is, then, basic to the understanding of the psychological dilemma of a twenty first century Somali woman who has lived most of her adult life as an immigrant in Canada and who decides, after losing her son in a horrendous accident, to embark on a journey back to Somalia. While the novel is concerned with the last of Cambara's journeys, it gives scope to a number of mental journeys to the past as part of the process of allowing her the chance to understand her feelings, motives

and future plans. It is, thus, true that 'the experience of return never effects a simple recovery of origins. Rather, the experience of exile not only calls into question cultural authenticity, but also disrupts linear narratives of time and place, since each and every place, time and event is reconstructed in a relation in which none is given ontological priority.<sup>4</sup> When Cambara arrives in 'Mogadiscio [...] after a long absence [she] does not know her way about, the city's landmarks having been savagely destroyed in the ongoing civil war to the extent where, based on what she has seen of the city so far, she doubts if she will recognize it'.<sup>5</sup> While in Canada, she is aware of her racial and cultural background and the solution to her problems after the death of her son that makes itself feasible is a journey back to her homeland.

Ali M. Meghdadi explores the furtive society of Iranians which has quietly settled in Los Angeles following the Islamic revolution of 1979, when a massive influx of refugees made their way to America and to Los Angeles in particular, making the city an adopted home to the largest gathering of Iranians outside of Iran. Iranians have endowed Los Angeles with its informal moniker: Irangeles but few non-Iranians have ever heard of Irangeles because in order to survive, Los Angeles Iranians exist in hiding. Although they are many things, a community they can never be and Irangeles must remain a fantasy and a mere attempt to recreate an idea that never existed anywhere: a community of Iranians in a secular democracy. Iranians endeavour to affix themselves to a history and culture whose roots have long evaporated. They are a people without a home, forced into exile, and they attempt to recuperate their identity by layering native customs and traditions upon an appropriated landscape and culture. Rather than successfully hybridizing their identity, they end up abominating their past in a misbegotten understanding of their present, which only further splinters instead of unifies them. Displaced by a society that crumbled in their wake and so often perceived with suspicion by the one they have tried to join, these Iranian immigrants suffer myriad identity crises given that their best efforts to identify with either their old

or new society fail them.

In 'Guevara's 'congolization': towards an explanation for the intertextuality between Guevara's 'African Dream' and Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'', Eve J. Eisenberg cites Che Guevara's report that the Cubans, who had gone to the Congo in 1965 to 'cubanize' the Congolese, eventually found themselves instead being 'congolized.' Disturbingly, Guevara's text often echoes, with shocking similarities, a much earlier text describing the 'congolization' of those who had arrived in Congo to attempt to save it: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. With reference to Maria Josefina Saldana-Portillo's *Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas in the Age of Development*, yet also moving beyond its thesis, Eisenberg interrogates the intertextuality between Che Guevara's *African Dream (Pasajes de la Guerra revolucionaria: Congo; el diario inedito del Che)* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Saldana-Portillo argues convincingly that 'a normative theory of human transformation and agency [...] is at the heart of the discursive collusion between revolutionary and development discourses,' yet such an argument cannot completely account for the echoes and commonalities between Guevara's and Conrad's texts. Fully conscious of the potential ahistoricity of its argument, as well as the impossibility of proving any sort of direct link between the two texts (vis-à-vis Guevara's knowing references to Conrad), this paper nevertheless imaginatively theorizes the lingering trace of *Heart of Darkness* in *African Dream* in order to investigate the role Conrad's text has played in the installation of a set of discursive practices which persistently mediate the experience between Africa and its outsiders. Eisenberg expands this research by putting Guevara's text into dialogue with more recent conversations about the role of international altruism in African spaces, particularly Ngugi wa Thiong'o's rooted African socialism and the explosively controversial topic of female circumcision (called, in some circles, 'female genital mutilation'). This dialogue will move beyond the exposure of Guevara's West-centric ontology in order to point out the opportunities he missed, which in turn may suggest non-

normative methods of enabling international collaborative activism in the future. Thus Eisenberg moves from a close examination of the normative discursive commonalities shared by socialism and imperialism, to an inquiry into the possibility of international communalities which actively resist normative impulses.

In 'Point of View and Epistemological Cosmopolitanism' Ming Xie explores the epistemological conditions of cosmopolitanism by focusing on the notion of viewpoint. To be cosmopolitan is to become aware of one's own position and viewpoint vis-à-vis other positions and viewpoints, which together form a 'world,' or 'cosmos.' Xie's discussion of the paradoxical nature of viewpoint adopts T.S. Eliot's theory of viewpoints as a point of reference, further exploring the ethical and political implications of epistemological cosmopolitanism. A particular viewpoint functions as the necessary transcendental condition of a given worldview, 'transcendental' in the sense of the 'self-transcending' that a particular viewpoint necessarily enacts and performs in order precisely to affirm its own particular worldview as a worldview by demarcating itself from other worldviews. To focus more precisely on the object while transcending particular viewpoints is one of the epistemological conditions of achieving a cosmopolitan viewpoint. Yet this has important political and ethical implications too. If there can be no (complete) identification with any single viewpoints, then we are, and ought to be, more open to other viewpoints. What cosmopolitanism means epistemologically is that the intrinsic value of a different perspective lies not in its being neutral or superior, but in its being a different and alternative perspective that is equally, but differently, marked by its own limitations. Yet learning to see from a different perspective is a matter not of translation into commensuration, but of thinking differently, thereby going beyond the issue of whether different viewpoints are incommensurable in the first place.

Jonathan S. Luftig in 'Style: De Quincey on Kant' explains that there are

several reasons why de Quincey's 'Kant in his Miscellaneous' essays (1833) may have been overlooked by readers of de Quincey who are also interested in the critical philosopher. For one the essay represents only one aspect of de Quincey's wide-ranging and life-long reception of Kant, and the rhetorical nastiness of the article is difficult to put in context, failing by any measure to meet the criteria the condition for the kind of lawful debate that Kant himself would have been willing to engage in. Moreover, de Quincey's digressiveness and his personal attacks on Kant can make the discursive level of his own text difficult to assess philosophically, especially to the extent de Quincey's account of Kant is interspersed with lengthy translated selections from the philosopher himself. Given these difficulties, what is particularly striking about de Quincey's account of Kant in this essay is the extent to which it articulates questions that bear on Kant's thinking of the (cosmo)political and on his manner of presentation, both under the heading of style. After looking at de Quincey's account of style in Kant, linked by him to the question of reading or of what he describes as 'Kant's failure to read,' Luftig turns to de Quincey's accounts of Kant's response to the censor in *Religion* and of Kant's refusal, in the special case of England, of the right to revolution in *On the Common Saying*.

In 'The Superfluous Man in Modernizing Literature and Society' David Benhammou outlines that in the decades before the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), writers including Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) and Tayama Katai (1872-1930) studied and translated Russian literature and literary criticism in order to master the Russian language. Due to the newly cosmopolitan literary environment of late nineteenth century Japan, influential figures such as Futabatei and Katai were able to consider and adopt elements of modern Russian culture in their writing. Literary conventions established in Russia in the late eighteenth century greatly impacted Japanese writers in the nineteenth century, and the Russian idea of the 'superfluous man' gained particular traction in the emerging Japanese literary scene. Benhammou first provides some historical context for a discussion

of the superfluous man in Russian literature before discussing how authors such as Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826) revolutionized Russian literature in much the same way as Futabatei changed literary traditions in Japan. The subsequent two sections will deal with Futabatei's *Ukigumo* (浮雲, Drifting Clouds) and Katai's *Futon* (蒲団, The Quilt). In analyzing these two pieces, we will see a character-type that clearly emerges from the Russian superfluous man. The last section will discuss the reception by the public of both *Ukigumo* and *Futon*. Specifically, Benhammou provides context for *Ukigumo*'s place as the 'first modern Japanese novel,' and clarifies how Katai later set the precedent for the I-novel in Japan, thereby demonstrating how the Japanese adaptation of a Russian theme insured the place of the superfluous man in Japanese literature. Finally, through a comparison with Russian cultural and literary history, Benhammou concludes that the literary superfluous man is a direct product of the modernization of Japanese and Russian societies.

In 'Cosmopolitan Intimacies in Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*' Hanna Musiol outlines that modernity and modernism, characterized by accelerated and often violent movements of diverse peoples, goods, and ideas across geographical and national boundaries, seemed to thrive on fantasies of cosmopolitanism. For metropolitan audiences, cosmopolitanism often meant little more than a cultural (and economic) takeover of 'other' traditions and spaces; the appropriation of world's cultural or material capital. Despite its claim to universalistic humanism and grand pronouncements about a right of each and any humans to the world, modernist cosmopolitanism often invoked a privilege of certain human bodies: white, male, upper-classed, educated to criss-cross and consume certain parts of the world; in the words of Dean McCannell, the right of 'the middle class [to] systematically scavenge the earth for new experiences to be woven into a collective, touristic version of other peoples and other places'.<sup>6</sup> At same time, in the first part of the twentieth century, we see a resurgence of movements



representing marginalized social, transnational groups: women's movement, Pan-African movement, worker's movements, and others that recognize their transnational and historical affiliations and use cosmopolitanism to demand local and transnational rights. The theory of cosmopolitanism in a traditional (western, metropolitan, top-to-bottom) and more nuanced ('minoritarian,'<sup>7</sup> heterogeneous, grassroots) views still struggles to account for particular conditions of cultural contact, migration, and inhabiting or participating in transnational cultures. It is additionally complicated by the dichotomy between its prescriptive (Appiah; Derrida) and descriptive dimensions (Appadurai; Dipesh; Mignolo), or, between 'social imaginaries and global realities' (Arthurs). While it might have taken several decades for the critical theory to address different dimensions of cosmopolitanism, to reveal particular circumstances under which female and male bodies experienced modernity across and within national borders, female writers and activists of the modernist period, from Nancy Cunard, Nella Larsen, to Fannie Hurst, were astutely aware of how gender, race, and class, inflected women's experience of transnational exchanges and restricted their actual transnational participation. Written into national and state laws as partial legal persons, restricted in their mobility, and denied access to full protections and rights of citizenship, female modernists often exposed universalist fictions of cosmopolitanism. For many of them, the promise of transnational intimacy across the boundaries of gender, race, and class, and religious difference seem unattainable, precisely because modernist cosmopolitanisms were often predicated on the model of citizenship (nationalist, consumerist, religious, or racial), which ignored gender and class difference.

In 'Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in Georgian Culture in the Light of Interpreting Classical Heritage' Ketevan Nadareishvili states clearly that the attitude towards cosmopolitanism in Georgian intellectual life has never been straightforward. Along with a definitely negative attitude, the Georgian intellectuals sharing the ideas of liberalism, considered that there existed

dialectical interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. For them cosmopolitanism was a supranational, common to all mankind, a universal issue (Vasha-Pshavela). Nadareishvili focuses on the study of the complex interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in Georgian mentality on the basis of Georgian (national) interpretations of the classical heritage (universal), among which the reception of the myth of the Argonauts proves to be the most problematic. The Argonaut myth is one of the best means for introducing Georgia's glorious history to the world. Still, Georgian culture either neglected the myth (until the 60s of the XIX century) or had serious problems while interpreting it. Nadareishvili believes that the main reason for such an attitude is the complex interrelation of universal (cosmopolitan) and national concept, which exists in Georgian consciousness. In this respects two points are especially decisive: first, Medea's image (a mother-killer) comes in conflict with Georgian traditional attitude towards women favouring the cult of a mother; secondly, the capture of the golden fleece is associated with invasion, and for Georgia, a country which has been invaded many times, this myth proved to be a clear reminder of the national trauma. The ways of overcoming these difficulties in some of the Georgian adaptations of this myth are discussed in the paper, namely how Medea is rehabilitated from her crime and there are attempts to explore the myth of the Argonauts in the context of Georgia's ethnical and historical problems, which in the end make the Argonaut myth a part of the national, Georgian narrative. Useful insights for cultural studies concerning the issues of the relationship of Georgian and western cultures and their value systems are suggested.

In '21<sup>st</sup> Century Reflections on G.I. Gurdjieff and Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century/Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cosmopolitanism in the Caucasus' Michael Pittman explains that G. I. Gurdjieff (1877-1949) was born in Gyumri, Armenia and was raised in the Caucasus and eastern Asia Minor. Although Gurdjieff's work is often overlooked in the scope of influential 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, director Peter Brook writes that

Gurdjieff is, ‘the most immediate, the most valid and most totally representative figure of our times’. As a polyglot and liminal figure, between East and West, his work has had a decisive influence in contemporary culture in such diverse areas as philosophy, religion, literature, psychology and ecology. In his semi-autobiographical work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff cites the formative influence of the Caucasus, including Tiflis, Georgia, where he worked as a young man. Gurdjieff grew up speaking Armenian, Greek, and refers to the importance of Russian, Persian, and Turkish in his work and writings. Building further on his cosmopolitan orientation, Gurdjieff spent his early years travelling in Central Asia, Egypt, India, and Tibet in search of undiscovered knowledge; his driving desire was to find the ‘sense and aim of organic and human life on Earth.’ Reflecting modernist tendencies of the period, his major work *Beelzebub’s Tales* seeks to create a new discourse on the soul based on the teachings of the East and developed for the West. This essay seeks to demonstrate the ways that Gurdjieff’s life and work, as well as his later influence, can be most productively analyzed through the lens of cosmopolitanism and as a product of the cosmopolitanism of the Caucasus during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In ‘Interrogating the Cosmopolitan: Curving and Carving a Queer Discursive Space within the Armenian Heteronormative Nationalism’ Nelli Sargsyan-Pittman explains that unlike the concept of male gayness, female non-heterosexuality has been rejected a discursive space within the nationalist heteronormativity of the current Armenian society. Sargsyan-Pittman explores the identities that a group of Armenian lesbian, bisexual, and straight women artists invoke and produce at different scales, in different spaces, through different languages while promoting their advocacy work for LGBT women on their online blog. More specifically, she analyzes how a group of LGBT and straight Armenian women’s collective called Women-Oriented Women (WOW) engages in this advocacy work through a project called Queering Yerevan, a project of self-mapping, a research-based initiative taking topography as a work of artistic

symbolization and translation. Sargsyan-Pittman argues that although locally rooted and articulated, the Armenian queer artists (some of whom are repatriated Diasporan Armenians), nevertheless, imagine themselves and align themselves with a global LGBT community that sustains their local struggles and advocacy for presenting themselves to the local society through various activist and art/literary projects. She suggests that along with utilizing their knowledge of theories on gender identity construction, the queer artists use techno- and mediascapes – sharing information and art on similar struggles and solutions – in an attempt to remain rooted in their imagined global community and to route to the local as well as diasporic Armenian communities. This allows them to more successfully represent their LGBT identities among many other identities they articulate at the same time complicating and nuancing what it means to be cosmopolitan.

In ‘How I should like to know this woman’: The Cosmopolitan Writing of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf’, Erika Baldt discusses Virginia Woolf’s 1928 novel *Orlando: a Biography*, which is possibly best known today as a ‘most elaborate love-letter’ to its subject, Vita Sackville-West.<sup>8</sup> The two women were engaged in a passionate affair in the 1920s, but at the height of their relationship, the two were very often apart, Sackville-West travelling through Europe, Africa, and Asia as the wife of British diplomat Harold Nicolson. Sackville-West wrote about her travels in a memoir, *Passenger to Teheran*, published in 1926, in which she describes how experiencing new cultures allows her to cultivate a cosmopolitan openness to the unfamiliar: ‘having emptied the mind of European preconceptions, one is at liberty to turn round and absorb an entirely new set of conditions’.<sup>9</sup> Yet while Sackville-West was enjoying her new identity as a citizen of the world, the Vita of *Passenger to Teheran* seemed almost alien to Woolf. For although it was Woolf who made the undeniably cosmopolitan claim in her 1938 essay *Three Guineas*, ‘as a woman I have no country; as a woman I want no country; as a woman my country is the whole world’,<sup>10</sup> her actual experiences

with travel and adventure were limited compared to Sackville-West's. As Woolf wrote to Sackville-West after reading the text: 'I kept saying 'How I should like to know this woman' and then thinking 'But I do', and then 'No, I don't [sic] – not altogether the woman who writes this'.<sup>11</sup> Baldt argues that Woolf created her 'biography' of Sackville-West, *Orlando*, as a way to shape the experiences Sackville-West described in *Passenger to Teheran* into a more manageable framework so that she might better 'know' both 'this woman' and that of which she writes. In so doing, Woolf, as Nigel Nicolson also notes, 'employed her art to reassert her claim on a different Vita'.<sup>12</sup> Rather than focus solely on Vita as an object of desire, since, as Nicolson suggests, their relationship was waning by the time of *Orlando*'s publication, and Sackville-West was engaging in affairs with other women, Woolf shows the woman as much a traveller and writer as a lover. *Orlando*, then, represents Woolf's attempt to engage with and make sense of Sackville-West's many travels abroad during the height of their romantic relationship. Baldt focuses here solely on the aspects of cosmopolitanism in each writer's text, rather than on issues of gender and/or sexuality that have been discussed by scholars such as Susan Bazargan and Abby Bardi.<sup>13</sup> Baldt explores both *Passenger to Teheran* and *Orlando: A Biography* in order to interrogate the relationship between the foreign and the familiar and how that relationship is negotiated through writing.

Finally, in 'Capitalism as Trauma: The Birth of the Early Eastern European Entrepreneur in Peter Pistanek's *Rivers of Babylon*' Eva R Hudcova discusses *Rivers of Babylon*, which is the first part of a trilogy of novels written by the Slovak author Peter Pistanek. Written in 1991, with the second and third parts written in 1994 and 1999 respectively, it describes the transition from a socialist regime in Slovakia, to what the literary critic and translator Peter Petro calls 'robber baron capitalism.' The transition that the readers of the trilogy witness is anything but smooth. For the characters of *Rivers of Babylon* capitalism in 1989-1991 takes hold in fits and starts, with traumatic and unexpected results.

Robber baron capitalism is not a world in which the old traumas of a totalitarian regime are overcome and are replaced with freedom and democracy. Rather, in robber baron capitalism, the old traumas are added on to and multiplied by a rabid, unregulated, dog-eat-dog kind of pseudo-capitalism. The result is a monstrous, violent, albeit – in Pistanek’s rendition – also funny world which can faithfully only be described in tall-tale fashion.

## 1. CREOLIZATION AS SUBVERSION IN ANANDA DEVI'S NOVELS

Maya Boutaghou (Florida International University)

Anjali Prahbu, along with other critics, describes very well how Creole culture is perceived as a non-language, and how the repression of Creoleness is related to the ambiguous representation of the African component of the Island. Anjali Prahbu makes an important statement about the position of the Creole language within Mauritian society:

Despite a tacit recognition of the reality of Creole and its universality on the Island, no official position exists on its usage [...]. The one language that is understood and spoken quasi universally, with perhaps different degrees of frequency, is unquestionably Creole. Yet Creole is the only language that no constituent wants to claim.<sup>14</sup>

Mauritius is the fruit of several migratory waves (from Africa and India mainly) and a double colonial presence – the French until 1810 and the British until 1968. Mauritian people are always negotiating their cultural identity between past and present, between cultures of Empires. Following Ulf Hannerz,<sup>15</sup> it is important to distinguish between different geopolitical and historical complex cultures. The ‘creolité’ specific to the Caraïbe is different from what can be understood by the creolization process in Mauritius:

Mauritians of Indian origin [...] are a numerical majority in Mauritius. Among them, the urban educated elite speaks both French and English as

well as Hindi or Tamil, whereas the rural Indians are generally bilingual in Bhojpuri and Creole. The white or mixed Mauritian minorities [to be read 'mulâtres'], on the other hand, speak Creole, French, and English, and take pride in the fact that it is this very diversity of linguistic ability that makes Mauritius both unique and truly nonhegemonic.<sup>16</sup>

The controversy about 'Creole' is linked to an ideological and political claim during the eighties around the famous playwright Dev Virahsawmy, who founded with others the MMM (Mouvement Militant Mauricien/Mauritian Militant Movement). In fact, the Creole is no longer understood as a 'Mauritian' universal, but like the culture that designates the Creole population, it is also designated by the expression 'population générale', or general population. The dilemma lies in the attitude of the government regarding the situation of 'Creole', the claim that Creole as a recognized language is immediately understood as a privilege allowed only to the part of the population that identifies itself with the language. At the same time, Creole is really the 'general language' of Mauritian people, their universal language.<sup>17</sup> The case of Mauritius is interesting because, the creolized culture is at the same time a part of the People of Mauritius and the particular culture of the more oppressed group of the Island, the African slave population. The slave population was displaced to work on sugar plantations and was the only population that was forced to settle on the Island. In fact, after the Emancipation Act was passed in 1833, the official abolition of slavery in Mauritius did not come into effect until 1835. Great Britain encouraged Indian workers to immigrate<sup>18</sup> and 'it was the first time that the introduction of 'coolie' labour from India was made large scale'.<sup>19</sup> In the Mauritian context, 'creolization' finds also an echo in the term 'coolitude'<sup>20</sup> explained as hybridization in the Hindu Mauritian community while 'creolization' stays the generic term, even if the root 'creole' is still problematic since it carries the meaning of segregated communities in the Mauritian context.

In Ananda Devi's novels, Creole characters tend to embody the return of the repressed chaos, whereas in a naïve reading of postcolonial theory, one can



think about the 'Creole' character as a projected positive third space. I would like to analyze the ambiguity between the political response to the diversity of ethnic and religious communities and its literary representation in some novels by Ananda Devi. Though it seems that in Mauritius, multiculturalism, as a political model, is the preferred system of bringing together different ethnic and religious groups (Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, Creole, European, African), this model does not allow for the total cohesion of the nation, but rather, it encourages communitarian conflicts and isolates ethnic groups.<sup>21</sup> The case of Mauritian culture links the politics of diasporas with the need of a recently established community to share the same public sphere. If the aim of each nation is to avoid the violence of a multiethnic society that can lead to the implosion of groups and cultures, the goal of political thought is then to build the discourse that allows for harmony between the different members or groups within a larger society. This paper highlights the question of 'becoming' Creole, which Ananda Devi's fictions stage through the depiction of the violence which is precipitated by undesired ethnic plurality. Mauritian society, as any conservative postcolonial society, suffers from an excess of differences and unexpressed paradoxes where the need of purity is everywhere counterbalanced by a creolized reality. In *Eve de ses décombres* (*Eve among her rubbles*, 2006) and *Le Sari Vert* (*The Green Sari*, 2009), trans-ethnic transgression is shaped implicitly through a homoerotic relationship presented as the only way to reverse attempts to prevent inter-ethnic relationships on the plural island. Critics specify how Creole is not claimed, and it seems to represent 'otherness' in a negative way. Writers and artists are trying to change this repressed representation of Creole, some of them write in Creole,<sup>22</sup> while Francophone writers integrate Creole in the body of their texts. As often, being Creole is somehow confounded with being other. Moreover, otherness is also highly associated with marginal sexualities, and, in conservative society, with prostitution. Devi writes on and around the margins where the grotesque body is the feminine, the disabled, the animal, the Creole.<sup>23</sup> I will question, as a leitmotif

in her novels, the articulation between homoeroticism (here lesbianism) and creoleness, in other words between ethnic cultural creolization and non-normative sexualities perceived as the quintessential expression of marginalized difference. I will first explore this leitmotif as represented in *Le Sari Vert*, then in *Éve de ses décombres* with the means to address the negotiation of 'difference' in a highly normative society where creolization is the rejected social narrative.

Mauritius society in common with other conservative postcolonial societies understands the term identity in its literal meaning, which from a critical perspective implies murderous identities to quote the famous title by Amin Maalouf.<sup>24</sup> Her novels put on the stage the caricature, the figure of madness becoming poetical as tools to express the laughter of the 'Creole' within repressed hybrid society.<sup>25</sup> In the two novels, the protagonists are from different ethnic groups. I want to show how, in a society where identity has to be pure, homoeroticism serves as a metaphor or trope to represent the absurdity of sameness and how homoeroticism is used as both a sign of infertility, and a positive difference to be added to all differences rejected by normative identity. Devi does more than thematically represent an object of dissension and repulsion in a conservative society, she clearly exhibits and pushes to its extreme the social desire for a homogeneous society to the extent of its unproductiveness. Devi shows the Creole body, the mutilated body as destroyed by the limits imposed within a society sick with desire for sameness. Homoerotic relationships become the poetical and political nexus where the paradox of sameness explodes. I would argue that homoeroticism is not judged morally but as a metaphor, a locus where social paradoxes show their absurdity as it is at the same time the manifesto for a better understanding of difference. It works as a site of transfer from social space to the intimacy of individual dramas, from the political space, as the space of the city to a poetical space as an intimate space. It is almost a banality, if we remember Foucault stating sexuality has always been the intimate space politically controlled to secure social reproduction, to be understood as ethnical

and religious sameness as the unique expression of purity.

*Eve de ses décombres* is a quartet putting into dialogue the story of four youngsters, Eve, Savita, Clélio and Sad. Using the first person, each of them in alternating accounts narrates his/her life in an imaginary poor district, called 'Troumaron' (the name means literally 'brown hole'). These are terrible life stories where verbal violence and physical violence forms part of their everyday lives. Savita is Indo-Mauritian and is Eve's best friend. Eve is Creole and probably Catholic, Sad and Clélio are Creole too. Savita and Sad are in love with Eve. They try to help her avoid the inevitable drama that takes place. They all go to the same Middle school where their Professor of Mathematics tries to seduce Eve. At the end of the novel, Eve is raped. Savita who witnesses the rape, is murdered by the same Professor. To end the circle of violence and misery, Eve murders her rapist. The reader is kept in the dark as to what happens to her after the murder, but we can imagine that her life is ruined. The narrative is also about a form of urban violence that is highly likened to ethnic diversity:

[...] Port Louis la noire, la vilaine, Port Louis défigurée par des formes grotesques, Port Louis l'infranchissable dans ses marées humaines, j'ai cru qu'elle me faisait de l'œil.<sup>26</sup>

And as a contrast to this ugliness Savita will say, addressing Eve: 'J'embrasse ta figure de souris. Tu es la beauté du monde, son illumination'.<sup>27</sup> With regard to Mauritian society, Eve and Savita transgress two taboos. They are in love and belong to two different ethnic groups, which means two different religions that both condemn same sex union. Against the ugliness and violence of the city, their sisterhood protects them. Their sameness as scattered female subject, in segregated society, creates a certain proximity. As they are both subalterns, they feel close. Their position is similar to Creole as the subaltern language and the Creole body as the subaltern subject. I now cite from a passage where the director of a middle school advises Eve in the three main languages of

the Island (the passage difficult to translate keeping the same understanding of plural-lingualism): ‘Vous vous devez de réussir. You owe it to yourself. Pas gaspy u lavi.’<sup>28</sup> In fact, we can see that the sentence repeated does not have the same meaning in the three languages. Where French and English express responsibility, duty and social image, Creole is the language of intimacy, of feelings, emotions, of life. This is probably how Mauritian people think of their shared language, as the internal space, the one that is too intimate to be compared, but also the unconfessed one, the subaltern language. The position of the Creole as the repressed language is the same as the position of colloquial Arabic in the Maghreb, where politics created a gap between the social reality of a culture and its official representation. The perception of Creole as the impure, the chaotic part of the self, the ‘ça’ or ‘id’ in English, is in a similar position to colloquial Arabic in the Maghreb. Here, colloquial Arabic is totally repressed by the politicians who condemn the colloquial as an impure language in comparison to the sacredness of classical Arabic, which is linked to the Koran. For example, in the Algerian Parliament there is a permanent debate about the use of colloquial or classical Arabic. Similarly, Mauritian Creole is surrounded by languages that have a very strong literary tradition – French, English, and as an Indian language, Hindu, which is culturally associated to Sanskrit. Then, even if Creole occupies the public sphere, its visibility is not recognized as an official language. Once again we have this recurrent paradox in postcolonial nations where the social and political value of a language contradicts its actual social practice and visibility. Social violence can find its excuse in such a gap between the social reality of a cultural practice and its representation in terms of political values. As a contrast to this social violence, the first mention of Savita and Eve’s love occurs early in the novel:

[...]La poésie des femmes, c’est quand Savita et moi, on marche ensemble en synchronisant nos pas pour éviter les ornières. C’est quand on joue à être jumelles parce qu’on se ressemble. Nous portons les mêmes

vêtements, le même parfum. Nous avons l'air de danser. Nos boucles d'oreilles tintent. Elle a une pierre minuscule à l'aile du nez, comme une étoile. La poésie des femmes, c'est le rire, dans ce coin perdu, qui ouvre un bout de paradis pour ne pas nous laisser nous noyer.<sup>29</sup>

Savita and Eve are not alike, they are visibly different: Eve is Creole, and Savita is Indo-Mauritian. Eve is Catholic, and Savita is Hindu. But Eve's gaze is rejecting ethnic and religious differences. They are the same in sharing their unfortunate story of women's misery in 'ce coin perdu'.<sup>30</sup> Their sameness is the result of their relation to the place. They will both be destroyed at the end of the novel. Their solidarity is the only way to resist unemployment and all social violence surrounding the question of cultural identity. Explicit homoeroticism protects the protagonists from the danger of rigid normative patterns where male/female unions are responsible for the reproduction of normative identity in a segregated society. Savita and Eve represent themselves as twins, this imagined sisterhood allows them to exit gender, cultural and political violence associated with their readable identity. Their sisterhood is interpreted as a language, the poetry of women, the creation of a common language that is theirs that Sad could not understand as a male. This language is first a body language (walking together as dancing together), the shared language that will not divide because it includes their bodies even if they are ethnically different from each other.

In *Le Sari Vert*, Ananda Devi represents a lesbian couple coming from different ethnic groups too. They are fired from the high school where they teach after their affair is discovered. *Le Sari Vert* represents a perverse grandfather who discovers that his granddaughter is a lesbian. From his perspective, the love between an Indo-Mauritian woman and a Creole-Mauritian is represented as pornographic, a denial of both the love and beauty of interethnic unions, revealing also a repression of Africanness. The narrator seems to say 'with your desire for sameness, you will produce infertility, impoverishment of our society quite the opposite of your aim'. It shows on the one hand the unproductiveness of such a

desire for sameness, on the other hand, the Rabelaisian laughter directed against a highly conservative society. In *Le Sari Vert*, the point of view is masculine. The narrative voice is a first person representing a sadistic Hindu-Mauritian grandfather, who is dying from cancer. He was a Doctor in his active life, called by the villagers 'le Dokter-Dieu' in Creole (God-Doctor), it is his only name in the novel. He lives with his daughter named Kitty, totally destroyed by her authoritative father. Dokter-Dieu is a misogynist, homophobic, racist character representing an exaggerated *vox populi*. The entire narrative is about the secret of the mother's death. The mother in a state of depression is burnt alive in her green sari by her daughter, still a child and unconsciously encouraged to commit the murder by her father. The novel depicts the family's interactions with Dokter-Dieu. Kitty, the daughter knows unconsciously the real cause of her mother's death, but expels it from her memory. Malika, the granddaughter tries to know the secret behind the death of her grandmother. She is depicted as a man,<sup>31</sup> her lesbian partner is Marie-Rose who is Creole. Being Creole and lesbian seem to be the most provocative expression of perversion and marginalization. The novel combines all subversive ingredients, its main object being the expression of two major marginalized groups: being Creole-Mauritian and homosexual. Following this pattern, the love between Malika and Marie-Rose is the actualization of repressed unions: Creole/Indian, Hindu/Catholic, and homosexual. Interethnic and inter-religious unions are combined, in addition to homosexuality. What does homosexuality represent here? We can probably partially draw a difference between the two novels. Even if the *topos* of queerness in a Mauritian context is present in both, more or less openly, it is particularly striking in *Le Sari Vert*. The whole narrative is Dokter-Dieu's monologue. The reader is exposed to its internal psychological and physical violence. The reader recognizes the violence of the grandfather, the father, the husband all in one, of course opposed to women protagonists, as the figure of the mother, the wife, the daughter, the granddaughter. The violence is apparently the result of a highly gendered society

and it is as if the whole monologue ultimately expresses the building of boundaries that are endemic to all spaces in social life. As an answer to this violence of desired segregation, the interface between inter-ethnicity and homosexuality is expressed by Malika in these terms addressed to her grandfather:

[...] regarde ce doigt avec lequel je touché ta nourriture. Tu le vois? Je sais tu te dis que c'est une main épaisse, que je n'ai aucune grâce, aucune élégance [...] et maintenant, ce gros index de cochon qui touille ton porridge et ta crème dessert, imagine qu'il est entré, cet index, dans une autre femme, et pas n'importe quelle femme, tu vois, une bien noire, ma Marie-Rose, de ceux que tu méprises si fort, une magnifique Noire, une vaste rose de chair qui donne le vertige, ma Marie-Rose.<sup>32</sup>

As mentioned by various critical commentaries on Ananda Devi's novels, physical violence, mainly through self-destruction, is a leitmotif.<sup>33</sup> Dokter-Dieu's power of destruction is finally counterbalanced by the pornographic violence exhibited by Malika. The unique possible revenge against the violence of social norms is in the act of subversion. Malika's verbal violence is emphasized by the *monstration* of her homosexuality as in 'Regarde ce doigt' (Look at this finger), 'Tu le vois' (Do you see it?); she uses the deictic 'cet index', knowing that in French as in English the index is the finger that designates the world and makes an object exist. The repetition of 'tu vois' (you see) and the insistence on Marie-Rose's skin colour 'une bien Noire, une magnifique Noire' (one very black, a gorgeous black) implies that subversion here could be interpreted as imposition, as forced internalization of difference through food ('porridge' or 'crème dessert') immediately similar in texture to 'une vaste rose de chair' (a vast rose of flesh), the sex of Marie-Rose, soft and elastic. The semantic proximity between food and sexuality is present in Devi's novels, particularly for female characters. In this excerpt, hatred against difference is internalized through food; the need to accept difference as a part of our internal being is forced into the character. As if, touching the food with her finger will transform, and will give a new form to the

grandfather. It will make him accept, understand difference as an inherent component to our humanity, to our body. It is not by any means that the grandfather is a 'Dokter' able to normalize bodies, to protect from the difference of illness. The food contaminated by the finger will transmit the difference, just as the 'hatred', transmitted through language that contaminates imaginary, normalizes the world. By designating the finger that is contaminated by Malika and Marie-Rose's sexuality, Malika reproduces in a highly normalized segregated hetero-normative society the way hatred of difference functions by imposing a law that is inadequate compared with cultural reality. In her depiction of ugliness, violence, and subversion, Devi's novels project the political reality produced as a reaction to a highly normative society. In other words, the novels obviously mirror not only normativity and rigidity in Mauritian society but also the performed answer to such a society. The answers translate the symbolic violence of normativity and destructive authority, leaving the reader with the feeling that there is a compulsive process of violence and counter-violence, far from the idealized discourse of happy diversity in a family picture. *Le Sari Vert* is all about destructive interactions between normativity and subversion, giving birth *versus* giving death, between the drive of life and death, or order and disorder. As if finally accepting difference could kill as much as rejecting difference. The grandfather cannot stand Malika's speech. He resists saying internally how Malika's words act upon him like a poison:

Le dégoût me donne des haut-le-cœur. Je ne dois pas vomir, c'est trop douloureux. Je me retiens et ravale ma salive, respire par le nez, lentement.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, Malika's speech inverses the dominant oppression, making the oppressor feel what it is like to be oppressed. The subversion in this case is in the return of the repressed as verbal violence acting upon the reader and the oppressor. Marie-Rose is Black, 'bien noire'. In this case, the creolization is also in the crossing of



heteronormative boundaries fixed by social norms. The subtext bridges all kinds of marginalization showing that these are the products of the same drive for purity. Ethnical and religious segregations are meant to prevent any creolization. The detour found by the narrator is to represent a symbolic analogy to the violence of oppressed creolization. She realizes the equivalence in violence by exposing to Dokter-Dieu all that is hated and excluded. The symbolic violence is similar on both sides. At some point, Dokter-Dieu's monologue becomes disarticulated, with paratax construction, a logorrhea without interruption.<sup>35</sup> The voice of Dokter-Dieu is the *vox populi* rejecting any form of creolization seen as an illness, an abnormal body, and the creole body is sick.

Ananda Devi pushes the question of fixed identity to its extreme, showing the absurdity of its limits, where refuge in a same sex union becomes the only safe space, while showing at the same time the psychological violence produced by unacceptable differences. Moreover, though homoeroticism is not acknowledged and is completely repressed, it is a safe way to love someone from another ethnic group without being suspected of an inter-ethnic union. Man-woman relationships always have a sexual connotation; they are always immediately suspected of being sexual. In highly gendered societies, the structure of prohibitions encourages, and at the same time, condemns homoeroticism. The differentiation between ethnic groups leads to an accumulation of prohibitions, which operate as walls between different territories. Sharp cultural definition actualizes the need for strict boundaries, even more present in a highly mixed society with a recent national history. The ideology behind the heteronormative discourse was discussed within another debate: the cult for motherhood and nationhood, even stronger in postcolonial situation with the urgent need to secure a national identity. The heteronormativity in a diverse and segregated society means also to control reproduction of purity (ethnic-religious) over creolization. This domination of purity means the reproduction and establishment of distinct fixed identities as if finally creolization will destroy the distinctiveness of normative

identity. Creolization is never forced but cannot be prevented, it is the unique expression of our relation to our own humanity,<sup>36</sup> but the relation cannot be measured or normalized following certain rules in order to obtain an expected result, a society with predetermined colours and shapes. The fear of creolization could be then the fear of a blurry cultural territory whereas heteronormative sexuality assures the reproduction of sameness and reinforces the contours of identity politics (I outline the shift between normative identity and normative sexuality). Then on the opposite side, the celebration of differentiation between ethnic groups can lead to a segregated society (one of the arguments again for certain forms of multiculturalism debated by Will Kymlicka in *Multicultural Citizenship*) and prevents the circulation of meaning, representation and text but reinforces the contours of the nation as the accumulation of fixed identities in a determined precise territory. What Devi's novels tend to show is that the increase in differentiation between ethnic groups increases the internal fear of otherness, which is in fact the limits of fixed identity, which have already been discussed in recent works in political philosophy.<sup>37</sup> In order to understand the clash of identities, we need to provide a more precise analysis of the functioning of cultural identity in the specific context of Mauritius.

Mauritian society represents itself as multicultural (for example through the politics of languages at school). In fact, the plurality of communities today in Mauritius creates a national community that operates more as pseudo-nations separated by borders, which is quite explosive on such a small territory than as a unified idealized nation. Idealistically speaking, where a society can provide 'creolization' the population benefits enormously and culturally from this process; but the Mauritian case shows very well how 'being' Creole is not a desired posture particularly in recent Mauritian history. The distinction brought by Anthony Appiah around the concept of 'identity' allows for a reflection on the particular case of Mauritius, where conflicting levels of identities are on the stage, mainly religion and language. In fact, the internal social divisions produced by the

accumulation of religious prohibitions prevent any mixed unions. Prohibitions are never creolized, but are accumulated by each group against the other. In this sense, we state that multiculturalism is a term used to designate societies where the concept of identity is needed to divide and where, implicitly creolization is repressed. In this highly conservative multiethnic society without any noticeable dominant group, each individual is responsible towards the community he/she belongs to and has to respect each component of his/her identity language-ethnicity-religion reproducing at the scale of each community the homogeneity of a national cultural model. But when one sees only the straightforward part of identity, such as religion or language, the other part is forgotten and hidden. Each community is then closed off to the rest of the society except when they speak in Creole. Appiah quotes Will Kymlicka as stating, 'it is quite possible for a state not to have an established church. But the state cannot help but give at least partial establishment to a culture when it decides which language is to be used in public schooling, or in the provision of state services'.<sup>38</sup> Then Creole could become this tool helping 'partial establishment to a culture', the element that brings together people, particularly in the spaces of everyday life, such as markets. Clear and unified identities are the submerged part of the iceberg as the creolized part acts internally, at the level of intimacy suggested by Devi in her novels. To make this complexity visible, Ananda Devi, among other authors, represents the violence of everyday life in a so-called 'multicultural' society where distinct parts of an identity are pitted against each other, which causes identity to become a point of contention.<sup>39</sup> The instinctive reaction is to go back to the position of communitarianism to avoid the domination of one ethnic group over the rest of the population. As if to reinforce this opposition between ethnic groups, the actual president, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, who is Indian, works to give a privileged position to the Indian population looking proudly toward Mother India (Anjali Prahbu). So, how then does one truly become Creole?

To establish the transcendence of 'Creole culture' is not an easy resolution

for the situation. The praise of Creole culture has to come from the part of the population that is not Creole. It is the paradoxical act, the unexpected act, against a homogenous model of cohesion that, in effect, reconfigures a new social order beyond 'murderous identities'.<sup>40</sup> India, France, England and even Africa are so far away, that they are no longer a dreamed of homeland, an argument which is developed further by Srilata Ravi. The multiethnic society in Mauritius, that is itself an expression of a specific multiculturalism, raises a question about the politics of differences or how we can build a unity that is not exclusive and respects differences in religion and languages. Mauritian people, within themselves, are divided over their several layers of identities. A Mauritian identity includes a religious and cultural re-composition of the former homeland and a Mauritian ethos that reflects a Creole layer that is common to a recent history on the Island. When the memory of the homeland is already distant and complicated by the recent history, the reality of the ghost homeland is that it is an imagined community that no longer has any relation to the reality of the Hindu Mauritian community. We are in the transitory moment when diasporas are in between two imagined communities. To establish a common ground, politicians could exercise their leadership and praise the Creole language, as well as, the process of cultural creolization as a solution to the communitarian violence. The gesture could be a common political decision, one that is transcendent and does not hold prejudice toward any particular group. A multiethnic society should rethink the two major divisions, the sacred versus the secular. Political leaders in a multiethnic society have to remove the sacred from the conflict and work to encourage a common space for the Mauritian people, which can only be found in the secular creolization process. Creole culture, as a process, can then be perceived as a universal Mauritian culture in progress; politicians have to find a discourse beyond the realm of the small differences that always divide, because it is easy to incite conflict between communities. In other words, the task of politics is to recognize the existence of religious differences (here the counter model is French

republicanism) and to create a transcendent cultural, a profane/secular space that would allow the circulation of texts, representations and meanings and encourage the formation of an imaginary common shared land. The best tool for creating this new and shared imaginary space is to produce a collective narrative praising Creole and allowing for the recognition of creolization as inherent to Mauritius identity and nationhood.

In the nineteenth century, creation of national communities, the unity of the family, the language, and the territory were components for the formation of a national shared identity in the imagination of the people. Why not reverse this process by building imagined plural communities, where the main goal is to allow the circulation of representations and values that are imported from elsewhere, even thinking about cultural identity as fluid (not flexible)<sup>41</sup> as in recent conception of sexual identity? Appiah claims the strong association between 'identification and narrative dimension': 'By way of my identity I fit my life story into a certain pattern [...] and I also fit that story to larger stories; for example, of a people, a religious tradition, or a race.'<sup>42</sup> To undo the formation of fixed 'identities', maybe we should think about working on counter-narrative imagination. In their edification of nations and national identities, the writers (as militants) were offering narratives allowing the building of imagined homogenous communities. What Mauritian literature shows is the increase of violence responding to the inadequacy of such a monolithic model for such a diverse society, on such a small island. Inventing new and imagined communities is in fact what the writers and artists are doing in Mauritius to project the reality of violence generated by the power of identities – to undo the outcomes of fixed identities. In her writings, Ananda Devi shows how Creole identity is at the same time one that divides and, paradoxically, the language that brings Mauritian people together. Her novels bring to the forefront the delicate opposition between multiculturalism and creolization through representation of urban violence and sexual violence. They also celebrate, through the beauty of homoerotic love, both

femininity and creolization together, whereas, schematically masculinity and motherhood represent violence and division. The body and the island<sup>43</sup> are comparable territories of meaning, with visible boundaries. But the boundaries are not only to delimit a space but help regulate what can come in and what cannot, the boundaries, like a membrane, filter meanings and representations, whereas sexuality is what permits transgression, the act of crossing the boundaries of the body and of entering an intimate space, like inside the Island, instilling difference. Ananda Devi uses the more intimate locus of representation in the form of sexuality to represent internal communitarian process. Sexuality and creolization become sites where the return of the repressed is actualized, or where the exclusion could be healed. Sexuality and creolization are processes of relationality that cannot be controlled. They define natures of relationality inherent to any culture. Preventing creolization is then like going against our humanity. Moreover, and pragmatically, the major problem faced by postcolonial emerging societies is the confusion between religious identity (that can be specific) and cultural identity (that can be collective and creolized). A nation's diversity can be represented in terms of its languages, which are no longer associated to a religious practice. The greater the number of languages recognized as a part of the national culture, the more convivial a nation can be. The goal of politics is to bring people together and to give structure by establishing a discourse for a shared public sphere. A symbolic way to start the conversation could be to recognize 'Creole' as an official language of Mauritius and to impose multilingualism including Creole as valuable. As in other postcolonial societies, it is time to recognize the language of the people as a valuable language as it is time to stop the perpetuation of division by isolating Creole as the language of the poor. A language cannot be ignored, it has a reality. If this reality is not seen, it is a whole part of the Mauritius reality that is made invisible, its intimate creolization.

## 2. MAGICAL THOUGHT IN *BELOVED/SARGASSO*

Harold Gabriel Weisz Carrington (University of Mexico)

Magical thought is a floating term, more like a metaphor that provokes some kind of supernatural intervention. A certain ontological region is prescribed by some scholars to experience a vicarious adventure, often ending as a political and psychological appropriation; however, could there be certain given conditions where a dialogical exchange happens, let us say, between literature and magical thought? This state of affairs would contribute a set of circumstances where a cultural narrative – that which derives from the subject matter of Alterity – interplays with fiction. We reach a point where myth interacts with the body introducing magical thought to a process of somatic identification. This has a direct consequence over a repertory of differences between magical thought as such and narrative. Either myth or ritual become part of the discursive elements that affects the body, while in fiction the body stands as an abstract entity that is construed by textual complexities. One could contend that the use of magical thought in fiction opens the door to an ethno-fictional process in which Otherness is processed into a fictionalized material, thus the subject matter translated from magical thought caters to our cultural demands and expectations; the impact over magical thought is that it undergoes a manner of dissolution. A cultural

'performance' where a spectral essence of magical thought morphs into reading entertainment that only becomes legitimized by different fictive modalities. Our modern 'reservations' are those fashioned by contemporary writers in their literary domains to encapsulate Otherness in the imagined world. Magical thought conveys a certain way of integrating the body to nature along with strategies to inhabit the environment through the mediation of symbolic imagination; however the symbolic acquires the form of living-thought, rendering a set of objects and expounding a discursive procedure which communicates with a universe of living attributes in objects and animals. This knowledge creates what Modernist minds might define as imaginary languages, to represent objects, animals and environment within a magical domain. Through these means the Modernist narrator depicts cultural Otherness. The Modernist thinker not only circumscribes Alterity, yet by the same token indicates where thinking assimilates to a centralized power artefact. These thinkers play an authoritarian role when confronted to unknown modalities of thought. The cult of Modernist rationality is always present during such intercourse. Magical thinking was often used to 'explain' primitive minds, ideas or practice related to witchcraft and magic meant ritual strategies, and treading into the strange and marvellous, always enigmatic and suggesting a land of the unexplained.

The context for certain cultural conflicts is aptly depicted by Baudrillard when alienation is conceived as 'a becoming other than me, [...] and a resolution of differences, of game, cult, culture of difference which belongs to our contemporary [world].'<sup>44</sup> On a close analysis of these words, magical thought appears as the milieu for cultural difference, and fiction as a resolution of difference. It is through narrative resources that a certain emotional exorcism occurs; through which writers can graft themselves onto the cultural ontology of Otherness and at the same time banish magical thought from its own region.

We might dwell, if only briefly, upon the strange attraction that 'séances, trance mediumship, [and] automatic writing'<sup>45</sup> held for Modernist writers.



Otherness undergoes a special narrative treatment by different writers focusing this particular interest on mediums, ghosts and other manifestations of the dead. My idea is that fiction, at this particular juncture, was not only concerned with the 'unseen world' and the supernatural, but also with a particular narrative shaping Otherness.

Lafcadio Hearn left an interesting legacy on Martinique as 'The Land of Ghosts' and legends on Pé Labatt or Père Labat tell of a Dominican priest killed by snakebite. It was told that his lantern is seen during the night still-hunting for snakes. This lantern is associated to 'zombi-fires' and if gazed at will bring bad luck. Hearn also was informed that it was Père Labat who introduced slavery into Martinique. He is a *revenant* figure because he introduced slavery and always comes back at night; when slavery becomes abolished Père Labat's light will be seen no more. He was turned into a ghostly figure, haunting mountains in Martinique. The man was a Dominican, who travelled to these places in 1693. However, as Labat is fashioned into a ghost, we realize that he is not only a legendary figure, but a legend of Otherness as well. One of the items registered in Labat's writings was about a slave buried alive because he was accused of witchcraft at St. Thomas in 1701. His crime was 'having made a little figure of baked clay to speak'.<sup>46</sup> It seems that as magical thought seduced Père Labat, he also came to embody a haunting Otherness, assimilated to local legends.

Returning to our main topic, in a cultural Caribbean worldview we come upon magical thought with Esu-Elegbara, the divine trickster figure in Yoruba mythology, he plays the role of slave liberator and enemy of enslavers. However we also have Esu as Onitumo the text interpreter, a mythological Lord of textual and cultural strategies. With Louis Gates we learn that Esu was associated to crossroads, this West African trickster figure is able to move between worlds, a mediator and liminal character. As storyteller he is a cultural architect, able, as he is, to read the language of gods and then interpret this language to people who do not have this ability. My problem was to trace some of these issues in the

narrative realm. Let us say with Spivak that ‘Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* is a novel about the shift from Africa to African-America’.<sup>47</sup> Also true for our shifting narrative from myth, to cultural ontologies, to *Beloved*, and an additional liminal structure, as we will find later on with Rhys’s novel. Another displacement also runs from the mythical, the storified, to the political view on slavery, with an imaginary line that goes from Esu and the Text interpreter, slave liberator and enemy of enslavers, to cultural discourse, and to *Beloved*. I propose this setting as a possible reading device for the subjects we develop here. The novel recreates Margaret Garner’s saga, an enslaved African American woman, who lived during the pre-Civil war and killed her own daughter rather than handing her to a life of slavery. She tried to flee from the slave catchers crossing the frozen Ohio River to Cincinnati and was caught. Thus, the character called Beloved is the daughter sacrificed by Sethe to prevent a life of slavery. Anyhow the magical dimension of Beloved is that she returns several years after as a ghost to haunt Sethe and Denver, the youngest daughter. In *Beloved* Seth’s ghostly murdered daughter becomes a supernatural reminder of slavery and its brutality. The spectral text is Margaret Garner’s life-story. The ghost is also a *revenant*, since after Paul D – a fellow slave that suffered the Kentucky plantation abuse along with Sethe – successfully exorcises the ghost, however, an eighteen year-old woman by the name of Beloved is admitted to Sethe’s house. This woman is no other than the murdered daughter. The *revenant* operates as a trope that not only is determined by the belief that a dead person returns to deal with unfinished business, but also returns as a symbol of slavery operating as a spectral reminder of what happened once. An interesting fact about African ancestral and witchcraft backgrounds is Sethe’s relationship to the ghost-daughter and the obeah women who were known to invoke the dead.

The Ghost brings us back to a black rhetorical trope as the ‘Esu’ in Henry Louis Gates’ book, which will be mentioned presently, Beloved is also a trickster as was also true for the Yoruba God. I wonder whether these characters operate in

a cultural narrative in which one could understand a certain figurative mode, linking myth, politics and history. Additionally we have a narrative ritual structure of indeterminacy; Gates will indicate that Esu is the god of indeterminacy.<sup>48</sup> In *Beloved* we are told that 'Here Boy' is picked by the spirit and slammed into the wall breaking his legs, dislocating his eye and provoking convulsions.<sup>49</sup> The ghostly other world might be indeterminate but it has direct impact on characters, animals and events. As we follow the story and discover that Sethe can restore order because she is a healer but also a mediator between worlds: 'She had taken a hammer, knocked the dog unconscious, wiped away the blood and saliva, pushed his eye back in his head and set his leg bones'.<sup>50</sup> Dislocation is also an interesting theme since we know that Esu can connect parts, just as Sethe relocates the injured and broken body parts. Sethe as a person broken by racial violence to the extent that she is driven to murder her daughter might be read as a political trope for cultural fragmentation. Magical thought is translated in *Beloved* as a cultural space to narrate difference and Otherness and therefore becomes a place where some political strategies are also played out. A good example is displayed over Sethe's back where difference and Otherness are forever engraved. She is punished because she refuses to give milk from her breasts to a group of men. Although pregnant she is beaten up, her skin is turned into a magical tree growing on her back. This lacerated back is not only a token that reminds one of terrible violence, but also an indeterminate object of sex and poetic beauty, illustrated by Sethe's lover when he decides to admire 'the sculpture her back had become, like the decorative work of an ironsmith too passionate for display'. Sethe's body turns into a somatic metaphor that brings together a crossroad of differences. The lover will continue his description of this flesh tree, touching 'every ridge and leaf of it with his mouth, none of which Sethe could feel because her back skin had been dead for years'.<sup>51</sup> The body becomes the surface where cultural violence is written and a place where feeling and insensitivity create an atmosphere of ambiguity. This is not all, why is the

body always marked? Sethe's mother lifts one of her breasts, there on her rib 'a circle and a cross [are] burnt right in the skin'.<sup>52</sup> Slavery and marked bodies are bound in the same cultural story, that is, the terrible facts that defined slavery. Scars change the body's narrative, a cultural 'braille' of sorts; from the once unblemished skin we discover flesh that has acquired new meanings.

And now we move on to the trickster writer Jean Rhys. Our story of *Wide Sargasso Sea* also touches upon the former slaves that worked the sugar plantations owned by wealthy Creoles. Then we discover Christophines's magical powers that originate in the obeah spells. The obeah or West Indies Folk Magic came from Central African and West African magical traditions. A most interesting detail is that Esu in his Pa Pa La Bas avocation is a trickster who has two heads 'fugitive hermit, Obeah man, botanist, animal impersonator, 2-Headed man'.<sup>53</sup> So Esu's presence can also be felt in *Wide Sargasso Sea* with Christophine, the obeah woman and Antoinette's black nurse. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a two headed novel, where the double subject of narrative and culture are played out. Antoinette, the Creole woman protagonist, is fashioned out of Charlotte Brontë's Bertha, the insane wife of Edward Rochester. The Creole ghost woman becomes Antoinette in a cultural mirroring where subjects are doubled within the land of Otherness. So we have Rhys's version of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. However, it is in madness or 'deranged' Otherness that Antoinette meets Bertha. In addition to these mirroring strategies there is a spectral presence of one novel embedded into another, provoking a dialogical exchange. We witness a conversation between novels; one is expecting exchange and various degrees of interaction. Although during these dialogical interpellations two different narratives introduce two equally diverse cultural narrators in Rhys's novel. A whole gamut of interconnections meets the eye, as British and West Indies cultures act and react. The question is whether a 'new' discourse has been created; I am thinking about Brontë's personal treatment in *Jane Eyre* and the narrative revision and re-creation set by Rhys under her own cultural demands.

I was struck by a certain character mimetism in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* where madness is a link between Jane and Bertha. Rage seems to mirror one character onto the other. Doubling is always active, let us not forget the two-headed Esu as the obeah generator, not actually present but inhabiting Christophine as his cultural interpreter; a deity that we mentioned before acting as the text interpreter, a mythological Lord of textual and cultural strategies. Other mimetic exchanges can be mentioned, as the leitmotif for the ghost trope in this novel. Jane will meet Edward Rochester, but she asks John the servant, not to disclose her name. The man Jane meets is blind. Rochester wants to know who is speaking, and Jane is playing the role of a ghost, that is, a nameless and invisible entity. His words are 'And where is the speaker? Is it only a voice? Oh! I cannot see...' When Jane explains that she has found him, he cannot believe that she returned to him. He asks 'In truth? – In the flesh? My living Jane?'<sup>54</sup> The ghost trope is used again when Jane mentions presentiments as signs and gives a description of how she becomes haunted in dreams by a wailing child, it changes moods, 'but whatever mood the apparition evinced, whatever aspect it wore, it failed not for seven successive nights to meet me the moment I entered the land of slumber'.<sup>55</sup> These two incidents define Jane as 'ghost-player' and the second instance when the child ghost haunts her. The ghost is always close to the body, at least it used to be one, so haunting happens as an activity that is associated to vision or a distortion of it, as the description of the child ghost. My perception is that the ghost trope relates to unformed identities, a theme we will be addressing in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. However, it is with a cry that the ghost trope is grounded. This entity is depicted as the 'thing delivering such utterance must rest ere it could repeat the effort'.<sup>56</sup> This strange creature is Bertha the pyromaniac, who sets the house on fire and then she commits suicide; at that point Edward Rochester loses an eye during the conflagration. What demands our attention is the way in which Bertha is first treated as a supernatural presence and also a deranged, savage woman. Coincidentally she is a Creole woman, and therefore our intertextual character

that brings with her not only the weight of Otherness and madness but also stands in mimetic relation to Antoinette. Here the mimetic relation is intertextual losing a personal identity, that of Bertha, to become more concerned with cultural identities. Bertha is the cultural ghost, the white Creole woman; she is mentioned as a dark double.<sup>57</sup> The mimetic impact will also be quite plain when Antoinette is dispossessed from her own name and Rochester calls her Bertha. The weight of Otherness merges into the Gothic Victorian tale where the sinister always lurks; a dangerous creature threatens the ordered and familiar surroundings of the English manor, where domestic power is seated. The ghost-theme feminine narrative brings out the invisible, and all that has been silenced, to perceived awareness. An advantage of Ghost story writing is how it ‘thrives’ in the amorphous and undefined. Since both the formed and defined belonged to rationalistic discourse, based on stable and centralized, narrative distribution. However, it must be underlined that ghost stories have to do with vision, but here I am thinking of that kind of scopic description that entails how the ‘alien’ is pictured, and also how subjective vision organizes a certain worldview. The first page of the novel introduces the haunted house, but such that it is quite different from the Victorian setting, since it is feared as haunted by the natives – the native other – who avoid both the house and the people that inhabit the place.

Returning to Christophine, the obeah woman from Martinique, there is a background atmosphere that has to be mentioned to understand certain salient aspects, which define her. The obeah tradition can be fabled into frightening figures associated with African witchdoctors. This tradition claims attention when Rhys construes her horror theatre for Alterity. Antoinette is about to visit Christophine. The Victorian Gothic sombreness is now imported to the strange and threatening abode inhabited by the Other:

The door was open to the sunlight, [...] but I was afraid. I was certain that hidden in the room [...] there was a dead man’s dried hand, white chicken feathers, a cock with its throat cut, dying slowly, slowly. Drop by drop the

blood was falling into a red basin and I imagined I could hear it. No one had ever spoken to me about obeah-but I knew what I would find if I dared to look.<sup>58</sup>

All this is nothing else but the enigmatic staging of exotic protagonists, simultaneously feared and admired. This horror theatre is a reminder of the secret conditions that defined obeah practice for the Westerner onlooker. On the other hand Antoinette cannot be 'read' as a spectral figure, though she is a cultural ghost, blacks, according to Rhys, hate her as a white Creole and white people shun from her. She finds herself floating between two cultures and belonging to none. These characters are found in neglected islands, abandoned by their colonial fathers. However, Antoinette marries to acquire an English identity and this shall be the site for cultural discord, brought into marital conflict quickly deteriorating into the double figure of master *versus* slave and man against wife. Cultural discord shows another face in contrast to Essu, the text interpreter, the Miss Reader can also be found in a book *The Glittering Coronet of Isles* that the narrator consults.

'A zombi is a dead person who seems to be alive or a living person who is dead. A zombi can also be the spirit of a place, usually malignant but sometimes to be propitiated with sacrifices or offerings of flowers and fruit.' Further on we are told: 'I have noticed that negroes [sic] as a rule refuse to discuss black magic in which so many believe. Voodoo as it is called in Haiti-Obeah in some of the islands [...].' Then we go back to the dangerous native other: 'Cases of sudden or mysterious death are attributed to a poison.'<sup>59</sup> The cultural beholder who will always despise his object of description hands down this portrayal. The atmosphere of Otherness articulated by zombies, obeah rituals and exotic magic is downright stifling for the rationalistic minded Rochester, such is the stuff of which his fear is made of. In the same frame Christophine gives the love potion to Antoinette so that she can bring Rochester back to her, while he believes he has been poisoned. Actually it is the collective Western imaginary that has been

'poisoned' by Alterity. The tropical world is threatening; the dangerousness of the place is coupled to fear of people.

As we cover these fictionist depictions of magical thought, from Morrison to Rhys both focused on developing distinct cultural narratives, we come to understand how the political cannot be erased from a particular worldview. But in addition we can also corroborate how magical thought in Morrison's ghost figure thematizes slavery; while in Rhys, Otherness is thematized at two levels: Christophine's obeah procedures and the novelist discursive setting of Creole and British identities – with two conflicting mentalities. These issues are extended to beliefs and places as we saw with that threatening tropical world. However, Christophine asks Antoinette if there is such a place as England: 'How can you ask that? You know there is.' Christophine replies, 'I never see the damn place, how I know?' 'You do not believe that there is a country called England?'<sup>60</sup> Otherness plays both ways. *Beloved* seems to evoke an incarnation of slavery. The magical is driven to political awareness. The treatment of Seth's magical body – the strange tree growing on her back – is brought to the slave's body. These strategies enact the body as a narrative agent that enables awareness about the characters. The ghost theme is mainly a pretext to give a kind of poetic substance to the protagonists who are foremost political and historical actors. Magical thought becomes a Ghost story divested from a Victorian background and set in the daily setting of Seth's household. The exotic cannot thrive in this environment. *Wide Sargasso Sea* runs a different course, since magical thought becomes the exotic pretext against which the Modernist rational mind legitimates its own worldview. The Victorian Ghost Story is somewhat turned on its back as Bertha comes into the story to clash against Antoinette's identity. However, we witness an intertextual ghost, and not a character-ghost such as the one found in *Beloved*. Some attention has been provided to mimetic strategies, which in this novel are manifested as an intertextual relation to Margaret Garner's story. Although we must concentrate on that ancestral part, paramount to define cultural



heritage, somehow this deconstructs a mere mimetic association to the ghost story. The past becomes a psychological spectre haunting the present, a feature that demands attention to the conflicts shaping identity in stark contrast between the narrative environment in Toni Morrison's novel and that in *Wide Sargasso Sea* that still holds the reputation of an exotic land. At this point one is reminded of Esu's power. He 'is able to level mountains or to turn forests into savannahs instantly.'<sup>61</sup> In *Beloved* the house is alive with the ghostly presence, it has the power to animate space; while in *Wide Sargasso Sea* it is the land itself that is haunted, a feature that turns space into the fictionalized exoticism of faraway places. The past is both the colonial world and new conditions with different social and political changes that affect the way race, culture and gender are treated. I want to forward an observation to stress, that both novels deal with violence against cultural identities, and magical thought is approached more as a pretext than as a focused issue; demonstrating through this treatment that in both narratives the magical has gone underground. As a closing remark we grasp a very marked difference between magical thought as a cultural instrument used in narrative, and magical thought enabling the body and environment to change through supernatural means.



### 3. CREOLIZING HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Felicia McCarren (Tulane University)

As flora and fauna (the *Creole* tomato, the *Creole* horse), as people and their languages, 'creoles' are phenomena that have inspired a broad range of historical study. They have also lent themselves to apprehension by the sciences; the most obvious being the biological sciences' exploration and classification of hybridity, the scientific version of the 'husbandry' engaged by Creole's origin as the word for 'breeding.' But 'creoles' as living organisms and as languages have also served as descriptive models for the development of new sciences, and the relations between branches or sub-disciplines within a science. Having been subject to scientific study, these creoles also ask for an historical account in the realm of the history of science, or more precisely, the inter-disciplinary field called History and Philosophy of Science. This history, I will suggest here, is itself close in many ways to the literary, historical, linguistic and philosophical-theoretical approaches in the field of Comparative Literature; the Creole as organism, as concept, helps us to see how interlinked these fields are historically but also theoretically, by providing us terrain in which they overlap. This article will sketch very briefly how, in work by historians and philosophers of science from the last thirty years, the Creole shifts from being matter for the apprehension

of science to a model for how sciences (not unlike like other fields) work. In moving from the history of biology (botany, zoology) over to the history of physics I am not only gesturing toward the history of the rise and dominance of particular sciences, wed to administrative power and funding, but also moving from a consideration of Creole as variant to be classified toward Creole understood as a consensus, as the common shared language of different populations.

*Creole* is derived from a Latin word relative to breeding. The OED attributes the word to ‘persons’: born and naturalized’ and animals and plants: ‘bred or grown in the West Indies, etc. but not of indigenous origin.’<sup>62</sup> Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century branches of biology are invoked in the ‘considerable alterations’ undergone by these transplants. This term is also said to come out of a colonial context (sometimes traced to Brazil) and suggests both a colonial administration in which all forms of property – whether botanical, zoological or human – fell under similar treatment, and also a biological parallel between human and plant-animal species. In ‘creolization’ a human reproductive process resulting from the contact of populations in the New World is extended into the realm of plants and animals. It is worth pointing out that the sciences have applied human qualities to flora and fauna for example in the romantic biology of Erasmus Darwin and Lawrence Okun, not far from the poetic tradition of animating nature and projecting its qualities back onto humans.<sup>63</sup>

What fascinates us in the term Creole is not the dictionary definition but the ways in which it was successively applied to new entities, new populations, precisely those eluding existing categories. Creole might be a non-scientific term but it manifests science’s growing task of describing and classifying the newly-encountered organisms of the so-called new world, and its ever greater purchase on administrative, political and social spheres. Charted by Foucault and others, the rise of the power of biology to explain social phenomena; the state’s move toward *bio-pouvoir*, the debates about environmental, cultural and genetic

influences have in many ways continued into present-day debates about human ‘hybridity.’

As historians of biology emphasize the cultural, even poetic influences on romantic science, historians of race also emphasize the ‘bad science’ of what is referred to as scientific racism. Nancy Stepan’s 1982 work, *The Idea of Race in Science*, reverses the common interest of historians at that time, especially historians of science, in ‘revolutionary change’ by showing continuities in racial science underlying discontinuities and superficial change.<sup>64</sup>

As Emmanuelle Saada has also shown, so-called ‘scientific racism’ produced by Metropolitan science, applied to the colonies, was slow to die and in turn influenced racial thinking in the Republic more than has been acknowledged in the French example.<sup>65</sup> Beyond the scope of this article, the rise of polygenism across the mid-nineteenth century, traced into the twentieth century by Stephen Jay Gould working on Agassiz’s Harvard papers, can also be detected in contemporary debates. Theories of polygenism and monogenism are still invoked in debates on difference in France, for example: in his *Affirmative Exclusion*, Jean-Loup Amselle argues that ‘the theme of multiculturalism or of *metisage* [...] means nothing more than a return in force of polygenism’ or ‘a plural view of human populations’<sup>66</sup> that ultimately gives rise to a ‘soft racism.’ In the United States, biological definitions of race, while broadly seen as invalid, are still used: DNA researchers agree that ‘there is no genetic basis for race,’<sup>67</sup> yet for medical anthropologist Duana Fullwily, biology continues to be ‘front and center’ because of its use by institutions such as the NIH, and in governmental gathering of data for affirmative action and the census.<sup>68</sup> As racial category and racial type continue to be used in studies – for example in medical genetics – she argues that race is not simply a social construct.<sup>69</sup> In the U.S., it seems, as science has bequeathed us these categories of race, we are not yet ready to abandon their usefulness in redressing wrongs done in their name, even as public opinion broadly moves toward an understanding of a global ‘*creolité*’ and geneticists toward a description

of universal ‘Africanness.’

Against this history of science grappling to define the nature of hybrids, I want to show, in the other direction, how such hybrids have influenced thinking about the sciences. My first example concerns the use of a concept of ‘hybrids’ in science studies. Over the past three decades, various branches of science studies have focused on the social construction of science, on the fabrication of a science not inconsistent with internalist explanations and sheltering specialist science from a certain kind of critique,<sup>70</sup> and on an anthropology of scientific practice as never disinterested or disengaged from political, economic and social causes. While we now seek in science the precision that – it is sometimes argued – bodies and languages do not attain, it is worth noting the theories of the history of science that emphasize its own difficulties in definition, in precision, and in the consensus that works to make these possible.

For Bruno Latour, science and scientific objects are themselves hybrid: ‘laboratory life’ is a site like every other office or workplace in which practices and interpretations are influenced by local factors. In Latour’s view, ‘we have never been modern’ in that the separation or regulation of well-defined domains such as ‘science’ has never been fully accomplished. He defines the ‘modern paradox’ as the confrontation between a consideration of the hybrid mixing of nature and culture, and the ‘work of purification’ of a modernity separating nature and culture, and he seeks to understand the relation between these two tasks.<sup>71</sup>

The moderns indeed declare that technology is nothing but pure instrumental mastery, science pure Enframing and pure Stamping [Das Ge-Stell], [...]. Purity everywhere! Look around you: scientific objects are circulating simultaneously as subjects, objects and discourse [...]. As for machines, they are laden with subjects and collectives.<sup>72</sup>

Latour’s hybrids can, I believe in part, be linked to the work of his teacher Michel Serres:<sup>73</sup> beyond the cultural history of factors controlling and often determining the course of sciences, Serres demonstrates a different set of links

between science and culture. For Serres, introducing concepts of ‘*corps mêlés*’ (hybrid bodies) into accounts of history of the hard sciences as well as the *sciences humaines*, the goal is not so much to link scientific discoveries back to their funding conditions or cultural contexts. He is particularly interested in the origins of sciences, not only for historical reasons (it is easier to treat historical science as a humanistic discipline) but because even new sciences, information theory or biochemistry, need to develop new languages. Thus poets or painters, imagining new representations of bodies, energy, or perception, for example, ‘transpose’ or ‘export’ or ‘translate’ what we call scientific discoveries rather than simply respond to them, and science itself ‘translates’ current thinking in the humanities, and thus plays an influential cultural role that is not simply deterministic.<sup>74</sup>

Across Serres’ *oeuvre*, his ‘*philosophie des corps mêlés*’ argues not simply for a decoding of science based on bodily experience – for example the cultural origins of sciences such as geometry in practices of measurement. Rather he describes a more complex bodiliness that reveals new sciences and responds to them. The living organism is both ‘an information and thermodynamic system.’<sup>75</sup> The body is hybrid, for example, because plunged into a ‘multiple proliferation of spaces,’ as he writes:

My body (I cannot help it) is not plunged into a single, specified space. It works in Euclidian space, but it only works there. It sees in a projective space; it touches, caresses, and feels in a topological space; it suffers in another; hears and communicates in a third, and so forth [...]. My body, therefore, is not plunged into a single space, but into the difficult intersection of this numerous family, into the set of connections and junctions to be established between these varieties. [...] not simply given or not always already there [...] always need[ing] to be constructed.<sup>76</sup>

Serres emphasizes not simply the dominance of any particular science classifying bodies, but the continual rise of new sciences and new scientific languages that then model bodies as well as shape our understandings of them. In

1992 interviews with Bruno Latour published as *Eclaircissements*, he describes his education not within disciplines but across sciences and the humanities, sometimes uncomfortably housed in philosophy, epistemology, often taking refuge in literature and myth, or in mathematics; and claiming central place for what he calls the three revolutions: in mathematics (algebra and topology); physics (quantum and information theory) and biochemistry. When Latour says to Serres: ‘you could do literature, but you don’t want to because the style is the continuation of philosophical argument by other means, imitating the work of mathematics,’ Serres replies: ‘Imitating or better, transposing, exporting, translating the work of mathematicians.’ And Latour concludes: ‘to a place where they can’t go.’<sup>77</sup> Serres argues that his work, moving from one science to another or from ‘pure science’ to philosophy or literature and arts, always shows the obstacles, the difficult conditions of these translations and transferences – and models these through figures such as the Parasite, Hermes, or the angels, *corps mêlés* that might be described as radically Creole, capable of moving in different systems at the same time, figures for communication and distribution, operators rather than ends in themselves. In literature and in myth, in painting and performance, Serres finds examples of the same questions identified in the sciences.

For Serres, technologies can ‘liberate’ bodies that then reinvent their functions: ‘each time that an organ – or a function – is freed from an old obligation, it invents.’<sup>78</sup> In the same way, ‘memory is freed three times: first by the invention of writing, then by the printing press, and now by the computer. Who can say what the invention of geometry owes to the first, what experimental sciences owe to the second, and what will emerge from this third ‘forgetting’ that we have achieved?’<sup>79</sup> For Serres, the same questions are asked in the human and hard sciences; but culture, as he has recently cast it, ‘precedes’ the rational project.

In the work of Peter Galison, it is the complexity of Creole language that



serves to describe exchanges between the subcultures of physics and between each of these subcultures and the broader embedding culture. In *Image and Logic*, Galison uses Creole language as a model for communication across the disciplines composing twentieth-century physics, what he calls the ‘exchange processes’ that link the ‘felt interconnectedness of physics as a discipline’ across its diverse theoretical and experimental subcultures.<sup>80</sup>

Creolist Albert Valdman emphasizes that Creole languages did not derive from written or standard French. Rather, creoles were the result of certain social conditions on plantations not with two linguistic components but many; and he traces the origins of Louisianan and Haitian creoles from the successive adoption by people without instruction; non-speakers learning the language on the plantation via successive proximations. With references to Valdman and other creolists, Galison describes links between different sciences and sub-disciplines as ‘pidgins that gradually emerged into full disciplinary languages (creoles) rich enough to ‘grow up’ in professionally.’<sup>81</sup> He does not use the term to describe the languages of physics, but as a model for the encounters of different bodies of understanding that then manage to communicate with one another:

The problem is considered here as a particular instance of local exchange between two theoretical subcultures. More generally, I want to treat the movement of ideas, objects, and practices as one of local coordination through the establishment of pidgins and creoles, not by invoking the metaphor of global translation and its philosophical doppelganger, the conceptual scheme [...]. How should we think about the relation of theorists to theorists, of theorists to experimenters, of physicist to engineers, of chemists to physicist, of image instrument makers to logic instrument makers, and of the myriad of [detector] subgroups within a hybrid experiment one to the other? To homogenize these various groups artificially is to miss their distinct ways of going about their craft; to represent them as participating in isolated conceptual schemes ‘translating’ back and forth is to shut our eyes to the productive, awkward, local coordination by which communities, machines, and knowledge get built.<sup>82</sup>

For Galison, the metaphor of translation falls short: ‘Translation metaphors of scientific thought exclude history; the dynamic of interlanguage change keeps history front and center.’ Creoles are specific and not global lingua *français*; they are time variant and thus a better model for this interlanguage of science.<sup>83</sup> Every science reaches maturity, Serres reminds us, by developing its language. Galison concludes: ‘It seems to be part of our general linguistic ability to set broader meanings aside while regularizing different lexical, syntactic, and phonological elements to serve a local communicative function. So too does it seem in the assembly of meanings, practices, and theories within physics.’<sup>84</sup> So from science’s task of describing nature to historians’ task of describing science, *Creole* as a body and *Creole* as a language are not far from the task at hand; on the contrary, the term and the things it designates can be seen as a challenge for science and even as model for science.

In trying to bring closer together the field of Comparative Literature with what is done in the history and philosophy of science (HPS), I am perhaps most influenced by Hasok Chang’s ‘complementary science,’ or the practice of a double history and philosophy of science that complements science practice and, as he writes, represents the ‘continuation of science by other means’:

Complementary science could trigger a decisive transformation in the nature of our scientific knowledge. Alongside the expanding and diversifying store of current specialist knowledge, we can create a growing complementary body of knowledge that combines a reclamation of past science, a renewed judgment on past and present science, and an exploration of alternatives.<sup>85</sup>

For Chang this means restaging historic experiments not to show where they went ‘wrong’ but what they revealed that was then marginalized in consensus or even forgotten in scientific orthodoxy; revaluing abandoned branches of scientific research; and considering alternate developments for such abandoned or rejected scientific history. The practice of such a ‘complementary

science' for Chang, a very different enterprise from the social history of science, or the epistemic activity of much current philosophy of science, can instead 'further our understanding of nature' and thus can stand alongside scientific knowledge. 'For HPS in the complementary mode, the ultimate object of study is nature, not science.'<sup>86</sup>

Doesn't our exploration of the term of *Creole*, its history, its conceptual reach, its recuperation and application, come close to this project? Doesn't our exploration of *Creole* bring us historically closer to the overlap of bodies and the development of categories to classify them, to the description of nature and the formation of disciplines around its changing nature, to the development of new languages exported into the sciences and the new languages developed by science?

If we look now at our local green markets and see only the fruits or vegetables for which there is a market, if we open our census documents and see only boxes into which we do not fit, classifications that do not fully describe our children, these are signs of a reign of a certain science, or sciences. We can only look forward to more descriptive sciences, more widespread understanding of *corps mêlés*, more robust 'complementary science,' the continuation of science by other means, closer to our bodies and their languages.



#### **4. LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR ET LE BLANC: NIKI HOEKY'S CAJUN CHIASM OF INDIAN MASKING AND NATIVE FUNK**

William McBride (Illinois State University)

'New Orleans is a cosmopolitan city where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town.' Tennessee Williams' Stage Directions to 1947's *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

With the 2008 groundbreaking election of a pejoratively named 'Halffrican American'<sup>87</sup> as President, America's great secret fear – miscegenation – continues to brew and be served up at Tea Parties all across America. Rather than an hysterical paroxysm like talk radio's name-calling, I will interrogate various incarnations of cultural Creolization as epitomized by America's global musical contributions jazz (funk) and rock (Cajun) and celebrate emblematic practitioners such as the 'red' Redbone (Yaqui/Shoshone Native Americans), the 'black' Wild Tchoupitoulas (African-American Mardi-Gras 'Indians,') and the many red, black and 'white' performers of the curiously enduring, universally acclaimed pop song 'Niki Hoeky.' In his Stage Directions to *A Streetcar Named Desire* Tennessee Williams writes: 'New Orleans is a cosmopolitan city where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town.'<sup>88</sup> My recent post-Katrina visits to The Big Easy continue to bear witness to this intermingling, reiterated in Disney's 2009 *The Princess and the Frog* set in New Orleans, by

Tiana's and Charlotte's willingness to kiss another species (a frog), Momma Odie's 'French-kissing' her walking stick snake, and by Tiana's pursuit of her father's dream to launch a restaurant that brings together people from 'all walks of life' – that is, black/white, rich/poor.<sup>89</sup> My title hijacks that of Stendhal's 1830 *Bildungsroman* *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*), and while he refers to the uniform colours of the Army and the Catholic Church, rather I refer to the skin colours of America's indigenous 'red' people, those 'black' men and women who were forcibly imported here, and I add 'white' to signify the Cajun aspect of this sound and phenomena with its genetic intermingling as well. It is where African call and response couples with the European hymn that spawns Gospel; Louis Armstrong bends the military instrument to express Storyville blues and jazz; Chuck Berry synthesizes swing idioms and post-war youth-culture desire through his voice, lyrics and guitar. I also amalgamate my title from the 1960s Cajun-pop song 'Niki Hoeky,' a top forty hit in 1966 for Texan P.J. Proby (James Marshall Smith), co-written by Yaqui Native-American brothers Pat and Lolly Vegas (later of Redbone) and New Orleansian Irish-American white man Jim Ford. I am interested in a composite musical language whose recipe is underwritten by Imperial France (think 'gypsy' Django Reinhardt), its colonial displacement in the American south, its post-bellum *mélange* of Black Yankee, antebellum slave, and free Mulatto traditions combined with Native American and European gumbo *filé* spice (think the mixed heritages of Cherokee/Irish Jimi Hendrix and West-Indian/Irish Bob Marley,) and the mixed genres that make up the Mardi-Gras Indian/Afro-Funk band, The Wild Tchoupitoulas. The solecism 'Halffrican American' is as incomplete as it is silly.

In May of 2011 U.S. President Barack Obama began his European tour in Moneygall, a small village in County Offaly, Ireland in order to connect with his ancestral roots, namely from his great-great-great-grandfather on his mother's side. Obama follows many others of African descent before him in discovering their Irish roots, most recently highlighted by Harvard's Henry Louis Gates' DNA

informed PBS series *Faces of America* (2008) and earlier Alex Haley's exploration of his Irish roots in his TV mini-series *Queen* (dir. by Erman 1993). Other such notable 'children of the plantation' who acknowledge their Irish heritage include Ella Fitzgerald, Alice Walker, Rosa Parks, Ishmael Reed, and Collin Powell. As with most US citizens of the 'melting pot,' very few black Americans retain their pure African heritage. Many have white great great grandparents and many also have Native American blood like Jimi Hendrix. The racial and cultural amalgamation of Red (Native American), Black (former African slaves) and White (Irish immigrants) is chronicled in part by Charles Dickens in his *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) and more fully by Herbert Asbury in *The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld* (1928).<sup>90</sup> With its Native American and Irish American authorship and inherent African funkiness, the pop song 'Niki Hoeky' blends deliciously these musical gumbo ingredients.

Much has been written about funk, that hybrid of black Jimi Hendrix rock and James Brown soul that we typically assign to practitioners Sly Stone and George Clinton's Funkadelic as I do in my 2001 piece on the ubiquitous African-American accent of UFO art and music,<sup>91</sup> but less attention has been directed to Native American music and its idioms. Flutes and powwow drums with their incessant 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4/4 beat are the recognized and often bemoaned signatures of Native music. A typical, early example of this stereotyped music can be found in the musical score of John Ford's 1939 classic *Stagecoach*. Whenever we see John Ford's Apaches we hear the clichéd musical representation of Native American peoples: pounding tom-toms and stark chords. Aside from some 'savage' war whoops during the much-anticipated attack sequence, these indigenous peoples, like the Cheyenne collaborator in the telegraph office near the beginning of the film, have no lines. They appear not only 'dumb,' as in incapable of speech, but unintelligent as well. They are little more than part of the savage backdrop like Monument Valley itself. This musical 'Uncle Tom-Tomism'

underwrites each of the following fairly inclusive list of popular music samplings: Hank Williams 1952 number one country hit ‘Kaw-Liga’ (Fred Rose/Hank Williams), Disney’s 1953 animated *Peter Pan* (Geronimi, Jackson, Luske), particularly the minstrel-like ‘What Made the Red Man Red?’ (Sammy Fain/Sammy Cahn) sung by Candy Candido, the 1960 novelty songs ‘Mr. Custer’ (Fred Darian/De Loryn/Van Winkle) sung by Larry Verne and Johnny Preston’s ‘Running Bear’ (J.P. Richardson), the #1 1960 instrumental hit by the Shadows ‘Apache’ (Jerry Lordan), a song that becomes even more ‘minstrelsy’ twenty years later in the hands of rap pioneers the Sugarhill Gang replete with ‘rap’ lines about ‘Apache,’ ‘Kemosabe!’ and war whoops. Dean Martin’s very silly 1968 macho rant ‘(Too Many Chiefs) Not Enough Indians’ (Baker Knight/Herbert Baker) throws in nearly every Native American cliché in the book (brave, squaw, warpath, peace pipe, tepee, happy hunting grounds, reservation, wampum) with Dino war whooping at song’s end. His attempt to adopt a ‘red man’ voice veers into an Amos and Andy brogue further pejoratively conflating red, black and white. From the same year the world of bubblegum has The Cowsills offer up ‘Indian Lake’ (Tony Romeo) and the following year the 1910 Fruitgum Co. contribute ‘Indian Giver’ (Bobby Bloom/Ritchie Cordell/Bo Gentry) each based on the infernal 1-2-3-4/4 beat. Even Jimi Hendrix’s 1968 unreleased *In the Studio* version of his ‘Cherokee Mist’ (Jimi Hendrix) adopts that clichéd beat, as does 1978’s ‘There’s An Engine in Me’ (Larry Graham) by funksters Graham Central Station, again replete with war whoops. In each of these pop examples there is a kind of affectionate nostalgia for an *ersatz* time and culture that never existed, combined with an uninformed patronizing.

Native American musician, songwriter, and poet Joy Harjo (Muscogee) wishes to make clear that ‘You will not normally hear flutes and powwow drums in my music, yet, these two instruments have become the recognized signature of ‘Native’ music.’<sup>92</sup> And Native American classical composer/musician R. Carlos Nakai (Navajo/Ute) reports that audiences have complained: ‘that’s not American



Indian music because it doesn't have the 1-2-1-2 beat, it doesn't use just rattles and drums, and the performers are not dressed in Native clothing.'<sup>93</sup> Educator *Rena Dennison* insists:

Native American music is as varied as the Native people themselves. The music you hear on the television and in the movies is not Native American music. Most people think of Native music as deep throbbing 'tom-toms' beating fiercely as wild 'Indians' whirl and dance around a bonfire. When you hear a drum beat that goes BOOM-boom-boom-boom, BOOM-boom-boom-boom, BOOM-boom-boom-boom, you can picture in your mind all the things that are in the cartoons and on the television: screaming 'Indians' with war whoops and tomahawks, who attack helpless settlers who are slowly moving west. Is this really what Native Americans did?<sup>94</sup>

While the uncanny tom-tom pattern certainly strikes our ears as stereotypical, in fact my personal visit to an authentic tribal pow-wow at Fort Erie (Ontario, Canada) in the late 1980s revealed strikingly similar 'authentic' patterns. A recording of such drumming can be heard at the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre website.<sup>95</sup> Either way, this 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4 beat is hypnotic and captures the European trained ear.

Two-thirds of Niki Hoeky's song writing team, brothers Pat and Lolly Vegas (née Vasquez) of the Yaqui and Shoshone tribes (along with Mexican heritage) played with Oscar Peterson at the Monterey Jazz and Pop Festival as youngsters out of Fresno California, were in a slew of surf bands through the mid sixties recording under various names, appeared in the 1965 film *It's a Bikini World* (dir. by Stephanie Rothman), were members of the house band on the hit pop music TV show, *Shindig*, along with Leon Russell and Delaney Bramlett, backed up Sonny and Cher, and contributed to the soundtrack of the Elvis Presley Cajun 'white trash' film *Kissin' Cousins* (dir. by Nelson 1964). As top session musicians, they played on Dobie Gray's 1965 hit single 'In Crowd' (Billy Page) and P.J. Proby's 1966 recording of their 'Niki Hoeky.' According to Pat Vegas, it was Jimi Hendrix who talked the musicians into forming an all-Native American

rock group. He told *Record Collector* writer Jeremy Isaac: ‘Hendrix was a friend of ours [...] and he was half [sic] Indian (Cherokee). Once he knew that we were Indian too he used to come and hang with us because of that. Jimi made me aware of my roots: He’d say ‘Native American is beautiful, man, be proud of that.’<sup>96</sup> The band adopted the name Redbone from the derogatory Cajun name for half-breed ‘Rehbon.’ They were signed to Epic Records in 1969, and released their debut album, *Redbone*, in 1970. A double album, it featured the group’s reworking of ‘Niki Hoeky,’ as well as a couple of extended funk instrumentals, the Cajun-influenced ‘Danse Calinda’ and the first track we ever hear from Redbone ‘Crazy Cajun Cakewalk Band’ written again, like ‘Niki Hoeky,’ by the racially intermingled song writing team of Jim Ford/Pat Vegas/Lolly Vegas.

‘Crazy Cajun Cakewalk Band’ is a brilliant self-descriptor – a song about a Native-American rock band creolizing, that is to say, fusing the French Arcadian Cajun tradition and African-American cakewalking together. But wait: is the origin of the cakewalk that pure and that simple? The commonly accepted history of the cakewalk recounts slaves mocking their white masters’ formal ballroom dancing as its origin. They exaggerated those European dance moves like the minuet, dressed in hand-me-down finery tails and big hoop dresses with their cadenced walking and high stepping. Slave owners would carriage down to enjoy the spectacle, apparently blind to the mockery and would cap the festivities by awarding a sweet cake to the best performing couple. Here we discover the origin of the phrase: ‘that takes the cake.’ However Ethel L. Urlin documents a competing origin of the cakewalk in her 1912 ‘little handbook’ entitled *Dancing, Ancient and Modern: The History of the Cake Walk*:

This dance was in vogue forty years ago in the Southern States of America. It originated in Florida, where it is said that the Negroes borrowed the idea of it from the War Dances of the Seminoles, an almost extinct Indian tribe. The Negroes were present as spectators at these dances, which consisted of wild and hilarious jumping and gyrating, alternating with slow processions in which the dancers walked solemnly in

couples. The idea grew, and style in walking came to be practised among the Negroes as an art.<sup>97</sup>

Perhaps cakewalking develops as doubly satirical. Albert and Josephine Butler, in their *Encyclopedia of Social Dance*, echo the Seminole Indian connection, stating that ‘Classes sprang up among the negroes for the teaching of the dance and the proper way to promenade’ in the 1880s. As Florida developed into a *de rigueur* east coast winter haven, the dance ‘spread to Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, and finally New York.’<sup>98</sup> In 1889 ‘The Creole Show’ opened, an ‘all-black production organized by white producer Sam T. Jack [...] with a chorus line of 16 singing and dancing girls.’<sup>99</sup> The show’s ‘Cakewalk’ finale started a dance craze. Perhaps Redbone’s adoption of the cakewalk is not so much an exotic borrowing from African-American tradition, but that both Red and Black have been intermingling easily and chiastically on the dance floor from early on. Chiasm ‘derives its name from the Greek letter X or ‘chi’ and signifies a rhetorical and thematic figure similar to inverted parallelism, whereby words, clauses, phrases, characters and plot elements are exchanged in a mirror-like inversion.’<sup>100</sup> As we will discover, African Americans dress and dance as Native Americans while Native Americans express themselves musically via African-American funk.

A distinction is often drawn between Creole – mixed racial heritage ranging from French, Spanish, African-American, Native American, and Cajun – and those descended from the Canadian or Acadian Diaspora. The Acadians – descendants of the seventeenth-century French colonists who settled in Acadia (located in the Canadian Maritime provinces) – were evicted by the British from 1755-1763 by means of a kind of ethnic cleansing often referred to as the Great Upheaval, the Great Expulsion or *Le Grand Dérangement*. The Acadian Diaspora is a grand story of miscegenation, of easy intermingling: When they got to Louisiana they shared the swamps, bayous and prairies with the Attakapa and Chitimacha tribes and were embraced by Irish Catholics and all the other

Americans in the area. Many today identify themselves culturally as Cajun despite lacking Acadian ancestry. Here are the lyrics to 'Niki Hoeky' as sung by P.J. Proby in 1967:

Umhhh  
 Way Down Louisiana  
 Down in Cajun land  
 Folks got something goin'  
 Goes something like  
 Get a Folky git'cha tootsie

I wants to t'tie ya puppe'tame me  
 Ya dig me on a scoobydoo  
 I'll dig ya on'a scubadie  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you, little girl  
 Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee

Polly Squally Miss Molly  
 Everything's copasetic now  
 Look-a-boo, look at you  
 What I'd like to do to you girl  
 Ya ooh boog-a-boo you  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you, little girl  
 Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee

Umhhh  
 Niki, Niki, Niki Hoeky  
 Pappy's doing time in the pokey  
 Your sisters on a trip  
 Your momma got hip  
 Little girl you're lookin' ok  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you  
 Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee

Umm hmm, hmm

You ooh boog-a-boo you  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you, little girl  
 Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee

Listen to me now  
 Niki, Niki, Niki Hoeky  
 Your Pappy's doing time in the pokey  
 Your sisters on a trip  
 Your momma got hip  
 Little girl you're lookin' ok  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you  
 You ooh boog-a-boo you, little girl  
 Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee

I talk bout your boola  
 Come on talk bout your wee  
 (mouth-watering inhalation as song fades out)  
 Talk bout your boola  
 I talk about your wee  
 Now listen to me, ah  
 (mouth-watering inhalation)

So Pat & Lolly Vegas join forces with white New Orleans Irish-American Jim Ford to write 'Niki Hoeky,' (not to be confused with the doo-wop song from 1956 'Neki Hokey' written by Herbie Cox/Berman Patterson as recorded by The Clefones). 'Niki Hoeky' is a funky Cajun pop song replete with French patois in the lines: 'Folks come an git'cha tootsie/I wants to t'tie ya puppe'tame me,' the last part of 'puppe'tame me' perhaps a corruption of *je t'aime*. Of particular note is that the 'poor white trash' or shanty Irish swamp aesthetic is here with 'your pappy's doing time in the pokey,' akin to Tony Joe White's 1968 swamp rock hit 'Polk Salad Annie' who's 'mama was workin' on a chain gang (a wretched, spiteful, straight-razor totin' woman).' We learn that the underclass Annie would pick this suspicious plant, 'Carry it home and cook it for supper, 'cause that's about all they had to eat.' No surprise her 'Daddy was lazy and no count/Claimed he had a bad back, all that her brothers were fit for was stealin' watermelons out of my truck patch.'<sup>101</sup>

Polk Salad Annie's clichéd swamp folk are not unlike the missing-toothed, big family, fiddle playin' Cajun lightning bug Raymond of *Princess and the Frog*.

Reggie, Darnell and Two Fingers, the film's toothless Cajun, frog hunting humans reiterate this underclass Cajun trope as do the Toothless Man and Mountain Man deviant duo from James Dickey's *Deliverance* (dir. by Boorman, 1972). Each of these stereotyped characters continues the 'underworld' legacy of the impoverished sketched out by Dickens and Asbury. The Delta Queen, Bobbie Gentry, soon covers 'Niki Hoeky'—rumour tells us its co-author Jim Ford wrote her huge hit 'Ode to Billie Joe' (1967) for his then girlfriend Gentry. The song immediately goes international with French crooner Herbert Leonard covering it (in French) in 1967, and German rocker Inga Rumpf releasing it as a b-side in 1968. Girl Group songwriter Ellie Greenwich scores a #1 hit in Japan with her version of 'Niki Hoeky' the same year. The song will live on in covers by British Blues woman Jo Ann Kelly (1974), Burton Cummings of The Guess Who (1976), Swamp Mama Johnson (1996), and Texas Rockers Freddy Steady 5 (2010). Other than versions of the song by Redbone themselves and Bobbie Gentry, most versions present wildly varying lyrics as those performers struggle with the patois. The Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin covers the song on her Lady Soul LP (1968) and turns 'I wants to 'tie ya puppe'tame me' into 'I got a man on the chain gang' which Freddie Garrity of Freddie & the Dreamers twists into 'I wants to retire from a chain gang' and instead of 'Get hip to the consultation of the boolawee' he sings 'you get hip to the competition, a whole lot of grief.'<sup>102</sup> What precisely getting hip to the consultation of the boolawee entails is certainly up for hermeneutic speculation, but a hint may be gleaned from the eroticized mouth-watering inhalation of the original recording and by the 2008 live version by Mr. Proby that makes it more explicit by miming the inhalation of a marijuana cigarette at the end of his performance.<sup>103</sup> Part of the song's charm and mystery is wrapped up in rock 'n' roll's *de rigueur* sex and drugs and the resultant knowledge gained. Most convincing as evidence for the chiasmic relationship between Indian Masking and Native Funk are Aretha's soulful cover and the super slow, down right funky 1973 version by Bobby Rush. These African-

American takes on Indian and Cajun rhythms, themes, (lyrics), and songs lead me to a further cultural Creole amalgamation: The Wild Tchoupitoulas.

The Wild Tchoupitoulas was sired by George Landry, uncle to the men in New Orleans' most popular group, Neville Brothers, who together with those musical nephews and the down home instrumental funk expertise of the Meters (also Landry's nephews and cousins) made in 1976 one phenomenal album of Mardi Gras Indian funk, Cajun and even reggae called *The Wild Tchoupitoulas*. As the legend goes, back in 1966 George Landry came across an old monochrome Indian costume, which he donned for the Mardi-Gras parades in 1967. In 1968 he marched with the Black Eagle tribe wearing a modified version until in 1972 he formed the Wild Tchoupitoulas with his 13th Ward neighbourhood males. George Landry became the uptown folk hero Big Chief Jolly. The sound of The Wild Tchoupitoulas is dominated by Art Neville's funky keyboard work along with percussion heavy, syncopated gritty grooves courtesy of the Meters that serve as background to the Big Chief's adaptations of traditional Native American chants and calls to which the Neville Brothers harmonize and respond.<sup>104</sup>

Those of African ancestry dressing up and dancing as Native Americans in New Orleans during Mardi Gras, known as 'Indian Masking,' harks back to the late nineteenth century. 'By the 1930's their numbers had increased to the point where violence over turf battles between warring tribes was common.'<sup>105</sup> James Sugar Boy Crawford's 1954 hit 'Jock O Mo' ('Iko Iko') chronicles the current, milder version of these clashes which is now less about actual turf and more akin to the African-American oral tradition of taunts known as 'the dozens.' Each of The Wild Tchoupitoulas' songs contains these verbal battle royals. The yearly practice of designing sequin, feather and bead outfits is continued to this day by tribes such as the Wild Magnolias (who also record their brand of funk), Creole Wild West, the Seminoles, and many others. Black Indians dress up in costumes and parade on Mardi Gras and Saint Joseph's Day (March 19) alike.<sup>106</sup> One can read about Mardi-Gras Indians while imbibing from a bottle of 'Jockamo' India

Pale Ale manufactured by New Orleans brewer, Abita, replete with a picture of an Uncle Jolly look-a-like as its logo. The 'Jockamo' Indian chief image festooned in full headdress is also available on corporation t-shirts.

Questions of origin and motivation arise regarding this Indian masking tradition as they did with the cakewalk. One may ask about the cultural and spiritual authenticity of these ceremonial costumes and their uses: Do African Americans dress as Native Americans out of solidarity with another oppressed minority within the white hegemonic culture? Passing as Indians enabled Blacks to escape certain aspects of discrimination. American Indians helped runaway slaves who, on occasion, married into the tribes. Buffalo Bill's popular Wild West Show in the 1880s may also have contributed to African American interest in things Indian. The Fort Davis Historical Site of the National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior traces the origin of the name for African American Civil War soldiers:

Nicknamed Buffalo Soldiers reportedly by the Indians, the soldiers of the black regiments were recruited from the United States Colored Troops that served in the Civil War, from the New Orleans area, from the fringes of the southern states, and from large northern cities. They were former slaves as well as freedmen.<sup>107</sup>

Stationed throughout the country these African American troops engaged in, among many battles, the Indian Wars. Military historian Frank N. Schubert in *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870-1898* examines the alleged affinity and empathy these soldiers experienced with Native Americans. He cites William Leckie's 1967 book, *The Buffalo Soldiers*, and in particular a footnote that supposed:

The origin of the term 'buffalo soldier' is uncertain, although the common explanation is that the Indian saw a similarity between the hair of the Negro soldier and that of the buffalo. The buffalo was a sacred animal to the Indian, and it is unlikely that he would so name an enemy if respect were lacking. It is a fair guess that the Negro trooper understood this and



thus his willingness to accept the title.<sup>108</sup>

Schubert goes on to consider the refutation by Vernon Bellecourt of the American Indian Movement who complains that the name 'Buffalo Soldier' was neither an endearing nor respectful term, rather it described 'these marauding murderous cavalry units' due to 'their dark skin and texture of their hair.'<sup>109</sup> Black soldiers writing in veterans' newspaper articles and requests for pensions display no love for the 'hostile tribes,' 'naked savages,' 'redskins,' 'voodoo niggers,' nor 'red niggers.'<sup>110</sup> Schubert argues Blacks reproduced the 'same racist caricatures employed by whites' toward their oppressed fellows:

Reminiscent of the use among whites of 'blackface' to denigrate and stereotype African-Americans, a black private named Robinson went to a masquerade ball at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, in 1894, dressed as 'an idiotic Indian squaw,' according to a published report by a fellow soldier.<sup>111</sup>

Robinson's racist practice needs to be distinguished from the celebratory Indian Masking of Mardi Gras Indians. Like many working and underclass Republicans and Tea Partiers, these buffalo soldiers ally themselves with the dominant class, repeating politically regressive values in hopes of belonging. This same behavioural political syndrome is illustrated in the 1980 cult classic *Caddyshack* (dir. by Harold Ramis).

Bill Murray's working class intellectual character, Carl Spackler, the Assistant Groundskeeper, is forced to do the Judge's bidding when it comes to the gopher. In a telling line delivered to the gopher, Carl lectures: 'I think it's time to teach these varmints a little lesson about morality and about what it's like to be a decent upstanding member of a society!'<sup>112</sup> Here is the lowest member of the Country Club 'food chain' mocking the gopher as 'one of the lowest member of the food chain' as Carl echoes a lecture he has doubtlessly endured many times. One of several cinematic parodies *Caddyshack* performs has Carl starring in his own Vietnam film à la *Apocalypse Now* (dir. by Coppola 1979) replete with

military drumming/electric guitar non-diegetic soundtrack, voice-over narration (akin to Michael Herr's narration for Captain Willard [Martin Sheen]), alcohol and drugs on the battlefield, and the poignant irony of the powerful, elder male pitting against each other two of the lowest members of the food chain – not unlike the U.S. government ordering African American soldiers to fight the frontier Indian Wars: Judge Smails pits Carl vs. the 'Varmint Cong' (gopher) in *Caddyshack* just as Henry Kissinger and John MacNamara pit the young black soldier in *Apocalypse Now*, Tyrone 'Clean' Miller (Lawrence Fishburne) vs. the 'yellow' Viet Cong. Before his final battle when he calls in his version of napalm or agent orange in the guise of plastic explosives shaped as woodland creatures, Carl begins singing the inspirational pro-Viet Nam number one hit song of 1966 by Staff Sgt. Barry Sadler, 'The Ballad of the Green Beret' (Robert Moore/Barry Sadler): 'Silver wings upon his chest/These are men, America's best.' As Carl moulds plastic explosives into shapes resembling the gopher's allies, 'the harmless squirrel and the friendly rabbit,' he articulates the power position wielded over him by Smails: 'I'm gonna use you two guys to do my dirty work for me.' The undereducated working class assistant groundskeeper hunts with extreme prejudice the other lowest member of the food chain for the rich, elderly white man: 'Varmint Poontang!' he exclaims as he aims his gun; the black youth hunts the 'yellow' villager for the rich, elderly white man: 'Run Charlie!' he screams from his helicopter;<sup>113</sup> the Buffalo Soldier hunts the 'red' man for the rich, elderly white man: 'Red Nigger!' he thinks when he sees these 'naked savages.'

Historian and buffalo soldier descendent, William Gwaltney, claims these historical African and Native American groups did not share common origins nor goals: 'Buffalo Soldiers fought for recognition as citizens in a racist country and [...] American Indian people fought to hold on to their traditions, their land, and their lives.'<sup>114</sup> Despite the divide between the Black and the Red, Tennessee Williams' warm and easy intermingling persists as demonstrated by the

genealogical scholarship of Angela Y. Walton-Raji, author of 2007's *Black Genealogy Research. African American Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes*, and her website: 'The African-Native American Genealogy Homepage: Celebrating the Oklahoma Freedmen and all Blended Families with African and Native American Histories.'<sup>115</sup> While researching Mardi Gras Indians I came across an interesting discussion thread following a YouTube film of Mardi Gras Indians that accompanied Dan Baum's Newyorker.com piece: 'Mardi Gras Indians Do Battle.' One commentator, 'redgreengrrl,' bemoaned the whole enterprise: 'This [Indian Masking] is offensive to Native Americans and it should be stopped. Retire the Mardi Gras Indian!' redgreengrrl reproduces the familiar 'Uncle Tom' charge. Several commentators claiming mixed blood who follow her, each remark upon the irony of a 'white girl' and 'feminist' politically correcting them as they gently and at other times quite rudely shout her down, calling the one who cried racism a racist.<sup>116</sup>

Discussing race is a tricky business, as soon as one does, one can be considered a racist – in the way that discussing economics makes one an economist, or discussing Marx, a Marxist. As the great cultural critic Leslie Fiedler, my SUNY-Buffalo teacher would demonstrate in classes and in his classic *Love and Death in the American Novel* over 50 years ago, Americans cannot wake from the 'nightmare of *miscegenation*'<sup>117</sup> as in the racist Tea-Party resistance to Barack Hussein Obama, whether it is a question of obstructing health care reform or doubting his birth certificate. Here is the Carl Spackler syndrome: fear – fear of difference, of the other, of the unknown. The genealogical work of Angela Y. Walton-Raji and the obvious mixing of races that continues apace in the United States and globally demonstrates our awakening from this nightmare, preferring Tennessee Williams' warm and easy intermingling like that of Redbone and Wild Tchoupitoulas. The dialectic is preserved as African Americans chiasmically dress, dance and celebrate as Native Americans while those of indigenous origin express themselves musically by means of the funk vernacular.

These multiple iterations of 'Niki Hoeky' by soul, country, rock, pop and international artists serve as both theme music and wake-up call for us to continue to get hip to the consultation of the boolawee.

## **5. READING OTHERWISE, SPEAKING OTHERWISE: LENNY BRUCE AND KAREN FINLEY IN HANNAH ARENDT'S POLIS**

Kelsey Craven (Northwestern University)

I arrived at the conclusion which I always, at the time, expressed to myself in one sentence, a sentence which clarified it to me: 'When one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself *as a Jew*.' Not as a German, not as a world-citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man.<sup>118</sup> – The Arendtian Condition

Hannah Arendt first elaborated her ideal of the Greek polis in *The Human Condition*, although it would remain a touchstone for all of her later political thought. Conceived as a society of equals, each member of the polis was said to distinguish himself one from the other and thereby reveal 'who' he was as opposed to 'what.'<sup>119</sup> This tension between the 'who' and the 'what' of a man is striking, as identity, the 'what,' is here eschewed as the outside of the political, and the very practice of politics is possible only by virtue of this exclusion. The polis is to be a classless space. There is no internal structure to it, no hierarchy to speak of, and yet it is permitted to exist by virtue of those identities that it bars from participating, by way of hierarchies external to it.

These externalized hierarchies are never made public and thus, in accordance with Arendt's own theorizing, it is an error of thought to think them 'external.' This is, however, precisely what Arendt does, for her political 'outside'

consists of the private insides, the ‘behind-the-scenes,’ of the public stage of the polis which go unthought-of and unmentioned by the Athenian politicians themselves. This mute, dehistoricized realm of stability and slavery, this realm of the body and its material demands, wherein life unfolds in accordance to ‘what’ one is but never ‘who,’ is the realm of both Animal Laborans and Homo Faber. Animal Laborans labours. It is the biological activity of the human body itself: growing, metabolizing, and decaying. And it is the province of women and slaves. Homo Faber works. Here one finds artisans busy at their craft, stabilizing the human life that is Animal Laborans, and thereby permitting the public sphere of politics to reveal the potentialities of man unburdened by material concerns.<sup>120</sup> Both, according to Arendt, find their space in the Greek household, *oikos*, and are therefore economic in nature. As both concern the ‘what’ of a man, the ‘facts’ of a life, that which must be given and/or inherited, neither can be political. Identity, in Arendt’s terms, is only ever private, and to live according to one’s identity is a privation.

And yet, in 1964, just six years after *The Human Condition* was published, Arendt gave the Gaus interview during which she asserted this essay’s rather remarkable opening quote: ‘When one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew,’ not as any one of the larger, and therefore more abstract legal titles in the name of which one might make an appeal. Not as one who exists unmarked and, therefore, without body, not as an Athenian, not as a political actor – according to Arendt’s own description – or in the crassest of modern caricatures, not as a wealthy, white, straight, male citizen of age. Indeed, in 1968, four years after she gave the Gaus interview and ten years after *The Human Condition* was published, Arendt reiterated this assertion concerning her own beset identity only more forcefully, writing:

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, in her impressive biography of Arendt, asserts that this was ‘the transformation of [Arendt’s] personal problem into an unambiguous political stance.’<sup>121</sup> However, the astute Arendt reader must

ask herself: by way of what sleight of thought was this supposedly impossible transformation achieved? How is one to understand such a conversion in light of the unambiguous nature of Arendt's explication of the Greek polis?

One explanation is that the Nazis, strictly speaking, were not political by virtue of their obsession with the bodies and identities of others. In light of Arendt's other writings, most famously *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, this explanation seems likely. Another, however, is that Arendt's ideal of the Greek polis, like any ideal, was sheer fantasy – comforting, to be sure, but utterly inoperable in the face of modern political modes and their consequent, horrifying realities. Comfort, however, does have its personal uses. Particularly in dark times – and Arendt was quite clear that her time, our time, is a dark one. More than this, we might read Arendt's political fantasy as a consequence of the political reality she experienced in Germany and France, thereby accounting for her peculiar, personal susceptibility to such an ideal of seeming impersonality, and explaining why she was inclined to read identity as privation and ban it from her ideal of politics.<sup>122</sup> For it was by virtue of identity that the Jews were deprived by the Third Reich – deprived of their belongings, deprived of their homes, deprived of their work, deprived of one another, and finally, deprived of their lives. To put this as plainly as possible: the Holocaust would not have occurred as it did without the identity card, and the identity card is 'fact'; it describes 'what' someone is, but never 'who.' To understand 'who' someone is would necessitate a narrative; we would have to be told their story. And a story necessitates a reading. Arendt's polis, then, is a space of storytelling. That she so insists that these stories be recounted by seemingly disembodied voices that suffer neither hunger nor thirst is a consequential and unfortunate oversight arising from her insistence that one speak and act so as to achieve an identity, not on the basis of an identity. As such, the minoritized figure was disavowed in much of her work and thought. Her life, however, tells a rather different story – more complicated and more nuanced. Arendt wanted a political

space characterized by freedom of thought and deed, democracy without representation, equality by way of singularity and, above all, she wanted an historicized consciousness. And yet, in 1930s Germany, her body was being threatened as a generalized idea, which is to say: as woman (although she was want to attest to this) and as Jew. Her body was being made public, and its publicity was not singular, but rather an abstraction. Her solution was to own this, to make cause with the Zionists, and to fight back as a Jew. And this was a noble response, an unusual response among German intellectuals of the time, a truly denatured response – in no way hybrid, and yet utterly extraordinary. She had known prior to the burning of the Reichstag that the Nazi Party was her enemy, it was the subsequent revelation that her friends, her intellectual milieu, sought naturalization and were thus also her enemies that was so stunning to her. And it was her stance against this majoritarian milieu that set her apart as a thinker that was singular, agonal, and political, according to her own reading of the Greek polis. This is to say, she distinguished herself as a thinker because she actually did something! She risked her body<sup>123</sup> so as to secure a space for her own speech and that of others, that the Nazi Party should not become the historical narrator, that other bodies, and her own body, might speak as singulars, that history might at once be plural and unrepeatable. She disliked writing about this risk, however, and this was not a risk she would have chosen for herself. Wherefrom the ideal of the Greek polis and her gloss of the slavery, sexism, and racism which made it possible. Wherefrom her neglect of all of those made mute by her ideal – including, ironically, herself. However, Hannah Arendt did not choose to be attacked as a Jew. It was not her speech nor an act that caused her to be attacked, but rather the political fact of her Jewishness. And it was the Nazis who called attention to this fact, not herself. Her response to this identitarian and homogenizing ‘calling-out’ of sorts was exceptional. But it was experienced personally as the privation and persecution that it necessarily was. The ‘facts’ were traumatic. Identity is a burden. Which is to say, a body is a burden. As



Karen Finley succinctly asserts: ‘It’s a good life when no one thinks you ever piss or shit.’<sup>124</sup>

In many ways the art and trials of Lenny Bruce and Karen Finley respond directly to the lacunae of Arendt. While both take identity as a given to the extent that it is inherited, they do not consider identity to be ‘fact’ in the same manner as Arendt. Identities are rather seen as ideological conditions with material consequences for individual lives. The conceptual equivalent to the work of Homo Faber (when he crafts something like a chair), identities are a part of ‘the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species’ ever-recurring life cycle.’<sup>125</sup> The tension between the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ of a man is, as a consequence, not so much a problem to be overcome theoretically, but the very fabric with which these artists create their performances. Moreover, these performances admirably satisfy Arendt’s requirements of political action, which ‘no matter what its specific content, always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries’<sup>126</sup> – only here it is the nature of identity itself which is being forced open, publicly.

Like Arendt, both performers found their bodies imperilled by the nation-state in a bid to protect its official self-conception, or rather, its national identity. In the case of Lenny Bruce, the crimes were linguistic. He spoke of the human body and its fundamental needs in idiomatic registers that were incomprehensible to the mass-subject, and the Law that seeks to conjure it. His crime was that he did so publicly, openly, in those spaces where the masses are said to congregate. To state this strongly: his shifting idiomatic registers disrupted those narratives which permit belief in an authentic ‘American society,’ in a homogenized public. This fact is made abundantly clear by snippets of Bruce’s 1961 obscenity trial in San Francisco, California (this was one of many), wherein the prosecuting attorney, Wollenberg, argued: he ‘believes that he can go out amongst us in *society* [...] using vile and profane language; no, this is a man that is going out

into the *public* and believes he has license to use this language.<sup>127</sup> Lenny Bruce, however, took political asylum in this language; he was addressing the mass-subject in idiomatic codes that it could not understand, for he asserted that same year, in 1961:

That's why I structure it, so the guy in the Ku Klux Klan [...]. He's probably a very down guy, man, *in his area*, and it's correct for him. But incorrect for me, man. Because probably *I identify* with getting schlepped around. Now, columnists who get down on me [...]. I used to get really *farbissener*.<sup>128</sup> *Then* I started thinking: No man, it's not that, I just come from a different generation. And I started to think that the people I relate best to [...] since my language is completely larded with *hip* idiom, *Yiddish* idiom [...]. So whether the word is either 'dig,' 'bread,' or cool,' or, or, Jewish words, or 'farbissener,' or completely erudite, pedantic words like 'euphemistic,' '*anthropomorphiastic*' [sic], so then with each one, he goes 'what's it mean,' what's 'schmuck' mean, what's 'bread' mean. It gets to be a what's-it-mean!<sup>129</sup>

The indication here is that some species of subaltern is speaking, and at Carnegie Hall, but in a register that cannot be understood by dominant ideologies – and yet it is speaking about the Law, addressing itself to the Law, at the very moment that it asserts its difference by way of its incomprehensibility to this Law. Lenny Bruce is demanding a right to difference and singularity, and he is here conjuring a counter public, a denatured polis, that must be erudite, hip, and more specifically, hip to Yiddish. He goes on to suggest that those who are over the age of 40, those who are square, or overly *goy*,<sup>130</sup> those who may be incapable of bearing the onus of reading the mass-subject as otherwise, those who cannot locate themselves in the non-space of self-alienated other that identifies with being schlepped around, should not be permitted to his shows, but rather that they wait in the car and have someone translate it for them after. The Law can only ever take him out of context, can only ever fetishize his language, can only ever misunderstand him, and thus, is in no position to persecute or try him. And the upstanding KKK man, whom he discusses regularly in his shows, is not his peer.

Karen Finley integrated this same problem into her dialogical performance piece ‘The Session,’ although here it is the female body and its life – indeed her own, as she performs this piece naked – that appears as illegible to the psychotherapist:

*Woman:* I don’t need to justify myself to you. (pause) You won’t ever understand. You got the dick, the power, the hope. I could never grow up wishing to be president. All I can wish for is to be the president’s lady and not get paid – even if I am redesigning the entire healthcare system.

*Man:* So you feel as if you’ve never existed in history.

*Woman:* Please don’t look at me with your perverted sense of understanding. Please don’t talk to me with your pathetic over-shaved sensitivity because you make me more determined than ever that there is nothing worse than a liberal shrink.

*Man:* You’re just angry because you never had a career.

*Woman:* Here’s my resume – I have had 3 children, 2 miscarriages and 1 abortion. I’ve been a mother, a whore and a slave. I’ve been needed, rejected but never valued.

*Man:* How’s your drinking?

*Woman:* You don’t get it do you? You see Kitty Dukakis, you see Betty Ford drunk and drugged. Why? Because they’re bored. BOREDOM. The carpool just didn’t do it. The ironing board as an artform just didn’t make it. (pause) Say something! SAY SOMETHING!

*Man:* What do you want me to say?

*Woman:* This whole setup is that I’ve got something wrong and you’ve got something right. But, I don’t see it that way – You got something wrong and I got something right.<sup>131</sup>

Finley’s performance itself and the excessiveness of her vocal registers subvert the above dialogue, and thus its constitutive roles. Her performance of the Man is cool, condescending, lilting, in a higher timbre, whereas the Woman is crotchety,

paranoid, accusatory, and yet hysterically measured. ‘This whole setup’ is mocked in its double performance, made uncomfortably humorous, as Finley speaks a language of male dominance that pins the Woman, and is ventriloquized by both the Man and the Woman, at the very moment they both claim to struggle against it. ‘This whole setup’ is psychotherapy as a microcosm of the larger superstructure of patriarchal society, to which the Woman submits to ‘get better.’ At issue is a unique female body – its labours, its miscarriages, its toxicity, its purity. And yet it is the privation of the female body, its fetishized absence in history that the Woman is trying to articulate and narrate to the Man, that the Woman is trying to make public by claiming it, indeed, as her *résumé*. The problem for this Woman, however, is that she has not structured it linguistically to be incomprehensible to the Law, as Bruce had done. She is not conjuring a new public, but rather addressing herself to the mass-subject as figured by the psychotherapist, who cannot hear the unique history of her sexed body due to the pre-existing ideology of gender. The Session continues:

*Man:* You aren’t wearing a bra today, are you?

*Woman:* No, I’m not wearing a bra today. In fact, I’m not wearing anything today.

*Man:* You had a choice in your appearance – you don’t have to wear make-up or a skirt, or wear perfume. By not wearing a bra, by being naked, you are saying that you desire me, you want me!

*Woman:* Let me say this: Women are tired of defending and explaining their bodies, the care of their bodies, the presentation of their bodies. Women are tired of being looked at as a loaded gun.

The Woman is being misunderstood. Yet it is not even her speech that is at issue, but rather the Law’s incapacity to hear her as one capable of speech. To the extent that her body is at issue, she cannot act politically within the larger rubric of world history or rather, she cannot act outside of the household or *oikos*. Arendt

understood this well, writing in 1932:

Not only must women accept, despite their legal equality, less pay than men in comparable positions, but they are still left with tasks which are no longer compatible with their new position. These tasks are based partly on social, partly on biological facts: In addition to her profession, a woman must take care of a household and look after her children. Thus a woman's freedom to make her own living seems to imply either enslavement in the family or dissolution of the family.<sup>132</sup>

The *oikos*, according to Arendt, has come to distinguish the modern nation-state, which is now not characterized by individual human achievement, by action, but rather by behaviour, by a collective gathering around the phony phantasmatic, around the ephemeral, around the dead as parlour trick. And it is this gathering that permits the experience of mass subjectivity which constitutes the mass-subject. The disaster of a multitude: fires, airplane crashes, earthquakes, assassination of public figures, national traumas, or rather, the 'conditions of mass society or mass hysteria [wherein] we see all people suddenly behave as though they were members of one family, each multiplying and prolonging the perspective of his neighbor.'<sup>133</sup> According to Michael Warner, in *Publics and Counterpublics*, this commonality is not, however, localized merely in catastrophe, for it is further concentrated in the celebrity body and the life, or rather travails, of the icon.<sup>134</sup> This is our *séance* table, what unites and constitutes us as mass public, and it is created for us via the prism of mass media, like public opinion which belongs not to individuals, but to a conglomerate that was constituted at the very moment of its reporting.<sup>135</sup> These bodies, these catastrophes, these statistics, are endlessly repeatable and re-enacted, founding the very existence of the mass public through the deployment of the mass subject. Insofar as it unites us, however, it also alienates us from ourselves. Warner reflects:

It is at the moment of recognizing ourselves as the mass subject, that we

also recognize ourselves as minority subjects. As participants of the mass subject, we are the 'we' that can describe our particular affiliations of class, gender, sexual orientation, race, or subculture only as 'they.' This self-alienation is common to all of the contexts of publicity, but it can be variously interpreted within each. The political meaning of the public subject's self-alienation is one of the most important sites of political struggle in contemporary culture.<sup>136</sup>

The mass subject of the twentieth century was unmarked: white, well-to-do, straight, male, and if female, sexualized. I would like to add parenthetically, however, that within the twenty-first century this mass-subject is more stridently becoming a group of mass-subjects, the better to market to, according to economics and dominant ideology. What unites the mass public is not its sympathy with the mass subject *per se*, insofar as the mass subject is representative of a tiny fraction of the population, but rather the public's consumption of it by way of the mass media. As such, the very thing that gathers mass society together is what disenfranchises the individual and abstracts him from himself. If there is a mass, monolithic 'we,' 'I' must be 'they,' insofar as my singularity makes me, as an individual, counter to the homogeneity of a 'we,' its very opposite, and perhaps, more antagonistic to the mass than even the 'they' in which I will be localized. This 'we' is totalitarian in structure, the presumption of a mass public that speaks for all. And we see this mass public conjured in Attorney Wollenberg's appeal to the public, to an 'authentic' American people's culture,' that is outraged by the language of Bruce. It was again intoned in 1989 by Jesse Helms when he targeted a group of artists which included Robert Mapplethorpe, Andres Serrano, and later, Karen Finley, in his proposed amendment that forbade the National Endowment for the Arts from funding work 'that was obscene or offensive to taxpayers.' Taxpayers!?! Finley recounts in her memoir: 'The anti-NEA team referred to these 'taxpayers' again and again over the course of the controversy that was to follow. It was as if they thought that the only people who paid taxes were the people who voted for them.'<sup>137</sup> That this

amendment passed represents a consolidation of the term ‘taxpayer,’ which is a consolidation of the American people as a common singular constructed within the courts. Such a consolidation is the very antithesis of democracy, of plurality, of political life, for it precludes both action and the individual, neither of which can be understood fully by referring to what has come before. Rather the individual engaged in action must risk misunderstanding in the present so as to reveal his/her meaning over time, which is to say that the individual only ever exists by way of an historicized consciousness.

This historicized consciousness is necessarily counter to mass society insofar as this mass *is* only to the extent that it is homogenized, to the extent that it is without distinction, to the extent that it follows the laws of behaviour, and thus constitutes itself as a mass. The organizing principle of the mass is statistics, which marks all difference as deviation and abnormality.<sup>138</sup> As mentioned earlier, however, it is precisely the deployment of these statistics, the reporting of public opinion, that constitutes this mass public, and thus constitutes a middling, an average, a respectable, a normative, a ‘taxpayer.’ For what constitutes the mass subject, catastrophe and iconicity, are both endlessly repeatable and entirely interchangeable to the extent that they anticipate the same emotional reaction, namely the centralization of the mass public, the literal incarnation of society, of ‘the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family’<sup>139</sup> wherein a mobilization of the country’s shoppers is an adequate response to America’s 9/11, and 9/11 must only ever refer to America. The result is a dehistoricization, due to the very incapacity of the individual to act publicly, wherein events ‘lose their significance, that is, their capacity to illuminate historical time.’<sup>140</sup> The idiomatic performances of Bruce and Finley ground themselves in historical time and make a mockery of the dominant ideologies of their day, ideologies that are still very much present. And in the instances of both performers, they were a little too successful in disrupting the Law’s univocal workings. Lenny Bruce was quite literally destroyed by the Law in the end, dying

bankrupt as a result of massive legal fees in 1966, two years after his last arrest in New York and his last losing appeal before the Illinois State Supreme Court. No one would book him. Club owners were frightened. He lodged complaints with the FBI that the courts were conspiring to violate his rights. No legal action on his behalf was taken. Bruce sought an injunction from the New York Court of Appeals that would prevent D.A.'s from arresting him in the future. He appeared before Thurgood Marshall:

Lenny pleaded that he was like a carpenter whose tools were being taken away. He compared the denial of his rights to 'a nigger who wants to use a toilet in Alabama.'

'You're not a Negro, Mr. Bruce,' said Judge Marshall.  
'Unfortunately not, Your Honor.'  
And Lenny's request was denied.<sup>141</sup>

The good news, I suppose, is that Marshall became the first black American male to sit on the United States' Supreme Court. The bad news is that he would be replaced, upon his retirement, by Clarence Thomas – a man who was a 'Negro' and who would not in any way identify with being 'schlepped around' – according to some bizarre, dehistoricized, late-capitalist identitarianism. Clarence Thomas. What a hybrid! I doubt the irony would have been lost on Bruce, for it points up the porous fungibility of the mass subject and the steadfast stricture of behaviour, wherein the 'what' of a man is more important than the 'who' of a man. And, to keep up appearances and save racist face, one black man must be replaced by another black man, as if he were exchangeable.

Such exchangeability, however, is not only dehistoricized, it is necessarily disembodied. This is to say: political identities exist regardless of one's comfort with them, and while there may be no true originary, there is always a history that is necessarily plural, necessarily constituted and worked upon by inexchangeable singulars, and this history, these narratives, will necessarily be deployed within a sociality. The question is how? And by whom? To what end? And in what



register? To speak and read otherwise, is to speak and read as a singular that is constituted by its own exteriority, and even by its own alterity to itself, that is: it is to speak and read towards the other, as both inexchangeable and timely. And it is the assumption of a responsibility that is necessarily social. The ground of this sociality is the body, Animal Laborans and Homo Faber, for it is the assumption of responsibility for the self by way of responsibility for, and to, the other, which is necessarily a body, in excess of an image or a word. To act politically, then, might begin with the very real risk of that part of ourselves which is most fragile, which can get sick, which can die – and to risk together, in difference and conflict. Further the assumption of responsibility for, and to, the other, necessitates also a responsibility for those nation-states and corporations which mobilize these political narratives for profit, against the singularity and timeliness that is the body. I would thus like to close by re-articulating Arendt's political stance in the wake of the burning of the Reichstag, but in more inclusive, and perhaps uncomfortable, terms, so as to state: 'When one is attacked as a Body, one must defend oneself *as a Body*.' The meaning and application of such an assertion is intentionally open.



## **6. TOWARD A GLOBAL THEORY OF CREOLIZATION AS AN EMERGENT PROCESS BY OPPOSITION TO MULTICULTURALISM AS A CONFIGURATION OF IDENTITIES**

Jean-Marie Grassin (Université de Limoges)

There cannot be any conclusive discussion about creolization without an agreement on terms and methodological perspectives. The seminar on ‘Creolization versus multiculturalism’ organized by Shu-Mei Shih, Maya Boutaghou and Françoise Lionnet from UCLA, and other panels in the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) 2010 conference in New Orleans, show a general slippage of terms about creolization and a wide array of problematic approaches to linguistic and cultural contacts in postcolonial world literature. Considering also the variety of situations labelled as being creole in the thesaurus of the *International Dictionary of Literary Terms*, if we mean to arrive at a set of coherent definitions of creolization, we should naturally take into account the polysemic, sometimes contradictory, uses made of the root word creole (in English, 1604 from the French, and after Spanish or Portuguese). Linguists and anthropologists sometimes have been terming as creoles hybrid languages, pidgins, and cultures lacking coherence with the phenomena characterizing the creolosphere. If we are to approach a global but specific theory of creolization, a distinction has to be made between contact languages used in

multicultural situations with little cultural base, and creoles *stricto sensu* as integrative processes.

Creolization as a general emergence process derives from an original paradigm based on the model of the creole languages in the sugar islands in the eighteenth century which can be declined in a variety of historical and geographical situations. On the syntagmatic axis, it develops four sub-paradigms: 1. in a /colonial/ context 2. involving imported /slave/ labour 3. the acquisition of a way of communicating within the /masters' cultural system/ 4. results in the creation of a new /language/. The /colonial/ element in the sugar islands has been extended, among other qualifications, to being 'postcolonial', 'postmodern', or 'global'; /imported slave labour/ to 'dominant-dominated situations', 'migrant culture', 'marginality', 'subaltern', and so on; /master's system/ to 'hegemonies', 'exploitation', 'oppression', 'sexism', 'logocentrism', 'presentism', and so on. As to /language/, the concept includes naturally the grammatical communication systems (*langues*) such as creole, but also cultural or social codes (*langages*) and what is called 'language-game' (*Sprachspiel*).

Definitions become more elusive when we consider the relation of 'creole', as a definite linguistic phenomenon, to 'creolization', as a cultural in-becoming result. When preparing the article on creolization for the *Dictionnaire International des Termes Littéraires*, the editor had to list all acceptations of the term in the section called 'Semantical study' recorded in the lexical surveys on international literary criticism. They had to be sorted from the most specific to the more complex or extensive. It was particularly difficult to condense into one formula the various recent statements of Caribbean writers about creolization because it is to them 'unknowable', 'still to come', 'unforeseeable', and so on. For them, it is not a 'concept', nor an 'idea', a 'school', a 'movement', but an 'imaginary'. In an attempt to understand what such a global imaginary might be, this non-definition of creolization could be formulated in one questionable paradigm:

Creolization is 1. a novel /dynamics/ (tentatively termed an ‘imaginary’), 2. manifested in the language and the discourse of /‘creolized’/ peoples, 3. acting as a ferment in the /postcolonial/ world out of conflicting tensions, 4. to facilitate the unforeseeable emergence of a still-to-be-known /relationship of men/ to their neighbours and to the universe.

For practical purposes, we could distinguish seven successive and overlapping stages or aspects in its extension from the colonial experience to the postmodern process of creolization:

- (1) It was used first to name the hybrid languages emerging in the tropical islands, ‘the Isles’, from the relationship of European planters and their African slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;
- (2) The persons and products originating from those islands;
- (3) Creolization describes the original constitution of a cultural and linguistic space in the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (the ‘creosphere’ properly said);
- (4) then, by comparison, the emergence of other hybrid languages in other times and spaces (have been notably termed creoles German based *Unserdeutsch*, English based *Bichelamar*, *Gullah*, *Ndjuka*, various pidgins, *Pitcairnian*, *Sarramaccan*, *Sranan*. Spanish based *Chavacano*, *Palenquero*, *Papiamentu*, *Chamorro*, Malay based in Indonesia *Peranakan*, *Betawi*, *Kupanguese*, *Bandan*, *Ambones*, in Singapour *Baba*, in Sri Lanka).
- (5) More generally and not always in accordance with the historical acceptance of the term, the contamination of a given language under the influence of another was sometimes included in the category of creolization.
- (6) Still more extensively, and sometimes surprisingly some papers in the 2010 ACLA conference on the general theme presented representations of hybrid speech, cross- or transcultural phenomena in Korean, Japanese, Chinese literatures as cases of creolization.
- (7) After 1981, Édouard Glissant and other Caribbean writers have been referring to *créolisation* as the difficult to define ‘imaginary’ that imbues the literature and culture not only of the creole islands but also of the postcolonial, postmodern world at large, as opposed to the levelling effects of globalization, beyond the concepts of hybridization and acculturation. Creolization appears as a matrix for the emergence of identities into the global landscape. Creolized peoples appropriate pre-existing concepts, reformulate them and send them back to the world which produced them with diffracted meanings.

The extraordinary 'productivity of the signifier' raises questions: is it possible to theorize creolization as a coherent all-encompassing category, a specific global paradigm? Are the constitution of any mixed language, all major interbreeding between languages, every trans- and cross-cultural experience cases of creolization? What is the rationale of the 'contradistinction' between creolization and multiculturalism posited by the ACLA seminar? How does this opposition lead to a general theory of creolization? There is no answer to that without examining how the concept of creolization relates to connected or opposite notions, such as interculturalism, transculturalism, interethnicity, hybridization, *métissage*, diaspora, assimilation, acculturation, *créolité* (Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, Jean Bernabé), *antillanité* (Édouard Glissant), *négritude* (Aimé Césaire), *tout-monde* (Édouard Glissant), and so on, all terms belonging either to the general nomenclature of languages and cultures in contact, or more specifically to the Caribbean and postcolonial discourse. The possible resulting definition of creolization as an emergent process raises epistemological and methodological issues in comparative literature and culture.

In lexicography, a standard procedure to define an object is to bring it to par with a congruent term to mark the difference. There is no productive comparison without parity and divergences. Given the close relationship between language and culture, creolization and multiculturalism constitute a pertinent oppositional pair. The one – creolization – is a linguistic phenomenon, the other – multiculturalism – is, just as the word itself spells, a cultural one. One is a dynamic process, the other a configuration, a state of affairs. One is a syndrome in emergence, the other a polyphonic situation. One is a fusion of heterogeneous elements into something having no precedent, the other a juxtaposition of distinctive entities inside a given super-system. Opposed as they may be in nature, the two phenomena do not exclude one another, one possibly leading to the other. Creolization, as a novel linguistic phenomenon, is triggered by a traumatic type of

cultural contact, and multiculturalism in certain conflicting conditions may bring a new form of creolization about.

Linguistic creolization cannot be separated from its cultural aspects. Robert Chaudenson, in what remains a reference work on creolization, *Des Îles, des hommes, des langues. Essai sur la créolisation linguistique et culturelle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), shows convincingly that the creole linguistic process can be extrapolated to the general dynamics of cultural creole systems including music, cooking, popular medicine, religion, magic, *oraliture*. Jazz in New Orleans, neither European nor African, but an emerging music, is as much a phenomenon of creolization as the creole language itself in some parts of Louisiana.

The trauma theory remains at the foundation of an understanding of creolization. Creolization seems like an ever open wound. The radical difference opposing heterogeneous elements in the emergence of a creole syndrome should be spelled with an 'a', according to Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance*. The progressive form of the term being derived from a present participle and the suggestion that this *différance* is ever differed aptly characterizes the dynamic vibration of the constitutive elements. The creole language, as an emergent process, is kept in cultural *différance*, forever remembering the drama of its origins: slavery. Creole is consubstantially based on an original *différend* (being at odds) as François Lyotard defines the inequality characterizing the relationship between master and the slaves. Such a *différend* is an undecidable dispute resulting from the fact that one party cannot voice a wrong (*tort*) because the other speaks within a different 'language-game' (Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiel*) or 'genre of discourse'. Creolization remains a lingering 'trace' of the attempt made by the slaves to voice their own codes of discourse.

Another lingering trace of the origin of creolization in the plantation society is a principle of tropicality; it would still be exceptional to have a situation be termed as creole in cold or temperate climates. Although the Roman

colonization of Europe giving rise to the romance languages in the high Middle Ages or the Norman conquest of England in 1066 to Middle English meet other criteria, they are not usually described as creolizations. Even now with the extension of creolization to the *tout-monde* of Édouard Glissant, creolization ever connotes the tropics. Economic conditions in the tropical areas colonized by other European nations gave rise to a variety of creole languages, whether an English based one in Jamaica, a French one in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean islands, several Portuguese ones in Brazil, Cabo Verde, possibly a Dutch creole in Saint Martin. A basic definition of the word 'creole' refers to someone who was born in the plantation islands, either a European or an African, in some places both, and something specific to tropics by opposition to an outsider or as a tradition, an artefact, a dish, an import from Europe or Africa. The core definition of creoleness remains the origin in the tropical islands. Outside of the creolosphere, the imaginary of creoleness is imbued with an exotic myth tinged by eroticism. Being creole is restricted to being from the tropical islands, but creolization as process has been extrapolated to comparable phenomena around the world and some hybrid languages in America, Africa and Asia have been termed as creoles.

Creolization as a term seems to have appeared in the *Discours antillais* (Paris: Le Seuil) of the Caribbean author and philosopher Édouard Glissant as early as 1981 and it soon came to describe a Caribbean entity beyond the language-based barriers to include into *antillanité* and *créolité* (creoleness) such areas as Puerto Rico or Jamaica. Sociocultural traits common to the tropical area became to be more determinant than the language itself to determine a creolization space; they allowed the inclusion into the same cultural area authors such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite from Jamaica, Wilson Harris from Guyana or Alejo Carpentier from Cuba.

In the jungle of formulations he proposed, Édouard Glissant stresses that creolization is beyond the logics of the interbreeding of cultures as it belongs to the realm of 'world imaginary', making it in some way a postmodern notion by its



malleability and indetermination: 'Creolization is unforeseeable: one cannot calculate its outcome. This is all the difference, according to me, between creolization and, on one part métissage, on the other part transculture. One cannot approach transculture by the concept; but one can only approach creolization by the imaginary';<sup>142</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant confirmed in 1991<sup>143</sup> that 'the point of departure is an abyss and the evolution remains unforeseeable'.

However, creolization is knowable, not by what it is, but by whatever unique the 'combustion' of cultures may engender; it should be considered not as a fact but as an uncertain 'evolution', a process. On the contrary, multiculturalism, as a configuration of singular cultural elements in a given space can be observed, understood, as it effectively functions; the United States as a whole then appear to the Caribbean writers as an example of multiculturalism, although there could be cases of creolization at the local level. Creolization on the contrary cannot be described because it is an ever un-ended process, the effects of which are yet unknowable. Yet the postmodern man is constantly involved in it, not only in the Caribbean but everywhere else: 'the whole world is becoming an archipelago of islands and gets creolized'. Creolization is 'a perpetual movement of cultural and linguistic interpenetrability' accompanying 'mondialisation' (the very concept of globalization) integrating distant and heterogeneous elements<sup>144</sup> rather than establishing a relationship between them the way multiculturalism does.

From both the remarks of Professor Chaudenson and the author Glissant, we understand that creolization and multiculturalism may be interrelated, but that they belong to two epistemological paradigms, and should be approached scientifically in opposite perspectives. Opposing creolization versus multiculturalism would be like, for instance in the fields of physics and chemistry, comparing water and brine. Brine keeps the properties of its components water and salt; they can be separated easily. In a multicultural society, each entity retains its own identity and can be recognized by its characteristics. On the

contrary, water has properties of its own which are not the properties of any of its constituents, hydrogen and oxygen. Creole is a language of its own not a mixture of French, or Portuguese, and African even if it is possible to trace the origin of the lexicon predominantly to a European language and the syntax to African languages (although it is not always easy to identify which ones).

In the terminology established for the study of intercultural and transcultural phenomena by the 'Research center on the emergence of new literatures, of new forms of art, of expression and communication' at the University of Limoges, creole appears as an 'emergent third' beyond its African and European constituents, just as water is the emergent third, of hydrogen and oxygen possessing other properties than those of hydrogen and water, not a mixture. In the same line of comparisons, brine on the contrary is a mixture of two recognizable elements, water and salt; multiculturalism would be more like brine as a configuration than water as an emergent third. In the realm of biology, a child is the emergent third of his or her parents, although some characters from the one or the other can be recognized in the novel human being engendered; the human being is a unique, undetermined, non-repeatable configuration of his or her forbears' genes. So are creoles. But living human beings are not achieved entities (only maybe death – or eternity as Mallarmé puts it about Edgar Allan Poe' tomb – would transform them definitely 'into Themselves'). They are persons in-becoming, un-ended processes; what they are getting to be is just as unforeseeable as creolization characterized by Édouard Glissant.

The idea of something else, something beyond, something unfinished, something unforeseeable being produced by some kind of a combustion of heterogeneous elements assigns creolization to the theory of emergence<sup>142</sup> originally developed by physics since the seventeenth century. The nineteenth-century epistemologist Georges Henry Lewes opposes emergents as phenomena 'that cannot be predicted nor explained by (their) constituent parts' to resultants

which are determined by identifiable causes. We recognize in creolization the propositions that characterize emergence as:

1. The process [creolization as a continuing and mobile identity syndrome]
2. by which a new product, a novel situation, an unexpected phenomenon, a work of art, an original idea [creolization being an unforeseeable evolution].
3. arises out of conflicting forces, the clash of heterogeneous elements [creolization being grounded in a traumatic event, a passage through 'chaos' like slavery in the creolosphere].
4. when a system reaches a certain degree of complexity [creolization being described by Caribbean authors as a complexity which makes everything possible].
5. while it cannot be considered as the logical result of their respective effects nor a combination of their elements [creolization as an 'emergent third' neither European nor African].

The world entered into postmodernity when it discovered with the theory of evolution, with the laws of general relativity, with the theory of catastrophe, that things are not ever determined and stable entities, that all measurements are forever false because of the changing nature of objects according to the speed of light and a number of imponderables, that 2 and 2 never equate 4. Then it is no surprise when Édouard Glissant refers to the physics of quanta and the theories of chaos rather than to descriptive linguistics or anthropology to construe language and culture phenomena not as facts but as processes, and creolization not as the expectable consciousness of the colonized man, but as the emergence of a new vision of the world. That way of being in the world is the emergent third of the conflicting elements which are part of it.

The global extension of creolization lets us consider various degrees and different forms of trauma to which emergent languages, cultures, literatures respond. First, if a trauma, like slavery, seems to be the condition for creolization in the tropical Isles, it does not follow that any kind of trauma necessarily brings a form of creolization (the Shoa for instance did not, or if it did, it would be

difficult to include the cultural and linguistic phenomena in the same problematic as the tropicity of the Isles).

Secondly, the absence of a trauma theoretically determines the zero degree of creolization. Hybrid languages without a cultural catastrophe at the origin would not be creoles. Because there is no *différend* according to François Lyotard's term in, say, *lingua franca*, there is no *lingua franca* literature. As an artefact without any cultural tension in its construction, Esperanto is hardly a case of linguistic creolization.

Thirdly, creolization as the process of linguistic indigenization is not a determined fact. It may either emerge or not in the same given conditions. Creole developed in the English plantations of Jamaica, and not in Georgia. Creole developed in the sugar 'habitations' of Haiti, but no Spanish based creole emerged in neighbouring Dominica nor in Cuba under similar socio-economic conditions involving the trauma of slavery. But it can be argued that, in Cuba for instance, we witness a creolized culture, more than a multicultural one, without a creole language. The conclusion would be that if the emergence of a creole language is sure evidence of creolization, the cultural process of creolization is much wider, encompassing all aspects of culture, the language included or not.

The relationship and opposition between creolization and colonization has also to be considered. A distinction has to be made between colonization with and without slavery. Being colonized certainly constitutes a trauma apt to induce creolization, but the fact is that European colonization did not produce any significant emergent language like creole outside the slavery Isles. Pidgins and communication languages are not creoles, as bases of emergent cultures. Colonization without slavery, however, had a cultural effect which somehow integrates the postcolonial principle of creolization. Colonization modifies the language and the vision of the world of both the colonized and the colonizer. When the language of the colonizers, their 'discourse genres', their cultural references are apprehended, reformulated by the colonized, they develop a new

*Weltanschauung*, an emergent vision of the world. It has in common with the creolization in the plantation islands, neither European nor African, the fact that its 'language game' is beyond the simple interaction or the combination of the European culture of the colonizers and the culture of the colonized peoples. The Anthropophagist movement in the Brazil of the early 1930s launched by the manifesto of Mário de Andrade in 1928 is a strong case of the emergence of new identity, culture, literature through the appropriation, the 'devouring' of European models by indigenous or colonized cultures.

Creolization is a way of deconstructing cultural hegemonies. Postcolonial emerging literatures become emergent literatures when, out of the cultural, social, economical conflagration brought by colonization, they 'imagine' (as Édouard Glissant would say), in whatever modified linguistic language, a novel aesthetic language and build their dialectical vision of the world. Colonization in various parts of the world generates a poetics of emergence akin to linguistic and cultural creolization in the plantation islands. Generally, it could be argued that creolization is what makes postcoloniality an emergent culture, as it triggers a dynamics that energizes a unique, deconstructive discourse on man and the world.

The extension of the notion of creolization from the original creolosphere to postcolonial studies and recently as a principle of world literature indicates that it could be a dynamics that brings about the emergence of new cultural spaces. The perspectives opened in comparative literature and culture by geocriticism as promoted mainly by Bertrand Westphal, could prove particularly productive in creolization studies. Geocriticism studies 'human spaces'; that is spaces emerging from discourse, culture, language practices, and literature. These human spaces are not Kantian 'things per se', set objects. They can only be described in postmodern terms, as they emerge not from determining causes but from discourse. They cannot be predicted before they are enunciated; they can only be discussed once they appear at the surface of consciousness. Their limits are liable

to variation, and they overlap with other spaces. Creolization is just one of these indeterminate dimensions of culture.

The historical creolization space in the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans was shaped by the European colonial expansion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resorting to slavery for hand labour; it resulted from a dual displacement of people, two diasporas, the European and the African ones with heterogeneous linguistic traditions. The French based creole space, to which several parishes (counties) of Louisiana belong, especially Saint Martin Parish, can be equated to what was called at least until the end of the eighteenth century *la culture des Isles* (the culture of the plantation islands); culture should be understood both as a type of cultivation based on the importation of labour from Africa as slaves, and a way of life in the plantation economy. *Les Isles* referred to the settlements in the tropical areas of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, Saint-Domingue (to-day Haiti), Guadeloupe, Martinique, Dominique, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint-Thomas, Trinidad, and in the Indian Ocean The Seychelles, Rodrigues, Mauritius, Réunion. Louisiana and French Guyana, participating in the *culture des Isles* are not of course geographical 'islands', but they should be included in the problematic of the Isles as they were based on the same type of economy and as they used creole as a communication language on the plantations.

From the onset, slavery determined a specific dominant/dominated relationship at the basis of the trauma inherent to creolization. The cultural, economical, social interactions between the communities, their *différend*, were the locus for the emergence of new languages, mainly European by the vocabulary, mainly African by the syntax, a fact which did not occur in other multicultural areas where the daily dominant/dominated connection was less oppressive. The importation of slaves speaking another language than that of the masters as they arrive in the colony is certainly a trauma at the origin of creolization.

Creole speaking areas are generally embedded in multicultural, multilinguistic communities. The language is generally used in the *Isles*

concurrently with dominant European languages, French and /or English, sometimes with other immigration languages, the languages of India notably, or native Amerindian languages in French Guyana.

As the occasion for the study of the relations between the notions of creolization, multiculturalism and diasporas was the 2010 ACLA meeting in New Orleans, a most relevant case of a multicultural space within the creosphere in which various languages interact would be Louisiana. It offers good examples of overlapping multicultural and creolized situations. Louisiana developed a creole language and culture beside standard French in a plantation society colonizing the Amerindian environment. After their deportation from Canada, the Acadians speaking their own variety of rural French brought into Louisiana a multicultural pattern more prevalent in the Northern territories; still to-day the Houma Indians rather speak Cajun (Acadian) French than creole or creolized French (gumbo). The Hispanic element dating from the times when Louisiana was ruled by Spain at the end of the eighteenth century regained importance recently due to Latin American migration. Of course, the dominant element has come to be the integrative American English language and culture as the general superstratum.

Out of this multicultural and multilinguistic situation, Cajun French developed various particularities that can be ascribed to a spectrum of hybridities ranging from near conformity to standard French with Acadian elements, a zero degree of creolization, to the integration of creole lexical and syntactic features. In difference from standard French on one side of the spectrum, and from creole on the other, characteristic Cajun French remaining close to the regional French of Western France integrates archaisms due to its origin (e.g. *éloise* for 'lightning', a Poitevin word), loan words brought by multicultural contacts (e.g. *fais-dodo* for 'dance', a creole borrowing from African origin), and quasi-creolizations (e.g. *revenez-back*, a lexical and syntactic French, English, creole fusion as a goodbye wish to a departing guest). Cajun French appears now as a French dialect with English influences not a hybrid language like creole. It has something in common

however with creole as it is also grounded in a trauma, not slavery, but the deportation in the eighteenth century of the French Acadian settlers from the Maritime Provinces of to-day's Canada, and their vagrancy over the oceans before finding a new home in South-western Louisiana.

The case of Louisiana exemplifies the two types of linguistic and cultural phenomena in the colonial and postcolonial world. In the case of multiculturalism, contacts produce a variety of the dominant language under the influence of another language (that could also be the case of the français de Moussa in Ivory Coast, being French spoken under the influence of Bambara and other West African languages), and on the creole side they result in the emergence of a new language. There is hardly intercommunication between a monolingual creolophone and a standard European speaker never exposed to creole. The evolution of a language such as Cajun French under multicultural conditions, on the contrary, does not impede radically intercommunication with other varieties of the same language.

The two spaces of English and French colonizations overlap in Louisiana, that of the sugar or cotton plantations making use of African slaves, which produced creoles by fusion, and on the other side that of the English colonies north of Dixie and of La Nouvelle France including Eastern Canada and much of the American Midwest, which relied on European immigration. In the multicultural pattern of the North, the colonists would speak English or French, the Indians their own language; when the latter adopted English or French it still was a variety of English or French not a hybrid language like creole in the South. In the North of America, there are records of at least two French-Indian hybrid contact languages, probably almost extinct by now: the *souriquoien* in Nova Scotia which was used by white fishermen as well as by Indians, and *michif* in Manitoba, a fusion of French and Cree. Possibly Hawaiian pidgin, the Spanish based Palenquero in Columbia, the Tupi-Guarani based *lingua geral* in Brazil, or *chinook* in Asia would rather be ascribed to the multicultural paradigm as contact



languages without creolization in the absence of a major trauma like slavery and cultural fusion.

On the contrary, Louisiana developed a creole language and culture in close connection with the Antilles islands. Creyol (also called, sometimes pejoratively, *neg*, *couri-vini*, *gumbo*) belongs to the global family of French based creoles extending from Natchitoches Parish, the northernmost creole area in the world (except of course for immigration Haitian creole in places like Canada or Europe), South down to Guyana, and Eastward to the Indian Ocean. Sub-spaces in the creolosphere can be distinguished with two great areas, one in the Atlantic, the other in the Indian Ocean, but at large the creolosphere constitutes one global space. Pancreolism refers to the common characteristics of creole languages irrespective of the area and the lexical base. Notable differences may exist between, say, Louisiana and Guyana creoles or Seychelles and Mauritius creoles, but globally they can be considered as dialects of one emerging language, since at least some intercommunication is possible between them. A Louisiana creolophone would even be surprised to discover that he/she could somehow communicate, beyond local peculiarities, with someone from distant islands he/she may never had heard of, such as the Indian Ocean Seychelles or Rodrigues without a reference to standard French or English; on the contrary there would be little or no intercommunication between a monolingual creolophone and a Frenchman never exposed to creole. Even if the contacts between a Louisiana creolophone and a Seychellois would be exceptional, this possible linguistic and cultural community outlines the specificity of the creolosphere.

Finally, the fundamental characteristics which can be observed in the creolosphere set a series of criteria to approach a postmodern theory of creolization. Down to the widest extension of the notion outside the creolosphere to the whole world seen as an archipelago of creolized islands by Édouard Glissant, creolization retains traces of its origins from the plantation islands. After Freud, trace is what is left in the psychical apparatus of the perceptions which

impinge upon it; in this manner worldwide creolization somehow remembers necessarily the trauma of slavery imbedded in the tropical psyche. Traumatic experiences comparable to slavery on the plantations – a brutal conquest, a dispossessing colonization, the harsh exploitation of manpower, and so on – tend to be repressed into the unconscious of both parties. As the analysis of the *différend* by François Lyotard suggests, creolization would be an attempt at a common discourse and a conquest of linguistic and cultural codes that would legitimate the emergence of a unique vision of the world, both with the slaves and their owners, both with the colonized and the colonizers, with the dominated and the dominants. Linked to the trauma and tropicality motivations, spatiality appears as another fundamental feature of creolization. Creolization is an expanding space to global dimensions; geographically through emigration from the tropical islands to many parts of the world; linguistically by the terming as creoles of other languages with similar emergent qualities and even of contact languages in a multicultural context acquiring such generative power; conceptually as a process engendering new identities by the confrontation and the fusion of diverse, sometimes conflicting elements, in the postcolonial and postmodern world. Thus the generation of novel identities ever-in-the-making from heterogeneous elements in the original islands as well as in the global ‘archipelago’ is the hallmark of creolization. What distinguishes creolization from multiculturalism is that it is not a combination or a mixture of identities; it even goes beyond *métissage* and hybridization to open up on a still-to-be-known consciousness of man in his social, historical, economic, artistic evolution.

## **7. ACCEPTANCE OF THE DIASPORA AS METHOD OF ESCAPE IN NALO HOPKINSON'S *BROWN GIRL IN THE RING AND MIDNIGHT ROBBER***

Melanie Marotta (Morgan State University)

In his essay, 'Renewal and Imagination: Thoreau's Thought and the Restoration of Walden Pond,' William R. Jordan III discusses E. B. White's experiences at Walden Pond documented in his essay, 'At Walden Pond,' specifically emphasizing White's disillusionment and disappointment when he first sees the area and its state of decay. Jordan, on the other hand, does not feel dejected, preferring instead to see the condition of Walden Pond as an opportunity for 'restoration and renewal of the pond and its surroundings'.<sup>146</sup> In his essay Jordan observes that restoration, specifically 'ecological restoration,' involves not only the alteration of the environment to a previous state of being, but also the participation of the community to aid in its transformation.<sup>147</sup> According to Jordan:

The period chosen as the model or 'target' for the restoration is ultimately arbitrary. In North America, restorationists often take the landscape as the time of European contact as a model. But this is obviously no hard-and-fast rule. Ultimately we choose a period that interests us, or that we consider important for some reason. At Walden, the period is pretty much

defined by the terms of the agreement by which the pond was turned over to the state, according to which the pond is to be maintained 'in the condition of the time of Emerson and Thoreau.'<sup>148</sup>

By applying the concepts of restoration and renewal discussed by Jordan in his essay to Nalo Hopkinson's works, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998) and *Midnight Robber* (2000), it becomes clear that it is only through restoration and renewal achieved by an acceptance of diasporic culture that Hopkinson's communities can exist. In the novels, Hopkinson positions her female protagonists, Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan, in dystopias that dominate their identities. Ti-Jeanne resides in metropolitan Toronto, her life commencing in the novel after the Riots and the birth of Baby, her unnamed son. Once it becomes clear to the inhabitants that metropolitan Toronto is falling, there is a mass exodus of business establishments, law enforcement, and the financially independent, culminating in the ultimate result, the event known as the Riots. Once the Riots occur, metropolitan Toronto and its remaining populace comprised of 'the ones who couldn't or wouldn't leave. The street people. The poor people. The ones who didn't see the writing on the wall, or who were too stubborn to give up their homes. Or who saw the decline of authority as an opportunity,' are walled into what remains of the city and are separated from what they believe is utopia, which is the suburbs.<sup>149</sup> It is here, within the barriers, that Ti-Jeanne resides with her grandmother, Mami Gros-Jeanne, a healer who dies because she attempts to create a new community in the city. Once Gros-Jeanne's body dies, the task of reforming the community and renewing the city is passed on to a reluctant Ti-Jeanne. Like Ti-Jeanne, Tan-Tan is also responsible for her community on New Half-Way Tree. In *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan, who eventually becomes the Robber Queen on New Half-Way Tree, begins her life on the planet of Toussaint, an area where Jonkanoo (Carnival) is integrated into the ideology of the inhabitants. As a child Tan-Tan resides in the dystopian urban Cockpit County with her father, Mayor Antonio, her mother, Ione, Nursie, and the house eshu (an aspect of technology designed to

impart information and assist in the ease of the lifestyle). In Cockpit County, the notion that hard work is demeaning prevails as does the reliance on technology. The people of Cockpit County are monitored by the Grande 'Nansi Web (Granny Nanny) and artificial intelligence (a.i.) is integrated into all aspects of Toussaint. The Grande Nansi Web, a cross between Queen Nanny, a revered protector of the Jamaican people and Anansi, the trickster god, exiles criminals to the mirror planet of New Half-Way Tree; after he murders Ione's lover, Quashee Cumberbatch, Antonio escapes to this planet, taking Tan-Tan with him. The settlements on New Half-Way Tree are also dystopian; they are dysfunctional because the majority of the inhabitants continue to commit criminal acts once there and because they are unaccustomed to physical labour and also unaware of how to perform it. New Half-Way Tree has no technology other than what is brought by the newcomers and that which is created by the douen, a bird-like species native to New Half-Way Tree. Both Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan reside in societies where the members have lost hope and agency. In the novels, with the loss of the city comes the destruction of the community. The downfall of metropolitan Toronto and the characters' separation from urban Cockpit County through the journey to New Half-Way Tree cause a loss of hope among the majority of the inhabitants, resulting in the dissolution of community. In *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Midnight Robber*, the individual becomes more important than the collective. Both Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan are ineffective in combating the restrictive forces of their urban locales until they accept the culture of the diaspora into their selves. Culture is a communal entity due to the sharing of beliefs and by the female protagonists freely accommodating its presence within their identities, they are accepting the task of passing that knowledge on to others. The examination for this study is as follows: Hopkinson shows that in order to escape the confining ideology of the urban areas the female protagonists, Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan, must accept the culture of the diaspora into their identities which results in the reformation of their selves, 'restoration' of their communities, and the

downfall of the dystopias, ergo the ‘renewal’ of the areas.<sup>150</sup> Once Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan are able to pass this freeing knowledge on to others, the feelings of despair subside, and an emotional attachment to others is the result, *ergo* the community. Once the community is reformed, the city can be renewed. In Hopkinson’s texts, ‘restoration’ of the community and ‘renewal’ of the city can only be achieved once detrimental constructs are escaped by the protagonists and hope returns.<sup>151</sup>

Jordan describes the aspects of the Walden Pond area that White observes and states that White ‘fails to see in them any sign of hope for renewal.’<sup>152</sup> Like White, the majority of the inhabitants of Toronto and New Half-Way Tree do not envision any possibility for change; hence they prefer stagnancy over action. When Ti-Jeanne is introduced, she resides with Gros-Jeanne in the area known as the Burn, the worst part of the metropolitan area. With a task from her grandmother in mind, obtaining books about herbs from Mr. Reed, Ti-Jeanne and Baby traverse the crime-ridden streets and narrowly avoid the grasp of her grandfather Rudy Baines’s men, known as the posse. In *Brown Girl in the Ring*, Ti-Jeanne, the female protagonist, must battle Rudy, who steals spirits, thereby, keeping the urban area in chaos and him powerful and invincible. Importantly, Ti-Jeanne is not ready to face Rudy until she accepts the culture of the diaspora, which appears as the teachings of Gros-Jeanne and in the form of the Jab-Jab, a representation of Legbara. Both Gros-Jeanne and Legbara, her spirit, attempt to alter Ti-Jeanne’s stagnant state of being by introducing the all-but-lost diasporic belief system, but she rebels at first, preferring anger, hatred, and despair over change towards a liveable future. Before the ritual to ensure that Ti-Jeanne and Tony, her lover, her child’s father, and the murderer of her grandmother, can depart for the suburbs unseen is performed, the narrator describes the various relationships the three women, Ti-Jeanne, Mi-Jeanne, and Gros-Jeanne, have with the orishas, the Caribbean/African deities. The narrator observes that before the fall of metropolitan Toronto the trio lived together and:

Mami-Gros-Jeanne would regularly go off in the evenings, dressed all in white and carrying food for some kind of religious celebration. Sometimes she stayed away all night. Ti-Jeanne's mother, Mi-Jeanne, had never wanted to accompany Mami, and she absolutely refused to let Ti-Jeanne go, so Ti-Jeanne had no idea what happened at these ceremonies.<sup>153</sup>

Each of the three women, even though they have been introduced to the belief in the orishas, suffers from a fear of the unknown, thereby separating them from a complete acceptance of the spirits. Osain, Gros-Jeanne's spirit, does not communicate with her for a period of time because she refuses to stop Rudy's control over the populace of the metropolitan area. When Gros-Jeanne momentarily ceases to teach the spirits to Ti-Jeanne, she shows she also accepts despair. Specifically, when Ti-Jeanne hears the name, Osain, she says, 'Who is he really, Mami?' showing her doubt regarding the previous knowledge that Gros-Jeanne has given her regarding the spirit.<sup>154</sup> Gros-Jeanne then gives her reply: 'The healing spirit. My father spirit.' She sighed. 'Never mind. All you just watch and do what I tell you.'<sup>155</sup> When Gros-Jeanne refuses to explain about Osain thereby alleviating Ti-Jeanne's doubt, she ceases to be a teacher to Ti-Jeanne and, instead, she exists as a barrier to her progress. Ti-Jeanne's mother fears the visions she receives from her spirit, so she rejects them and, by doing so, her mother also. Critic Giselle Liza Anatol notes, 'Mi-Jeanne is [...] blind; her lack of sight is literal – her eyes have been dug out – but also metaphorical [...] in that she wanted to shield her eyes against the prophetic visions.'<sup>156</sup> Like Gros-Jeanne, she has ceased to advance, thereby remaining stagnant. After Mi-Jeanne refuses her visions and Gros-Jeanne to help her granddaughter, the orisha tells Ti-Jeanne that their fates are sealed, but that Ti-Jeanne has a chance at having a future. In order to escape the confining aspects of decay in the city, specifically Rudy, her fear of others, and of her true self, Ti-Jeanne must actively seek Rudy and stop his consumption of spirits. In order to complete her task, Ti-Jeanne needs the assistance of the orishas, which she obtains through an acceptance of their

existence.

Throughout the novel, Ti-Jeanne repeatedly has visions of the future and in them she sees the character known as the Jab-Jab, a representation of the orisha, Legbara. Valorie D. Thomas writes, 'the Yoruba trickster *Esu-Legbara* [is] also known by numerous other names including *Ellegua*, *Eshu-Legbara*, *Eshu*, *Esu*, and/or *Legba*.'<sup>157</sup> In Hopkinson's work, this figure contains many attributes of the previously listed spirits including, most importantly, the ability to see the future (Eshu) and to cause 'transformation' (Legba).<sup>158</sup> Robert D. Pelton observes, 'The Yoruba are more definite still about Eshu's responsibility for divination. They think of him as the divine messenger, who blows his whistle 'to clear the way' [...]. Furthermore, Eshu has the agility to balance and harmonize the forces of good and evil.'<sup>159</sup> Ti-Jeanne's self includes these attributes, but her selfishness caused by a loss of empathy for others stops her from accepting her true identity. Once the city deteriorates and the individual's importance over the collective is affirmed, Ti-Jeanne's desire to assist others diminishes. For example, a group of children who live in a mall come to ask for Gros-Jeanne's medical assistance when one child, Susie, breaks her leg. Ti-Jeanne's state of mind fluctuates; one moment she loathes the presence of the children in the house and the next she permits a female child to hold Baby. When she feels a lack of attention from Gros-Jeanne, it is then that she associates with the children. The attributes previously highlighted by Pelton must be made to surface and the self-interest must dissipate in order for Ti-Jeanne to defeat and destroy Rudy.<sup>160</sup>

Later, after the death of Gros-Jeanne, when Ti-Jeanne and Tony are fleeing a duppy sent by Rudy, they are protected by the same group of children that Gros-Jeanne has assisted. It is in the mall, the children's home that Chu, one of the children, dies due to the duppy attack. Significantly, Ti-Jeanne is powerless to prevent Chu's death and this lack of agency impacts her greatly. Before the death of Chu, his friend says to Ti-Jeanne, 'You're a healer, can't you do something?' at which point she actively attempts to save the child's life.<sup>161</sup> The



previously mentioned attributes of the orishas come to light in Ti-Jeanne's self here. Not only does she refuse to leave the dying child when Tony insinuates that they should flee in order to save themselves because Ruby is going to locate them, but she also has a vision in which she speaks to the Jab-Jab. In his discussion of the restoration of Walden Pond Jordan observes, 'no landscape is ever static, and the restorationist, taking that into account, aims to reproduce not only the historic landscape but also its dynamics. The idea is not merely to produce an object, but also to set it in motion.'<sup>162</sup> In order to restore the community and renew the city Ti-Jeanne must, as Jordan notes, be actively involved in its transformation.<sup>163</sup> Once Ti-Jeanne takes agency for one who is powerless she, like the orishas, provides protection for another being. After Chu's death, Ti-Jeanne repeatedly apologizes for the loss of Chu and for her inability to stop the child's death. By doing so, Ti-Jeanne shows not only that she identifies with another's feelings of loss, but also that she cares for another being other than herself. Like the family of children, Ti-Jeanne suffers a death of a family member and, by witnessing Chu's death and the grief of the children, she understands that she is not alone, that others also experience tragedies. It is here that Ti-Jeanne decides that the future is possible as the notion of the community makes an impression on her self. Once Ti-Jeanne is able to undergo her emotional 'transformation,' she is ready to voice her decision to confront Rudy and, importantly she does so in a vision with the Jab-Jab.<sup>164</sup>

In her vision told from the first-person point of view Ti-Jeanne highlights the most well-known feature of metropolitan Toronto, the CN Tower, before she speaks to the Jab-Jab. Significantly, Ti-Jeanne, at first, refers to the CN Tower by its name, then she observes, '*Now we does just call it Rudy office*' and, finally, she recalls a moment from the past in which Gros-Jeanne has taught her that it 'is the tallest freestanding building in the world.'<sup>165</sup> Importantly, the CN Tower exists before the fall of the metropolitan area and continues to do so after the demise of Rudy. The CN Tower, in the vision and as a site for the final battle

before restoration and reformation, symbolizes the endurance of the past and hope for the future.<sup>166</sup> Once this image is described by Ti-Jeanne and her feelings of inferiority rise to the surface, she observes that the size of the structure makes her feel small, the Jab-Jab appears and Ti-Jeanne declares her intent to go to Rudy. Significantly, she also tells the Jab-Jab the following: 'I can't make this go on no longer. But I can't climb like that,' I say. All this time it been haunting me, and now is the first time I find voice enough to speak it.'<sup>167</sup> By speaking her fears aloud, Ti-Jeanne shows that she is taking control of her life and that she desires to change what she sees as weakness, as a flaw in her identity. Before Ti-Jeanne can go to Rudy, however, she also needs to accept the primary role of Legbara, that of the trickster, and to incorporate this attribute into her identity. By Ti-Jeanne noting to the Jab-Jab that 'I think I go have to trick Rudy into letting me in,' she demonstrates that she has absorbed the teachings of Gros-Jeanne and Legbara into her identity and that she is going to use them to defeat Rudy.<sup>168</sup> Importantly, once she escapes the confinement of despair through her acceptance of her culture, specifically she asks for Legbara's assistance for her to secretly enter the CN Tower in order to confront Rudy, she reaches the final stage of her 'transformation.'<sup>169</sup>

Once inside the tower, Ti-Jeanne destroys the duppy bowl that contains her mother's spirit and, by doing so, she depletes some of Rudy's power. Now Rudy's physical appearance reflects the decay that he spreads throughout the city's inhabitants through fear and domination. The final stage of Ti-Jeanne's 'transformation' occurs once she is captured by Rudy and his posse and forcefully given the drug known as buff which, according to Rudy, turns the user into a zombie.<sup>170</sup> It is during this mental confinement that Ti-Jeanne chooses, through the guidance of the Jab-Jab, hope over despair; Ti-Jeanne refuses to become a duppy and accepts that she has the power to enact change, which she does by calling for the assistance of the orishas. Once Rudy and his posse are defeated by the orishas Osain informs Legbara that 'your daughter still need plenty healing yet

[...]. Body get better, but spirit still bust-up, I think,' statements to which Ti-Jeanne replies, 'Is okay, Papa Osain, thank you [...]. I think you start the healing good already. I could do the rest myself.'<sup>171</sup> Once the orishas have been accepted, shown through Ti-Jeanne's call to them, Ti-Jeanne's culture becomes an active part of her self. Ti-Jeanne's acceptance of her culture ensures that the destruction of the main element of decay to the city, Rudy, occurs; it is only then that the community can be restored.<sup>172</sup>

After the destruction of Rudy, when Ti-Jeanne re-enters the outside world from the CN Tower, it is now, symbolically, day instead of night. Immediately, Ti-Jeanne passes through the Saint Lawrence Market where 'She had a yearning to lose herself in this noisy throng of people going about the business of staying alive.'<sup>173</sup> By wanting to immerse herself amongst the populace of the market, instead of avoiding them as she has previously done, and then by actually physically joining the crowd, Ti-Jeanne relinquishes her status as individual, thereby making a step towards restoring the community. In his discussion of Walden Pond's restoration Jordan cites 'the two essential criteria for restoration' are 'an active effort' taken by humans in regards to restoration and 'the recreation of an entire [ecological] community.'<sup>174</sup> Even though in this instance Jordan is describing a restoration of a natural environment, the concept applies to Ti-Jeanne's actions towards the sociological state of Toronto. Ti-Jeanne observes the market labourers performing their various tasks and they speak to her in turn about her grandmother and also about their hopes that Ti-Jeanne is going to take her place as healer. Even though Ti-Jeanne's face expresses the joy she feels at accepting her identity, she remains unsure of whether or not she desires to become the healer. Importantly, when Ti-Jeanne heads home she is carrying supplies that the market people have given her, as they did her grandmother for her services. The market people have given Ti-Jeanne a position in society by accepting her as a healer; by doing so they also show that they have faith in her abilities, a confidence that Ti-Jeanne currently lacks. The acceptance of Ti-Jeanne is not

unconditional; by giving her goods the market people imply that they want services in return. By defeating Rudy and by taking the goods, indicating that she is to become the healer in place of her grandmother, Ti-Jeanne forms a relationship with the market people. Specifically, through the creation of a relationship Ti-Jeanne is no longer separate from others, therefore, she becomes a member of the community. At this point, a Torontonian community has been restored.

The final step in the novel is for the renewal of the city to begin. Jordan describes Thoreau's interactions with nature, revealing that 'In this way Thoreau sought an intimacy with nature that went beyond observation to actual participation, a truly ecological relationship that involved, as ecological relationships do, a genuine exchange of goods and services.'<sup>175</sup> After Ti-Jeanne arrives home and finds her mother alive, she ventures into her grandmother's bedroom to rest. Through this act she shows she accepts Gros-Jeanne's death and, symbolically, her new position in the community as healer. Ti-Jeanne takes her grandmother's place and immediately begins to contribute to the community, ergo Jordan's 'genuine exchange of goods and services.'<sup>176</sup> She listens to Gros-Jeanne's 'flock' as they teach her how to have a 'nine-night, a wake for the recently dead that would calm the dead spirit and point out its way to Guinea Land, sent off with the love of the living it must leave behind'; she also listens to her newly-found mother tell her of the abuse she and Gros-Jeanne suffered at the hands of Rudy.<sup>177</sup> The community not only attends the wake, the members also donate food to the gathering. Even though the novel concludes with Ti-Jeanne being unsure of whether or not she desires to fill the role left vacant by her grandmother, she and Mi-Jeanne welcome the ailing into their home for medical attention and accept the products offered as payment. Through the celebration of life, that of Gros-Jeanne and a select number of inhabitants of the Burn, as well as Ti-Jeanne and Mi-Jeanne's immediate efforts as healers and Ti-Jeanne's insistence on now naming her child, the metropolitan city begins its renewal as

the characters plan for the future. Like Ti-Jeanne, Tan-Tan's urban area suffers from the decay produced by the negativity of its inhabitants.

As previously noted, on the planet of Toussaint technology appears in the guise of aspects of culture, namely Queen Nanny and Anansi, and greatly influences the inhabitants' behaviour. In *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan begins her life in Cockpit County and later leaves for New Half-Way Tree. In Cockpit County, the populace has forgotten the true meaning of entities like Queen Nanny and the trickster Anansi, preferring instead to accept these beings as features of their culture that make life easily liveable; here, they appear, as previously noted, as an artificial intelligence. The majority of the population of Cockpit County has an implant which connects them to Granny Nanny, who watches over the behaviour of the inhabitants, and to their house eshu, a form of technology that takes care of the home and the family. Communal spirit is found in this urban area during festival time, named Jonkanoo Season (Carnival), but so is a confining ideology. In order to create Cockpit County's Carnival, Hopkinson draws on her knowledge of the Trinidadian carnival.<sup>178</sup> In reference to Caribbean carnivals in general, Judith Bettelheim observes that 'Many of these cultural organizations are predicated on ethnic identity and thus the public display of identity during carnival often counters and moves toward the nationalization of culture, which most carnivals today represent.'<sup>179</sup> What Hopkinson shows, rather than a people united to 'celebrate the landing of the Marryshow Corporation nation ships that had brought their ancestors to this planet [Toussaint] two centuries before,' is a group of people falling victim to their own desires.<sup>180</sup> The identities of the inhabitants of Cockpit County are decayed by sloth and selfishness as pleasing themselves is first on the characters' agendas. For example, Ione and Antonio both have affairs, preferring over all else to revel in the other's suffering, regardless of the damage done to the almost non-existent familial unit. During her parents' separation, as a result of Ione's affair and Antonio's bruised pride, Tan-Tan is neglected by her father and verbally abused by her mother; both parents are

self-absorbed and leave Tan-Tan in the care of Nursie and the eshu. As a child, Tan-Tan escapes her unhappiness by dressing as the Robber Queen, an integral part of the Carnival; it is this form that Tan-Tan adopts on New Half-Way Tree in an attempt to instil order on the chaos. Regardless of the consequences, Antonio cheats at the community-sanctioned duel he has with Quashee and the result is the murder of Quashee. Once Quashee dies, the prison eshu informs Antonio that he is to receive 'Life imprisonment or exile' as a punishment from Nanny because 'You a danger, Master [...]. Is so the law go.'<sup>181</sup> By fleeing Toussaint for the mirror planet of New Half-Way Tree and taking his seven-year-old daughter with him, telling her that it is for her that he escapes, Antonio shows his egomaniacal self and his ease at discarding the ideology of his society. Antonio does not allow Granny Nanny to decide his fate, as do the others on Toussaint, and his final act on the planet is to flee with Tan-Tan. Antonio and Tan-Tan-physically leave the technology behind but, unfortunately, the imprint has already been made on their respective identities. Neither Antonio nor Tan-Tan can escape Toussaint's confining ideology, but Tan-Tan has the ability to change her identity through adaptation.

Decay, in *Midnight Robber*, is not limited to the urban Cockpit County; it also occurs in the various New Half-Way Tree settlements. When Antonio and Tan-Tan arrive, New Half-Way Tree appears as a new frontier, a 'wild west' so to speak. On this planet, there is no Granny Nanny to promote order and, instead, it is the lawless that control the settlements. Similarly to Toussaint, the majority of the New Half-Way Tree inhabitants are selfish and self-destructive. While some small element of community exists in Cockpit County, thereby taking the form of the Carnival, on New Half-Way Tree community exists sporadically for the exchange of goods and services only.<sup>182</sup> Like *Brown Girl in the Ring*, no emotional attachment is fostered in the New Half-Way Tree towns; the groupings only exist to fulfil the needs of the inhabitants. There is no culture in the majority of these towns; the masses tend to favour violence, greed, and themselves over all

else. For example, when Melonhead, Tan-Tan's friend and later romantic companion, locates the protagonist after she has escaped the town of Junjuh (she has killed her father for raping her once again), Melonhead informs her that the townspeople are well-aware that Antonio has been beating her. None of the townspeople sought to protect, or rescue Tan-Tan from the abuse (It should be noted that Melonhead searches for her later after Antonio's death). It is Chichibud, one of the community-oriented douen (bird beings), that removes Tan-Tan from Junjuh after she kills Antonio. Significantly, while Chichibud's family encourages Tan-Tan's presence in their community, many of the douen resent her presence and even desire her departure because of their fear of humans and the humans' desire to fulfil their needs, regardless of the damage they cause to others. While with the douen and after she is forced to leave them, Tan-Tan is confined by her fear of self, she splits mentally into both Good and Bad Tan-Tan, and also by her fear of and feelings of superiority over the douen. Once Tan-Tan and Abitefa, Chichibud's daughter, are separated from the douen community, the females become a community of their own due to their emotional attachment to one another. Unfortunately, this community malfunctions frequently due to Tan-Tan's desire to be with humans rather than with Abitefa. Hiding her pregnancy under the Robber Queen's costume, Tan-Tan leaves Abitefa periodically to go to the town of Chigger Bite, attempting to instil order, therefore, giving her life a purpose. When Tan-Tan arrives at New Half-Way Tree, she is a child and, through the teachings of Antonio, fearful of the unknown. While Antonio's identity is stagnant, Tan-Tan is willing to learn from Chichibud about the environment and how to care for herself, utilizing her new surroundings. It is important to note that since Tan-Tan left Toussaint when she was a child, she is greatly attached to what remains of her former life and her childhood memories when she dressed as the Robber Queen. When she visits the human settlements, she invokes her past and becomes the Robber Queen in order to protect herself from the inhabitants' judgment of her (she is pregnant with her father's child),

thereby obtaining freedom she does not normally have. Unfortunately, Tan-Tan's behaviour tends to be destructive when she enters Chigger Bite as the Robber Queen. For example, she holds her machete to Cookie's neck when she discovers he has been watering the pimienta liqueur down and then tells his customers he has been cheating them. Even though Tan-Tan is destructive, by accepting her diasporic culture and becoming the Robber Queen, Tan-Tan also risks her life in order to protect the rights of others. By caring for others in this manner, she mirrors the behaviour of the Granny Nanny a.i., and also by performing physical labour, an act only done on New Half-Way Tree, she accepts culture from her past and her present, thereby, reforming her self. Once Tan-Tan protects another from harm, and she only does so dressed as the Robber Queen, she is then ready to begin the reformation of the community.

The restoration of the community begins on New Half-Way Tree after her step-mother Janisette locates her in the town of Sweet Pone during Carnival. According to Jordan, the restoration of Walden Pond is 'a way of carrying out Thoreau's agenda, as it were, and in fact popularizing it, while avoiding the undesirable consequences this might have for the environment. The solution is very neatly to continue the work, continue with your 'business' with nature, but shift its purpose from consumption to creation [...] restoration entails essentially all the interactions with nature Thoreau pursued at Walden.'<sup>183</sup> The inhabitants of Sweet Pone are attempting to survive through hard work and lawful living. The town functions and even has a Carnival, but they are unwilling to accept outsiders. When Tan-Tan attempts to regain her voice by confronting Janisette and telling the townspeople her true story, rather than one of fantasy for the purpose of entertainment, she is repeatedly stopped by the townspeople. One person who previously has interest in her story tells Tan-Tan that 'Everybody life hard here. You coulda come up with a nicer speech than that, girl. Come Selector: start up the music again.'<sup>184</sup> The townspeople have no empathy for Tan-Tan; once again a group of people does not make a community if there is no emotional



attachment to others within this group. Jordan observes that it is crucial that restoration involves 'creation' rather than 'consumption.'<sup>185</sup> Once Tan-Tan tells the audience who the father of her child is and also the entire story which has never before been uttered by Tan-Tan, some take Tan-tan seriously and accept her. Once she utilizes the Robber Queen's method of speech, but tells the truth instead of falsehoods, the Sweet Pone people form an emotional attachment to Tan-Tan. The community can now be considered successful due to the outpouring of support from those that believe Tan-Tan and the fact that all cheer for Tan-Tan simultaneously, *ergo* a collective act is accomplished. A community has now been restored and the city may now begin its renewal.

Once Janisette finishes with Tan-Tan and gives Tan-Tan the key to her handcuffs, the Carnival festivities resume. Jordan observes that the 'theme of renewal' appears in Thoreau's 'Spring' chapter and that '*Walden* is essentially a manual for spiritual self-renewal. And the faith in renewal of the self is accompanied by a deep and explicit faith in the regenerative power of nature [...]. Ecological restoration is, or course, nothing less than taking this process of renewal seriously, reducing it to practice, and participating in it.'<sup>186</sup> Due to the dystopian state of New Half-Way Tree and the decay of the majority of the inhabitants, emotional attachment to others must be established, or re-established before the renewal of the city can begin. Once the Carnival in Sweet Pone restarts, Tan-Tan receives some unfavourable looks from some, but she is also given the change thrown to her for her speech by an unnamed man who has collected the change for her. Through this selfless act, what Jordan calls 'spiritual self-renewal,' the city starts to become functional.<sup>187</sup> Through the cheering Tan-Tan receives, which is an emotional reaction to her speech, she is acknowledged as part of the community; once Tan-Tan receives money for her speech, an exchange of goods and services has been performed. It is at this point that Tan-Tan goes into labour with her son, Tubman. As Jordan states, 'the faith in renewal of the self is accompanied by a deep and explicit faith in the regenerative power of

nature;’ once Tan-Tan accepts her identity she is able to love her son and he is born, *ergo* ‘nature’ is ‘regenerat[ed].’<sup>188</sup> As with the conclusion of *Brown Girl in the Ring*, *Midnight Robber* closes with a celebration of life; in this case it appears in the form of the birth of Tubman, the next generation of people on New Half-Way Tree and the future.

In both of Hopkinson’s novels studied, the female protagonists reside in dystopias and find that the acceptance of their culture leads to the task of counteracting the decay of the identities of others in Toronto and New Half-Way Tree. For Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan, once the past is accepted, their identities are reformed; as a result, the present can be renewed and hope for the future can be established. In *Brown Girl in the Ring*, Ti-Jeanne creates a community through her exchange of goods and services and emotional attachment to others, but by having the celebration of life she fosters community spirit, which gives hope for the future. Tan-Tan, in *Midnight Robber*, must integrate the cultures of both Toussaint and New Half-Way Tree into her identity in order to release her feelings of guilt and shame regarding the rape; this release occurs when she orally voices the traumatic events of her life to the Sweet Pone people. By accepting her culture and releasing her negative feelings about her identity, Tan-Tan heals herself. She is then able to reform the community and renew the urban area. In Hopkinson’s works, it is the female protagonists that create the beginnings of utopian societies.

## **8. DIASPORA: TEXTILES AS PARADOX**

Jill Kinnear (Savannah College of Art and Design)

The history of textiles is also a history of trade, colonisation and migration. The patterns of cloth – the visual language of fabrics – are partially defined by the global patterns of human traffic over millennia. While textiles and the visual arts have always migrated in some form; as trade artefact, as material or medium, as colonial acquisition, as traditional exchange, as cultural export, the increasingly vast migrations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have accelerated the transition of visual culture. In addition, the volume of visual artwork that now deals specifically with the cross-cultural effects of migration suggests that artists are an important part of this migratory movement and that they are contributing to cultural theory through the visual expression of personal experience and reflection of cultural and national identity. Third Space artists, so named after Homi Bhabha's definition of a place of cultural negotiation formed from the recognition of difference, confront notions of Diaspora and homeland, and accommodate for that 'cosmopolitan cultural space' noted by the American Comparative Literature Association on their website as the defining feature of the concept of 'Creole'.

It is these notions of the Third Space and diaspora that are crucial to the

textile work which I am presenting here. This work attempts to express the experience of migration, and presents that experience as formed from contradiction and inversion, creating an 'in-betweenness' informed by both memory and possibility. Bhabha's Third Space is a place which facilitates ambivalent interpretation, one which he constructed from the observation that meaning is derived from the structure of symbolisation (and not the symbols themselves) and its expression of it as an acknowledgement 'of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific space'.<sup>189</sup> In order for meaning to exist, says Bhabha, these two places or positions have to be activated by the passage through a Third Space, which represents both places but cannot in itself be represented. The Third Space is therefore a facilitator for the interpretation of meaning. As structure cannot address its enunciation or utterance, and enunciation is in a constant state of flux, meaning, projected through the Third Space, is open to interpretation and is in itself, constantly changing.

On the transition to the twenty-first century, Bhabha<sup>190</sup> lobs the location of culture and nation into the void, noting, like the centuries of Europeans before him, that the very presence of borders and boundaries creates a 'beyond'. But for Bhabha, the boundaries on all sides are in a constant state of flux, and what happens 'where space and time cross',<sup>191</sup> while disorientating and restless, also seems more certain, more innovative and energetic, more essential to existence, than enterprise from historically recognised domains. As the notion of Other changes over centuries, Bhabha appears to invert his view of this cultural space, looking back from 'beyond' in the way that twentieth-century artists such as David Hockney inverted Renaissance perspective, removing the window or wall between the viewer and the scene. And Bhabha's space as a place of negotiation and possibility correlates further with the properties of cyberspace, where physical boundaries, walls, windows, finally dissolve entirely, and 'new dynamic interplays between egocentric and exocentric viewpoints' take place.<sup>192</sup>

The work I present here focuses on my role as a Scottish/Australian textile designer. Within a wider historical context, the work draws on my personal experience of migration from Scotland to Australia, and analyses how the myths and memories of migratory experience and the journey between these geographical extremes becomes an analogy for the Third Space.

The transitory (and transient) character of the journey becomes the homeland, the place between the points of departure and arrival, a place of hybrid cross-cultural response, compromise and innovation, which has been referred to by various theorists such as Homi Bhabha. According to Bhabha, 'to think of migration as metaphor' suggests that the language, form and rhetoric of its outcome 'must be open to meanings that are ambivalent, doubling and dissembling'.<sup>193</sup> As a printed textile designer, I am interested in the role of textiles as a cultural signifier of history, place and identity. As an emigrant Scot, I am interested in the role that traditional Scottish textiles, paisleys, and in particular, tartans, have played in the construction of a Scottish identity and mythology, and how tartan imagery has migrated along with its mythologies to every corner of the world. Through the juxtapositioning of two collections of tartans and Paisley garments as a visual paradox, I attempt to represent within the gallery, the Third Space; the space which Bhabha maintains cannot be represented.

Just as the representation of the Third Space is for Bhabha, problematic, the interpretation of diaspora, for Nicholas Mirzoeff, is equally so. 'Diaspora', he writes, 'cannot by its very nature be fully known, seen or quantified, even, or especially, by its own members. The notion of diaspora and visual culture embodies this paradox'.<sup>194</sup>

For Mirzoeff to represent diaspora visually (I suspect especially, through traditional visual disciplines) is further compromised by the limitation of dimension and perspective, and lack of visually concrete subject matter; the 'visual rhetoric' we associate with nationality; the icons, 'geographical sites, monuments and symbols',<sup>195</sup> the tangibility of land and centre. Ironically, the very

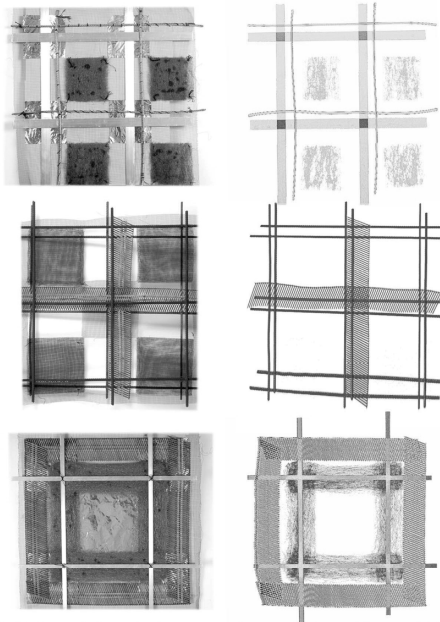
symbols of Scottish nationality and diaspora, tartans, embody the notion of paradox within their weaves. Paradox is resolutely embedded in their history, but it requires a recognition of textiles as a history of cultural, social and political experience to understand this.

Mirzoeff's identification of the incompatibility of visual arts and diaspora as paradox is pivotal to this paper. But while Mirzoeff presents paradox as a contradiction in that it is a negation, a cancelling-out resulting in nothing, its very structure as contradiction has the potential to be used as a visual device. Paradox can be employed to profoundly explain the most incorporeal intangibilities, because paradox, by its very nature, creates difference, and consequently a Third Space. In paradox, it is in the space between, Bhabha's space of contradiction, where meaning can be read. The work I present here demonstrates that paradox can be constructed visually through the medium of printed textiles to explain my experience of diaspora and emigration.

This work commenced with an initial exploration of how the visual artefacts of travel and consequently, migration, might explain the vibration of tension between points, support and suspension, mobility and self-containment, examination of self and belongings. The study then narrowed to focus solely on the use of the airport baggage x-ray machine. For migrants such as myself, the transition from homeland to place of settlement involves physical travel, frequently by air. At the point of embarkation in this journey of exodus, our intimate possessions and clothing, encased and encapsulated in baggage, are x-rayed. Beyond the exterior of the tough vinyl case, the personal effects, cultures and histories of our lives are briefly revealed, examined and discarded. The airport has become the present-day place of embarkation and disembarkation, a no-man's land of arrival and departure. The airport and the plane seem like portals of Bhabha's Third Space, a place of passage unconnected to landmass through which the populations of the world are squeezed, a facilitator for transforming and changing perception and culture. I see the x-ray machine as an icon of this

change; a transporter and transformer of culture.

I began the artwork for this project by constructing metal structures, what I call the *Steel Tartans*. I made three of these, simply formed from a variety of metal pieces including aluminium strips, steel wire, steel wool, nail gun nails, silver foil, all found in a hardware store, and reinforcement mesh used in the construction industry. Nail gun nails were used to recreate the effect of a twill weave, a major characteristic of traditional tartans. I also constructed a metal Paisley, from laser-cut layers of mild steel and aluminium.



(Left) Jill Kinnear's three *Steel tartan structures*, each 50cm x 50cm, and (right) a selection of the resulting airport baggage x-rays of the structures which were used to construct the *Diaspora* textile designs. The materials of the original structures include aluminium bar, steel wire, steel wool, nailgun nails, silver foil and reinforcement mesh.



Jill Kinnear placing one of the *Steel tartan structures* into the baggage x-ray machine at Brisbane International Airport. Photo: Don Hildred

These constructions were conveyed to Brisbane International Airport, where they were passed through the baggage x-ray machine. Two collections of textiles result from this process; the *Steel Tartan* designs, made from photographs of the original metal forms, and what I refer to as my *Diaspora Tartans*, constructed from the baggage x-ray images of the same forms.

I view the entire art-making process and content in this project as composed of three layers, each building on the other to the final outcome; to begin, the construction of the textile designs from the metal structures through the baggage x-ray process; then the development and extension of those textile designs into garments, and finally, the installation and presentation of those garments in the gallery space, thereby attempting a visual synthesis of the issues discussed in this paper. The visitor to the gallery sees first the installation, and then begins to note the detail; their process of discovery is a direct reversal of my process of making; I as the artist, construct the work and meaning through the layering process, the discerning viewer deconstructs it through the layering process, and in doing so becomes increasingly aware of the many possible



interpretations contained within the work. From its genesis the work moves from the computer screen to the gallery floor, from two dimensions to three; from virtual space as digital image to actual space in the gallery.

Like a hologram, the work constantly shifts between the dimensions of past and present, north and south, monochromatic metal and vividly coloured silk. The contemporary meanings of tartan, as signifiers of difference, but also of a cohesive national identity, were born out of the Industrial age, and it is to the Industrial age that I return with my tartan metal structures and references to Hegel.

Hegel fits well with how I feel about this initial stage of the artwork, and his polarity of vision corresponds to my intentions, as well as the binary system of the digital network.

Hegel's notion of inherent contradiction stems from his perception of the conflict of being and nothing. 'Pure being makes the beginning',<sup>196</sup> he writes, but being, as Hegel's genesis, is both positive and negative; it is also nothing. Together they form becoming, which is, not unexpectedly, a constant state of unrest. These original three *Steel tartan* structures were made with the implicit intention of x-raying them in the baggage x-ray machine, and as they are an illustration of intention, they remain in Hegel's constant state of becoming.

Even after they are x-rayed, the metal structures remain in this state, as their entire purpose is to become something else. Their existence is contradicted by their non-existence as things in themselves. While I have structured textile designs from photographs of two of these *Steel Tartan* structures and one from the metal Paisley, these designs exist only as a contradiction to their x-ray counterparts, a visual manifestation of the metal structures' inherent struggle. Commercially these *Steel* designs may exist as independent textile designs, but for this project they are inextricably bound to what they will become.

While the transformation compelled by my interpretation of Hegel's inherent contradiction suggests a changing state, a movement from one condition

to another, it is in my interests, for several reasons, to retain a reference of that change. For this reason, I write that even after being x-rayed the metal structures remain in the state of becoming. Hegel<sup>197</sup> saw the history of philosophy as an evolution, where past systems of thought were neither refuted nor maintained, and where all systems contributed to the latest development of the idea. Philosophy therefore also changes; Hegel acknowledges that systems, although presented as potential solutions in the search for “truth”, also have an intention in that they will change, but will also remain. Similarly, as an artist, I retain the metal constructions within the context of this research even after they have been x-rayed, as they show the original condition from which the x-rays contain visual memories and traces of their structures, they are an illustration of the different states of change, and, like Hegel’s theory of philosophy, they demonstrate the effects of the process of evolution. All these reasons relate to the process of transference in emigration; emigrants, although changed by their new environment, retain traces of their original cultural identity; at different times and in different places in their lives emigrants demonstrate different states of cultural identity; and the process of emigration compels change. Finally, and importantly, the metal structures’ continued presence in the state of becoming, together with their changed condition as x-rays, creates paradox, a specific reference to the history of Scottish emigration; absence creates national identity, a physical severing with land creates a strong mythical connection, the outward movement of emigration and anticipation creates a diaspora of reflection and memory.

Hegel’s becoming as a state of constant transformation through potential negation parallels Bhabha’s notion of identity. Bhabha<sup>198</sup> writes that ‘to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness’ and defines identity not as a pre-conceived ‘totalizing, plenitudinous object of vision’, but the state of transformation, and consequent splitting, of the subject in the process of assuming that pre-given image of identity. So diaspora, in its response to otherness to define its difference, shapes itself through the process of transformation within this

doubling, this in-between space, split between memory and possibility. 'Identification', writes Bhabha,<sup>199</sup> 'is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes.'

These theories of both Hegel and Bhabha are marked by absence; Hegel's being is also nothing; Bhabha's colonial identity is formed by what is not visible, and the image of identity as representation is 'a metaphoric substitution, an illusion of presence, and by that same token a metonym, a sign of its absence and loss'.<sup>200</sup> Emigration and the response to the demand for identification both involve journeys that are shaped by the concept of other, linked to each other, and defined within the Third Space by absence, unrest and constant transformation. They are journeys of transmutation.

The phenomena in this project are defined by such words as emigration, diaspora, cultural identity and Third Space. Visual arts practice is a thoughtful and reflective process which uses visual language to attempt to find a definition and expression, in visual terms, of the phenomena. Hegel writes that 'the only way of reaching the permanent substratum (is) to transmute the given phenomena by means of reflection'.<sup>201</sup> I do this through the process of constructing the artwork, and, in this instance, also through the process of writing.

So I record my placement of the monochromatic metal constructions one by one onto the belt of the x-ray baggage machine at Brisbane International Airport over a series of three visits. The spectrum that I had viewed in my luggage from the first experimental visit, the almost fluorescent oranges, pinks, purples, blues, aquas, greens, yellows, were now transferred to the straight horizontal and vertical bands of what were to become my *Diaspora Tartans*.

Colour shone from the screen; nails appeared like bands of madly woven kaleidoscopic twill, vibrantly changing hue in the corners where the rows overlapped. Bands of speckled pea-green and turquoise aluminium and ultramarine blue steel revealed vivid squares of scarlet and orange, where the thickness of metal crossed and doubled.

Lines were edged with fire, tiny flicks of violet peeling off into a vibrating cauldron of magentas and reds. Steel wool appeared as clouds of pixilation, infinite shades of oranges and greens, or blues and pinks within the one image. Nothing was a constant plane of one colour; although each metal composition resulted in six or seven images immediately recognisable in shape as the original monochromatic aluminium and steel structure, the impression was almost as if some unseen hand had cast aside the tiny particles of a brilliant jigsaw, and then had frantically reassembled them without too much care for their logic.

Over a series of months these images were overlaid and structured firstly into units, then into textile designs which were repeatedly checked for flow, continuity, composition, balance of colour and shape, detail and scale. Other than occasionally entering a tone to block in the white background of the x-rays, the colour was never interfered with; all the colour of these x-ray designs is the colour designated by the baggage x-ray machine.

The x-ray designs are the manifestation of intent, and therefore, unlike the metal constructions, they do not contain an inherent struggle. They exist, they *are*, as in Hegel's terms; what he terms 'determinate being';<sup>202</sup> reality which nevertheless contains its own negation as otherness. And so Hegel's contradictions continue *ad infinitum*; each change brings forth something which contains its other. In the case of these designs, each state both contradicts itself and the other state – the metal structures exist only to become something else, the x-rays and Hegel's reality are not real in the sense that the metal structures are real; they are virtual, digital impressions of the metal structures, but they do not struggle because they have become what they were intended to be. However there is a sense of 'cancelling out' when I look at them because I know they are something else, but to do so is impossible – there is no stable state to cancel them out to.

As an emigrant I can go back to my country of origin, but I can never go back to my previous state, and the one that I am in is constantly influenced by the other. While present in Scotland I was vaguely aware of the history of absence; through political circumstance and my own desire to travel, I have become that absence; the very thing which allowed Scotland in the early nineteenth century to form its national identity, its appearance to the world, and in particular to its neighbour. Hegel<sup>203</sup> states that everything contains its negation, its other, its inherent contradiction. Then it becomes the other, and so becomes something which again has its other. Like the x-ray, as a member of the Scottish diaspora, I bear the traces of something else. It is changed, transferred, transmuted, but its origins are still recognisable. The x-ray and I are formed, as emigrants are formed, by memory. In the synthesis of that recognition we become something else which is imbued with possibility.

In Hegel's interpretation of inherent contradiction, that which *is* also contains its negation, because that which is defined by its limits is imposed by that which is beyond them. He writes, 'Hence otherness is not something indifferent and outside it, but a proper function to it'.<sup>204</sup>

So that which *is*, Hegel's determinate being, is both finite and infinite. True infinity, according to Hegel, is not a grappling with the extent of time and space – something he identifies as futile because it 'never leaves the region of the finite behind'<sup>205</sup> – but the recognition of the finite and the non-finite as the contradiction within the essence of being. To me, it is like the compression of space in visual abstraction. The digital image, which is the immediate manifestation of the x-ray as it appears on the baggage x-ray handler's monitor, seems to reinforce this contradiction, because it also is a compression of space, therefore finite and infinite.

The digital image seems finite because at a certain magnification one reaches a limit and can go no further; a wall of pixels is the outer edge of this particular galaxy. Infinite because the x-ray image has the potential to change, to

be rewritten, reinterpreted, or endlessly and effortlessly copied, and sent back into the ether whence it came. This 'virtualness' is in direct contrast to the character of the metal constructions; they are of the earth, these are of the air. While the metal constructions were also made into digital images through photography so that they could be produced as fabric, I consider the x-ray designs as true digital images because their origin is digital. No other process has intervened in their construction.

Space is the essential component of everything I make for this project. The baggage x-rays are brought into existence specifically for surveillance purposes; they scan particular spaces; small compartments representative of peoples' lives. My x-ray tartans and paisleys are representative of the space of my life, and the lives of others. By constructing these designs, printing them onto silk and then structuring the textiles into three-dimensional garments for installation within the gallery I am defining space. Hegel<sup>206</sup> defines the finite as that which is limited by what lies beyond; therefore the finite and infinite are bound together. The garments that I construct are the other of space, its limits, and its edge. Through my imagination, what Spivak<sup>207</sup> calls the 'real virtuality', I define the shape and feel of the Third Space, as it might feel to me. By placing these garments into the gallery, into the 'white cube', I move beyond the two-dimensionality of Hegel and invite people to share my postcolonial space, to experience how it feels to be drawn between two extremes which, in their contradiction, are always without conflict but also always without resolution.

And so the two dimensional process I go through in constructing these textile designs echoes Hegel's process; each state contradicts itself; the metals are both being and nothing; they become the x-rays; the x-rays are being but something else. In the presentation of both groups of designs as three-dimensional installation within the gallery space they reveal paradox and the space between each other, the Third Space. It is this transition to the three dimensionality of garment and gallery space which relates to Bhabha, for while both Hegel and

Bhabha deal with contradiction, for Hegel its form is the constant unrest of being and nothing, while Bhabha identifies a Third Space in which the splitting is a complex negotiation instigated by cultural difference.

As a negation of the artwork, the Third Space can only be revealed by the presence of the artwork, and the artwork can only reveal its cultural meanings through its careful positioning as installation within space. Hegel and Bhabha both contribute to the layers of contradiction on display; positive is defined by the negative, presence is defined by absence and vice versa; absence contributed to the presence of 'traditional' Scottish national identity, emigration formed the diaspora.

Bhabha arrives at his Third Space through the examination of cultural difference. In contrast to cultural diversity which, he writes, is an 'epistemological object', cultural difference is the process of enunciation of culture as knowledgeable. In the interaction of cultures, says Bhabha,<sup>208</sup> cultural authority only comes into being through 'the attempt to dominate in the *name* of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation'. Cultural authority is therefore ambivalent; it is in response to difference that authority manifests itself. In doing so it employs and nurtures compelling imagery, language and mythology. At the beginning of the nineteenth century in industrial Britain, tartan, as language, as signifier, as mythology, became symbolic of this struggle.

The need for a focus on difference becomes apparent through writers such as Deleuze<sup>209</sup> and Gandhi.<sup>210</sup> Deleuze writes that 'the primacy of identity [...] defines the world of representation' but then goes on to say that 'modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities and the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical'.<sup>211</sup> Gandhi agrees, writing of the fear of difference within the Enlightenment,<sup>212</sup> and mentioning specifically the marginalized knowledge which postcolonialism, women's studies, cultural studies and gay/lesbian studies have attempted to

recover since the 1980s.<sup>213</sup> The scientific, mathematical basis of thought processes within the Enlightenment proposed a 'global and unitary view of thought which maintains that if all things are knowable in the same way, they must be virtually identical'.<sup>214</sup> Foucault called this 'a history of the Same'.<sup>215</sup>

The machine and mass production of the Industrial Revolution, the development of the factory system, commercialisation of farming and the rapid urbanisation of rural areas was the visual expression of this orthodoxy. Belief and confidence in the power of economic production was overwhelming and consolidated the concept of Empire as a discourse which projected superiority as an ideological ground for colonisation. As anglicised Highland landowners realised the benefits of replacing their tenant population with sheep and deer, people were forced from ancestral lands to the unfamiliar and infertile margins of the sea; with little choice many reluctantly crossed its expanse to the New World.

European epistemological thought processes of the time did accommodate for difference but only as other. Writers such as Edward Said recognised the importance of other in the formation of Western identity. In *Orientalism* Said<sup>216</sup> notes that to fully understand the development of the West as a structure and ideology it has to be recognised that the colonised 'Orient' has 'helped to define Europe as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'. According to Gandhi, Heidegger maintained through his theory of *Lichtung* that 'every major knowledge carries within itself the possibility of countervailing minor-ness [...] a reminder that identity is always underpinned by the presence of its other'.<sup>217</sup>

Enlightenment thinking, the Romantic Movement and the Medieval Revival, a new interest in nature, and in the past, as a response to industrialisation all focused on human social evolution. A fusion of references to classical mythology and the 'noble savage' cast a fresh light on perceived 'primitive' cultures, such as the Highlands. According to Devine<sup>218</sup> they 'caught an intellectual and spiritual mood at a time of massive economic, social and political change which saw 'primitive' societies possessing virtues which modern societies



had lost'. Such was the conviction of the West in its own superiority, rationality and civilisation, however, that actual contact with cultural difference, with other, only served to reinforce those beliefs. The idea of colonisation and a genuine respect for ethnic cultures are conflicting ideals. Writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau<sup>219</sup> illuminates this paradox of modernist thought patterns when he complained in 1755 that the European-instigated voyages of travel and exploration, designed to contribute to the idea of an anthropology of human diversity, had only revealed the prejudice and limitations of his own countrymen. There were also protestors against the injustices of the Highland Clearances, but their voices seemed lost in the frenetic development of the time.

The romantic idea of the Scottish Highlander fitted the notion of the 'primitive' in the eyes of the European intellectual aesthete. Withers writes that 'to the urbane *philosophe* of the late eighteenth century the Highlander was a contemporary ancestor, the Highlands the Scottish past on the doorstep'.<sup>220</sup> The remote and wild landscape also corresponded perfectly to the genres of the sublime and the picturesque. As thousands were forced off the land into industrialised areas and emigrant ships, and estates 'went to the wall', the tourists and new southern landowners moved in. Difference could only be accepted by its subjugation, could only be celebrated through its absence; paradox as difference.

Both Morrison and Devine question how Scotland ended up with a national identity which focuses on the Highlands and Highland culture, a culture which was abhorred, ridiculed and rejected, chronicled as barbarous by other Scots since the fourteenth century and viewed as other from both within the country and without. How also did it choose an identity that, while promoting egalitarianism, seemed either indifferent or quite brazenly to ignore the plight of those it was meant to represent? These authors recognise the paradoxical outcomes of Highlandism, but in order to fully understand it, they each analyse the contradictory elements of its composition. In doing so they essentially 'split' the paradox, revealing the circumstances of its construction. In this context,

'splitting' becomes an intentional deconstruction, from which new forms emerge. This process is vital to my own construction of the artwork.

Morrison argues that the study of Scottish culture within Scottish historical analyses 'has often been separated from other aspects of its history, especially its political, social and economic history'.<sup>221</sup> He gives two reasons for this trend; that modern histories are 'imbued with the notion that the culture of Scotland is not a true reflection of the 'real' Scottish character' and that as a result of the Union with England in 1707 many believe that Scottish culture 'split' in the nineteenth century, resulting in a 'deformity of self-image'.

In postcolonial discourse, Bhabha also writes of 'splitting', one that affects all parties engaged in cultural negotiation and which:

constitutes an intricate strategy of defense and differentiation [...]. Two contradictory and independent attitudes inhabit the same place, one takes account of reality, the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality. This results in the production of multiple and contradictory belief.<sup>222</sup>

In an interview with W. J. T. Mitchell,<sup>223</sup> Bhabha agreed that as part of a wider theory about the construction of authority, he saw splitting as a means of survival, as a way of living with contradiction and then using it for 'social agency', for unbalancing the empowered. His examples of such survival techniques, slightly altered language causing subtle shifting ground, are subversive solutions relating to his analysis of cultural relations.

Nairn also offers a theory of splitting, contending 'that the genetic code of all nationalisms is simultaneously inscribed by [...] contradictory signals', the equally powerful rhetoric of national development and national attachment creating a paradox as the desire for 'industrialization, prosperity, equality with other peoples' is matched by an inward retrospection which invokes tradition, custom and mythology.<sup>224</sup> According to Barthes, mythology presents a simple and reassuring option. Myth is economic, he writes, it:

[...] abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world that is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.<sup>225</sup>

Nairn sees the need for the past as compensatory for the present; thus, as nations move forward they look backward into their past, 'to gather strength wherever it can be found for the ordeal of development'.<sup>226</sup> Anderson also believes that nationalisms fill the void created by the 'rationalist secularism of the Enlightenment', replacing old systems of belief such as 'divine kingship, religious community, sacred languages and cosmological consciousness with a national purpose and meaning'.<sup>227</sup> Such theories explain the popularity of Highlandism and the success, for example, of Sir Walter Scott's novels, often set in the Middle Ages and uncritically championing the customs of Medieval feudalism.<sup>228</sup> The stories were published during the time of rapid industrialisation of Europe; heroic, stirring tales that 'emotionally bonded an urban populace to a romantic notion of pre-industrial Scotland'.<sup>229</sup> Significantly, it was also a displaced populace.

Devine suggests that the icons and mythology of Scottish nationality, as they are popularly presented and packaged to the world, have partly resulted as a nineteenth-century response 'to the threat of cultural conquest by its more powerful neighbour';<sup>230</sup> a response which provided a strong national identity whilst avoiding a threat to the Union with England and demonstrating an allegiance to the British monarch.

It maximised difference to establish a non-threatening authority. 'Difference' thus becomes, in this context, a demonstration of Bhabha's social agency, a conscious and sought construction, a response generated within the Third Space. According to Devine, the Scots appropriated what they had always considered, and abhorred, as 'different' from within their own country, and

projected it as theirs without, thereby delineating their national boundaries more clearly within a British context.

In analysing how culture might be transformed by migration through the use of my own Scottish cultural textile heritage, I have to examine how those textiles became elevated to the status of national identity. In doing so I have a better understanding of the reason for the paradox they represent, a paradox that is visually illustrated through my process of using the x-ray baggage machine. In physically constructing monochromatic industrial metal components into a Steel Tartan with the intention of x-raying, I am inducing the paradox, of which emigration is the catalyst. Emigration and migration contributed to the disappearance of Highland culture from its place of origin and its reappearance and transformation in other areas of the world. Emigration, as absence, intensified by the industrial and agrarian revolutions, facilitated the existence of the romantic mythology of Highlandism. The process of emigration results in the diaspora, and the power of the diaspora, no longer physically connected to the place of origin but still present, sustains the mythology.

These ideas and designs are extended into the construction of the two groups of garments relating to the period of the Industrial Revolution; the *Workshop of the Empire Dresses* and the *Chivalry Dresses*. The *Workshop of the Empire Dresses* refers to the area around Glasgow in Western Scotland where Highlanders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries migrated in order to survive. The concentration of industries, including textiles and later steel, contributed to the naming of the area as the Workshop of the Empire. Partially influenced by the appalling conditions of industrialisation, growing secularism and the divisions of a class system, Romanticism grew considerably in Britain, particularly through a fascination with the Middle Ages. The disappearance of culture from the Highlands, and the fading away of any Jacobite threat, allowed Highlandism to become a cogent vehicle for Romantic imaginings. The *Chivalry Dresses*, composed of the x-ray imagery of the *Steel Tartans*, reflect this

movement. Comprised of x-rays, the *Chivalry Dresses* are symbolic of transference; a transference of design from metal to x-ray along the constantly moving conveyor belt of migration, but also a cultural transference reminiscent of a shift in thought; a changing perception of the past and the nostalgia of memory created by an embracing of innovation, knowledge and the embarkation of a journey into the unknown. Fused with both historical and contemporary references, these two groups of garments map a response to a changing environment, whether the context is the rapid commercialisation of Scotland in the nineteenth century or a new land for an emigrant in the twenty-first.



*Workshop of the Empire dresses*, Jill Kinnear, 2006. Textile designs constructed from photographs of the *Steel Tartan Structures* and digitally printed onto silk shantung and silk georgette. Garment drafted and constructed from Jill Kinnear's design by Carolyn Taylor-Smith.



*Chivalry dresses*, Jill Kinnear, 2008. Baggage x-rays of *Steel tartan constructions*, developed into *Diaspora tartan 6* and *Diaspora tartan 3* textile designs with co-ordinates, digitally printed onto silk sateen, silk crepe de chine and silk shantung. Garment drafted and constructed from Jill Kinnear's design by Carolyn Taylor-Smith.

My processes, which could include what could be described as a partnership with the x-ray machine, are, from the moment that I insert a metal structure into the machine, entirely digital. Like the x-ray machine, the computer is the interface between actual space and virtual space. While I do not enter into the Internet in the process, there is interactivity between myself and both the x-ray machine and the computer. The interaction in this project is not with other

cyberspace users, but is a binary dialogue both within the machine and without. The designs alternate between the real world and the virtual, the migratory trajectory of flight paralleled by the journey of the textile from metal to silk.

The artwork for the Diaspora designs therefore exists in both spaces; as metal construction transferred to digital image by the baggage x-ray machine, and then extended to digital textile design through the use of the computer. By digitally printing the images onto fabric I return them to the physical world. However, their passage remains in virtual space, and their existence on the fabric and their shift in appearance is proof of their transference from metal structure; the space of contradiction that Bhabha says cannot be represented is present by its absence and formed by the existence of the artworks in their different manifestations. The potential of both my process and outcomes lies in the interstices between the 'real' and the 'virtual', recalling the relationship within pre-eighteenth century scholastic philosophy which Marie-Laure Ryan describes:

[...] 'actual' and 'virtual' exist in a dialectical relation rather than in one of radical opposition: the virtual is not that which is deprived of existence, but that which possesses the potential, or force of developing into actual existence.<sup>231</sup>

While the possibility of Bhabha's Third Space lies in the cultural dialogue between the 'real' and the virtual, ultimately the concept of art is a virtual reality. Art is an illusion of reality; it is constructed in the space of the artist's imagination, and its existence within the 'real' world, and its illusion of reality creates a negotiation between the artwork and the 'real' world. Art represents possibility. If, as Martha Rosler says, 'those who seek cyberspace dream the future by literally moving space to the plane of the imaginary',<sup>232</sup> then I am in cyberspace as an artist. Marc Poster cautions against such a reading of the word, writing:



In the hands of certain literary theorists the virtual becomes transcendental and founds the real in its own image. Thus novels are just as much virtual realities as computer generated immersive environments. And since novels are more 'real' than experience, fiction more true than facts, a new disciplinary foundation for Literature is constructed. In discussions of virtual reality it is imperative to guard against the 'transcendentalist gesture', as I would like to call these discursive maneuvers, by keeping in mind the material basis of the term, the machinic assemblages of cyberspace and helmet-glove apparatuses.<sup>233</sup>

Virtual, for the purposes of this paper, defines Rosler's airport experience, the workings and effects of the baggage x-ray machine within that space of dislocation, and the digital processes of my computer. If the helmet-glove apparatus defines Poster's cyberspace, then the airport baggage x-ray machine and its analogies of migration and cultural transference defines mine.

Emigration does form a split, and my life inevitably remains suspended between two hemispheres. In comparison to the trauma many exiles experience, for me the relatively mild discomfort of migrant dislocation remains. But as an artist I can use this Third Space; it has become my home. Bhabha has shown me that contradiction is empowering; it is fundamental to growth, change and evolution.

The work presented here places an Anglo-Celtic, Northern European perspective within the predominantly Asian artistic examination of the Third Space. It addresses, through a visual context, Bhabha's idea in *The Location of Culture* (1994) of 'in-between' and presents it as the emigrant's homeland, the nature of Ian McLean's idea in *White Aborigines, Identity Politics in Australian Art* (1998) of Australian antipodality,<sup>234</sup> and the source for future innovation. Though it is a dislocated space this 'in-between-ness' is not some aberration of homeland, or no place at all, but a place natural to the experience of the migrant. McLean notes that 'the Antipodean never *becomes*, never *is*, but is condemned to a perpetual *becoming*'.<sup>235</sup> This is also Hegel's definition of being. Being, for Hegel, is both positive and negative; it is also nothing. Together they form

becoming, which is a constant state of unrest. It is contradiction. In a world of increasingly mobile populations, as nations such as Scotland question the definition of national history, national identity and national culture, and analyse the relationship of these issues to diaspora,<sup>236</sup> perhaps the only issue worth considering is the acceptance of this contradictory state, which now seems as relevant for those within the geographical confines of a national boundary as it is for those outside it. It appears that leaving is as dislocating for a nation as it is for the migrating citizen of that nation. Perhaps, ironically for Scotland, emigration, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to providing the country with a fixed national identity, is now, in the twenty-first century, not completely destroying, but changing it; that national identity is becoming Other, it is absorbing the shifting nature of diaspora. This is the infinite character of Hegel's contradiction; nothing is fixed. Only mythology is fixed, and the textiles presented here take the mythology and shift it, shattering it into countless fragments of light; the coloured pixels of the baggage x-ray machine, my icon of migratory transference. The momentary regrouping of those pixels into the *Diaspora* textiles is a brief settling of digital dust, before a wind blows again to remind us that nothing is stationary.

## **9. ECOCRITICISM AND POSTCOLONIALITY IN DIGITAL DIASPORAS: POST-9/11 AND KATRINA**

Russell L. Stockard Jr. (California Lutheran University)

This essay has as its background the intersection of race, gender and class against the backdrop of the culture of late capitalism. As O'Brien notes in her discussion of irony and ecology during the early years of the war in Iraq, the key elements of this culture include the dominance of the image, the weakening of historicity, and the production of an aesthetic of the sublime focused not on nature but on technology.<sup>237</sup> More specifically, she asserts that the aggressive defence of a 'war like no other' by the Bush administration constituted a crisis of representation of Western civilization. In this context, I examine how narrative and rhetoric are used to construct and reconstruct place, spectacle, and history with respect to displaced individuals and groups from real and imagined homelands by the fall of empire and disaster. I argue that notions of place define diasporas even as these dispersed groups and individuals are connected as much through mediated experience as by the face-to-face variety. Digital diasporas, then, are a fusion of community and communication technology. However, the latter may range from computer code to words scrawled on scraps of paper.

Apart from including an examination of rap music for its contributions to a

sense of place in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, this essay also investigates the recent 9/11 novel *Let the Great World Spin* and nonfiction novel *Zeitoun* for their depictions of mediated experience by diaspora community members and other characters. I want to introduce the notion of ecocriticism into cyberspace and the mediascape in the examination of these works.

Environmental literature has been an area for study for a generation. Many academic scholars are familiar with the fact that the original notion of ecocriticism of American letters as nature writing by white male writers has come under criticism. Consequently, ecocritics began to include women and people of colour in the emerging canon and in *Second Arrivals*, DeLoughrey and Casteel have contributed to a dialogue between ecocriticism and diaspora studies. In one review, George B. Handley asks the following questions: ‘What is the role of geography in shaping cultural practice in an age of rampant environmental degradation? For that matter, what can it possibly mean any longer to long for home, to believe in a sense of place, in the face of ethnic nationalism’s long history of violence and intolerance?’<sup>238</sup>

In *Second Arrivals* the notion of newcomers to these shores who go beyond their original footholds in ports of entry such as New York City, Los Angeles, or the borderlands separating the U.S. and Mexico is placed under the microscope. Ending up in natural settings, this subsequent stage of migration DeLoughrey and Casteel’s term ‘second arrivals’ and comment how it results in a natural world confronting not the usual suspects of male Euro-Americans but women and postcolonial subjects.<sup>239</sup>

With the above as a general background I have chosen to consider another aspect of digital diaspora – conflict resolution in a time of war, both cold and hot, which describe the war on terror. In doing so, I investigate Colum McCann’s 9/11 work, *Let the Great World Spin*, which opens with a narrative of a tightrope walker who boldly challenges winds, the laws of physics and human proscriptions against reckless endangerment in a feat that unites the witnesses to the spectacle

on the streets of New York.

McCann situates the performance of the tightrope walker in the surrounding cityscape: ‘Those who saw him hushed. On Church Street. Liberty. Courtlandt. West Street. Fulton. Vesey. It was a silence that heard itself.’<sup>240</sup> McCann also sets the scene of the reluctant and impatient onlookers, first psychologically and then geographically:

It was the dilemma of the watchers: they didn’t want to wait around for nothing at all, some idiot standing on the precipice of the towers, but they didn’t want to miss the moment either, if he slipped, or got arrested, or dove, arms stretched.

Around the watchers, the city still made its everyday noises, Car horns. Garbage trucks. Ferry whistles. The thrum of the subway. The M22 bus pulled in against the sidewalk, braked, sighed down into a pothole. A flying chocolate wrapper touched against a fire hydrant. Taxi doors slammed. Bits of trash sparred in the darkest reaches of the alleyways. Sneakers found their sweetspots. The leather of brief- cases rubbed against trouserlegs. A few umbrella tips clinked against the pavement. Revolving doors pushed quarters of conversation out into the street.<sup>241</sup>

The scene is a mixture of rapt silence by those enthralled by the spectacle and the rest of the New Yorkers in a hurry to reach their workplaces and appointments, oblivious to the drama unfolding above them. This scene foreshadows the shards of drama experienced by the protagonists in the novel, most of which is only glimpsed by passersby.

Anker has noted the prevalence of allegories of falling in 9/11 novels. She also treats spectacle and the sublime in the postmodern grounding of the novels in her essay.<sup>242</sup> In his 9/11 novel, *Let the Great World Spin*, Colum McCann uses as his central conceit, French daredevil Philippe Petit’s 1974 tightrope walk between the newly completed twin towers of the World Trade Center. The center would be the target of two attacks; the second one would succeed in bringing down both structures on 9/11/01. One of the protagonists, John Corrigan, belongs to a kind of mendicant order of his own creation, having previously been a Franciscan.

Corrigan has abandoned his Irish middle-class origins to unconventionally minister to prostitutes in the Bronx. Narrated by his older brother, Ciaran, the section of the novel features Corrigan as a committed servant of God and man (and woman) who risks life and limb (the pimps periodically reward his services with beatings). Corrigan came to his calling as a youth, spending time with the down and out derelicts of his native Dublin, sharing cigarettes, alcohol and even the clothing off his back. His restless being has compelled him to respond to his fellow human beings who do not enjoy the privileges that he inherited. Ciaran interprets his leading as a follower. He notes that despite being two or three years younger, Corrigan managed to secure the top bunk. From there he would read his Bible verses with a view of the bay. The following passage from early in the book suggests the well-being he and brother enjoyed despite their physicist father abandoning them and their mother. It also serves as stark counterpoint to the habitat he would later adopt in the Bronx:

Our house in Sandymount looked out to the bay. We had a short driveway full of weeds, a square of lawn, a black ironwork fence. If we crossed the road, we could stand on the curved seawall and look a good distance across the bay. A bunch of palm trees grew at the end of the road. They stood smaller and more stunted than palms elsewhere, but exotic nonetheless, as if invited to come watch Dublin the rain.<sup>243</sup>

After describing this tranquil environment, the transition to the two brothers' time in the United States begins with a terrorist incident, an IRA bombing in Dublin. This ethnic nationalism and violence set against the pastoral description of the Corrigan home on the bay invokes the above Handley passage about longing for home. Having survived the incident and a charge of drug possession, Corrigan's brother-narrator goes to visit his younger sibling. As narrator of his brother's life, he describes the highly distinctive Bronx cityscape:

On one side was a row of high-rise tenements behind a chain-link fence. Parts of the fence were topped with razor wire. On the other, the

expressway: the light-streak of cars zipping above. Below, by the underpass, a long line of women. Cars and trucks were pulling into the shadows. The women struck poses.<sup>244</sup>

So it is not too hard to see Corrigan as belonging to a diaspora of Irish itinerant priests who want to rescue those whom society has cast aside – the poor, the sex workers, and the desperate. Among the prostitutes that strike a pose at the underpass is Tillie, already a grandmother in her late thirties, her daughter Jazzlyn already on the stroll as a hooker. Tillie takes the fall on an old robbery charge involving her and Jazzlyn, an act that she hopes will help her atone for being such a poor mother. Later on the day that Philippe Petit would take his daring walk, we find out that Corrigan's own balancing act ends. He is fatally injured in a car accident after rescuing Jazzlyn, mother of two young children. The teen prostitute is killed instantly, victim of the mean streets she had already grown used to negotiating.

While life on the street has hardened Tillie, she experiences redemptive moments. In one of the scenes that allows Tillie to use her profession paradoxically to escape it, she spends a week with a man in a luxurious hotel:

Once I had a man a whole week long at the Sherry Netherlands. There was a chandelier surrounded with grapes 'n vines in the ceiling and violins carved outta the plaster and all. He was small and fat and bald and brown. He put a record on the player. Sounded like snake music. He said, 'Isn't this a divine comedy?' I said, 'That's a weird thing to say.' He just smiled. He had a nice accent.

We had crystal cocaine and caviar and champagne in a bucket. It was a blow date, but all he had me do is read to him. Persian poems. I thought I was already in heaven and floating on a cloud. There were a lot of things being said about ancient Syria and Persia. I laid out on the bed naked and just read to the chandelier. He didn't even want to touch me. He sat in the chair and watched me reading. I left with eight hundred dollars and a copy of Rumi. I never read nothing like that before. It made me want to have a fig tree.

That's long before I went to Hunt's Point. That's long before I ended up under the Deegan. And that's long before Jazz and Corries rode that van to doom.<sup>245</sup>

In the postcolonial meetings of members of diverse diasporas, in this case the African diaspora and the Persian diaspora, culture can step in for the structural violence of rapacious capitalism or the actual violence of war. Tillie's Persian client gives her a respite from the brutal, ugly environment of the street. She can assume the nearly Platonic ideal of beauty as she reads verses from Rumi. It is a moment about which Tillie fondly muses more than once. This scene contrasts with the one of the young Corrigan reading his verses as he takes in the beauty of the bay, lined with palm trees.

In a novel that is ostensibly about 9/11, the Persian identity of Tillie's client is benign rather than menacing. His love of literature undermines any association with terror. Rather representing Islamic fundamentalism, the Persian is a man of letters and learning, cultured and gentle. The Rumi text joins the brown man from an ancient Western Asian culture with a woman from the immature culture of the U.S. The client at least temporarily rescues Tillie from the low level combat she faces everyday on the streets of the Bronx.

As already indicated, Corrigan plays the role of first responder. He sees those ignored by society with a special vision. He vigorously intervenes in the arrest of the prostitutes just short of getting arrested himself. It is not too much of a leap to see Corrigan's risk-taking as parallel to the derring-do of Philippe Petit on the cable strung between the twin towers. McCann has skilfully drawn a portrait of a man who tries to test his faith by flagellating himself in the face of imminent danger. His Corrigan can only rescue the disenfranchised African American prostitutes at the expense of his very own suffering and eventual death. On the eve of his own death, Corrigan does find a less solipsistic joy as he consummates his love for the Guatemalan nurse Adelita who like Jazzlyn is mother of two children. Unlike Jazzlyn, Adelita keeps a photo of the children's father in a prominent place so they will know who he was. She maintains this arrangement despite her dislike for him and his militaristic connections. Unlike



Philippe Petit, Corrigan cannot defy gravity and loses his footing on the high wire at the same time as he loses his grip on the steering wheel of his ramshackle van as the vehicle is hit by a young artist and his wife. The world set into motion by the Vietnam War, staged like the run-up to the Iraq war, is one where mega-disasters are not only possible, but likely, as the social contract between government and citizens is torn.

The world the characters of *Let the Great World Spin* inhabit is culturally pre-digital. Books of Rumi, Bible verses on scraps of cigarette packaging, and paintings intentionally left in the rain are the central texts of this culture-world. However, there are characters who can think and function in algorithms and computer code. They include Claire who loses her programmer son Joshua in an attack in Vietnam. She herself was a math major in college and certainly passed the gift on to her son. In the depths of her grief she convinces herself that she can communicate with her dead son by sitting in front of an open refrigerator. The irony of her son's death is that his core project consisted of a 'Death Hack,' a program to count the number of dead resulting from the carnage in the Vietnam War:

It was easy enough to write a program that would collate the dead, he said, but what he really wanted was to write a program that could make sense of the dying.<sup>246</sup>

The trope of computer communication continues into a longer passage that takes place as Philippe Petit consummates his walk between the World Trade Center towers. It includes a team of hackers in California working for the Department of Defense who manipulate the phone system to ring pay phones at the foot of the towers a continent away. The hackers want to get a live account of the walk. In essence, they are both spectators and interviewers who orchestrate a series of phone correspondents as the French daredevil performs one hundred and ten stories above them.

All of eighteen years old, the youngest of the hackers, Sam Peters, interrogates a number of spectators among them a working-class Latino and a sophisticated older woman. Sam may be a substitute for the late Joshua, endowed with prodigious programming skills. Unlike Joshua, he hopes to be able to start a relationship with a woman he will only know by the name she gives him, Sable Senatore. After accepting a number of personal questions, she politely laughs him off and terminates the conversation.

The final digital trope is Ciaran, Corrigan's brother, having become the CEO of an Internet company in Ireland. Tillie's granddaughters, Jasslyn and her older sister Janice visit the island, but only Jasslyn looks up Ciaran. The notion of the Internet as a network of networks aptly applies to the overlapping relationships formed in the novel as Jasslyn learns that Ciaran is married to Lara. She was the passenger in the car that hit Corrigan's van, causing the accident that took the life of his brother and Jazzlyn, the girls' mother.

While *Let the Great World Spin* can be viewed as a global novel with a plot that foreshadows both 9/11 and Katrina, events that grew out the loss of civic wetlands that provided welfare to its citizens just as the loss of Louisiana wetlands set the stage for a crippling flood. Let us leave the geographies of *Let the Great World Spin* and move into the Gulf and Caribbean regions to understand the diasporas wrought by the hurricane.

The central protagonist in Dave Egger's novel *Zeitoun* is a Syrian immigrant to the United States, Abdulrahman Zeitoun. Given that his original homeland belongs to George W. Bush's infamous Axis of Evil, it is not surprising that he crosses paths with forces as concerned about terrorists plotting nefarious deeds as about identifying and rescuing hurricane victims in the days following the Katrina storm surge. I will be examining the implications of this novel shortly.

Brinkerhoff has conducted research on digital diasporas and conflict prevention. She notes that research on the Internet confirms enabling features for terrorist activities, among them its ease of access, anonymity, and global scope.

Moreover, Brinkeroff observes that some have even claimed that information technology has brought into relief the marginalization stemming from globalization, 'promoting despair and hopelessness in the South, and thus contributing to the emergence of terrorism.'

Schumann has commented on the need for political articulation in the Arab-American diaspora. Many Arab-Americans feel with good reason that the media misrepresent their community. He notes that diaspora communities face the challenge of being on the margins of two national public spheres, both in American society and in their Arab homelands. In addition, these publics face the challenge of communicating in two different languages: English and Arabic. As a result, processes of translation and reinterpretation must take place in order for communication to take place at two different levels. One is communication within the Arab-American community itself and the other is communication between the community and both its Arab homelands and American society.

Another community accustomed to protesting its portrayal in the media is African-Americans. Much useful scholarship has placed African-Americans in the United States in a global diaspora of African descended peoples. Katrina added another dimension to the diaspora within the confines of the U.S. as the disaster dispersed black citizens of New Orleans around the nation. This condition made communication in the dispersed black community in the city of origin and in the receiving cities of vital importance. Zeitoun's story shows that he is a second arrival to New Orleans before Katrina. African-American evacuees were in many ways second arrivals to Atlanta, Houston, Washington, D.C.

In a useful discussion of hip-hop's role in the Katrina disaster recovery, Kish suggests despite commentary to the contrary, that Katrina did have a precedent for the African-American community in the 'experience of massive upheaval and displacement in the face of natural disaster' in two catastrophes: the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and the less publicized Vanport Flood of 1948. Both of these events triggered monstrous waves of African-American relocation.

In each case, black and often poverty-stricken communities absorbed much more than their share of the environmental and economic costs of natural disaster due to housing discrimination, bias in employment, and racist rescue efforts. This traumatic experience found its way into the blues and the African-American diaspora found its way into a media narrative.

The musical evolution from the blues to hip-hop did not exclude the twenty-first-century black diaspora from the dominant popular musical form of the day. In a survey of black American migration narratives in fiction and song, Farah Jasmine Griffin has noted that far from being uniform or static representations of displacement, these narratives are characterized by a diversity that matches the people and times in which they were born.

Without going into an extended exploration of contemporary Katrina hip-hop narratives, suffice it to say that Kish sets up a typology of three levels of hip-hop artists operating in the post-Katrina environment: local New Orleans rappers, national rappers with origins in New Orleans, and national rappers not intimately connected with the city. Among the first set, local rappers, are artists who use rap idioms that reflect the highly specific musical varieties of the city, often cataloguing neighbourhoods in an intimate way and thus contribute to the depiction of an environment that is not so much characterized by nature and wilderness as much as territoriality and identification with neighbourhood-specific cultures. The other two kinds of rappers often tie the experience of the dislocated to national and global issues, particularly the Iraq war.

The ecocritical nature of the local rappers' discourse serves as the foundation for the analysis of tropes and narratives in the longer work to be discussed below. In the dialogue that long-time Seventh Ward resident Mia X sets up with the lived environment of the neighbourhoods she calls home, a politicization of a particularly ludic form of rap known as bounce has taken place. As Mia X raps in her song 'My FEMA People':

Ride through my city  
Beirut. Iraq. Ride through my city  
I ride and cry all through the city  
Looking for the culture all through the city  
We were left for dead for vultures all through the city  
It's so much bigger than the weather (Bonisteel)

In a twist on the urban ecocriticism article title by Rosenthal, 'Hoods and the Woods,' in Mia X's song 'Woods in the Hood', the rapper is not only looking for those physical elements of her homeland that have survived the hurricane, but also for the less tangible but much 'bigger' characteristic local culture that travels in the hearts and souls of those scattered among the Katrina diaspora. With this start, let us now investigate how the discourse of the rappers is reflected in the nonfiction novel *Zeitoun*.

*Zeitoun* is a nonfiction novel that in the opinion of a number of critics is the landmark of post-Katrina literature five years after the storm. The book grew out of Eggers' oral history work with Katrina survivors, *Voices of the Storm*, and is the story of Kathy and Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a couple that owned a painting and contracting firm in New Orleans when Katrina struck. Zeitoun, a Syrian immigrant, convinced his wife and family to evacuate before the hurricane made landfall, while remaining behind to supervise the family business, properties, and the interests of their many clients who had evacuated the city. Curiously, Zeitoun had purchased a canoe before the storm, hoping to entice his family into joining him in paddling through the bayous and other waterways lacing New Orleans. Initially feeling useful in the rescue effort following the flooding of New Orleans in the wake of the storm, Zeitoun manoeuvred his canoe through the floodwaters either rescuing or identifying residents for other rescuers. Eventually, despite his humanitarian efforts, he was swept up in a dragnet of alleged looters and terror suspects as law enforcement officers brought in from as far away as New Mexico serving the citizens of New Orleans by arresting criminals. The enormity of the storm and resulting civil crisis had depleted the New Orleans Police Department.

Zeitoun falls victim to the chaotic rescue enterprise mounted by various government and police agencies and imprisoned, first in a makeshift jail, 'Camp Greyhound', and then in a Louisianan state prison. While many would say that the entrepreneurial Abdulrahman was an Arab-American Horatio Alger he could not overcome the climate of fear abroad in the land after 9/11.

The characters in *Zeitoun* use information and communication technology in a number of ways, contributing to a mediascape in the book. Once Zeitoun and Kathy and the children separate, they maintain contact by mobile phone. Zeitoun also speaks to his brother, Ahmad, over the phone. At the same time, as television stories are filed from the flood zone, Kathy and other relatives see the desperation and distress of those left behind. They scour the video footage for any signs of their loved one, Abdulrahman, an activity tens of thousands engaged in during the horrific first week following the inundation:

think of Judgment Day, of Noah and forty days of rain. And yet it was so quiet, so still. He sat on the roof and scanned the horizon, looking for any person, any animal or machine moving. Nothing (Z 104).

The silence is soon broken by a helicopter flying overhead, but the persistence of the water trope is significant in Zeitoun's narrative. It both connects him to an idealized mythic past, not only to his childhood in Jableh, but also to the history of the civilizations that plied the Mediterranean. Immediately, he noticed the canoe he had purchased for recreational purposes tethered to the building. Rather than attempt to move through floodwaters too deep wade into, he could use the canoe:

Amid the devastation of the city, standing on the roof of his drowned home, Zeitoun felt something like inspiration. He imagined floating alone, through the streets of his city. In a way, this was a new world, uncharted. He could be an explorer. He could see things first (Z 104-05).

Soon Zeitoun would be the first to encounter neighbours stranded in their homes.

Rather than representing expeditions of explorers and merchants that historically travelled through his ancestral home, he occupied the role of humanitarian and first responder. Eggers situates Zeitoun spatially the same way the local rappers described earlier identify their locales by city ward or neighbourhood. We are reminded of street locations that Zeitoun repeatedly passes and returns to, such as Dart and Claiborne.

One week after the flooding and after days of dutiful rescue work, Zeitoun realized the city was emptying out. He had changed his base of operations to another of his properties where he was living with several other men. He began the mental planning for his departure to rejoin his wife Kathy and their children. His family had moved from nearby Baton Rouge cross-country to Phoenix. Zeitoun phoned his brother Ahmad, an airline pilot, in Spain. This conversation underscored the fear that permeated the conversations Zeitoun had had with Kathy. The mediated reality was of a city underwater, terrorized by looters and criminals, with law enforcement using drastic measures to regain control: “Do you realize the images we’re seeing on TV?” Ahmad asked.’

This was the turning point of the narrative, but also for Zeitoun. He and his companions would be arrested despite having identification and despite Zeitoun being the landlord of the property. Initially, Zeitoun did not panic:

He knew there had been a mandatory evacuation in effect, and he assumed (the arrest) had something to do with that. He knew it would all get straightened out wherever they were being taken. All he needed to do was to call Kathy, he would call a lawyer (Z 217).

The narrative continues with Zeitoun and his fellows taken to Camp Greyhound, the name for the makeshift jail set up at the Union Passenger Terminal. The irony of using a train and bus terminal as a prison was clear. Not only were Zeitoun and his three companions not free to use the facility for the purpose of travel. One of the interrogators declared to a native-born American friend of Zeitoun that they all were ‘Al Queda.’ While Todd ‘laughed derisively, [...] Zeitoun was startled.

He could not have heard right' (Z 222).

After a period of time in Camp Greyhound, Zeitoun was moved to the Hunt Correctional Center, in an isolated part of the state. After arriving there, Zeitoun began to think about a fishing phenomenon called bycatch. This refers to other sea creatures such as dolphins being caught up unintended in the sardine nets. Obviously, he viewed himself this way. Soon, Zeitoun sent word through a prison missionary to Kathy, who immediately went into action, calling the prison and, Ahman, her brother-in-law in Spain. Ahmad thought the worst about his brother, 'a Syrian in an American prison in 2005.' She also got in touch with a lawyer, who had just seen a TV news story on Zeitoun in his canoe.

So, then, these were the extremes, a racially profiled Syrian imprisoned in the U.S. after 9/11 and a local TV celebrity. The latter did not mitigate the former. Eggers relates Zeitoun's reaction to his freedom and the ordeal of his imprisonment:

More than anything else, Zeitoun is simply happy to be free and in his city. It's the place of his dreams, the place where he was married, where his children were born, where he was given the trust of his neighborhood.

So, every day he gets in his white van, still with its rainbow logo, and makes his way through the city, watching it rise again.

It was a test, Zeitoun thinks. Who among us could deny that we were tested? But now look at us, he says. Every person is stronger now. Every person who was forgotten by God or country is now louder, more defiant, and more determined. They existed before, and they exist again, in the city of New Orleans and the United States of America. And Abdulrahman Zeitoun existed before, and exists again, in the city of New Orleans and the United States of America (Z 354).

*Zeitoun* operates at the nexus between diaspora and global justice. Like political upheavals, environmental catastrophes like Katrina create their own diasporas. *Let the Great World Spin* is a novel written after both 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. While ostensibly focused on the former, it offers insights into the latter for ecocritics and analysts of postcoloniality.



In discussing how films engage globalization, Manning and Shackford-Bradley assert that the master narrative of globalization:

combines political, economic and cultural terms to project a singular linear progression toward industrialization and capitalism, modernity and urbanization, and secular democracy and a high-tech enhanced middle-class lifestyle. In this narrative, the local is given a name, contrasted with the global, and position as inferior [...]. Recently, however, this construct has been appropriated and inverted by those who would resist globalization. Local space has been granted new status as the site of their resistance [...].<sup>247</sup>

At the outset of combat in Iraq, the reaction to 9/11 reinforces the comfort with, if not the necessity for war.<sup>248</sup> Colum McCann opens his novel with a narrator commenting on his younger brother, Corrigan as they were growing up in Ireland. McCann alludes to the full-scale terror war underway in Great Britain during the action of the novel. Corrigan devotes life to the down-and-out of Dublin, getting drunk with them, giving them his clothes and trying to find the meaning of life in their mean existence. He eventually moves to the U.S. to continue his mission. A theme of struggle for justice appears to give meaning to Corrigan's life. So, how ironic that he dies after witnessing for justice in the courtroom where mother and daughter prostitutes get mixed results from the judicial system. The greater irony is that the judge in the narrative, Claire's spouse Solomon, is proud of his decision to fine high-wire artist Petit a penny for each floor of the World Trade Towers, a grand total of \$1.10.

This is a virtual reward to the performer in the spectacle but where is the justice for Zeitoun and his fellows? If the Internet is the analogue for the connections of the characters in *Let the Great World Spin*, sea and land are the literal reality and tropes for Zeitoun. It is true that a number of communication technologies are used by his family. They use these technologies to stay and touch with him and Kathy before the storm and with him after the storm until he is detained. They range from the cell phone, the landline, e-mail and the Internet.

But at the core of Zeitoun's being is his connection with the land and sea of Jableh. It was there he learned to swim, to fish and to yearn to follow his father to the sea as a sailor. His connection to his family of origin is strongly rooted in place. He also lives his faith and shares it with Kathy as though it surges up from the sea and the land of origin and to his family. The mobility he experienced as a crewman on ships and his travels exposed him to a mitigating modernity, one that tempered his tight connection to place. At the same time, Zeitoun's diasporic identity combined with his own individual resilience gave him the fortitude to both withstand the abusive imprisonment, but also the violation of the principles of freedom and justice he had come to adopt in his new homeland.

Of course, his arrest and the utter suspension of his civil and legal rights challenged his faith no less than Corrigan's. In many ways, the way out of his anonymous prison – the compassion covertly expressed by the African-American missionary might easily not have occurred. After Kathy got word of her husband's whereabouts, obstacles and setbacks still remained.

Corrigan took beatings and humiliation in order to give the prostitutes a place where they could go to the bathroom. His vow of poverty and capacity to accept punishment from the pimps could be seen as a kind of civil disobedience, a message sent to his tormentors that nonviolence was superior to the alternative. While he did not express opposition to the Vietnam War, it is too hard to imagine that Corrigan might. The only conflict that he did not try to resolve was the one between him and his God.

Zeitoun and his wife set up a foundation to promote human rights and to rebuild New Orleans. Eggers points out that there is no faith like the faith of a builder in coastal Louisiana. Conversely, I would add that there is no faith like someone who has survived unlawful arrest and detention and who continues to have faith in justice post 9/11.

Philippe Petit's daredevil was a spectacle in a pure sense, conceived by him outside of overt political or economic motive, an act of showmanship. The

acts of Corrigan and Zeitoun in rescuing those around them happened outside of the spotlight, except for Zeitoun's media interview. Petit's act depended on the spectacular nature of the place where he chose to walk on the high wire. Corrigan and Zeitoun merely surrendered themselves to what in their minds was the obvious imperative to act as rescuers.

Jasslyn enters the narrative of *Let the Great World Spin* as an accountant who helps Katrina victims recover what is owed them. She shows none of the flair for performance of her mother or her grandmother. She prefers to play down any performative excess. She meets an Italian member of Doctors without Borders whose sense of humour gets him in trouble in the humourless world of airports after 9/11. Both of these characters try to work behind the spectacle but with their feet planted firmly on the ground.



## **10. LANGUAGE, DIASPORA AND URBAN/RURAL SPACE IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S *THE DISPLACED PERSON***

William Welty (University of Cincinnati)

'He is a foreigner: he is from nowhere, from everywhere'- Julia Kristeva,  
*Strangers to Ourselves*

'The Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did  
the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.' - *Genesis 11:9*

In her short story 'The Displaced Person,' Flannery O'Connor explores the violent class of worlds that results from diaspora. I argue that O'Connor portrays diaspora as a two way street: commodified identity signifiers flow into the first world, but also flow back into the third world. These flows are not neat and distinct, but rather a haphazard back and forth that results in violent juxtapositions of values, which in turn leads to physical violence. These juxtapositions in turn disrupt the flows, creating 'blockages' which translate into a crisis of identity. Because values are flowing in both directions (into both the new place and old), this violence is not limited to the diasporas and their identities, but also extends to the individuals in the First World and their sense of identity. Within the context of the story, these disruptions are seen primarily in terms of language, religion, and concepts of space. More important than the disruptions, however, are the results,

which beg the question: is violence really an inevitable part of diaspora?

Despite the proliferation of research on diaspora, its definition is not quite as obvious and distinct as one might suppose. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur note, 'It is often used as a catch-all phrase to speak of and for all movements, however privileged, and for all dislocations, even symbolic ones'.<sup>249</sup> For example, terms such as migration, immigration, refugees, displacement, and others are often used alongside diaspora, sometimes even interchangeably. To prevent diaspora from becoming a 'catch-all,' Braziel and Mannur maintain that the term is a religious 'naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile'.<sup>250</sup> Additionally, the pair differentiate between terms of conquest, like odyssey, and terms of displacement, like diaspora.<sup>251</sup> The connotations of religion and loss in diaspora seem to speak directly to the traditional way of interpreting O'Connor's work. However, we still must determine how O'Connor's 'displacement' is related to our contemporary and problematic notions of 'diaspora,' and how that relationship elucidates both terms.

Following Brazil and Mannur's demand for a concrete historical and cultural approach, I argue that diaspora is a distinct subset of a larger twentieth century issue of displacement: identity is displaced by commodified concepts of language and difference just as manufacturing is displaced by producer services. Several critics have already noted such broad implications of displacement within O'Connor's story. For example, Rachel Carroll writes, '*The Displaced Person* is indeed a narrative about displacement, not merely of people but of history, memory, and guilt'.<sup>252</sup> Youli Theodosiadou describes the story as 'The displacement of the foreigner who does not belong and *therefore, does not have a claim to humanity*'.<sup>253</sup> Thus, for understanding O'Connor's story, diaspora can be described as the displacement of this sense of humanity and of belonging. Philip Marfleet writes, 'Loss of resources can bring what Marx calls loss of 'social

competence.' This does not suggest a loss of human capacities for thought, action, and innovation – although these may be seriously damaged – but separation from pre-existing resources and a rupture in the social environment of those displaced'.<sup>254</sup>

If diaspora is a displacement of humanity and a 'loss of social competence,' it can then be understood metaphysically and independently of movement, as a category separate (but related to) terms mentioned by Brazil and Mannur, like exile and migration, although in reality these terms are often anything but distinct, overlapping in myriad and complex ways.

Diaspora can even occur without literal travel or movement, such as in the gentrification which is increasingly prevalent in urban spaces. Thus, a certain double diaspora is possible: 'Some refugee communities become permanently alienated, not only from their place of origin but from the authorities of the host society'.<sup>255</sup> The diaspora is displaced through travel or exile from his home, but he is also displaced in a metaphysical sense, from belonging to his new human community. O'Connor's displaced person Mr. Guizac is a perfect example: he is dis-placed when he is forced to leave Poland, and displaced again as an Other on the McIntyre farm. Thus, diaspora is not only a 'naming of the other,' but a naming of the other as Other.

We might also think of double diaspora in another way. Not only is the Other displaced, but people are also displaced by him. Thus, Mr. Guizac's arrival on the farm is understandable as a challenge to identity and autonomy, a threat exacerbated by Mr. Guizac's status as a diaspora. O'Connor writes, 'The first thing that struck her [Mrs. Shortley] as very peculiar was that they looked like other people. Every time she had seen them in her imagination, the image she had got was of the three bears [...] with wooden shoes [...] and sailor hats'.<sup>256</sup> Invasion and loss of identity are conflated by Mrs. Shortley; Mr. Guizac is clearly an 'other,' as depicted by her imagined images of him, but simultaneously, he is still the same. This issue is further complicated for her by his race and religion:

again, both different (Polish, Catholic) but the same (White, Christian). Mr. Shortley expresses similar sentiments throughout the story: 'I'd rather have a nigger if it was me' (FOC 206). With the black help on the farm, there is no anxiety because the prevalent notions of other-ness are not challenged as they are with Mr. Guizac. Mr. Shortley also says that 'he recalled the face of one man who had thrown a hand-grenade at him and that the man had had little round eye-glasses exactly like Mr. Guizac's (FOC 241). Even when Mrs. McIntyre protests that Mr. Guizac is Polish, not German, Mr. Shortley responds, 'It ain't a great deal of difference in them two kinds' (FOC 241). Mr. Shortley perfectly articulates the desire for difference and clearly demarcated lines of identity: '[I]f I was going to travel again, it would be either China or Africa. You go to either of them two places and you can tell right away what the *difference* is between you and them' (FOC 248, my emphasis). The Cold War mentality, as mentioned by Jon Bacon, revolves around the anxiety of loss of identity, of us vs. them., or 'you vs. them,' as Mr. Shortley puts it. But diasporas precisely destabilize those clear-cut markers of identity, in terms of race, sexuality, and difference.

Sexual difference, often associated with the foreigner, is particularly troubling for the inhabitants of the McIntyre farm, but is nothing new for O'Connor's South. As depicted by O'Connor, the Southern obsession with miscegenation reflects the fear of invasion and penetration (metaphorical or literal) by a foreigner. Bacon points out that integration and communism were both viewed as outside threats which would violate the pastoral: 'Segregationists linked integration with foreign political subversion'.<sup>257</sup> Thus, the Cold War invasion scenario is figured in much the same way as the invasion scenario of the American Civil war: '[i]n this way, racism and anti-Communism converged'.<sup>258</sup> It is no coincidence that the change of opinion regarding Mr. Guizac is related to miscegenation directly, and thus metaphorically to prevalent fears of invasion and communism. Mrs. McIntyre views Mr. Guizac as a miracle worker for her farm until he proposes a marriage between his young cousin and Sulk, the black



farmhand. When Mrs. McIntyre confronts Mr. Guizac, he is now described as grotesque, with a 'whole face [that] looked as if it might have been patched together out of several others' (FOC 234). She screams, 'Mr. Guizac! You would bring this poor innocent child over here and try to marry her to a half-witted thieving black stinking nigger! *What kind of monster are you!*' (FOC 234, my emphasis). By proposing this marriage, Mr. Guizac is proposing the erosion of difference that is deemed necessary for maintenance of Southern life. Carroll writes, 'He [Mr. Guizac] is quickly designated the target of a racially marked narrative of sexual violation.

National differences symbolically substitute for racial difference'.<sup>259</sup> The sexualized grotesque-ness of Mr. Guizac only heightens the anxiety he elicits; O'Connor writes of Mr. Shortley that he 'was not a violent man but he hated to see a woman done in by a foreigner. He felt that that was one thing a man couldn't stand by and see happen' (FOC 245). The conflict thus becomes the male foreigner vs. the female citizen, or the male invader vs. the female, rural land, with masculinity on the line. The diasporic Mr. Guizac loses his individual identity in a sea of synecdoche, becoming the racial other, the sexual deviant, the rapist, the invader, and the Communist all at once.

Many critics have noted how language acts as another marker of difference in 'The Displaced Person.' This anxiety of language is especially heightened in light of the Cold War climate of the story. In the new community, the diaspora's language is no longer a marker of any sort of unique identity, but a commodified quality: it does not show who they are, but merely how they are different or useful. In other words, commodification of identity is only a matter of differentiation, of which language is a tangible marker. William Burke writes, 'This variety of different languages – Polish, English, Latin, along with the dialects of Irish brogue, black-rural, and Shortley-American – is a babel that seldom communicates or represents a common foundation for a community'.<sup>260</sup> The diasporic Mr. Guizac can never be a part of the community because his

different language is a necessary, unprivileged signifier in the us/them binary: the community needs him to be different so they can define themselves. Mr. Shortley acknowledges that different language inextricably ties the speaker to another place: 'My wife said knowing two languages was like having eyes in the back of your head' (FOC 248). This notion of language as possessing Janus-like quality is repeated throughout the story. When Mrs. Shortley has her 'vision,' she sees 'a gigantic figure [...]. She was not able to tell if the figure was going forward or backward because its magnificence was so great [...]. A voice, very resonant, said the one word, 'Prophesy!' (FOC 218). Indeed, the figure of Janus is an apt description for the diaspora, constantly looking back to the homeland and forward to the new place, unable to tell whether he is 'going forward or backward.' Language thus links the diaspora's elsewhere with the citizen's here, but only as a haphazard juxtaposition. O'Connor writes:

[Mrs. Shortley] began to imagine a war of words, to see the Polish words and the English words coming at each other, stalking forward, not sentences, just words, gabble gabble gabble, flung out high and shrill and stalking forward and then grappling with each other. She saw the Polish words, dirty and all-knowing and unreformed, flinging mud on the clean English words until everything was equally dirty. She saw them all piled up in a room, all the dead dirty words, theirs and hers too, piled up like the naked bodies in the newsreel. God save me! She cried silently (FOC 216-217).

Language, as experienced by Mrs. Shortley, is inherently violent. As a method of differentiation, it demands that words as signifiers of difference literally battle it out for supremacy. However, this need for identity to be defined by differentiation – that the other be something absent (other), but also present (the unprivileged signifier) – sets up a contradictory and ultimately untenable system of identification. James Mellard, articulating a Lacanian perspective, argues that in identifying with the other, two 'modes' are possible: 'identificatory and/or aggressive relations'.<sup>261</sup> In this context, identification is impossible; in fact, it is

not desired, since identifying with the other would make everything 'equally dirty,' eroding the binary relationship thought necessary for identity formation. Violence is the only option, both because the diaspora is different and represents values deemed threatening, but more importantly because the otherness of the diaspora reveals that the self is likewise other, unstable, and displaced.

This violent revelation in turn makes the diaspora a target of violence. Carroll writes, '[The] alien character of Mr. Guizac's language, Polish, is perceived as complicit in this uncanny proliferation of anxiety. Moreover, it is posited as an agent of its immanent violence'.<sup>262</sup> Just as sex and sexuality are conflated with invasion and violence, so too is language.

Carroll points out that speaking, as a reproductive act, has a certain affinity with the body: as language is a reproduction of the object or identity, so too is the corpse a grotesque reproduction of the body. Indeed, as Carroll notes, 'corpus' means both 'body' and 'body of writing'.<sup>263</sup> Reproduction also refers to the methods of Capitalism, driven by the reproduction of goods and money. Here, we can recall Mrs. Shortley's vision of the room piled with bodies. She conflates mass conformity and consumption/reproduction with violence, war, and the Holocaust:

[She] recalled a newsreel she had seen once of a small room piled high with bodies of dead naked people all in a heap, their arms and legs tangled together, a head thrust in here, a head there, a foot, a knee, a part that should have been covered up sticking out, a hand raised clutching nothing. Before you could realize that it was real and take it into your head, the picture changed and a hollow-sounding voice was saying, 'Time marches on!' (FOC 199)

Each body in the room is indistinguishable from the rest of the 'heap.' The hand 'clutching nothing' calls to mind both grasping at life but also the emptiness of defining life through consumption. Even the newsreel itself is from a movie theatre, a tangible symbol of national ideology and consumption, but also a reproduced image. Mrs. Shortley also mispronounces 'Guizac' as 'Gobblehook,'

and thinks ‘Sledgewig sounded [...] like something you would name a bug, or vice versa, as if you named a boy Bollweevil’ (FOC 198). Both of these mispronunciations suggest devouring and the Cold War anxiety about being consumed and invaded.<sup>264</sup> It seems that language, at least as portrayed by O’Connor, has an inherent tendency towards violence, ‘assaulting the senses’ in both a literal and metaphysical way.

Returning to Mellard’s psychoanalysis, the rejection of the Other has important implications for the diaspora’s identity. Violence seems to be the only option for dealing with the Other, but that ‘necessary’ violence in turn must destroy both individuals. Mellard writes that this type of narcissistic desire for separate identity will lead to death for both the self and ‘his narcissistic other, his better ‘self’’.<sup>265</sup> Mr. Guizac is such an Other, and it is important to note that Mrs. McIntyre has already linked him to Christ on several occasions. Referring to Mr. Guizac, it is significant that her pronoun is ambiguous, when she says, ‘That man is my salvation’ (FOC 209). Later, she and Father Flynn have an exchange about Christ and Mr. Guizac, with more ambiguous and interchangeable pronouns: ‘He didn’t have to come in the first place,’ she repeated, emphasizing every word. The old man smiled absently. ‘He came to redeem us,’ he said’ (FOC 239-240). Mrs. McIntyre finally concludes, ‘As far as I’m concerned [...] Christ was just another D.P.’ (FOC 243). Mellard argues that rejecting and murdering the other who is associated with the self becomes murder of the ‘Other in the register of the Symbolic – a far graver crime, indeed, one that in psychoanalytic terms equals the murder of God in the Christian subject’s denial of God’s grace’.<sup>266</sup> When Mr. Guizac is killed by the tractor, Mrs. McIntyre ‘felt her eyes and Mr. Shortley’s eyes and the Negro’s eyes come together in one look that froze them in collusion forever, and she had heard the little noise the Pole made as the tractor wheel broke his backbone’ (FOC 250). This is a moment of mirror stage identification with each other, made possible through the Other, who is Mr. Guizac, God, or the Lacanian Symbolic: in rejecting and murdering one, they reject and murder them

at large. This scene portrays the inevitable violence of conflation and the treatment of the diaspora as a marker of difference: the other/Other. In clinging to the prevalent system of identity formation, with its contradictory and impossible demand, the individual must do violence to both the diaspora and to himself.

Language's linkage to diaspora and violence likewise reveals its linkage with religion and diaspora in identity formation: like language, religion is another marker of difference. Indeed, Father Flynn 'spoke in a foreign way himself, English but as if he had a throatful of hay' and the Guizacs' name 'was something only they themselves and the priest could pronounce' (FOC 201 and 198). Universal religious concerns have been the traditional emphasis when interpreting O'Connor, but limiting interpretation to these areas ignores O'Connor's dialogue with the specific religious and cultural concerns of her day. Her characters are not only dealing with transcendental religious concerns, but very specific ones influenced by the Cold War and United States culture. As Mrs. McIntyre says, 'I'm not theological. I'm practical! I want to talk to you about something practical!' (FOC 237) However, it is those very practical and specific concerns with culture that make religion important and relevant to this discussion.

The crucial question about religion during the Cold War was its relation to the United States: was it a competitor or compatriot with capitalism and the American way?

For the residents of the McIntyre farm, and for many Americans at the time, religion – specifically Catholicism – was just another backwards, foreign, invasive ideology. Michael Kreyling describes how Catholicism and communism both function in the same way: 'Both cultures, secular and theological, were structurally the same: the destruction of an age of faith and certainty and its replacement by an age of doubt, suspicion, and multi-centered views of meaning and history that induced a turning to absolutist authority: philistine or clerical'.<sup>267</sup> Mrs. Shortley reflects that 'none of the foolishness had been reformed' out of Catholicism (FOC 201). Robert Donahoo points out that

Father Flynn is associated with outdated faith, authoritarianism, and invasion (all markers of communism), though he acknowledges that 'in doing his Catholic work of resettling the Guizacs, Father Flynn is doing work both 'good' and 'American'.<sup>268</sup> Theodosiadou sums up the view of Catholics: 'Catholicism was viewed with suspicion and considered incompatible with concepts of liberty, self-government, and national loyalty for Americans'.<sup>269</sup> Clearly, the viewpoints of religion were contradictory at best, outright hostile at worst. But this is to be expected based on the contradictory demands placed on the forces of identity formation.

As shown, the problem does not seem to be religion itself, but specifically Catholicism: American life could be Christian, but not Catholic, since the Vatican was viewed as a 'foreign government' analogous to Moscow, whereas Protestantism did not pose the same threat to American and capitalist ideology.<sup>270</sup> It is the foreign-ness of Catholicism that makes it so threatening; Bacon writes 'Xenophobia underlay the analogy between Catholicism and communism'.<sup>271</sup> Religion itself seems to be displaced, relegated to an unprivileged position in the binary to function as the 'other' for capitalism, in the same way that communists and diasporas were. Thus, if diaspora has a religious nature as argued above, then religion likewise has a diasporic nature. In fact, most Christian religions posit diaspora as the essential human condition: displaced or 'scattered' from the Garden of Eden. In that same vein, religion itself is 'scattered,' not from the Garden, but from the marketplace, where 'real' identities can be formed.

Bacon writes that capitalism was the American religion, one that Catholics refused to acknowledge as primary.<sup>272</sup> Indeed, throughout 'The Displaced Person,' money is treated with reverence as a religion. To extend the simile, the Judge, Mrs. McIntyre's deceased husband, becomes the High Priest or even the God-figure of this religion. O'Connor writes that Mrs. McIntyre had 'married him when he was an old man and because of his money but there had been another reason that she would not admit then, even to herself: she had liked him' (FOC

228). He was 'famous all over the county for being rich' but 'when he died his estate proved to be bankrupt. He left her a mortgaged house and fifty acres that he had managed to cut the timber off before he died. It was as if, as the final triumph of a successful life, he had been able to take everything with him' (FOC 228-29). These brief descriptions clearly align the Judge with the forces of capitalism: owning land and capital as an end and not a means, living beyond those means, and amassing debt that cannot and will not be paid off. But these qualities are precisely the ones valued by Mrs. McIntyre to the point of religious devotion. After finding out that Mr. Guizac plans to marry his cousin to Sulk, Mrs. McIntyre retreats to the Judge's office, 'a closet-like space that was dark and quiet as a chapel' (FOC 232).

O'Connor describes the space: 'Old bankbooks and ledgers were stacked in the half-open drawers and there was a small safe, empty but locked, set like a tabernacle in the center of it. She had left this part of the house unchanged since the old man's time. It was a kind of memorial to him, sacred because he had conducted his business here' (FOC 233). The empty safe as a symbol has multiple connotations. It refers not only to the methods of capitalism and globalization – where wealth is not about saved up paper money but about having debt, capital, and workers providing services for you – but also to the spiritual emptiness of those kinds of pursuits. Christ is not present in this tabernacle, but rather, as the Priest points out, present in the beauty of the peacock: 'Christ will come like that' (FOC 239). And despite Mrs. McIntyre's preservation of the office, the Judge as God is not present there either. Rather, he is 'sunk in the cornfield with his family', 'grinning under his desecrated monument' (FOC 228, 237). The Judge is thus a Gnostic god: dead, absent, and desecrated. And for the diaspora, capitalism pushes her toward a similar end.

Conversely, Father Flynn represents true religious spirituality, but he is repeatedly dismissed as unwanted. Because religion is only a marker of difference, and because Father Flynn is responsible for bringing the Guizacs to

the farm, Father Flynn is conflated with all of the ‘others’ of the story: communists, invaders, and displaced persons. Mrs. Shortley characterizes him as ‘leading foreigners over in hordes to places that were not theirs, to cause disputes, to uproot niggers, to plant the Whore of Babylon in the midst of the righteous!’ (FOC 217) Theodosiadou has commented on how Mrs. Shortley conflates Mr. Guizac with the Nazis from whom he has fled, turning him ‘from a victim to a perpetrator of violence’.<sup>273</sup> A similar association affects the Priest: rather than being known for his admirable actions and Catholic social work, he is only identified by his ties to the foreign, ‘mysterious and evil, the devil’s experiment station’ (FOC 211). Burke comments on how Father Flynn is perceived as acting as ‘something of an ambassador without portfolio, an envoy for people from a violent and evil Europe who wish to infiltrate American Society [...] [he] is the chief representative of this satanic and foreign invasion’.<sup>274</sup> Indeed, Father Flynn and Mr. Guizac are repeatedly characterized as the devil himself. When Mrs. McIntyre still considers Mr. Guizac ‘her salvation,’ Mrs. Shortley says, ‘I would suspicion salvation got from the devil’ (209). Even Mrs. McIntyre’s reaction to this is telling:

She had never given much thought to the devil for she felt that religion was essentially for those people who didn’t have the brain to avoid evil without it [...] but if she had ever given it much thought, she would have considered *the devil the head of it and God the hanger-on*. With the coming of these displaced people, she was obliged to give new thought to a good many things’ (FOC 209, my emphasis).

This is a complicated notion, where God and Satan are inverted. God is clearly identified as a diaspora like Mr. Guizac – as a ‘hanger-on’ – but as such is relegated to the unprivileged position in the relationship. He needs Satan to define himself. Thus, Satan comes to define the binary, and also to define characters like Father Flynn and Mr. Guizac. However, if Mr. Guizac is associated with God, as he is throughout the story, then he is the obvious agent of grace, to speak in more



traditional O'Connor terms. And if Mr. Guizac is God, characters like Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Shortley would have to be Satan.

However, the priest himself is able to escape such binaristic definitions of identity. As Robert Donahoo points out, his comments about the peacock reflect his ability to 'link the abstract and the real'.<sup>275</sup> Unlike Mrs. McIntyre (or indeed, many of the other characters on the farm), who can only think in terms of either/or, us/them, or theological/practical, Father Flynn can do both. In the beauty of the peacock's tail, he sees 'The Transfiguration' (FOC 239). In earthly beauty he sees also the divine. The Transfiguration, in religious terms, is a moment of transformation, where Christ as a human assumed divine radiance: a concrete symbol of how Christ himself transcended binaries and was both human and divine. Since Christ was 'just another D.P.,' perhaps religion provides a language in which the diaspora can also transcend the binaries of either/or and us/them. Indeed, when Mrs. McIntyre is displaced from her own farm and abandoned by everyone else, the only comfort left to her is religion: 'Not many people remembered to come out to the country to see her except the old priest [...]. He would come in and sit by the side of her bed and explain the doctrines of the Church' (FOC 252).

Like language, religion is commodified by Cold War Culture to conform to capitalist standards, serving only as a marker of difference, not as a quality that can establish identity on its own. Additionally, religious difference is conflated with the various other types of difference involved in Cold War discourses: diasporic, ethnic, racial, political, and national. However, religion, as a linkage of the earthly and divine, offers one possible solution for escaping identities defined by binaries and difference. Instead of an *other*-actualized identity, religion provides the opportunity for a *self*-actualized identity.

So far, throughout my analysis, I have focused on how markers of difference are used to commodify the qualities of the diasporas, resulting in an identity crisis for diaspora and citizen alike, since a system of identity formation

based only on difference is ultimately untenable. However, just as diasporic identity is often conflated with other premade identities, so too are diasporas often conflated with the urban environments to which they have fled. Saskia Sassen argues that 'global cities are one of the main areas of new class alignment' and that the 'Global City replaces [a] regional complex'.<sup>276</sup> Other research focuses on diasporic communities living in global cities like London, New York, Tokyo, and others. These analyses are perfectly valid in their own right, but they privilege the urban over the rural as a place of diaspora and identity formation in too neat a way. Indeed, if we look at O'Connor's story, we will see many of the same elements of the Global City present in her rural setting. Additionally, as Sassen notes, the rural is still a part of the global network: another node on the circuit that global cities inhabit. Thus, the story demonstrates that the rural is a significant aspect of the global network posited by Sassen. Laurel Nesbitt has argued that the major action of 'The Displaced Person' revolves around the 'characters' attempts at establishing a separate and privileged *place* for themselves'.<sup>277</sup> The attempt to establish identity is very different than the actual production of such an identity, and this distinction can also be aptly applied to place: both rural and urban places have the potential to create identity, but this potential can differ radically from reality. To use O'Connor's language, 'The Displaced Person' is about understanding what is meant by 'true country,' and how an identity can be formed in such a country, if it exists at all.

Though the characters of the story long to establish an identity tied to a place, this longing for place as the 'true country' is problematic. As I have suggested, conflating a real sense of identity with some pre-made form results in violence. The Cold War understanding of the rural reveals this contradiction: the rural is identified with the essentialized America, but also 'with the South as a region distinct from the nation'.<sup>278</sup> In other words, the conflict on the McIntyre farm is both local and international. Thus, the farm becomes like Sassen's Global City: part of a nationalist state, but also distinct from it as part of a larger global

circuit. This similarity points out the need to re-examine both the pastoral and the Global City. As Bacon writes, 'In portraying her rural characters as freaks and misfits, O'Connor allied herself with those who called attention to the representational inadequacy of the pastoral myth'.<sup>279</sup> Additionally, the similarities between O'Connor's rural farm and Sassen's Global City destabilize the relationship between the two, making neither place so distinct. Both places are thought to be opposites but in this context exist in the same space.

O'Connor's characters clearly recognize the destabilization of this boundary, and throughout the story, they long for a return to 'simpler times.' In her dream, Mrs. McIntyre says of Mr. Guizac, 'He's *extra* and he's *upset the balance* around here' (FOC 246, my emphasis). When she confronts Mr. Guizac in the barn after this dream, she shouts 'This is my place [...]. All of you are *extra*. Each and every one of you are *extra!*' (FOC 247, emphasis mine). Of course, this 'balance' is one of white, capitalist control. As an 'extra,' the diaspora links one place to another, the local to the international; in doing so, he undermines the binaries thought so crucial for identity formation: specificity and locality. The diaspora is a hybrid, something unacceptable that 'upset[s] the balance' where identity needs to be specific and grounded in one place. (Hybridity could also be construed as miscegenation, which would further explain why it upsets the balance).

In this light, the pastoral myth is inherently nostalgic: it is something longed for, but it is a past which cannot be reclaimed. In this sense, all of the characters are displaced. All are diasporas. But as is often the case with O'Connor, the violence of displacement results in the potential for grace. H. R. Stoneback writes, '[D]isplacement, [...] radical divestiture, and deracination [...] necessarily precede entry into the 'true country'.<sup>280</sup> O'Connor's notion of the 'true country' complicates the pastoral readings put forth by Bacon about the Cold War: O'Connor's 'true country' is not a place at all, but a divestiture of place. Thus, the diaspora is precisely at home in the 'true country,' a space of dis-

placement. Stoneback muses, '[C]ould it be that the countryside is hell, rather than Atlanta or New York? Isn't it rather that New York and the other lunatic, godless 'no-place' cities of her fiction amount to a kind of Purgatory, the required displacement in the rite of passage to grace?'<sup>281</sup> Though Stoneback's reading is provocative, it also demonstrates the conflationary instinct that we have seen throughout this analysis. In moving beyond the pastoral myth, Stoneback still posits that place must have either a good or bad value. Furthermore, he only dwells on place and its opposite, no-place, which commits him to the binary and ignores the third possibility: space. True, the city can function as a purgatory, and in this sense, we could easily substitute Sassen's Global Cities – Tokyo or Paris – for Atlanta. Furthermore, the refugee camp is a tangible symbol of the rural, whereas the Global City represents a passage out of suffering into grace. And significantly, part three of 'The Displaced Person' begins with a discussion of this very issue: 'The priest [...] had been talking for ten minutes about Purgatory while Mrs. McIntyre squinted furiously at him from an opposite chair' (FOC 237). Rather than Hell or Heaven, Purgatory is representative of the in-between space of diaspora. And the Global City as a concept, not as a physical place, also functions as a sort of Purgatory: straddling the divide between heaven and hell, local and national, specific and multitudinous. However, the realities of the Global City and of the rural often differ from their potentialities. Sassen writes that '[t]he geography of globalization contains both a dynamic for dispersal and of centralization'.<sup>282</sup> In other words, the Global City has the potential for transcending place and locality in a move towards grace and space, but it also has an equal tendency for further centralization, moving from Purgatory back into Hell.

While the Global City may indeed transcend the national/international binary, it still remains heavily grounded in notions of place. It simply redefines it. Many critics have noted that the Global City is not an entirely new phenomenon, but just a variation on a long present theme, different only in scope.<sup>283</sup> The Global

City de-emphasizes place as such, but still emphasizes the flows to and from places. Marfleet acknowledges that community 'no longer implies a bounded physical presence' and 'the new networks themselves play a key role in shaping global movements', but also argues that '[e]fforts to establish coherent communities, and to maintain links to home and to other places of exile are often frustrated by impermanence, by discrimination and by a pressing lack of resources'.<sup>284</sup> Thus, the diaspora is still out of place: an 'extra' and a disruption of the flow. The Global City, rather than being the place of 'displacement [...] radical divestiture, and deracination' that Stoneback calls for, is just a new place of displacement where the diaspora is left out of the flow that connects the various nodes on the circuit. Whereas O'Connor's notion of religious displacement is an aspiration to remove oneself from the flow in order to arrive at grace, Global City displacement is just a redirection of the flow to bypass the undesired nodes to arrive at higher profits.

But because the Global City network still revolves around place, the space of diaspora cannot be ignored and simply left out of the flow: the diaspora still intrudes. When the Global City network is forced to deal with a diaspora like Mr. Guizac (as a result of forces that are essential to globalism in the first place, such as intervention in poor countries, economic inequality, or military conquest), juxtaposition of flows occurs. The flow of the diaspora is often at odds with the flow of globalization, and blockage occurs. When Mrs. Shortley herself becomes a displaced person, she suffers a stroke. O'Connor writes:

They didn't know that she had had a great experience or ever been displaced in the world from all that belonged to her. They were frightened by the grey slick road before them and they kept repeating in higher and higher voices, 'Where we goin, Ma? Where we going?' while their mother [...] seemed to contemplate for the first time the tremendous frontiers of her true country. (FOC 223)

This type of death is not incidental. A stroke is the blockage of the flow of blood

in the brain; likewise, diaspora is the blockage of flows in the Global City circuit. Mrs. Shortley's type of death is thus an explicit critique of globalization as conflating space with place. Mrs. Shortley was first described as 'the giant wife of the countryside' (FOC 196). Now she is 'displaced [...] from all that belonged to her' but still present 'in the world.' Thus she goes from being 'the natural autochthonous expression of her place' to residing in the dis-placed space of diaspora.<sup>285</sup> The definition of identity vis-à-vis place inevitably results in a 'stroke,' either literally, in the case of Mrs. Shortley, or metaphorically, in the sense of global financial crisis, of which we are far too familiar. O'Connor's alternative is to reside in a space that is still part of the world, but not limited to any one place: the space of humanity, or alternatively, of grace. Patrick Samway points out, 'Catholic theology at once embraces the world and renounces it, as it seeks to go from the specific to the horizon of the eternal moment'.<sup>286</sup> Writing from a Catholic perspective, O'Connor's story embodies this theological position, privileging a movement from sin to grace corresponding with a move from place to space.

Drawing on the interplay between diaspora and religion, O'Connor's peacock seems to represent a viable notion of space as distinct from place, which I argue is O'Connor's notion of 'true country.' The peacock is repeatedly described as a diaspora itself: 'his head on the long blue reed-like neck was drawn back as if his attention were fixed in the distance on something no one else could see' (FOC 197). This clearly invokes the Janus gaze of the diaspora to the receding and unseeable homeland. The peacock species is out of place in the South, scattered from its original homeland: 'There used to be twenty or thirty of those things on the place but I've let them die off' (FOC 202). As I have already mentioned, the Priest links the abstract notion of Transfiguration with the peacock's worldly beauty, which is described in terms of (outer) space. O'Connor writes, '[The peacock] had jumped into the tree and his tail hung in front of her, *full of fierce planets* [...]. She might have been looking at a *map of the universe*

but she didn't notice it any more than she did the spots of sky that cracked the dull green of the tree' (FOC 204, my emphasis). The peacock, like the diaspora, is from another place, and its beauty has an other-worldly quality, reminiscent of the heavens/Heaven. At the end of the story, when Mrs. McIntyre sells her cows and retires, we can imagine that the farm is now inhabited only by the peacock, and indeed, O'Connor mentions this detail in her final sentence: 'after he had fed these [breadcrumbs] to the peacock, he would come in and sit by the side of her bed and explain the doctrines of the Church' (FOC 252). The peacock is again associated with the Church and its doctrines, which as Samway points out, revolve around the movement from specific place to eternal space. As a symbol of that space, the peacock avoids the violent juxtapositions that result from grounded-ness in place.

Despite being deeply rooted in her times, O'Connor possesses remarkable foresight. Her fiction not only illuminates the issues of displacement and migration occurring in her own time, during the Cold War; it also continues to be highly relevant for our understanding of diaspora today and during the preceding few decades. In turn, our understandings of diaspora illuminate some of the more subtle implications of O'Connor's text. Ironically, perhaps it is O'Connor's transcendental religious concerns which allow her to continue to be relevant in such a concrete, historical way: the believer is always looking to the future, toward heaven and redemption. Paradoxically, the believer is also always looking to the past, to their religious texts and historical figures who laid the foundations of their faith.

In this sense, the believer is another Janus figure, just like the diaspora. Just as 'knowing two languages was like having eyes in the back of your head,' so too is religion. This explains why O'Connor's fiction continues to provide relevant and provocative interpretations: she was writing for her present, but she was deeply concerned with what had happened in the past and what the future would bring. O'Connor perceived that future – our present – with a keen eye,

replete with all of the developments in globalization, neoliberalism, diaspora, and identity crises. Just like Mrs. Shortley, O'Connor seems to contemplate the tremendous frontiers of our true country.



## 11. NOSTALGIA AS A MANIFESTATION OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE: TESTIMONIES OF GALICIAN EMIGRANTS TO SWITZERLAND

Luís Calvo Salgado (University of Zurich)

María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar (University of Santiago de Compostela)

This article is based on forty five interviews with Galician migrants in Switzerland. One of them, Manuel,<sup>287</sup> talked about his childhood and youth in Galicia:

‘– ¿E os teus país que facían?

– Meu pai facía de artesano. En carpintería, ebanistería, porque en aqueles tempos tiñan que facer, hasta carro de arados. Era, sin duda, parquet, mobles, sólo que o home non sabía o que estaba a facer. Despois de aí, se pode seguir...

– Sí, sí.

– Aprendimos cuatro fillos del. Foi a escuela mellor que tuvemos. O final é o resultado máis bo que tuvemos, porque traballamos sin luz, e traballamos sin máquinas, claro. O non haber luz non hai máquinas. Entonces aí realmente é cuando ten que un [...] tratar de faguer no oficio, os trucos máis elevados para que podan salir as cousas. Igual que salen prácticamente hoxe. Calculando sempre a falta da mau de obra, o sea. Non a falta de mau en sí, senón as faltas que se fai por ser mau de obra. Que non son tantas faltas coma na máquina. Pero realmente se aprende, a cortar

madeira, saber como se seca, digamos que da en parte o oficio desde raíces, cousa que hoxe pois non se pode [facer], ir ó fondo dese sistema, porque xa ben todo dado, feito [...]. Entonces como todo ben mecanizado pois a xente non sabe realmente traballar a mau en general.<sup>288</sup>

Later Manuel refers to one of the jobs he had near Zurich which he shared with his brother:

‘Marchamos a [...] cerca de Zurich, a dez, quince kilómetros. A unha fábrica de carpintería-ebanistería. O cual alí levábamos os dous o reparto de máquinas. Foi a parte máis feliz da miña vida na emigración. Posto que o patrón, ou estiveran as máquinas paradas, ou estiveran camiñando, nunca fixo unha reclamación. Viña cos planos, e decía máis ou menos pa tal fecha debía estar este traballo terminado. Nunca dixo por forza ten que ser porque tedes as máquinas apagadas. E alí traballaba moi ben porque estábamos os dous solos e facíamolo ó noso aire dándonos unha idea que estábamos aínda en Galicia [...]. E foron tres anos de traballo.’<sup>289</sup>

Manuel was born in 1949 in southern Galicia not far from the Portuguese border. His father was a carpenter in a small town; Manuel had two sisters and four brothers. In the interview he likes recounting the way he learned the carpenter’s trade from his father. The descriptions of that era show certain nostalgia for the world of craftsmen in rural areas. Yet he does not forget about the daily hardships of the 1960s. In 1969 he emigrated to Switzerland with one of his brothers and they both worked in a furniture factory. Later he also worked in construction and the hotel business. After ten years of living in Switzerland he was able to make himself independent and he opened a business restoring and selling antique furniture. Up to this day his business has been a success. In 1988 his attempt to return to Galicia failed. He wanted to settle down in his hometown where he still has a house, which he uses in the summer.

In his narration Manuel often uses nostalgia to explain why he tried to return to Galicia in 1988. His project of founding a business for the insulation of windows was not successful. Also the discussions and the lack of agreement he had with his in-laws convinced him of the impossibility of a final return under

those conditions. Throughout the interview nostalgia and yearning for his homeland appear on repetitive occasions and are expressed in different ways: in regard to the language, when Manuel heard people speaking Galician or Spanish during his first years in Switzerland; when his vacations in Galicia came to an end and it was hard for him to return to Zurich; and especially when remembering the world of craftsmen in his homeland in the 1960s and the education he received from his father.

The learning of the trade was the starting point for his decision to create his own business restoring and selling antique furniture. It is precisely the restoration of furniture which gives him the possibility to reflect on work in past times compared to the quality of work which is done in factories. In this area nostalgia shows its potential of criticizing the present. In this case it concentrates on economic and labor conditions in Spain, the constant incapability of the Spanish economy to offer their habitants fitting work and the corruption and oppression which characterized Franco's regime. It also shows the disappointment and disillusionment which the change to democracy produced, especially concerning its offer of employment. His business and his trips to antique furniture fairs permit him to participate in life on a transnational level. There the high professional specialization and the ability of good communication to sell products are essential. His participation in associative Galician life in Zurich is part of his free time and shows another aspect of his transnational relationships.

Since its modern origins the notion of nostalgia appears connected to ambivalence and duplicity. Nostalgia has been simultaneously seen as a sickness of which the individual needs to be cured and as an exceptional element for the characterization of some cultures. It is also seen as a specific way of knowing or as something that impedes true understanding, as an anchoring in the past or a subtle way of criticizing the present. Currently, nostalgia can even adopt the form of utopia, presenting itself in certain settings of science fiction or political fiction as a longing anticipation for the future.

In the Western culture, nostalgia emerges as a feeling closely bound to the new ways of temporal conception established by modernity. David Konstan, one of the principal experts on emotions in the Greek world, indicates that there is nothing comparable to the nostalgia in Aristotle.<sup>290</sup> This fact might actually indicate the particular relation between nostalgia and a mode of divided temporality. As a matter of fact, nostalgia may be the most temporal of all feelings. The emotion of pain combined with the capacity of memory would therefore provide the key for the definition of nostalgia.

It is the memory – and more precisely the axis memory/forgetting – which permits connecting nostalgia with the notions of narration, identity and resistance which will constitute the three keys of this exposition. The interviews on which this article is based were carried out in Galician by Luís M. Calvo Salgado from 1999 to 2002. The interviewees belong to different age groups and profession. They are all men and women who arrived in Switzerland in the 1960s and 70s and resided in this country for at least ten years. Working with oral testimonies of Galician immigrants in Switzerland we have perceived that for them the necessity of telling about their past worked as a strategy to affirm their identity, as much on the level of biographical identity as well as the level of collective identity. However, most astonishing is that in these life stories the personal and common identity was not revealed as a fact but rather as a process of which doubts and even conflicts were not excluded. It is in this controversial, unstable and critical character of identity, shaped by narration where the sentiment of nostalgia plays an important role.

In oral history the incentive which motivates the emotion is usually the conscience of loss. However, as Rudolf Braun has noticed in his observations of nostalgia of emigrants, the dynamics of remembrance are complex intellectual operations.<sup>291</sup> One has to take into account that in the oral testimony the person who experiences nostalgia is at the same time the one who talks about it. This duplicates the subtlety and capacity of resonance of the expressed feelings. As

opposed to the exiled, the emigrant does not usually express hate or anger towards the country of origin or the ones he considers responsible for him taking up residence in a foreign country. Through the act of remembering, the emigrant implicitly passes a judgement on his own decision to leave his native land and to live in a far away country. Besides that, reliving the past often includes making reference to the original social status in contrast to the current status; in the case of the Galicians this refers to the rural life. It is exactly at this crucial point where nostalgia reveals the capacity of criticism and even resistance.

In the discourse of the emigrants, nostalgia usually triggers the compensatory act of returning. In this sense we remember that the famous tango 'Volver' from Gardel and Le Pera was conceived as a musical piece addressed to the emigrant market, which at that time without doubt was the most suitable audience to differentiate the complex symbolic resonance of the idea of returning. Also in the case of the Galicians, cultural products which offered the community 'symbolic return' were very successful, by alluding to the term used by Rudolf Braun we refer to the success of a song about homesickness of an Italian emigrant in the 60s.<sup>292</sup>

In his work Braun points out the importance of nostalgia with respect to the images of the country of origin. He compares it to an 'oscillating kaleidoscope' of representations which is strongly marked by subjectivity. The images of memory do not only relate to space and nature but also to socio-cultural aspects like interpersonal relationships, known forms of communication, values, feelings and behaviour, the way of life and simply 'the things' or objects of their country of origin.

The elements mentioned often appear during the leisure time of the emigrants, in fact, more frequently than during their work time. In this context Braun refers to 'paradox nostalgia' meaning that 'the desired image is a memory linked with pain and nostalgia and at the same time an emotion which is accompanied by feelings of satisfaction, security and desire'.<sup>293</sup>

Thus the behaviour of emigrants in their free time would explain itself: it is an attempt symbolically to be in the country of origin while being in a new environment.

The transnational vision of this line of argument corrects the insistence on it being an 'illusion' or even a 'false illusion'. Are the remaining products of cultural consumption by any chance 'more authentic' than the ones consumed by the emigrants? In their leisure time, their meetings with other emigrants, the Galicians in Switzerland experience a non-dramatic conception of nostalgia, a symbolic return which shows the capacity of creating transnational spaces. The emigrants are therefore part of the plural society of which they form a part in the host country, where the citizens meet each other according to their network of contacts, whether it is migratory or not. In short, nostalgia usually functions as an emotion which leads to participation in the social life of a community and not as an indication of the supposed 'exclusion' of emigrants in the society of destination.

Many of the classical analyses of nostalgia confer an individual character dispossessing nostalgia of its communal dimension. This stands in contrast to the experiences previously mentioned. In fact, they often touch on its fundamentally illusory character and influence the historians to view the testimonies of the emigrants from a critical point of view.

In this way Selma Leydesdorff (1986), basing her views on interviews with Jewish workers deported to Amsterdam during the Second World War, says that nostalgia works like a series of 'screen memories'. Based on psychoanalysis, the author considers these memories to be substitutes for others, which due to their sensitive nature, have been repressed by the storyteller. Therefore Leydesdorff concludes: 'The only way oral historians can subdue the power of nostalgia is to become more critical as interviewers in pursuit of reality, constantly questioning the historic pictures, which serve as substitute memories'.<sup>294</sup>

This classical conception of nostalgia is perceived as melancholic imagination which should be reduced to its true grounds by the historians. In opposition to this, the analysis of Barbara Shircliffe is very suggestive, for it incorporates awareness of the fact that the speakers could be making ironic and even critical use of this emotional mechanism. Reasoning from a series of interviews with Afro-Americans who experienced the practice of segregation in school, she concludes that nostalgia is not only a strategy for idealizing the past, but rather of questioning the present. Having said this, the author notes: 'My analysis of these testimonies and testimonials suggests ways the study of nostalgia can enhance, rather than diminish, the use of oral history for understanding how we use historical consciousness to make sense of and comment on the present'.<sup>295</sup>

Consequently, for the processing of nostalgia we will be working in an area equally distant from the two analysts' positions. From Leyderesdorff we will retain the precaution concerning literality in the idealisation of the country of origin. However, we acknowledge the possibility of a neo-positivist tendency in this distrust of nostalgia as an effect of distortion of a truth which should be comprehensible in another way.

And in relation to Barbara Shircliffe's analysis we will retain the symptomatic importance of nostalgia, for it turns out to be the mechanism which permits a community to position itself critically in regards to the present:

From this perspective, the study of nostalgia, literally defined as 'homesickness' – a yearning for something past that is no longer recoverable – allows historians to explore how individuals invest past experiences with meaning and use historical memory as a starting point for social commentary. Through nostalgia we can invest past events and experiences with significance largely informed by our present concerns. Our nostalgia for the past in a sense is an informal way we comment and make sense of history, revealing our responses to and desires for social change [...]. These memories illustrate the construction of historical consciousness. In this sense, nostalgia functions as critique of the present as much as stories about the past'.<sup>296</sup>

From the point of view of narrative consideration of oral history, nostalgia turns into one of the principal incentives for the activation of a plot. In her socio-cultural analysis of nostalgia, Kathleen Stewart draws on the concept of 'structures of feeling' and other distinctions by Raymond Williams (for example the difference between 'hegemonic nostalgia' and 'resistant nostalgia'). In her studies the author patently recognizes the close connection between nostalgia and narrative structures:

Nostalgia is an essential narrative function of language that orders events temporally and dramatizes them in the mode of 'things that happened', that 'could happen', that 'threaten to erupt at any moment'. By resurrecting time and place, and a subject in time and place, it shatters the surface or an atemporal order and a prefab cultural landscape. To narrate is to place oneself in an event and a scene – to make an interpretative space – and to relate something to someone: to make an interpretative space that is relational and in which meanings have direct social referents.<sup>297</sup>

The oral interview of open structure, which is the way we have gained access to the testimonies of Galician emigrants, can be understood as a narrative genre with peculiarities which are derived from the inclusion of the historian in the process of investigation. From the epistemological point of view, linking history of emotions and oral history, one can provide conclusions especially useful in both areas. For the emotions constitute one of the principal motors and mechanisms of pragmatic functioning of life stories.

This orientation also reinforces the necessity of transcending limiting conceptions of the truthfulness of the narrated in the conversation. For the truth in the emotional expression is not directed by the objectivist parameter of 'adherence to fact', but rather by performative criteria of 'adherence to intention'.

The problem with the truth of oral history, one of the most recurrent ones in specialized bibliography, has been reworded by Alessandro Portelli in the following terms: 'The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to



fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge'.<sup>298</sup> And apart from imagination, symbolism and desire we would have to add the emotional world to which the conversation alludes and which the conversation itself provokes to arise.

The performance of an interview does indeed give way to what we could call a 'double circuit of emotional communication'. Duality alludes as much to mentioned emotions in the conversation as to the ones which surround its development as an act of speaking. On the first level, maintaining a conversation assumes activating a series of mechanisms which are more than a transmission of a message. As Warren D. Anderson notes, 'any exchange of information relying on the combination of accurate memory and story-telling is double charged with the delightful complexities of human invention, creativity, and posturing'.<sup>299</sup> In this process of spinning yarns of one's own experience, emotions permit securing important principles like empathy for the development of the oral interview. That is why on a first level of the analysis the emotions of the interviewed result to be just as important as the ones of the interviewer.

On a second level, the emotions and feelings usually evolve into the subject of conversation or even its main incentive. As Joanna Bourke has pointed out the sentimental narrations denote a strong link between emotions and power relations: 'Emotions are an expression of power relations. Emotions link the individual with the social in dynamic ways. They are always about social enaction'.<sup>300</sup>

This link is evident in labour contexts like domestic service, agricultural work, hospitality industry or factory work, all of which are carried out by Galician immigrants in Switzerland and to which the interviewed usually respond in a dynamic and differentiating way, as we have seen in the beginning through Manuel's labour history. Among these feelings nostalgia acquires a symptomatic role due to its evident link with the past and the ideologies – nationalism amongst them – based on their roots.

The testimonies of Galician emigrants to Switzerland reveal remarkable differences with respect to the articulation of nostalgia in other communities. Eva Gugenberger has studied the emotional process of Galician emigration in Buenos Aires, linking homesickness with the attitude towards the language.<sup>301</sup> According to the Austrian sociolinguist who has studied the linguistic adaptation of Galicians in Argentina, at first the emigrants experience a shock in the new country marked by fear of the new environment and the idealisation of the country of origin and the past. Then they gradually adapt themselves and lose their fear of the environment, passing better and better judgements on the things and people in the new country. At last they develop a new identity, not static but dynamic, which permits the integration of new elements.

Still following this model the author acknowledges that there are cases with divergent reactions and attitudes. She distinguishes two types of emigrants: the philobat type who easily breaks free from the past and the ocnophil, for whom the links and attachment to the country of origin are of great importance. In accordance with this scheme and these variations, she analyses how homesickness and the attitude towards language, the Galician, become indicators of a major or minor tendency to the loss of identity. According to Gugenberger there are emigrants who never abandon the initial phase of shock and cannot overcome the initial state of nostalgia, wrapped in a sentiment of loneliness and anguish, with memories associated with the pain of loss and a strong resistance to adopt the Spanish language. For others, on the other hand, the denial of nostalgia is imposed and the desire of adaptation is a sign of their desire to avoid suffering. All the same, they cannot overcome the conflict of identities: between the original identity and the present identity. The break with the past and Galician as a language is the fruit of suppression of nostalgia.

This model can be useful in some cases like the one of the emigration to countries overseas at the beginnings of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, we do not think that it could justify the complexity of the emotional and linguistic

process which develops in emigrant communities like the one of the Galicians in Switzerland in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first century. At present many experts on emigration put a great emphasis on transnational relations of emigrants who break with the scheme of 'loss' and 'new identity'. Those scholars tend to emphasize the contemporaneity of the people's past and present in which the emigrants live when politically interacting, cooking, thinking or acting in another country, but with respect to the country of origin. These transnational relations create transnational spaces in which it is necessary to analyse the emotions drawing from other premises.

If we only see nostalgia as pain caused by loss we understand that the emigrants consider their migratory process as a 'loss' at least at some point in time. However, if we tinge this interpretation of the process with loss, we will see that nostalgia has no reason to be associated only with pain of memory, the absent or the past.

Adaptation does not need to be a pre-arranged way of overcoming bonds. A transnational interpretation of the migratory and emotional development leaves space for the maintaining of relations and elements without the necessity of turning the narration of nostalgia in the interviews into an expression of fear and anguish.

This way the definition of identity becomes dynamic from its beginning and not only from a certain point in time. Nostalgia can be used to resist aspects of the present which the emigrant dislikes without relating to an initial state of shock or lack of adaptation to the very end. Consequently, the attachment to the mother tongue does not indicate pain or nostalgia as we have seen through Manuel's linguistic expression. For example, many of the interviewed emigrants speak Galician during the interview as well as with many of their Galician and Portuguese friends in Zurich. What those emigrants describe in their report is the search of closer contact with the Spanish in their first years of their stay in Switzerland.

The use of language and the emotional value of nostalgia cannot be seen as parallel phenomena, but rather that they follow their own paths and adopt their own logic. Both cases show a continual negotiation with the environment which constantly shifts between different points of view and practices. The characteristics of the original culture and the demands of the new community vary depending on the specific sector in which the emigrants reside: their working place, their children's schools or their neighbourhood. The conflicts, problems and exclusions related to identity are negotiated differently in every area and can give way to specific emotional situations which strongly depend on the context.

To proceed in the analysis of social and political meaning of nostalgia one has to take into account that emotions are an expression of power relations (Joanna Bourke). In the interview we referred to in the beginning, Manuel experiences nostalgia. As an example it can be perceived when he remembers the world of craftsmen in which his father passed on the carpenter's trade to him. It is also revealed in the phase when he could work in a Swiss woodwork factory. Manuel worked there with his brother and says it was the best time in his life as a labourer in Switzerland. That happiness was due to the freedom the boss gave them to organize their own work. His nostalgia for those times is at the same time a protest against the rhythm of industrial work and the treatment he received in other working places. In those places the authoritarian discipline of labour forms of fordism did not leave room for creativity and development of relevant individual strategies. His narration articulates the emotions of nostalgia and the joy over his family who united private life and labour in its original rural world of craftsmen. The family as an emotional community is also the affective nucleus of his life in Switzerland, even though the return is made more complicated due to the relationship with his in-laws. In Manuel's case the distribution of roles and responsibilities within the emotional community, the rituals and practices they instil, form the base of necessary stability to live in the new country. The phenomena of chain migration are usually accompanied by a strong emotional

dimension which characterizes the transnational areas in which the social interactions of migrants take place. Solidarity and help abroad are strengthened with the arrival of other relatives and friends with whom goods and services are exchanged and shared as well as experiences, stories and emotions.

In the narratives of the Galician migrants in Switzerland the world of work often serves the projection of images of the country of origin and the new country. In the interview with Manuel the area of the factory is only desirable when he remembers the workshop. The disciplinary values are only acceptable when combined with creativity. In this way awareness of loss becomes a critical instrument of the present. Nostalgia cannot simply be linked to the lack of adaptation to the new context in Switzerland; it is rather a dynamic emotion closely linked to the maintaining of strong social networks. In this case the familiar one is centred in the world of work, but often it is associated with transnational spaces in which the migrants spend their free time as for example the Galician associations in Switzerland. There nostalgia is dwelled on in a variety of ways which go from music to food, always passing the tongue. The emotional value of the frequency of the exchange and communication of the members of the Galician community has wide consequences. Above all, the support and affection show in the investment of time and resources in the common free time, whether it is with the family or in cultural associations. The emotional fabric of the community is strengthened by celebrations, parties, meals and fellowship on weekends.

The migrants' stories show how they question the present with their joint experience of nostalgia. Manuel's narrative and description of his work with antique furniture, which ended up being his transition from employee (with several experiences as a wage earner) to self-employment, acquire a value of meta-reflection on the value of the past and its relation to the present. This is the time of post-fordism in which factories and the work world he got to know in the 1960s, 70s and 80s do not seem quite as paradigmatic anymore since the 90s of

the past century. With his decision to specialize in an area as specific as the restoration and selling of antique furniture on such an open and plural market as the Swiss one, he shows that his knowledge of the trade in his craftsmanship, his knowledge about cutting wood and his use of 'tricks' permit him to achieve a quality of products which is nourished in his creativity and which is not subject to the standardizing mechanization of the consumer furniture industry. His story lets us recognize the areas of nostalgia which preserve the past and absorb states of mind which can be perceived by others. His retail store and his workshop full of antique furniture, some restored and some still to be restored, have sentimental qualities which contrast with the functionary space of a factory meant to develop a productive industrial function.

The aesthetic practice of restoration becomes a life style in which the experience of nostalgia comes to life in a dynamic way. Facing the global homogenization of the present in this way an enriched fragmentation surges with layers of the past. The times of leisure, in which nostalgia is substantiated and focused on in cultural practices of Galician associationalism, are also places of frequent exchange and communication. They have significant influence on the migrants' life style.

In short, we can affirm that the Galician emigration to Switzerland from the point of view of the emotional life expressed in the analysed testimonies, has been historically resistant. As opposed to the dominant forms of nostalgia fabricated by the State with the goal of regulating migratory politics these short life stories imply the refusal of accepting a single identifying narrative. At the same time the ambivalent character of nostalgia is captured in these testimonies as a way of resisting – maybe not deliberately yet not unaware – the logic of linguistic and cultural nationalism. In the testimonies in which occasionally we can hear them saying 'I don't know who I am', 'I don't know where I'm from' between the lines, an oscillation is produced between the 'here' and the 'there' which openly objects to the necessity of feeling one belongs to a single place. Or

in the words of Rosa Amor, one of the emigrants who has shared with us: 'Eu non me sinto nin galega nin suíza. Eu síntome' ('I feel neither Galician nor Swiss. I feel myself').<sup>302</sup>





## **12. CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI AND THE (IM) POSSIBILITY OF THE DIASPORIC BILDINGSROMAN**

Sreyoshi Sarkar (Gargi College, University of Delhi)

Diaspora is etymologically derived from the Greek word 'diasperien', 'dia' meaning across and 'sperien' meaning scattering seeds. Located within a semiotics of Derridean 'différance',<sup>303</sup> the diaspora as signifier births the opposing motions of organization, collection and recentering of the field of diaspora studies. This is not to suggest that such studies seek to control the experience/s of scattered-ness although limiting binaries of homeland and host-land, 'impossible mourning'<sup>304</sup> and easy assimilations have been produced within its rubrics. But recent theorists have sought to read serial diasporas, digital diasporas, and transnational mobilities as birthing simultaneous processes of difference and deferral that continue to produce and contain lateral mobilities. 'Différance' thus being a necessary condition of diaspora/s has also been acknowledged as intrinsic to the processes of identity formation within diasporic spaces. It is what constantly thwarts the immigrants' search for a unified, stable self that can comfortably straddle affective, cultural and linguistic counters of both homeland and host-land. In the words of Sneja Gunew, diasporic subjects are continuously constituted within 'instabilities of hybridity, m'etissage,

creolization, and contamination,<sup>305</sup> However, since the very state of being scattered engenders a desire for a definitive centre and for self knowledge, the structure of diaspora narratives often mirror that of the traditional European *Bildungsroman*. Hence the immigrant-protagonists' journey is charted as her movement from ignorance to maturity through seeking closure to the indefinite permutations of cultural and social identities she partakes of within diasporic spaces. Such narratives of formation are pre-empted by the very image of seeds and sowing in the root word 'diasperien'. But since both seed/spores and the *Bildung* refer primarily to the male experience, it becomes essential to ask how women interpret and appropriate diasporic space/s? How are female diasporic narratives structured? Does the *Bildungsroman* provide a useful model for women writers in diaspora/s?

While it is impossible to engage with such diverse and weighty issues within the scope of this paper I have sought to address here, some of the above concerns as they pertain to South Asian American diasporic writing by women. My continuing academic interest in this arena besides my own awkward positioning within the South Asian American diasporic space spurred me on in these investigations. First on a spouse visa which only recently was converted to a student visa, the issue of the *Bildungsroman* structuring female diasporic experiences has been central to my everyday negotiations as student-teacher from within the Delhi university circuit, aspiring to a PhD from an American University, Bengali with no nostalgic memories of Kolkata and continuously reconstituting the self as wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law. Located within such negotiations I found it rather intriguing to investigate the question of the female *Bildung* especially in the novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Divakaruni is an internationally recognized writer whose prose and poetry primarily engage with South Asian American diasporic experiences and have been translated into multiple languages. However in academic circles her novels have been much criticized as portraying an exoticised India/homeland steeped in

ancient, often stifling traditions and whose women continue to be oppressed and seek salvation in America. This paper seeks to contend that while initially Divakaruni's narratives might seem to originate from spaces of a nostalgic romanticisation of home/Kolkata/India, there is soon a refutation of such leanings as homes are found out to be stifling, punitive and limiting. Furthermore, women in the homeland are shown as constantly resisting oppression, old traditions are challenged and refuted where needed by old and new generations alike and finally America as the land of equality and immense possibilities is constantly undercut by immigrant experiences.

Her characters are also far from South Asian American diasporic archetypes such as the nostalgic immigrant consumed by an immense sense of loss or those who undergo an easy assimilation within the host culture and are considered progressive individuals. Here, I read Divakaruni's five novels as parts of a continuum (although not progressive in any manner) that in the process of tracing the development of its female protagonists towards emotional and artistic maturity also archives the author's efforts towards articulating her own subjectivity as a South Asian American woman and writer.

Divakaruni was born and brought up in the Kolkata of the 1960s-1970s and came to the United States in 1976 to study at the Universities of Ohio and Berkeley. She spent most of her life in Northern California where her narratives are based. She has won numerous awards for both poetry and prose and also serves on the advisory board of Maitri and Daya, NGOs that help South Asian or South Asian American women in America, who are victims of domestic abuse or violence. Up until today, she has published five novels, *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of my Heart* (2000), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *One Amazing Thing* (2009).

While they all centre on the South Asian experience in America, there is a gendered perspective made available through explorations of dynamic, plural and infinite imbrications of the cultural, the social and the personal that continuously

reproduces dispersed female subjectivities at the borders of the self and society. In chapters eight and sixteen of the *The Vine of Desire*, Lalit's conversation with Sudha is broken into units titled, 'What I said/what I didn't say/what you said/what I wanted you to say'.<sup>306</sup> This underlines the divided-ness of the self. At any given moment the self is scattered, thinking multiple things, saying one thing; giving certain responses being conditioned by social, cultural and gendered codes of propriety yet enacting a wholly different response in the mind. This process is even more complex for immigrants who 'travel back and forth between dual societies, inhabit multiple homes, roles, identities and languages.'<sup>307</sup> Sudha's cousin Anju initially tries to find her voice, her Self by delving into the past, by writing in isolated rooms about isolated subjects – letters to her dead father, her mother, Sunil and on Draupadi's desire for revenge. Yet those very processes underscore for Anju the impossibility of a coherent self. They underline 'the apparent incompatibility of the different needs that she is 'free' to recognize. The multiplicity is both liberating and desperate'.<sup>308</sup> She does not seek to stifle her different selves yet there is a certain sense of entrapment, of being suffocated trying to live with these different conflicting emotions and loyalties. Finally it is in the act of flying, by venturing beyond the known and the definable, that Anju achieves a sort of transcendence, 'Her life is just beginning.' This amniotic space is not the clichéd *tabula rasa* for new, unbound beginnings but one inextricably bound and nurtured by all the people, places, readings, memories, dreams and thoughts, both conscious and subconscious, which have ever been part of her life. To quote from the text:

'Salt and the cry of bay gulls, the ammoniac odor of developer fluid. But there are so many smells suddenly, all at once [...] astringence of antiseptics in an emergency room in Redwood City, [...]. In a Calcutta bus, sweat and exhaust [...] Anju's old apartment, where old whiffs of methi and coriander now mingle with green onion and kim chee [...] ginger flowers that grow on the Assam hills.'<sup>309</sup>

In *Queen of Dreams*, Rakhi continuously seeks to go beyond the convictions of the autobiographical voice in her mother's journals. The scattered entries in the journal containing 'lessons, stories from old books, famous dreams, clients, people she knew'<sup>310</sup> are too containing for Rakhi, there has to be more and in that search for the more, for the impossible essence of the woman that was her mother, Rakhi continues to seek her impossible essence all through the novel. Her father's mediation in translating the journal entries written in Bengali, a language which Rakhi cannot understand, defers the intimacy that she seeks. But through reflection and recollection she reconstructs her mother's life as wife, lover, immigrant and dream teller, while Jonaki (Rakhi's daughter) translates her grandmother's desires from within her dream space. For Rakhi's father it is 'like reading a novel written by a stranger – I don't recognize anyone, especially myself'.<sup>311</sup> *Queen of Dreams* also constantly moves between real time and dream time such that any attempt at a comprehensive identity, an essential self is frustrated. The *Mistress of Spices* ends with Tilo renaming herself Maya, 'illusion, magic, enchantment'<sup>312</sup> which threatens to dissolve any notion of the existence of the self within real time, rendering in turn Tilo's first person narrative farcical. If the self is only an illusion, the whole attempt of the *Bildung* to track that self as it moves from ignorance to maturity is redundant.

Yet meaningful agency lies in the continuing act of the search itself as it resists fixed modes and nodes of identity formation. Thus in Divakaruni's narratives, there can be no unified self in the case of the diasporic, female *Bildung*, no fictional harmony of the exterior and interior but only in the production of an authentic voice, its energies rooted deep within the polyphonies of the dialogical self. In fact, the soul of her writing lies in seeking such authenticities.

Divakaruni recounts an incident where her young children, born and brought up in California, read the American flag = 'our flag'. For Divakaruni, the '=' as site of synonymity is disrupted by an affective loyalty to the Indian

nationalist, communal, home space that interrupts, intervenes and irritates Divakaruni's attempts to own the American patriotic space.<sup>313</sup> This dialectical too invigorates all of Divakaruni's writings even as the author along with her female protagonists seeks a voice outside such claustrophobic belonging/s.

In spirit the female protagonists' quest for the transcendent self is akin to the quests of the classical *Bildungsroman* as defined by Lukacs.<sup>314</sup> Yet, here the quest does not trace a linear trajectory or teleological development. Multiple protagonists, most of them female and a polyphony of narrative voices take over from the single male journeyman so typical of the European narrative of development. Besides, the impossibility of the realization of the essential self or soul within the diasporic space renders the quest important yet futile. No closure is possible. While the traditional *Bildung* requires a constructed harmony between external and internal factors to provide, according to Franco Moretti, 'a homeland to the individual',<sup>315</sup> Divakaruni's novels of development expose the impossibility of such a fictional harmony thereby underwriting the (im) possibility of the diasporic female *Bildungsroman*:

Once upon a time I used to labour under the delusion that I was unique. Special. I've learned better since. So I'll begin my story where the stories of most young men begin. With my father.<sup>316</sup>

Most of Divakaruni's male characters begin their narratives by talking about their fathers, irrespective of age, class and religion. However, in these novels there is a careful underlining of the various ways in which different masculinities are socially and culturally constructed and articulated within the diasporic space. As such Haroun, Lalit, Sunil and Rakhi's father all seek to move away from paternal control towards an independence and empowerment of the self that enables them to inscribe new belongings rooted in their roles as provider/nurturer. The male diasporic consciousness seeks to prove itself first through survival in the host-land and then by attaining economic success so as to announce his coming of age, of

being in control. This sense of an empowered, successful self is then sought to be maintained and reified through heterosexual marriage and fatherhood where wife and child/ren belong to the man. But in Divakaruni, such domestic spaces are thwarted by the woman's search for herself. Marriage and heterosexual relationships are found to be imposing in different ways and despite pregnancy being articulated by them as a visceral experience of belonging, motherhood seems limiting and frustrating.

Thus concepts of the heterosexual, patrilineal home space as an uncontested, safe space for simultaneous belonging within both houses of South Asia and Asian America and women as embodiments of cultural purity and continuity is constantly dismantled in the course of these narratives. Though 'homing desire'<sup>317</sup> remains an intrinsic part of the diasporic consciousness, the actual possibility of home and of belonging, as woman and as diasporic subject, is explored and exploded as the female protagonists find empowered pluralities and voices outside of homes and hyphenations. The female 'I' constantly seeks a transformative narrative, a voice 'of truth',<sup>318</sup> a new metaphor of living that reinstates a simultaneous aesthetic and political agency in the performing self/selves.

'Home' in diaspora criticism is used to refer to the nation-state of origin, the place of one's birth and growing up and/or the place where one's family i.e. parents and siblings live. In all cases, 'home' has connotations of familiarity, a seamless belonging and an umbilical cord-like attachment. Yet home is an impossible concept. Susan Stanford Friedman quotes Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*:

I had to leave home so I could find myself. But I didn't leave all the parts of me: I kept the ground of my own being [...]. So yes, though 'home' permeates every sinew and cartilage in my body, I too am afraid of going home.<sup>319</sup>

Friedman interprets these lines as Anzaldúa's being 'rooted in a sense of home as

a place she can never be at home and from which she must escape to feel at home with herself'.<sup>320</sup> In Divakaruni's narratives home is configured in similar terms, as a longed for space of harmony, of belonging. While the men seek to construct such spaces through heterosexual relationships within the diaspora, for the women home is a limited and limiting experience. There is a strong awareness of home as a controlling space, constantly policing sexual autonomy and performance, seeking to reconstitute subjectivity within its own nationalist, communal codes. For Tilo in *Mistress of Spices*, home/homeland is a space that at birth threatened her but later her magical powers threaten to control home. For the orphaned dream teller in *Queen of Dreams*, the slums are never home. For both these characters, the idea of home and family is associated with the islands where they learnt the magical arts of healing and its all female community of teachers and students.

Rajayashree Khushu Lahiri and Shweta Rao have pointed out that this system of education replicates the traditional Hindu *gurukul* where male teachers and students lived and worked together in the pursuit of knowledge. Yet within the imaginaries of *Mistress of Spices* and *Queen of Dreams*, the hierarchy is transformed since this *gurukul* has only women students centred around the First Mother/Old Ones. Yet it seems more like a nunnery in its strict policing of political, social and sexual autonomies. Its almost religious rhetoric of devoting one's life to the magical arts and healing humanity while constantly negating the self and desires subverts its potential for empowerment. Its strictures on the denial of individuality and sacrificing the self for community undercut the very premises that allow magic to be transformative, awe-inspiring and wondrous. This *gurukul* seeks to produce an assembly line of healers who follow the same rules rather than honing individual magical skills. Even in the traditional *gurukul* while the students were taught all subjects, their individual skills were sought to be honed and that was how they contributed to their community. The transformative hierarchy produced in the all-female *gurukuls* is then doubly undercut by their



denial of individual magical skills and an erasure of the self in return for the knowledge given. These institutions of magic are therefore read as stifling and punitive and the thought of returning 'home' for Tilo and the dream teller remains undesirable. In fact, returning 'home' constitutes the punishment for their transgressions. Even as Tilo walks into the sunset hoping for a better home with Raven on the foundations of an interracial heterosexual romance, the dream teller's inability to completely belong, to be transparent, legible to either husband or daughter could well be Tilo's future. The longing for yet impossibility of home as a necessary condition for the growth of the self, for self realization as it were, orders Divakaruni's narratives.

In the case of *Sister of my Heart* and *The Vine of Desire* there is a variety of possible homes evoked, the huge double-storey Kolkata house where Sudha and Anju grow up with the three mothers, Sudha's in-laws' house in Bardhaman, Anju's in-laws' house in Kolkata and Anju's two-roomed apartment in Houston. Yet, marked by failed relationships, violence and betrayals, all four houses fail to metamorphose into homes.

For Anju, the Kolkata home is initially good enough since it allows her to read and dream and be herself and she also has Sudha's friendship. But once her mother's health crisis brings on an early marriage and she moves out of home, nesting is a never again available option for her as she continuously seeks a space for her(s)elf. The all-women writers' group offers a temporary refuge but it is finally in the joyous declaration 'I've learnt to fly',<sup>321</sup> that Anju finds her voice, 'Her life is just beginning'.<sup>322</sup>

For Sudha, the Kolkata house is comforting only in Anju's friendship, although she fears that too would be spoilt by the revelation of her parents' betrayal, of them not belonging to the Chatterjee family. America is unable to provide her feminist self enlightenment that she is comfortable with and therefore she decides to go back with Tridib's father and her daughter to the old man's home in Jalpaiguri, India. She tells Pishi that she wishes to continue her struggle

for being, becoming in a new part of the country away from the stifling ‘whispers’ of home. But when she imagines her daughter going to school with the old man she realizes that she does not fit in here either. She wonders aloud, ‘In this picture, where am I?’<sup>323</sup> This aspect speaks to the core struggle of Divakaruni’s female protagonists who seek to salvage the self/one’s own space which is constantly swamped by cultural, social, sexual belonging/s and gender roles.

The crises of home grow even graver and more complex in a post 9/11 America. Derrida spoke of the ‘powerlessness of language’ to mark the event of the bombing of the Twin Towers by terrorists and therefore the repetition of the date as ‘a journalistic litany, or rhetorical refrain that admits to not knowing what it’s talking about’.<sup>324</sup> Sudesh Mishra reads this repetition as ‘the symptom of an insufferable excess in speculative signification as it pertains to the spectacle itself’.<sup>325</sup> I would like to extend Mishra’s reading to the narratives of trauma and loss, the proliferating effects of bombings across the world. In America, the post 9/11 nationalist rhetoric threatened to wipe out South Asians literally and metaphorically from the country. There had been hate crimes earlier but now South Asians were persistently typecast and targeted as the enemy, the other, the non-American, the terrorists:

Looked in a mirror lately [...]. You ain’t no American! It’s fuckers like you who planned this attack on the innocent people of this country. Time someone taught you faggots a lesson.<sup>326</sup>

Being American meant being Christian, white, heterosexual, innocent/harmless and speaking English the American way. Citizenship was not synonymous with belonging. In *Queen of Dreams* Rakhi is bewildered at the whole process of othering which seems inescapable. It becomes part of the rhetoric of hatred against South Asians:

Go back to where you came from’/’Go back home’/’Go back to your own country’ (S.A.A.L.T documentaries on hate crimes post 9/11)

It is also part of the words of encouragement, the politics of solidarity other Americans extend as they 'welcome *her* presence in *their* community.'<sup>327</sup> For Rakhi and Tariq as second generation immigrants it practically renders them homeless. The attack on Kurma House International allows for documentation of an alternative narrative of terrorizations – the American response to 9/11. Tariq's father's detention in *One Amazing Thing* further underscores the continuing xenophobic and racist nature of government policies affecting South Asians in America even to this day.

In the face of such hostilities and insecurities, *One Amazing Thing* attempts the reconstruction of community and of belonging through the sharing of individual narratives of loss. The nine visitors to the Indian consulate are trapped inside the manager's office when there is an earthquake and it is within this space that they are able to reach out to each other. The ceiling is in a precarious position, there is a gas leak and water starts to fill the chamber. In the face of this fatal crisis the storytelling helps them communicate, bond and work together as a group to keep alive. Their stories describe the quintessential moment that define who they are, their loves and losses, their histories, their hyphenated identities and its pains and gains. The stories of these modern-day Scheherazades reaffirm life in the face of death, reinscribe being in the crisis of annihilation. The dark, claustrophobic space of the waiting hall evokes the womb while the water slowly seeping in from burst pipelines, is emblematic of the amniotic fluid thereby converting the site of destruction to one that allows for regeneration, for life that is ascertained as each narrative re-enacts the process of realization, of finding the self. While they seek to construct families of their own and community for the sake of survival, the womb-like space continues to pose the threat of collapsing at any moment.

The short stories challenge the long, detailed narratives of the conventional *Bildungsroman*. As opposed to the gradual coming into knowledge

of the self, each story describes that one brief moment or one incident that shapes/transforms the individual. It defines the crux of her being, the moment of enlightenment, of maturation. Yet it is crucial to note that even as they narrate that one moment of self realization, they are moving through another such potentially significant moment. This reiterates the impossibilities of a definitive moment of maturation, of fixed identities and defined ways of belonging.

In *Impossible Desires*, Gayatri Gopinath reads Divakaruni's fiction as 'developmental narratives' where the 'female protagonists travel from an India that functions as the symbolic space of gender oppression and old world dutifulness to an America that fulfils its promise of progress, individual freedom and feminist self-enlightenment'.<sup>328</sup> But in fact, Divakaruni's narratives consistently confound such a neat teleological trajectory of development. There is no concept of a unified, monochromatic India, although *Mistress of Spices* has been often critiqued for organizing South Asian American subjectivities and their concerns around the exoticised, Orientalist Indian Spice Bazaar. The later narratives refer specifically to a 1970s Kolkata/West Bengal. Here there is gender oppression, yet this is also where Anju plans her college education and Sudha dreams of a career as fashion designer, where Gouri Ma successfully runs the all female household and the bookstore and only in the event of a severe health crisis thinks of Anju's marriage before she has completed college. In an atmosphere of strict policing of female sexual autonomy Sudha plans her elopement with Ashok, whom she loves even though her groom has been already chosen by her family. She aborts her plan only because of her love for Anju so as not to jeopardise Anju's chances of a good marriage. The same Sudha later rebels against her mother-in-law when told to abort her unborn girl child.

In *Queen of Dreams*, Rakhi's search for an essential India of magic and mystery comes to an end when she receives a parcel containing photographs of paintings which she assumes are by Indian painters. She senses that they have something to do with India although they are in the abstract mode and very

different from her paintings of things Indian. It helps her realize that ‘They’re Indian – but in such different ways’.<sup>329</sup> *One Amazing Thing* talks of ‘India Shining’ to which Uma Sinha’s parents return not only because it is ‘hometown’<sup>330</sup> but because of its many facilities – because it is now able to provide good jobs, fat pay packages, leisure and a variety of entertainment options. Travelling to India means different things to the different visa applicants. Mrs Pritchett hopes for a new identity while Mangalam needs distancing from India to escape his father-in-law who can destroy his life as soon as he sets foot in the country.

Similarly, America is not portrayed as the stereotypical land of opportunities, freedom and equality for all. ‘You can be anything in America [...] You can be what you want’,<sup>331</sup> Sunil tells a newly married Anju. Yet, America is not the answer to his sister-in-law, Sudha’s search for freedom, for a new life for herself and her daughter Dayita. Instead she chooses to accompany her employer Tridib’s old father to Jalpaiguri in North Bengal and take care of him. She tells the old man:

America isn’t the same country for everyone you know. Things here didn’t work out the way I’d hoped. Going back with you would be a way for me to start over in a culture I understand the way I’ll never understand America. In a new part of India where no one knows me. Without the weight of old memories, the whispers that say, we knew she’d fail or serves her right.<sup>332</sup>

Anju after staying in the country for three years warns Sudha: ‘You’re too romantic about what goes on in America. There are a lot of silenced women here. The no-money, no-rights rule works here, too. It’s got very little to do with love of justice.’<sup>333</sup>

Although America lives up to the cliché of being the land of opportunities in some senses, the South Asian immigrant is constantly identified as other, sworn at, threatened and violated in American public spaces such as residential

neighbourhoods, roads and parks. As discussed in the previous section, things come to a head in the attack on Rakhi and her friends in *Queen of Dreams* in the aftermath of 9/11. Also economic independence does not always guarantee a free and easy life for women in America. Tilo describes the cashier at Sears as 'sad', 'sagging', 'wholly innocent of interest',<sup>334</sup> speaking and working mechanically while she can only dream of a good life that comes with more money. Lalitha Ahuja is rescued from an abusive husband by a women's support group but while they hope to help her set up her own small tailoring business, she realizes that being a dependant immigrant, such independence will not be easy. Mrs. Pritchett who is healthy and wealthy and has an attentive husband feels 'bankrupt' and seeks a new life, a new identity amongst the multitudes of India. Thus factors of race, economic status and immigrant employment policies undercut any notions of an easy feminist self realization or independence in America. Both India and America are shown for what they are – in their vulnerabilities and strengths. Neither are social markers such as 'American', South Asian or South Asian American made out to be representative of whole communities and cultures. Divakaruni's narratives make essential investments in the personal and the intimate without any attempts at voyeurism, allow for the playing out of the simultaneous processes of difference and deferral in the characters' quests for their elusive, (im)possible Selves.

In *Dislocating Cultures: Identity, Tradition and Third World*, Uma Narayan reports that 'as emissaries, third world individuals are often expected to be virtual encyclopaedias of information on all sorts of different aspects of their complex 'cultural' heritage. Their encyclopaedic expertise is often expected to range from the esoteric to the mundane, from popular to High Culture, from matters of history to contemporary issues'.<sup>335</sup> Lisa Lau in her essay 'Making the Difference: The Differing Presentations and Representations of South Asia in the Contemporary Fictions of Home and Diasporic South Asian Women Writers' draws from within South Asian diasporic narratives to establish that there is

indeed such a persisting anxiety even amongst writers vis-à-vis the representation of the cultures of South Asia and those of the diasporic community settled abroad. She writes that:

Even diasporic South Asian women writers are not exempt from such pressures and expectations and find themselves needing to verify their cultural facts before publishing. This concern with accuracy of cultural facts suggests a lack of confidence in their own knowledge of the culture, and a possible difference in the way they themselves practise their culture on a daily basis.<sup>336</sup>

Resisting such burdens, Sneja Gunew in her essay titled 'Resident Aliens' asks, 'To what extent and for how long are writers charged with conveying diasporic histories and representing diasporic communities?'<sup>337</sup> Divakaruni's continuous engagements with the South Asian diaspora in the United States categorically suggest the impossibility of diasporic representation. Hers has been a tradition of continuously rethinking identities, incorporating changing times and newer generations and documenting varying narratives from cross sections of people and cultures inhabiting diasporic spaces. Her novels do not at any point strive towards producing an essential South Asian, American or South Asian American subjectivity. Furthermore, in her case, the very act of writing and rewriting from within the diasporic space enacts the metanarrative of the polyphonies of the dialogical female selves that emerge as the female protagonists seek an essential Self. In conclusion then, the intricacies, inextricabilities and idiosyncrasies of the 'I' predominate Divakaruni's narratives and continuously resist pressures to salvage and reinforce 'us' or 'ours'. It continues to remain at best an illusive possibility, exploding the conventional formatting of the European *Bildungsroman*. Yet the quest for this 'I' continues to mark diasporic subjectivities and narratives across generations and remains the soul of all of Divakaruni's writings.





### **13. RECONCEPTUALIZING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ARMENIAN-AMERICAN DIASPORIC LITERATURE**

Andzhela Keshishyan and Lilit Manucharyan (California State Northridge)

Since Armenians are among the few peoples that have more members living in a diaspora than in their own country, their existence as a national group has become increasingly threatened as a result of continued integration and assimilation into host cultures. Cultural references, especially of their tragic past, in literature, film, and other forms of media allow the Diaspora to identify with one another based on a common theme of mourning and survival. Theorist Michele Balaev has suggested that when stories of one generation are transmitted to another through cultural productions, private trauma may become ‘transhistorical trauma’ and thus ‘define contemporary individual identity, as well as racial or cultural identity.’<sup>338</sup> This phenomenon is reflected in the works by contemporary poets, authors and filmmakers, many of which allude to the painful experiences of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. These allusions allow the Diaspora’s artistic productions to transcend the personal realm and become part of a global, shared realm of consciousness. In doing so, references to the Genocide in literature and other mediums of expression bring forth the community’s effort to keep its memory

alive, fashioning a new, transnational Armenia in the process.

Third-generation Armenian-American author and poet, Peter Balakian, suggests that such references help those who are far removed from the events of 1915 to orient Armenia's tragic history within their own lives today. He writes, 'The journey into history, into the Armenian Genocide, was for me inseparable from poetry. Poetry was part of the journey and the excavation'.<sup>339</sup> In this paper, we will focus on the extent to which memories of the Genocide echo throughout contemporary North-American diasporic poetry, literature and film, as well as how these references serve to coalesce the worldwide Armenian community's sense of national identity. No matter how fragmented or subjective they may be, the memories brought forth in post-genocide cultural productions by 'hyphenated' Armenians like Balakian influence the identity-formation of all those who are part of the Diaspora.

To adequately impress upon readers the important role that such texts play in uniting the Diaspora through a shared historical consciousness, it is necessary to give a brief background of the events that splintered the Armenian nation almost a century ago. The Ottoman Empire began losing vast amounts of land as well as the powerful grip it had on various minority groups scattered throughout Anatolia during the last half of the nineteenth century. Since Armenians were among the most prosperous of these groups, they were targeted for massacre several times, which revealed that the Ottoman populace was developing a dangerous attitude toward them.<sup>340</sup> Though the Ottoman ruler, Abdul Hamid, was overthrown in 1913 by the Young Turks, a much more – self-proclaimed – tolerant party, the Armenians' already deplorable living conditions took a turn for the worse. The policies of The Young Turks pushed for 'ethnic homogeneity and national territorial integrity in the heartlands of the Ottoman empire'.<sup>341</sup> They also sought 'political and economic independence for Turks as an ethnic-national group'.<sup>342</sup> The 'alien element' that Armenians in Cilicia and eastern Anatolia imposed was not only seen as an obstacle to each of these ends but 'an immediate

threat.<sup>343</sup>

Thus, not long after their rise to power, the Young Turks decided to obliterate every Armenian man, woman and child in the Anatolian Turkish heartlands. Under the cover of World War I, the Ottomans systematically expunged thousands upon thousands of Armenians from their ancestral lands. All of the men, including teenaged boys, were gathered together and summarily killed, leaving women, children, the sick and the elderly defenceless.

The remaining population suffered a 'fate worse than dying;' they were tortured, raped, starved, physically abused, sold into slavery and plagued by debilitating diseases during the deportation (or 'death marches' through the Syrian Desert) that soon followed.<sup>344</sup>

Over the next several months, approximately 1.5 million people were slaughtered. This horrific moment in history left an indelible mark on the collective Armenian consciousness and laid the foundations for the radical shift that the Armenian national identity would undergo during the twentieth century. The state of the surviving population was grim.

As if their physical, emotional and mental scars were not enough to cope with, they also had to face the fact that they were banned from returning to their homes in Turkey. Countless survivors were thus left utterly poor, homeless and stateless. Consequently, they had no choice but to begin new lives in whatever country first offered them asylum, usually in the Middle East or the Caucasus.<sup>345</sup>

Emigration continued for years after the Genocide and, eventually, survivors resettled in all corners of the globe, including Russia, Syria, Egypt and the Americas.<sup>346</sup>

As a result, Armenians are among the few people 'that have more members living in the Diaspora than in their own country'.<sup>347</sup>

Refugees invariably built Armenian communities, schools and churches wherever they went. However, as the first generation of Armenian immigrants started families and set down roots, the threat emerged of losing their unique

Armenian culture, and increased with each subsequent generation as foreign cultures and languages took prominence. Thus, as scholar Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, writes, ‘members of the older generation in Armenian communities ‘believed that they, as remnants of a persecuted people, were the crucible, the well-spring of national renaissance,’ and ‘to them fell the enormous responsibility to sustain the patriotic spirit, [and] to nurture Armenian culture’.<sup>348</sup> Today, the duty of the younger generations carries the same underlying goal: to nourish a culture with a tragic past and to help sustain its history by educating future generations about what it means to be Armenian.

Thus, despite the fact that they are ‘divided by geography and assimilation, the past helps bring Armenians together as a transnational community.’<sup>349</sup> Scholar Henry C. Theriault maintains that even though ‘Armenian identity depends on much more than the genocide and its continuing aftermath,’ these components are nonetheless ‘a central part of modern Armenian history, and as such, an essential part of contemporary Armenian identity’.<sup>350</sup> Even as immigrants settled down in foreign countries, memories of the Genocide continued to haunt survivors. The transmission of these memories from one generation to the next is a recurring phenomenon to this very day. As a result, references to this horrific moment in history and to the Armenian population’s ensuing exodus from the Ottoman Empire are almost ubiquitous in contemporary cultural productions.

Meredith Z. Avakian vividly captures this concept in her poem ‘Armenian Queen,’ in which she claims that the sheltered life her grandmother led in a two-bedroom apartment in Jersey City failed to prevent her from re-experiencing the trauma her parents brought over with them from the old country. ‘She grew up hearing of what it was like back home,’ Avakian writes, ‘Far from the streets of Jersey/ Where the blood of many relatives tragically stained the soil/ To be left in her roots’.<sup>351</sup> Though her grandmother is far removed (in time and space) from her relatives’ traumatic experiences, their pain has nonetheless become an

inextricable part of her roots. This image suggests that the speaker of the poem will also one day transfer this ancestral tragedy on to her own offspring, as water inevitably flows from root to branch. As scholar Bernard-Donals points out, such references to a common and, we would even add, a hereditary, history, help form new memories, which are rooted in a collective consciousness.<sup>352</sup>

This notion of a collective consciousness borne from memory is reiterated time and again in the poetry and prose submitted by Armenians in the Diaspora to the *Armenian News Network/Groong*, a California based website established in 1988 that publishes original works about current issues, events, and organizations within the global Armenian community.<sup>353</sup> The site was founded on the premise that ‘well informed Armenians become more active and involved in their communities, and keep their heritage alive and vibrant.’ One of the main subsections, The Literary Groong, or TLG, publishes poetry submitted by members of the Diaspora, many of which reference the authors’ Armenian origins. One of its primary goals is to promote quality works that will shine as beacons for the next generation of writers who ‘take up pen and thought, express themselves, share their inner worlds and live as passionate Armenians within the creative arena.’<sup>354</sup>

An underlying theme of national trauma and continued survival runs through the majority of these works.

For example, Meredith Z. Avakian, a performance poet who was born and raised in New Jersey, contributed a poem in 2007 entitled ‘I will not Forget.’<sup>355</sup> Avakian addresses the poem to her grandmother, assuring her in the very first stanza, that she will remember the stories she shared, even the painful ones, ‘like how the Turkish children split Daddy Sam’s head open on the way to school one morning, just because he was Armenian.

The past is the past,’ she asserts, ‘but I will not forget it.’ This reiteration of the title, coupled with her explicit reference to the Genocide makes Avakian a participant in the Armenian community’s struggle to keep the memory of the

Genocide alive. It also highlights the fact that this tragic event has yet to be recognized by its perpetrators, as well as on an international level. This active remembrance of the past links the Diaspora to its current national identity. In the poem, Avakian highlights her grandmother's role in encouraging this identification with Armenian history through her cooking and story-telling. She understands her grandmother's need to 'conform and assimilate' in order to ease the transition into American culture for the younger generations, but assures her that, as part of this new generation, she will strive to remember and carry on her ethnic traditions. The lines 'I will try to remember your recipe/ as it's been passed down to me' not only refer to the transference of the actual recipes for authentic food, but also symbolize Avakian's promise to preserve the Armenian culture as a whole.

Avakian contributed another poem to the TLG in 2007 entitled 'Picking up the Pieces,' in which she compares the displaced Armenian population to the fragments of a broken vase.<sup>356</sup> These fragments symbolize the Armenian Diaspora after the Genocide. In the second stanza, she describes them as 'Scattered and distorted/ Picked up and aborted/ Moved and confused.' 'But they remain the same' she writes, 'Different pieces of the same vase/ Many linking to one/ One land. One nation. One people.' Here, Avakian implies that despite their dispersal, Armenians not only remain connected to the actual country itself, but also to the figurative nation that encompasses all Armenians throughout the world. She then asserts her role as part of the Diaspora, saying, 'I am a piece of this broken vase/ I may not look the same as the others/ But the whole is incomplete without me.' In other words, assimilation into a host culture may differentiate members of the Diaspora from Armenian citizens, but they are nonetheless an integral part of the international Armenian community. In stanza four, Avakian speaks directly to the Diaspora encouraging them to embrace these differences and recognize the similarities since they are all 'part of the same vase.'

The final stanza makes another reference to the Genocide, stating that the vase, or Armenia, has 'been broken/ beaten, hidden and damaged.' The fact that 'some were lost along the way' caused the fragmentation of the Armenian people. Thus, the nation is not complete without unity. 'Without unity/ How can we recreate?' Avakian asks. The use of enjambment in these lines is symbolic of the broken vase, which, in turn, symbolizes the fragmented nation. Avakian insists that it is possible to reconstruct the vase 'if you constantly search/ and pick up the pieces/ one at a time/ and keep them together.' This reconstruction is, in fact, 'bound by need.' Although the vase will always remain literally broken since its pieces have already become infused within the framework of other cultures, Armenians around the world can figuratively come together through an understanding of themselves as 'the remains' of 'One land. One nation. One people.' In both of these poems, Avakian's references to the Genocide bring forth the community's effort to keep its memory alive and to fashion a new transnational Armenian consciousness.

Daiana Der-Hovanesian's poem, 'Break In,' also engages the past's continued affect on the present. The story presented in this poem is two-fold. First, there is the overarching narrative of a burglary that has taken place in the narrator's home; her door is ajar, her drawers have been emptied, the objects inside them 'strewn as if a giant had poured/ out everything' (lines 4-5), and many of her prized possessions have been stolen, most importantly, her mother's old cameo that held a picture of her 'father at four in a village dress.' 'Aghast at the chaos inside,' she runs 'screaming to call/ 911.'

As the police ask her to give them an inventory of everything she remembers, the 'chaos' inside her home melds with another, much larger and more tragic, chaotic moment in history, one that has affected not only her own family but countless other Armenian families as well. At this point, the second, and arguably more significant, story emerges. From her former husband's war medals and her child's first tooth, the speaker's thoughts move on to public

memories of loss:

The detective asked if I'd been robbed before.  
 I thought of jewels buried in the ground  
 as Armenian families fled the sound  
 of shooting, Turks breaking in each door,  
 my grandmother's gems down to one cameo  
 sent to America with her older son,  
 two million relatives lost as one  
 art, architecture, poems I'd never know  
 everything except a picture in a cameo.  
 Answered what he wanted, 'No.' (lines 19-28).

Here, the speaker not only details the human and material losses of the Genocide, but ties the past with the present by lamenting over how the mass slaughter and destruction has affected her. Precious art, architecture and poems, for instance, were not only stolen from her ancestors, but are lost to her as well.

The first mention of the cameo presents it as a priceless possession, yet there is a sinister element connected to it as well since it is the only thing that the speaker's grandmother has 'saved' from an unnamed, but undoubtedly destructive, force. In the second instance, the cameo becomes a symbol of both hope and loss, as the speaker's grandmother sends it away with her eldest son to a new country. The final mention of the cameo presents it as a symbol of knowledge and as a sacred link between one generation and the next, indeed between a dead civilization and a continuing one. Everything is lost, broken and buried, and there is only this 'picture in a cameo' to inform the speaker, whose relatives experienced such horrors first-hand, about who she is and where she came from. Thus, these numerous images of disaster, tragedy and loss are all folded into a single image of a cameo, whose repeated presence in the poem serves as a symbol of the chaos looming over the story, and, at the same time, reminds readers of their connection to that chaos.

Other forms of literature also stand as unifying beacons for the Armenian Diaspora. For example, there is now a 'proliferating body of autobiographical



literature which explores the experiences of multiracial individuals'.<sup>357</sup> In Peter Balakian's 1997 memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*, the memories of a tragic past offer an opportunity for self-understanding to unfold. Balakian's conflicted feelings about his ethnic identity while growing up illustrate the confusion that later generations living in host cultures may experience about their origins. Though he is a fully assimilated American citizen, his eventual need to connect with his ancestral roots points toward a necessity for historical and cultural awareness in relation to present identity. His grandmother, a genocide survivor, provides the primary lens through which Balakian sees blurred glimpses of his cultural background. He writes, 'When I was with [her], I had access to some other world, some evocative place of dark and light, some kind of energy that ran like an invisible force from this old country called Armenia to my world in New Jersey. It was something ancient, something connected to earth and words and blood and sky'.<sup>358</sup>

After her death, Balakian is compelled to understand what prompted his family's flight from the old country. This inevitably leads him to uncover various documents, first-hand accounts, and poetic delineations of the Genocide, many of which he incorporates into his memoir.

For example, he includes excerpts from Ambassador Morgenthau's 1919 published report of the Genocide. Balakian is shocked, horrified and, at times, even sickened as he reads textual evidence regarding the slaughter of innumerable Armenians. He embeds these emotional responses throughout Morgenthau's narrative. Further research helps him discover how his family, in particular, was impacted during this time. In the chapter entitled 'A Document and a Photograph,' for instance, he presents portions from the human rights suit that his grandmother filed in Washington D.C. in 1920 against the Turkish government for the losses she suffered as a result of the Genocide. The inclusion of such documents makes the memoir more than just an account of Balakian's search for identity.

Rather, it enables all diasporan Armenian readers to access ‘factual history’ through an exposure to legal accounts that validate their ancestors’ subjective memories of the Genocide. As he does with Morgenthau’s account, Balakian also intersperses various segments of his grandmother’s claim with his own reactions and commentary, quite literally overlapping her words and memories with his. At times, he includes segments from the affidavit and his own reactions to them within the very same paragraph, at first differentiating one from the other by italicizing his grandmother’s words. For example:

I didn’t want to break down in front of my aunt. I clenched my jaw for a long time until it felt sore. My grandmother’s words now like a taste. Nafina Hagop Chilinguirian, born Shekerlemedjian, remarried in the United States, in New Jersey, Aroosian. My grandmother at twenty-five. My husband [...] feeble and indisposed, being subjected to such conditions, and seeing our relatives killed inhumanely, he could not support the life.<sup>359</sup>

He then merges the two perspectives into one by seamlessly transitioning from an italicized quote to regular font and adopting the plural form: ‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: Then the choreg swelled into rings and braids and the black seeds seemed like they would burst. So for thirty two days we were obliged to wander through mountains and valleys.’<sup>360</sup>

This structural strategy allows Balakian to enter into his grandmother’s memories and relive her experiences. The interjection of his own thoughts throughout such documents also depicts Balakian’s struggle to make sense of how this catastrophic moment in history fits into his life and shapes his personal and cultural identity. In doing so, it provides contemporary readers with an opportunity to see the enduring effects of past traumas as well as to insert their own responses to the events described in the text by substituting the sections in which Balakian reflects on his grandmother’s experiences with their own reflections. Readers can thus symbolically place themselves into the text alongside Balakian and his grandmother, making *Black Dog of Fate* a space

wherein Armenians in the Diaspora can form a community based on a shared tragic past.

Nancy Agabian's memoir, *Me as her again*, also illustrates a 'key theme in the growing literature on being multiracial.'<sup>361</sup> Agabian feels alienated from other Armenians because she is faced with a language barrier. She only knows a few phrases in her mother tongue, and so is criticized by other Armenians, which drives her to reject her ethnic identity. Still, Agabian learns through her grandmother, much like Balakian, that her Armenianness is inescapable. She admits:

Clearly, I was a complete failure at being Armenian. Though I could reject my identity by making fun of it and by refusing to learn the language, and I could embrace the white world by following all the rules and excelling at American school, I would still look different to everyone in Walpole, I would still have the label of my last name, and I would still come to learn that my grandmother's stories were never acknowledged'.<sup>362</sup>

In many ways, her grandmother's painful past becomes the springboard for Agabian's 'coming of age.'

A powerful chapter in Agabian's life, and one that contributes to her inclusion in collective identity, is her visit to her grandmother's birthplace in Turkey. Agabian is overcome with intense emotion as she stands on the ancient grounds where her grandmother was born and where she saw members of her family perish. She writes, 'All I wanted was to have my moment with the dirt, to feel its properties, to be joined with my heritage through its minerals.'<sup>363</sup> The visit to Turkey brings Agabian closer to her grandmother and she begins to study the history of her family and the Armenian Genocide more deeply. After reading *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* by Donald and Lorna Miller, Agabian asserts, 'my grandmother's experience became less singular and I suddenly realized the immensity of the Genocide.'<sup>364</sup> Despite the fact that Agabian is generations removed from the massacres, she still calls herself a

‘witness.’ Now, she says, ‘it was time for me to mourn [...] in lineage and empathy.’<sup>365</sup> The readers of the memoir, too, become a part of the plurality of the experience simply by being silent witnesses.

In the memoir, Agabian remembers and repeats her grandmother’s tragic past as a victim of the Armenian Genocide through her works as a performance artist. This confirms her own place among the communal world of Armenians and Americans. Such repetitions are not only an effective tool for the artist in terms of self-discovery, but they also give audiences an opportunity to ‘remember’ as well. Consequently, the need to ‘repeat the tragedy’ by those who did not experience them firsthand is a necessary part in the search for personal and cultural identity. Hence, *Me as her again* is one of Agabian’s artistic expressions produced for the purpose of self-confirmation: ‘When we consciously reconstruct [a traumatic experience], we reconfirm who we are; thus, we can argue that regardless of the intent of the creator, these references to the trauma form a collective national memory for a dispersed and disparate community.’<sup>366</sup> Agabian, then, not only helps diasporic readers connect with their cultural past, but she herself confirms her participation in her collective as well as artistic and individual identity.

Films serve as another medium in which references to the Genocide and ensuing themes of emigration, assimilation, and the search for identity unify the Diaspora. *Ararat*, written and directed by Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Atom Egoyan in 2002, is one example. Within it, various modes of public discourse that engage these themes, such as art, literature and film, are represented. *Ararat* follows numerous characters, many of who are members of the Diaspora, and portrays the different ways in which they try to preserve the memory of the Genocide. This common struggle connects all the characters to one another. The first scene shows Arshile Gorky, a celebrated artist and genocide survivor, working on his famous painting in New York City called ‘The Artist and his Mother.’ The painting is based on a photograph of Gorky and his mother taken shortly before they escaped from Turkish invasion. She died of starvation soon

after. Gorky captures his lifelong grief over this loss in the painting. Recurring scenes of Gorky working on 'The Artist and his Mother' throughout the film symbolize the death of all Armenians during those years, and the wound that the massacres left on subsequent generations.

The character Ani, for example, is a third-generation Armenian-Canadian who studies and lectures about Gorky's works and has recently published a book about his life. 'The Artist and his Mother,' she insists, is 'a repository of our history. It's a sacred code that explains who we are and how and why we got here.'<sup>367</sup> In other words, its theme of loss transcends time as it continues to inform the consciousness of modern-day Armenians. Her research becomes a valuable source for Edward, a director who has always dreamt of making a film about his mother's experiences during the Genocide so 'her story won't die.' Ani and Edward's collaborative project has a profound effect on Ani's son, Raffi. Raffi's father was a freedom fighter for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, a highly political and nationalistic organization. When Raffi was a young boy, his father was killed while trying to assassinate a Turkish diplomat. As a child, and even into early adulthood, Raffi could not understand what would drive a father to sacrifice his own life and give up his family. As a result, he had very conflicted feelings about his national origins for most of his life. As Raffi observes the making of Edward's film, however, his hitherto confused sense of cultural identity begins to strengthen.

In an attempt to discover the purpose behind his father's actions, Raffi visits an historic city in Ottoman Armenia that was destroyed during the Genocide. Seeing the ruins not only helps him understand and come to terms with his father's motives, but also causes him to reach an understanding of Gorky's work that is similar to his mother's conclusions. He, too, concludes that 'The Artist and His Mother' is a repository of history and that it helps bridge the gap between the current Diaspora and the tragic loss of their ancestors. 'This is the origin,' Raffi says, 'from the memory of this place, to the photograph, to the

sketch, to the painting.’ The memories that Gorky has encapsulated in this painting continue to be reiterated in different forms generations later by people like Ani and Edward, who strive to enlighten others about Armenia’s calamitous past. Although their primary goal may not be the unification of a dispersed community, their work could ultimately reach this end. Raffi, for instance, experiences a life changing transformation upon witnessing these different art forms dedicated to a common theme. He is a representation of the members of the Diaspora, who, although generations removed from the actual events of 1915, feel its lasting effects as a result of exposure to continued references to the Genocide in contemporary cultural productions.

Modern Armenian diasporic texts aim to link Armenian communities scattered across the globe through a shared national consciousness founded on a common tragic past. Vahe Oshagan captures this idea in his article ‘Literature of the Armenian Diaspora,’ in which he writes:

Modern writing in the diaspora reflects the image of the Armenian people: highly diverse, subject to a world of influences and change, [and] preoccupied with problems of survival and identity. That is the reason why Armenian writers function within limitations that are unknown to most people. One is the obligation to defend national institutions and traditions; another is the duty to have a strong commitment toward national ideals in order to ensure the survival of Armenian literature and, consequently, their own survival as well.<sup>368</sup>

One of their obligations, he concludes, is ‘to defend national institutions and traditions,’ and another ‘is the duty to have a strong commitment toward national ideals in order to ensure the survival of Armenian literature and, consequently, their own survival as well.’<sup>369</sup>

In a similar vein, scholar Rubina Perroomian claims in ‘New Directions in Literary Responses to the Armenian Genocide’ that references to the Genocide in literature and other mediums of expression stand ‘as a monument to the Armenian aspiration to revived nationhood’ by linking history to public discourse.<sup>370</sup> This

places 'the Armenian Genocide within the ongoing saga of a living people,' she continues, 'to try to reconcile the tragedy and ensure national survival and evolution.'<sup>371</sup> Thus, invoking history is essential to diasporan artists' shared goal of 'reviving' a sense of Armenian trans-nationhood despite the fact that they are already citizens of host cultures. More importantly, their identification with a past tragedy and attempt toward national revival suggests that contemporary Armenians have adopted their ancestors' trauma and victimization and, as a result, taken on the role of 'survivors' themselves. As 'survivor' artists openly address the horrors of 1915 through their productions, they point toward a human 'instinct to rebuild the web of meanings with the same quiet determination' as a spider that 'repairs the threads that winds and weather have torn'.<sup>372</sup>





## **14. RE-IMAGING THE CONCEPT OF BORDER**

Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz (UACM Ciudad de Mexico)

The idea behind the configuration of such a model based on comparative studies lies in the possibility of isolating a formal aesthetics in the border narratives (taking into account the discourses as well as narratives on the social and literary subjects) bringing to the front the ‘social imaginary’ of people on both sides of the border.<sup>373</sup> From a cultural point of view and its relevant concepts (migration, minority, identity, representation, etc.), basing my research principally on power relationships (dominion and exclusion), other aspects of the relationship between borders subjects also come to light.

My research hypothesis consists of de-constructing the dichotomies which are integral to the concept of borders and which has inhibited research and solutions which could clarify the real needs of subjects who cohabit border regions. I have placed an epistemological emphasis on the border relationship within/ and from the specific realities of the subjects living at borders.<sup>374</sup>

In order to proceed I need to de-construct five cultural phenomena (they are not exclusive) which are the result of a ‘premature normative state’. The term belongs to Seyla Benhabib and it is defined as ‘the expedited reiteration of group identities, the failure to question cultural identities and the omission of these in

the historical and sociological literature dominated by the constructivist methodology'.<sup>375</sup> This theme also applies to the conformation of the cultural identity of the subjects who inhabit the US-Mexican border. The cultural phenomena I am interested in analyzing consist of:

1. the process of conformation of a cultural identity of the people who inhabit the border (Mexicans from the northern states; migrants; Chicanos; Mexican-Americans)
2. the way they represent themselves (particularly in literature)
3. the type of socio cultural and power relationships which they establish on both sides
4. the language they use in order to refer to themselves and the other
5. the conformation of sub cultures which are seen on the political borders (for example, on the US Mexican border we can distinguish a *maquila* subculture).<sup>376</sup>

Taking into account these elements I have divided this paper into three parts: the first is about the socio cultural relationships and power relations, which are established at the border. The second deals with the self representation, in the literature, of the border inhabitants. The third deals with de-constructing the interdiction of language at the border, not only based on literature but also on the cultural identity of the border subjects.

How does the process of becoming a border subject imprint itself in the creation of a literary subject? Etymologically the word 'subject' comes from *subjectus (subjicere)* which implies submission, subordination, and subjection; a subject then responds to the authority of the one who names him as such and his actions implicate subordination. Nonetheless this definition of a subject is lacking since, as seen in the actions of the Mexican-Americans, subordination is a process or state which can be reversed.<sup>377</sup> The Mexican-American subject is aware of his subordinate role *vis à vis* the American community and the pressure it exerts on him to acculturate; but he also fights it through different processes of integration-

adaptation which include the juxtaposition of two cultures (the Mexican and the American). The same happens with trans-border subjects: they are part of a Mexican culture but as border citizens of a border region they are subjects that must also create for themselves another culture or subculture.<sup>378</sup> The border subject moves in the realm of the power that subordinates him and allows him in return certain margins for actions and autonomy in order to construct a conscious 'functional dependency' to that power.

This was prevalent in the passive resistance which the Mexican migrants exhibited towards the American community during the middle of the past century. This changed when the Chicano Movement came into force and the Mexican-American community gained presence and influenced political decisions. Today this type of subordination has been reverted and the Mexican-American community is empowered and has become a true political force.<sup>379</sup>

The Mexican-American subjects and the trans-border subjects, like many other subjects in history, have found in literacy a way of giving meaning to existence because it allows them to de-construct decolonial, macho, Eurocentric discourse. It is also a way to self expression and a way to be heard. Nonetheless, for centuries, the subject was only a concept imported from other disciplines like philosophy or psychology; in some cases the concept of a subject had only the status of the 'inspired', 'genius', 'original' or 'creator of a work of art'.

During the sixties some thinkers, like Lacan or Foucault, basing their theories on Freud or Heidegger, begin to conceptualize the subject as 'a systematic component of literary theory',<sup>380</sup> focusing on the corporal subject, the receptor of worldly sensations, the body that motivates literacy and cultural activity. The subject, since then, acquired the characteristic of mediator and translator of reality through literature since 'reflection and sublimation initiate within and by the dynamics that occurs between the subject and the world'.<sup>381</sup> That is, the social subject is immersed in various social networks and narrative networks (family discourses, social imaginary discourses) through which he

represents his culture.

One of these networks, specifically, is literature. The literary subject (call him a writer or story teller or actant) also moves within the power relations, which constitute and subordinates him. The writer is subordinated to the power of the discourse that constitutes him; the storyteller is constituted by the point of view of the writer and the actant by the plot's actions. In any of these instances the subject 'becomes a sign, in a realm where other signs appear – and make themselves felt'.<sup>382</sup> In literature the subject plays the role of the 'begetter of reality' by transmitting messages whose content is generally idiosyncratic because the subject struggles with what is real and what is not. For the literary subject, then, 'reality is not a dialogue' since reality as such cannot be transcribed, so he proceeds to transform it into a discourse. A discourse that on one side constitutes the subject as social being and, because of the form it takes, it also differentiates him. He is a subject that is cause and effect at the same time. The discourse of the literary subject is known as a narrative since it functions as 'a complex language device which gives form to narratives, discourses and dialogues', with indications to the social or literary role of the subject within his community.<sup>383</sup>

To distinguish between the context and theme chosen by the subject in the literary work it is indispensable that we isolate it as a border literature and make a comparative analysis between Chicano literature and border literature. The context of the subject consists of the subject as 'author-creator' who composes an 'axiological coherent universe which is referable to a subjective context in cognitive expansion'.<sup>384</sup> The context of the Mexican-American subject aims at an original voice within the US community while the context of the trans-border subject is his confrontation with the changes in urban and production settings which assail him.

The theme of the subject consists of his manner of mediating and manipulating 'the esthetic, cultural and literary codes' as well his search for self-identity (of his self and his intimacies as well as his subconscious), a process that

involves both the Mexican-American and the trans-border subjects. The Mexican-American subject construes his identity based on multiple socio cultural elements and it is indistinguishable from the rhetoric of the self *vis à vis* the other. The trans-border subject, with a flexible and adaptable identity, evolves in an open space thanks to multiple factors which he must deal with on a daily basis. They transgress limits to the self and also the genre which norm these narratives. In consequence, the idea of literature as a unitary system is relative to the literary subject because 'there is no poetry nor novel, only a discourse of the subject in the novel or the poem; as such 'literature is always 'in the making under the influence of the subject whose discourse is remade each time'.<sup>385</sup>

The representation of the subjects, which inhabit the border, is the product of a dominant discourse or is it the result of a border transgression? Avoiding being a relativist, the answer depends on how it is analyzed. For example, when dealing specifically with literature we cannot talk about border literature in general since we must define if we are referring to literature from the southern states of the US (Chicano Literature) or literature produced in the northern states of Mexico. Each has to be analyzed separately and only then can we state that Chicano literature is the result of a dominant discourse while trans-border literature is the product of border transgressions.

Chicano literature at the border status of the US is known as 'border literature or border writing', following Socorro Tabuenca, since 'the majority of the time it refers more to concepts than to a geographic region'.<sup>386</sup> This is literature created mainly by Chicano writers which have caused substantial changes in the social articulation of their communities within US society. It is part of an effort to preserve their origins and denounce xenophobic attitudes, creating paths towards respect and equality. On the other side, the border literature came into existence around the seventies in border cities like Tijuana, Mexicali and Ciudad Juárez. Border literature contributed to the cultural conformation of the north and testifies to the historical development of the region (there is a direct

relation between the work of the artist and the region he lives in – not necessarily his birthplace). In this sense the writer re-invents space and region and ‘privileges the recreation of daily life without turning into genre writing of past times’.<sup>387</sup>

In order to reach this conclusion I took into consideration several variables. For the Chicano literature I took into consideration those factors which are related to the construction of the Chicano subject and the psycho social and linguistic factors which impact the way they represent themselves to others. A representation can be theatrical because the Chicano subject is perceived through insults, violence and oppression by the dominant culture.<sup>388</sup> On the other hand the trans-border subject (the subject who lives in the north of Mexico and crosses the border constantly for work, study or shopping) does not incur in the identity process with such complexity. The variables, which I analyze in the border writing, refer mainly to the urban phenomena, the characteristics of liminal space, the configuration of the social role of women and their body as an active agent in the economy.

It is not an accident that Chicano literature is cemented on an ideological realm since in this manner an identity can be construed slowly, through daily practices in which the Chicanos engage. The performance of this identity, as seen in the analysis of the texts, systematically recur to the use of remembrances, mythic places, inherited Mexican traditions and customs which create an ideological discourse which singles them out as a minority community within US society.

On the other side, even if the northern border states of Mexico can also be seen also as minority communities due to the highly centralized Mexico society, the realm of literature refers more to the urban setting. From this emphasis the literary subject can denounce the abnormal economic development of the border, and its social consequences; the performance of this discourse has no nostalgia for a lost paradise but on the contrary denounces the inhuman living conditions in which many migrants find themselves when they leave their place of origin

looking for their share of the 'American dream'. Many get stuck at the border, finding jobs at *maquilas*, bars, whorehouses, restaurants and other transient places.

It is a mistake to make any effort to try and homologize differences between neighbouring subjects and their distinct aesthetics because these are subjects with different needs for cultural expressions. The differences between Chicano literature and border literature are considerable and they refer not only to the way they approach their work, its objectives and goals but also to the different cosmologies of the writers. I have also avoided judgmental references on border literature in general and only aim at deconstructing separately Chicano and border literature in order to point out what makes them original, in the realm of writing, in the narrative style and in the characters depicted.

The Chicano writers expound an ideological discourse with which they attempt to make themselves heard and some of them build bridges between cultures with the intention of not losing genre ties with their Mexican heritage. They are full of voices which verbalize stories of remembrances full of chromatic images.

On the other hand the border writers have made denunciations a form of discourse and in the majority of cases, ironically, their aim is to put emphasis in the ungovernable situation, which constitutes living at the border; at the same time they construe an original culture distancing themselves from the centre. In this way the border writers are beginning to have their own voice, different from the centre and with a distinct view of border life. The border is not seen as a hostile place where cartel drug lords (*narcos*) reign free but a place full of possibilities for the ones who are able to see it through literary or artistic expressions.

The Chicano writer's texts as well as the border writers, stylistically, are full of rhetoric, which exhibit the sensation of a close interaction with textures, tastes, colour and images. They differ only in the way they approach it: the

Chicanos writers cement their representations with critical theoretical posturing, like feminism, minority and postcolonial rhetoric, making blatant their political positioning not only *vis à vis* Academia but also before the whole literary community of the United States. Even if it is true that Chicano writers live at the margins of their self identity because they have found that this non-cultural self definition is complacent to their surroundings it is also true that this lack of self identity is a powerful rhetorical tool that allows them to construe an original discourse, charged with symbolic elements which open doors towards their Mexican origins, camouflaged as genre writing, and from there they develop their ideologies. This allows the Chicano writers an identity that gives their lives meaning while they search for their lost Mexican identity and their mother tongue which in some cases is long forgotten. Their literature is not as fluid as the border writer's because they are more concerned in construing an anti racist or feminist discourse which impedes the development of an original style.

On the other hand the border literature recreates the daily arbitrariness of recently created urban centres that allows the writers to consolidate an ironic discourse that transcends Mexican reality. This literature also has the impact of modern critical theory, especially of feminist ideology, but it does not affect the interpretative assertiveness of their work because it usually is just the personal leanings of the writer and not a discourse that speaks of the social movement of a minority community. Perhaps the Achilles heel in the border literature is the postmodernism of the style. In the attempt to break borders, including literary borders, the writers explore unusual paths for the common reader and he also loses himself in the intersections within the dialogues; or when he juxtaposes actions within their narrative. The original path is weakened in this manner and sometimes a lack of rationality and sense is evident when certain rhetorical formulas or typography are introduced.

With respect to the psychological make-up of the characters the Chicano writers are meticulous in their exaggeration due to their need to construe them as



subjects with their own voice and vote within a society that has always insulted or exploited them. This leads them to reconstruct their indigenous Mexican origins; also to certain myths and traditions that are not always genuine but have become part of their idiosyncrasies and which allow them to become an analogous community within US society.

They also recreate the language, as with the creation of *spanGLISH*, which allows for the identification between language and political posturing. This language is also existent among border writers and it is a tool of subversion of their reality but with a different intent: it is more a reflection of uses and customs of a people accustomed to daily crossing at the borders.

The characters are also very distinct in the work of border writers. They are non complacent with stereotypes; they aim to represent a post modern society, non politically correct characterizations, characters that are more comfortable in a post national setting. They distance themselves from genre writing and in this sense the urban sprawl is not only the scenery for the narrative but, as is the case with the poetry of Caballero, the scenery is another character in the narrative and it intervenes in the recreation of the postmodernism of space and time in which the writers find themselves.

It is impossible to speak of border literature in generalities. Different variables must be taken into account, such that privilege the historical, social or cultural circumstances because we are referring to two neighbouring literatures that share some characteristics (like language, places or traditions) but speak of distinct political, cultural and stylistic identities.

The importance of doing research based on this stylistic distinction between Chicano and border literature lies in the questioning – as I mentioned at the onset of this paper – of certain colonial practices, which annul artistic expressions and ideologies existent in minority communities. It brings forth also a new debate on the way we approach the borders as well as questioning our preconceptions. In this manner we can study complex social reconfigurations,

identity issues and representation of the social imaginary in which the subjects are presently immersed. It also pertains to the problematic of migrations which afflict many countries which have not been able to cope with dominant practices in their communities because they continue to privilege the intervention of the State-Nation, individual and national identity issues instead of assuming the responsibility of committing to mechanism (political, economic, social and educational) which give precedence to intercultural relations; mechanisms that do not turn differences into exclusions but foment communion.

In what language do we write history when there is no authorized mother tongue? In order to address this question I refer to Derrida's experience when he mentions his own mother tongue (French) and the relation to other languages during his infancy, especially with Berber or Arabic:

The optional study of Arabic remained, of course. We knew it was allowed, which meant anything but encouraged. The authority of National Education (of 'public education') proposed it for the same reason, at the same time, and in the same form as the study of any foreign language in Algeria! As if we were being told – and that, in the end, is what we were being told: 'Let's see, Latin is required for everyone in sixth grade, of course, not to speak of French, but do you, in addition, want to learn English, or Arabic, or Spanish, or German?' It seems that Berber was never included.<sup>389</sup>

The same situation can be found at the US-Mexican Border, especially within the Mexican-American community (or Chicanos) where Spanish is spoken at home and English outside (no other languages). Spanish is an optional language or 'authorized' today even though in the 1950s it was not permitted in American schools. However, this situation is different with the Northern Mexican community, where this phenomenon is non-existent, although emphasis is placed in learning English as a second language (or first language).<sup>390</sup> In this sense, deconstructing the power of language allows me to analyze the 'interdictions of language' which result from racism, gender, class and ethnic differences, as well

as others.<sup>391</sup>

As Derrida mentions: ‘The interdiction is not negative, it does not incite simply to loss’ (Derrida, 31), so we must deconstruct the power of interdiction (even if this sounds tautological) in the formation of the identity of subjects who live at the border (and its repercussions on both sides). As well as the social relations, which are established between communities: ‘when access to a language is forbidden, nothing – no gesture, no act – is forbidden. One forbids access to speech [*au dire*], that is all, a certain kind of speech. But that is precisely the fundamental interdiction, the absolute interdiction, the interdiction of diction and speech’ (Derrida, 32).

Following this reasoning I will refer to the *Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin* (1998) because through the deconstruction of some premises it becomes plausible to carry out a similar exercise with the maternal tongue of the Mexican-Americans and the Northern Mexicans (wherever they are) in order to reach some consensus about the identity of the other, that are represented in their narratives. The premises that I have selected for this analysis are:

1. ‘Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine.’ (Derrida, 2)
2. We only speak one language – or rather one idiom only.  
We never speak only one language – or rather there is no pure idiom.  
(Derrida, 8)
3. We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically, always for the other, from the other, kept by the other. Coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other. (Derrida, 40)

In the first case, ‘Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine,’ Derrida explains that we can be wrong in thinking that it lacks logic; even though it may be a ‘performative contradiction’. It can sound that way if it is taken out of context; if we omit a particular geographical location and give no socio-political and historical factors for the integration-adaptation process of a community *vis à*

*vis* the other. As is the case at the southern border of the US, where different and diverse subjects interact, and where a policy of acculturation imposed by the dominant culture takes place. In this case we can ascertain that there is only one language and that it is not the mother tongue, it is not mine because the policies of the American State have inhibited the development of the traditions and native language of the communities which are part of the border population (specifically the Mexican-American community). Those policies promote a homogenous and mono cultural discourse.

As for the second premise, we only speak one language – or rather one idiom only. We never speak only one language – or rather there is no pure idiom, Derrida makes no attempt to define language, idiom or dialect but rather insists that there must be certain ‘internal and structural features’ that distinguish one from the other. As examples we can take some phenomena ‘that blur these boundaries, cross them, and make their historical artifice appear, also their violence, meaning the relations of force that are concentrated there and actually capitalize themselves there interminably’ (Derrida, 9).

Phenomena which are defined by external criteria (quantitative phenomena such as demographics, history, border conformation) as well as by ‘political-symbolic’ criteria (legitimacy, authority, dominion of one language over the other) which we can observe in the southern states of the US where the dominant language is English (imposed by public policies and its commercial, technological and scientific use); while the spoken language of the majority is Spanish which points to the fact that in border situations no one language exists and least of all in any pure form.

The phenomena I have referred to are insufficient to understand the relationship between Mexico and the US, mainly because Mexico was never colonized by the US, as was Derrida’s Algeria. But we can start with these general premises in order to research into the interdiction of the language of Mexican-Americans and the Northern Mexican population.

Following Derrida's arguments, he reaches a crucial point when dealing with the identity issue (or the subverted identity issue) when he asks what is a Franco-Maghrebian? What does Franco-Maghrebian mean? Who is a Franco-Maghrebian? These are essential questions in order to define what has more weight in the conformation of his identity, as Derrida affirms: 'To be a Franco-Maghrebian, one 'like myself', is not, not particularly, and particularly not, a surfeit or richness of identities, attributes, or names. In the first place, it would rather betray a *disorder of identity* [*trouble d'identité*].' (Derrida, 14)

The same questions can be applied to the Mexican-American. These questions would seem irrelevant if we consider the concept of citizenship, as Derrida states, because 'As we know, citizenship does not define a cultural, linguistic, or, in general, historical participation. It does not cover all these modes of belonging. But it is not some superficial or super structural predicate floating on the surface of experience.' (Derrida, 14-15)

If we apply the concept of Mexican-American citizen the situation changes and so does the question: Does the Mexican-American want to be more Mexican or more American? Especially when one of these citizenships endangers the other, as is the case when Mexicans voluntarily adopt US citizenship. The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty of 1848<sup>392</sup> set the rules for new policies between Mexico and the US after the invasion of Mexican territory in 1846, which followed by the secession war of Texas in 1836. Afterwards, Texas became an independent state and the Rio Bravo became the aquatic border between the two countries.

Nonetheless the people living in these territories were not legally recognized until 1889 when the International Commission on the Border was constituted.<sup>393</sup> After 1889 the Mexicans who lived in this territory were no longer independent citizens but neo-colonized citizens under American domination.

I will now present a literature example that refers to this point: 'Mericans' a story from Sandra Cisneros, a Chicana writer, consists of a logical-description

story that refers to the *disorder of identity* that a Mexican-American girl experiences while visiting the Basilica of Guadalupe, which is an important church in Mexico City, with her grandma and her two brothers. At the end of the story, meanwhile Micaela-Michele is waiting outside the church for her grandma to finish her prides, a lady approaches Junior, one of her brothers, and asks him ‘in a Spanish too big for her mouth’ if she can take a picture of him – ‘Por favor’ says the lady. ‘¿Un foto?’ pointing to her camera – because she thinks that Junior is a Mexican-indigenous child. And she does not realize that they speak English, so when she hears them speak, she surprisingly affirms:

‘But you speak English!’  
 ‘Yeah’ my brother says, ‘we’re Mericans.’  
 We’re Mericans, we’re Mericans, and inside the awful grandmother prays.<sup>394</sup>

According to this, Derrida mentions that there are a great many communities or groups of people who have to give up one citizenship in order to adapt to a new one; but research has not delved into the situation of people who do not adopt voluntarily a new citizenship but are abruptly denied the choice as it happened with the Mexican community at the border at the end of the nineteenth century:

No, I am speaking of a ‘community’ group (a ‘mass’ assembling together tens or hundreds of thousands persons), a supposedly ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ group that finds itself one day deprived, as a group, of its citizenship by a state that, with the brutality of a unilateral decision, withdraws it without asking for their opinion, and without the said group gaining back any other citizenship. No other. (Derrida, 15)

Northern Mexican population does not imply citizenship, nor native language or idiom either. In this sense it points to a social and cultural situation were ‘depropriation’ of the language is the case and the identity issue is not based on natural rights or rights to the land. These subjects, unlike the Mexican-Americans, have a specific origin and citizenship; they come from different states in Mexico

and are adapted to the realities of a global world. This phenomenon of depropriation of the language allows us 'to analyze the historical phenomena, above all, the reconstitution of what these phantasms managed to motivate: 'nationalist' aggressions (which are always more or less 'naturalist') or monoculturalist homogeneity.' (Derrida, 64)

The tip of the iceberg of the interdiction of the language at the US-Mexican border is possibly the creation of a third language, the one known as *Spanglish*. This third language is the result of the fusion of two cultures and it is rapidly becoming institutionalized and its symbols demand philosophical, aesthetic and cultural translations. These translations entail the interchange, discarding and adopting, of cultural elements. When Spanish is exchanged for English, certain words in Spanish are kept and incorporated; a more expressive and functional language is the result. In the worst case scenario *Spanglish* could point to the colonization of one language at the expense of the other. Or vice-versa.

This brings us to Derrida's third premise: 'We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically, always for the other, from the other, kept by the other. Coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other.' Especially when we refer to the relation between the Mexican-American and Northern Mexican community.

Contrary to popular views *Spanglish* is not the instrument of a passive rebellion; it is neither a language nor a way of preserving origins. Its meanings and symbols have no specific origin and are not immutable. *Spanglish*, in the sense of a language of representation and action comes into view or disappears, as it is needed. However this action needs translation simply because it was created at the border. Not just a literal translation, but also one that includes all customs, behaviours and narratives that take place there.

For example, in the story 'Sabaditos en la Noche' ('Little Saturday Nights') from Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, a Mexican northeast border writer, the

protagonist of the story, who is a non-citizen, with no name and no past, is standing at the corner of one of Tijuana's streets watching the time pass and asking himself why does there have to be just one language, one language to teach others, and why does it have to be English:

Estoy en mi trabajo, carnal, en la faquin escuela donde daba las faquin clasecitas a los niños enfadosos del barrio, ganándome el pan de cada día, enseñándoles el faquin inglés porque se supone que solo el faquin inglés pueden hablar en mi país de mierda, land-of-da-faquin-fri. Nada de español, ¿ves?, nada que se le parezca. Por eso he decidido, que de hoy en adelante, mi lengua será el spanich, ¿qué te parece? El spánich and ay guont spik enithing els.<sup>395</sup>

As I have tried to argue, research at the border brings forth a new debate on theories and paradigms. On a specific geographical setting such as the border different theories interplay. It is important to set precedence on research done so far at the US Mexican border so we can juxtapose different assessments and disciplines in order to understand present reality as well as deconstruct the dominant discourse; we can avoid, in this manner, historical racism or the advancement of a homogeneous mono cultural process at the border. In this sense it is important to rethink the concept of borders so as to speak of our limitations and from here restructure the notions that have permeated contemporary research into border (whatever these may be). From this perspective it is important to develop new models and concepts so that they can, on one side, guide future actions and policies towards the border population and, on the other, allow us an epistemological approach within and from the border and into their own process of cultural and identity conformation.



## **15. GEOGRAPHIES OF SEX, WORK AND MIGRATION: URSULA BIEMANN'S *REMOTE SENSING* AND THE POLITICS OF GENDER**

Roxana Galusca (The University of Chicago)

'How can I dislocate and recontextualize a much belaboured question such as the marketability of women and the objectification of female sexuality? How can a video, rather than simply arguing against capitalism and affirming rigid gender identities, reflect and produce the expansion of the very space in which we write and speak of the feminine?'

(Ursula Biemann, 'Remotedly Sensed: A Topography of the Global Sex Trade')

The citation that opens this essay comes from the Swiss film director and video artist Ursula Biemann. Biemann's work grapples with questions of gender, sexuality, and migration in the twenty-first century, asking uneasy questions and theorizing the commodification of women's bodies in neoliberal capitalism. The above quote is also central to Biemann's video work *Remote Sensing* (2001), an artistic video about the traffic of women into the sex industry. Distributed by Women Make Movies, *Remote Sensing* tackles the traffic of women into the sex industry in an attempt to query penal approaches to women's migration and to expose sexualized market exchanges in late capitalism. The film unfolds as a series of visual and discursive juxtapositions: satellite images of the earth are contrasted with daily routes of migration; biometrical data are placed side by side

with women's intimate stories of migration; while militarized border crossings throw into relief informal sex markets. The official topography of migration unfolds alongside alternative rhizome-like illicit networks of travelling.

The viewer is encouraged to reassess the disciplinary and regulatory, indeed biopolitical, impulse behind the 'technological geography' of border control: the positivist measuring of routes, satellite images, biometrics at the border, monitored borders and circuits of migration. *Remote Sensing* attempts to complement satellite measurements with stories of sex workers' daily experiences, remote sensing with the eventfulness of women's migration. Biometrics challenged by the messiness of bodies that move, love, hurt, make and sell sex; remote sensing confronted with the full and unpredictable eventfulness of being in motion. How can a technological geography be complemented with multiple counter-geographies,' Ursula Biemann asks, counter-geographies 'that will map a gendered and possibly conflicting view of the world that can account for migration and cross-border circuits, illegal and illicit networks, alternative circuits of survival, where women have emerged as key actors?' The film proceeds to answer this question but it falls short of offering a response and, at the end, the filmmaker, as if frustrated with the technological limitations of film-production itself, brings us back full circle to the same rhetorical question. Can there possibly be an approach to women's migration that supersedes the empiricist and biomedical grid at the border? Are there alternative modes of signification that could in turn open up gendered subject-forms to a plurality of meanings and capture the gray areas that define women's migrational experiences?

This chapter begins with these questions in order to rethink women's migration for sex work in neoliberal capitalism as it has been theorized in the scholarship on human trafficking. More specifically, I aim to interrogate the ways in which a liberal concept of gender becomes central to current accounts of sex work to the extent that sex workers' mobility across borders is rendered socially

and politically illegible outside the framework of sexual violence. I offer a close reading of Biemann's *Remote Sensing* to show how her film serves as a model for feminist approaches to the traffic in women, being as it is one of the few films that moves away from lurid and hackneyed images of captivity. At the same time, however, Biemann's approach to sex work re-inscribes migrant women's sexuality into a discourse of violence, with no attention to women's own migrational experiences. This view of migrant sex work as always already violent rests, I contend, on simplified and rigid analysis of power and gender, whereby a gender-based paradigm is applied squarely on women's existence and expected to make comprehensible daily experiences. In addition, the emphasis on the violence of migrant sex work conveniently leaves out the equally harmful exploitation of women in other neoliberal capitalist sectors.

To clarify, my intention here is not to deny that violence may be part of women's sex work migration. Nor do I intend to move away from a gender-based analysis of migration. Rather, in the tradition of feminist women of colour such as Andrea Smith, Chandra Mohanty, and Neferti Tadiar, I insist on gendered embodiments as being necessarily contingent on constructs of race, sexuality, and nationality. Moreover, rather than a fixed analytical category, gender is the effect of a process of normalization and, as any norm, gender is 'always and only tenuously embodied by any particular social actor.'<sup>396</sup> This essay draws attention to those tenuous embodiments that almost always fall off the analytical radar in scholarship of sex work migration. Thus, instead of asking how gender makes possible women's exploitation in the sex industry, I want to pose the question differently: what is it that makes migrant women legible in one space of economic production, with regard to some means and relations of production, such as service and domestic work or maquila work? In these spaces of capitalist production, migrant women are seen as legitimate and autonomous subjects of labour rightly engaged in economic migration. Yet what is it that renders women, illegible, illicit, and irredeemable in a space like the red light district, a space that

is perceived to function underground, on the dark side of a seemingly equitable economy of capitalist production? Such a question can prompt us to re-consider sex work as part of a continuum of occupations in which a growing number of migrant women engage in neoliberal capitalism. This approach would not ignore the violence of trafficking. Rather, such an analysis would conceive sex trafficking in terms of labour exploitation and not in the context of sexual violence.

*Remote Sensing* begins with a panorama of the earth seen through satellite imaging. Shades of brown, white and green configure the earth digitally, the panoramic view zooming in and out of focus. The satellite image constitutes the earth as a distant object of knowledge and analysis, while the film confronts its viewers with the prospect of their own existence as objects of technological scrutiny and examination. This is a view from above. Yet, this time, it is not the mystic eye but the machine-eye of the satellite that takes migrant women as objects of knowledge and control. Moreover, this machine-like point of view, the film seems to imply, is made possible by neoliberal capitalist modes of production that have led to increasing poverty rates and market-driven mass migration. Neoliberal capitalism, the film shows, destabilizes economies, it thrives on wars, and in the process it displaces women, pushing them into risky means of migration and sexualizing their labour. As Biemann explains, ‘The interpenetration of the industrial market and the sexual market is not an interesting side effect, it is a structural part of global capitalism. One of the most striking, and maybe most disturbing, insights I gained on the border is that international labour in the South is not only feminized but also sexualized. The female workers are literally interpellated in their sexuality. For many women, this is the beginning of a long and sensitive negotiation of survival.’<sup>397</sup> The over encompassing view at the beginning of Biemann’s film might be said, then, to be that of Capital itself, and this is far from a metaphor. Indeed, it is as if Biemann

invites her readers to contemplate migrant women's objectification at the hands of neoliberal capitalism and the patriarchal forms of control that sustain capitalism, as if it invites us, as viewers, to inhabit, if only for a moment, the viewpoint of Capital. But, just as we are being comfortably lulled into the voyeuristic fascination of our own neo-capitalist post-human planetary existence, Biemann ushers in stories of migration, accounts of lives entangled in the market-driven global economy of the twenty-first century.

If migration patterns and circuits are fascinating in their neat progression and directionality when viewed from the point of view of the satellite-machine, they cannot but puzzle us when followed close-up on the ground. And Biemann proceeds to confound us by superimposing on satellite pictures day-to-day geographies of dispersal and survival. She works along and across three spatial and temporal axes: satellite recordings of the earth, border documentation such as passports and biometrical data, and stories/testimonials of sex work and migration. These three dimensions crisscross and short-circuit one another as the filmmaker takes us from the Philippines, India, and Nigeria to the famous highway E55 that divides the Czech-German border, home to a large number of Eastern European sex workers; as well as from Vietnam and China to the U.S.-Mexico border. All this time, we find out about women migrating to Hong Kong to work in strip clubs, Filipinas working on U.S. military bases, Vietnamese women sold as mail-order brides to China, women moving continuously and at fast pace from Managua to El Salvador, from Oaxaca to Mexico City, Baja California and San Diego, shuttling to and fro, from the Mekong Delta to Bangkok, from Hong Kong to Tokyo. The tracking of women's migrational routes, Biemann contends, 'is an effort to write counter-geographies into these digital, remote and scientific scripts of the planet. Gender is one of the categories that notoriously fall through the evaluation rosters.'<sup>398</sup>

One story, recounted by Bandana Pattanaik, International Coordinator for the Global Alliance against the Traffic in Women (GAATW), introduces the

adventures of a Vietnamese woman tricked into travelling to China to marry a Chinese man. Another clip in the film captures the border between the Czech Republic and Germany, the camera panning the E55 highway only to reveal scantily dressed women towering on their heels in search of potential customers. In yet another scene, Biemann offers trafficking statistics, in an ironic move that recuperates the very biometrical and statistical knowledge she critiques. 'There are 160,000 Nepalese women held in Indian brothels,' Biemann informs her viewers, '200,000 Bengali women sent to brothels in Pakistan; 190,000 Pakistani girls sold to the Middle East; 200,000 Burmese women trafficked to Pakistan; 20,000 Burmese girls trafficked to Thailand each year; 100,000 Southeast Asian women shipped to Japan each year.'<sup>399</sup> The statistics make an awkward appearance in the context of the film not only because of lack of reference, but also because of the filmmaker's use of passive voice. Biemann refers to migrant women as commodities ('taken,' 'sold,' 'traded,' and 'shipped'), recouping the objectifying discourse that defines capitalist market exchanges.

In the film, the sex industry becomes the ultimate paradigm of capitalist and patriarchal violence, the sexualized mode of production that, when infused and invested with capitalist dreams of development, naturalizes women's exploitation and the seemingly autonomous workings of the market. Thus, migrant sex workers' lives become a series of generalizable stories about prostitution and patriarchal exploitation, as suggested by the above statistics. In this, Biemann is in conversation with numerous feminist scholars who have addressed sex work and human trafficking. Debates around sex work have either exposed its patriarchal intensely violent structures or, conversely, such discussions have emphasized sex workers' agency and empowerment.<sup>400</sup> The United Nations Protocol against the traffic in women differentiates between women's coercion into the sex trade (the so-called 'sex trafficking') and women's willing migration into sex work. Choice becomes here the central element in differentiating between the violence of trafficking and the choice of work. Yet,

many feminists in the United States refuse what they view as an artificial distinction, opining that women's sex work migration is essentially violent. In 'The "Natasha" Trade: Transnational Shadow Market of Trafficking in Women', Donna Hughes defines the traffic in women as occurring whenever a woman is involved in the sex industry, irrespective of whether coercion is involved, a definition that she credits to the 1949 UN convention. According to Hughes, this definition of trafficking proves a comprehensive view of trafficking, not available in today's 'narrower definitions of trafficking.'<sup>401</sup> In her lecture on sexual exploitation, 'Men Create the Demand, Women the Supply', Hughes also contends that prostitution:

is not the world's oldest profession, as it is commonly said, although it is probably one of the world's oldest forms of men's violence against women and girls [...]. Prostitution is abuse and exploitation of women and girls that results from structural inequality between women and men on a world scale. Prostitution commodifies women and girls and markets their bodies for whatever acts men have sexualized and want to buy.<sup>402</sup>

In contrast, scholars and sex work activists such as Jo Doezema, Laura Agustín, and Kamala Kempadoo rightly equate sex work with labour, foregrounding instead stigma, labour exploitation and social marginalization, as well as heterosexual institutions, as real culprits in sex workers' exploitation. Jyoti Sanghera, for example, offers a sophisticated analysis of the traffic in women arguing that poverty and structural inequities are not the causes of trafficking but that they only exacerbate it, making women more vulnerable. Instead, Sanghera believes that the 'expansion and diversification of the sex entertainment industry,' including the development of 'marketable, intimate services' such as marriage trigger the migration of large numbers of women into the sex trade.<sup>403</sup> Laura Agustín has been one of the few scholars to replace the penal approach to women's migration for sex work with a theoretical framework informed by studies of migration. Following Agustín, migrant women who sell sex should be

viewed as ‘transnational migrants, as members of diasporas, as entrepreneurial women, as flexible workers and as active agents participating in globalization.’<sup>404</sup>

In *Remote Sensing*, Biemann seems to hesitate between these two analytical positions even as she recognizes the need to complicate the victim-agent paradigm and to acknowledge women’s constant negotiations of work migration. The filmmaker bends over backward to feature migrant women from all walks of life and to shed light on a wide variety of experiences, from Thai and Filipina women working as hostesses on U.S. military bases to eastern European sex workers in Germany.<sup>405</sup> Yet, Biemann fails to consider the racialized and nationally specific nature of the sex industry, forgoing important ways in which women of different nationalities, racial and sexual backgrounds may experience sex migration in very different ways. For instance, Biemann does not consider the high number of transgender and transsexual workers in the sex industry despite the fact that in some places as much as one third of migrant sex workers are transsexual.<sup>406</sup> The film also conflates trafficking (i.e. forced migration) and migration, presenting women’s work in the sex industry as trafficking even when there is little proof of it. Moreover, the use of particular filmic techniques, such as voice-over, birds-eye-view camera angles, as well as close and extreme close shots, adds to the objectifying narrative of the film. The omniscient voice-over dominates the filmic narrative, with the camera towering from above and taking in women’s daily lives and work. One shot takes audiences to a Burmese brothel in Thailand. The camera moves through the empty hallways of the brothel. The split screen reveals random images of workrooms, johns, and sex workers waiting for their clients. To the backdrop of these images, the voice of a service provider is heard expounding on the sex industry in Thailand and on women’s exploitation. The voyeuristic gaze of the camera, coupled with the voice-over, turns women’s complex stories of migration into narrow representations of trafficking and exploitation. Not once are women themselves allowed to tell their own stories. Despite the fact that the video moves away from the usual trafficking imagery of



captivity, Biemann's intervention recuperates nonetheless some of the trafficking imagery, while failing to offer alternative understanding of sex work and migration. Instead, the filmmaker remains trapped in a representational paradigm that cannot move beyond the typical story of sex workers as injured subjects of sexual violence and exploitation.<sup>407</sup>

A particular moment in the film speaks to the scarcity of cultural significations defining narratives of sex work. In what follows, I offer a counter-reading of this scene and posit an understanding of gender not as a fixed identity attached to a subject, but as an imprecise and incomplete normative force that constitutes us in social relations that are open, unpredictable, and tenuous. This clip shows that a narrative of sexual violence fails to make comprehensible migrants' experiences.

The clip features a conversation between Biemann and a former entertainer Naomi. The upper left corner of the split screen shows a close shot of Naomi, with the rest of the screen displaying satellite images of the earth. To the split-screen backdrop, Biemann's voice is heard asking Naomi: 'Why do you think it was not good to have sex with Papasan?' 'Because it's free,' Naomi answers, 'I never go free with the customer.' Asked about a boyfriend, 'someone you loved' during time as an entertainer, Naomi confesses laughing embarrassedly: 'Boyfriend [...]. I don't know [...] because I never say to my customer 'I love you.' Never.' At Biemann's insistence that 'a customer is something else' and that a boyfriend is someone whom you love and who never pays for sex, Naomi retorts 'Customer yes, boyfriend no, but free, no. But why?' Naomi's challenge to Biemann to explain the reasoning behind free sexual relations remains unanswered. Instead, confounded by Naomi's insistence that she has had long-term paid relationships with her customers, but that she has never had a boyfriend outside these transactions, Biemann comments that, 'If there is no rigid distinction between natural emotion and commodified one, emotion becomes denaturalized, no longer considered as communicated from the soul but a product

of socialization, like so many other things.' During the interview, Naomi is shown in close fuzzy shots, at skewed angle, her face blurred. The scene is shot with a hand-held camera and at times the shaky image goes out of focus, the camera moving randomly from Naomi's face to her neck and upper body.

The interaction between Biemann and Naomi bespeaks the different registers of signification upon which the two women rely and which renders their communication impossible. Biemann's inability to grasp Naomi's relations is suggestive of a deep misrecognition of affective bonds that lies at the heart of many feminist critiques of sex work. Indeed, Naomi's long-term relationships/'partnerships' (as she calls them) with her customers cannot be captured by conventional understandings of emotional bonds. In effect, while we all seem to know what love and what a love relationship is supposed to be, we hardly have conceptual equivalents that can render meaningful, outside a vocabulary of market transaction, a relationship like Naomi's. While rooted in an economy of market exchange, Naomi's long-term connections with her customers/partners exist in a zone of misrecognition, in excess of both market transactions and intimate relationships. More than that, however, Biemann's puzzlement springs particularly from the belief that there can be a strict separation between economic transactions and emotional bonds, that is, that the intimate sphere of affection exists outside of and separate from the public realm of market transaction and exchange. In effect, what both Biemann and critics of sex work do not address is the ways in which the economic and the affective are mutually constitutive, facets of the same capitalist system that produces us simultaneously as economic agents and as desiring subjects.

Feminists have exposed the untenable distinction between the private and the public, demonstrating how unequal emotional, sexual, and labour exchanges in the allegedly private sphere of the family sustain and make possible the workings of capitalist modes of production outside the family. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Emma Goldman addressed her contemporaries' indignation

at the existence of prostitution and what was then called ‘the white slave trade’, pointing out important parallels between commercial sex and marriage. Goldman underlines an aspect not without significance for our times, namely that ‘marriage for monetary considerations is perfectly legitimate, sanctified by law and public opinion, while any other union is condemned and repudiated. Yet a prostitute, if properly defined, means nothing else than ‘any person for whom sexual relationships are subordinated to gain.’<sup>408</sup> My goal in citing Goldman here is not to equate marriage and sex work or to prove that they are indistinct. Rather, I want to emphasize that, in the clip above, the exclusive focus on Naomi’s monetary transactions masks the contractual basis of marriage and of the family in general. Beyond anything else, though, Goldman’s words draw attention to the artificial separation between the private and the public spheres, separation that has historically functioned to enforce patriarchy and perpetrate violence against women.<sup>409</sup> To quote Native American scholar Andrea Smith, ‘the notion that violence happens ‘out there’ [...] prevents us from recognizing that the home is, in fact, the place of greatest danger for women.’<sup>410</sup>

Biemann’s insistence on a pre-given grand narrative of gender as the standard decoder of migrant sex workers’ experiences and as the identity that inscribes social relations into a heterosexual narrative of love, render illegible the multiple ways in which sex and work come together in migrant women’s lives. A counter-reading of Naomi’s experience can shed light on the entanglement of work and affective investment, of profit-making and desire, that defines the logic of capitalism in general; indeed, it can point out the private libidinal structures that sustain the workings of capital; the secrets of heterosexual intimacy that keep the capital-machine running. In *The Empire of Love*, anthropologist Elisabeth Povinelli argues compellingly for the urgency to understand how ‘forms of love and forms of liberal governance [come together] in empire without reducing these relations to a singular kind or scale of power, to analogy, description, or rumor.’<sup>411</sup> Povinelli draws attention to the ways in which love and marriage

become naturalized to the extent that every other type of relationship that falls outside that affective spectrum becomes incomprehensible and illegitimate.

Naomi's and other sex workers' experiences can be used to queer dominant understandings of gendered relationships. Indeed, Naomi's story, when understood outside the sexual violence paradigm, can point out ways in which emotional attachments to the private sphere of heteronormativity makes possible forms of inequality that affect not only sex workers, but also gay people, transgendered, and women of colour. By interrogating our commitment to certain forms of emotions and relational practices at the expense of others, we can begin to see the normative power of gender, as Judith Butler advises us to do.<sup>412</sup> Butler talked about the need to 'undo gender,' that is, the urgency to demystify the double bind in which the regulatory apparatus of gender constitutes us as consenting gendered subjects. For Butler, gender is a norm, which means that, as norm, gender functions neither as the law nor as a regulation. Instead, gender works through a process of normalization, producing not only us as gendered subjects but also the whole disciplinary apparatus that defines our lives, such as the binary gender system and the sexual regulations ensuing from it. Moreover, the apparatus of gender makes visible and naturalizes only certain relations and practices, while relegating others to abjection. Understood this way, gender is both the effect of disciplinary systems of control – the effect of power – and the tool that can enable us to pry open technologies of power. Gender is the norm that constitutes us relationally as desirable, desiring, but also as subjects who, when interpellated into gendered identities, can interrupt that interpellation or respond otherwise. Or to quote Butler again, 'one is brought into being as subject precisely through being regulated.'<sup>413</sup>

Butler's innovative account of gender, built on a Foucauldian analysis of power, can help us to re-articulate the feminist debate on sex work outside the sexual violence paradigm, from the perspective of a more capacious and sophisticated understanding of gender. Michel Foucault provides us with a theory

of modern power as a positive and productive force that constitutes us as subjects actively implicated in the game of power rather than pure victim or agent.<sup>414</sup> The analysis of sex work as simply commodification and sexual violence loses from sight the fact that this particular approach to sex as violence is itself a symptom and a normative discourse produced by the regulatory apparatus of gender. The rhetoric of sex as violence is a gendered discourse par excellence that envisions sexuality as a rigid practice involving male perpetrators and female victims, pure agents and pure victims. From this perspective, sexuality as a practice and discourse produces women as always vulnerable and always violently at risk, erasing important understandings of sexuality and of human relations, as suggested by Naomi's story above.

This does not mean that violence might not be part of sex workers' experiences or that sex work is not irreversibly connected with patriarchy. It rather means that we need to take seriously those moments that do not fit neat analytical constructs, while insisting on the specificity of each and every experience. A more fluid understanding of gender and sex work implies making a distinction between women 'as a discursively constructed group' and women 'as material subjects of their own history.'<sup>415</sup> An unbiased and comprehensive approach to sex migration could account for an experience such as Naomi's without casting her into the camp of 'victims' or 'brainwashed' subjects of globalization. Indeed, one might ask what particular discourses remain un-tackled and unheeded in such cases when trafficking, violence, and sex work are uncritically presented as equivalent.<sup>416</sup>

Last but not least, the current discourse of sex as violence can have unpredictable consequences on women's lives in general. In a genealogical examination of anti-feminist prostitution campaigns in nineteenth-century England, Judith Walkowitz demonstrates that the initial attempt by feminists to oppose the state's regulation of prostitution relied on arguments about sex as male violence, as well as on arguments about innate female virtue and male vice.<sup>417</sup>

Such restrictive gender-based arguments encouraged the emergence of the new man, the hero and the protector of pure women, capable of restraining his sexual drive and crusading to save and protect daughters and mothers. As Walkowitz shows, the feminists' intervention, despite its emancipatory goals at the beginning, derailed into a campaign of social purity that encouraged normative discourses about sexually passive (and pure) women and sexually active men. Moreover, the same nineteenth-century social purity campaign, this time in the United States, made possible the introduction of the Comstock Laws used, among many other things, to censor birth control information as obscene. The belief was that the separation of sexuality and reproduction would encourage women to prostitute and thus become victims of patriarchal control.<sup>418</sup> The Comstock Laws were struck down only in the late 1960s.

Let me end this essay by returning to the question I posed at its beginning: why are forms of migrant labour such as domestic and maquila work regarded as legitimate means of earning a living? Why don't such occupations elicit the same outcry and incomprehension as sex work? After all, exploitation, sexual abuse, physical and psychic harm are also part of the livelihoods of domestic and maquila workers. I argued in this essay that a rigid sexual violence paradigm, when forced upon migrant women's lives, render illegitimate or invisible those moments that cannot be easily explained in terms of violence, while obfuscating the violence that happens in the allegedly private sphere of the family and in the name of love. In addition, the exclusive focus on the violence of the sex industry leaves from sight migrant women's exploitation as cheap labour in other sectors of the neoliberal economy. Indeed, this overemphasis on the violence of the sex trade normalizes the violence of neoliberal capitalism.

What would an alternative analysis of sex work migration look like? I take my cue from the work of the Madrid-based activist group *Precarias a la Deriva* to rethink in what follows the approach to the traffic in women and to migrant sex work. *Precarias a la Deriva* came to life in 2002 during a union strike in Madrid.

Some women at the strike decided to organize and confront the unwillingness of union organizers to recognize the work of migrant women, of domestic and sex workers, in short, ‘the kind of fragmented, informal, invisible work’ that most women do in neoliberal capitalism. This is how the founders of the Precarias a la Deriva describe the initial organizing steps: ‘Faced with a mobilization which did not represent the kind of fragmented, informal, invisible work that we do – our jobs were neither taken into consideration by the unions that called the strike nor effected by the legislation that provoked it – a group of women decided to spend the day of the strike wandering the city together, transforming the classic picket line into a picket survey: talking to women about their work and their days. Are you striking? Why? Under what conditions do you work? What kind of tools do you have to confront situations that seem unjust to you?’<sup>419</sup> Following their wanderings (*derivas*) through the city, in search of women with diverse work and life experiences, activists decided to organize their group around the concept of *precariousness*, foregrounding the uncertainty of women’s lives and work in neoliberal capitalism.

The complex project spearheaded by the Precarias activists will be addressed elsewhere. For the purpose of my argument, however, the Precarias collective provides a significant lesson in feminism in their eschewal of easy labels such as ‘sex trafficked’, ‘sexual violence’, ‘prostitute’, and ‘undocumented’. Instead, the group proposes the chameleonic concept of *precariousness*, the fundamental condition of neoliberalism that affects some women more than others, and that defines not only the work place or the home but, most significantly, the ‘metropolitan territory we navigate every day, with its billboards and shopping centers, fast-food that tastes like air and every variety of useless contracts’.<sup>420</sup> The notion of *precariousness* makes possible new ways of perceiving and acting on the relationship between women, sex work, and migration. Such an approach would acknowledge migrant women’s sexual exploitation as an effect of their social and economic positioning in the

multinational capitalist economy. Most significantly, this alternative would place sex work on a continuum with other gendered and racialized forms of precarious labour in capitalism, avoiding a simplified binary between victims and perpetrators, trafficked women and brainwashed 'prostituted women' (as anti-prostitution feminists refer to sex workers).

The insistence on human trafficking (and on sexual violence for that matter) rather than on labour exploitation – followed by the usual call for the abolition of prostitution as opposed to the enforcement of labour rights – backfires and produces new forms of control and rights violations. Most significantly, however, the emphasis on women's sexuality does little to address the crux of the matter: the precarious conditions under which migrant workers live in countries of destination, their disposability and deportability. The concept of *precariousness* represents an important political tool in the fight for migrant workers' rights, as the work of the activist group *Precarias a la Deriva* suggests. Precariousness is pivotal to understanding migrant women's social position in neoliberal capitalism because it names both the conditions of neoliberalism and the new subjects these conditions enable. Precariousness points to the political economy of neoliberalism, being as it is the direct effect of the global expansion of multinational capital and of the widespread insecurity this expansion generates. It is precariousness, I contend, that defines women's work and migration in the twenty-first century and not trafficking or sexual violence. Additionally, precariousness refers to the flexibility and increased mobility that neoliberal capitalism forces upon individuals and populations, the necessity to move continuously, to be adaptable, and to accept risky and temporary work. Far from a new condition, precariousness expands to engulf new sectors of society. As the feminists from *Precarias* contend, 'What is new is the process by which this [the condition of precariousness] is expanding to include more and more social sectors, not in a uniform manner (it would be difficult to draw a rigid or precise line between the 'precarious' and the 'guaranteed' parts of the population) but



such that the tendency is generalized. Thus we prefer to talk not about a state of precariousness but about 'precarization' as a process which effects [sic] the whole of society, with devastating consequences for social bonds.<sup>421</sup>

The focus on the precariousness and uncertainty of migrant women's daily lives can represent one way of approaching migrant women's exploitation at the hands not only of pimps and traffickers but especially at the hands of the border patrol, the police, multinationals, and maquila supervisors. From this perspective, despite the fact that *Remote Sensing* offers an important commentary on globalization and the sexualization of women's labour, it misses the opportunity to complicate current accounts of sex migration and challenge liberal gender-based analysis. Biemann's endeavour to imagine alternative forms of migration has only a limited emancipatory potential to the extent that she remains fixed on a liberal concept of gender as the pre-given standard identity that can explain sex workers' practices of migration. A focus on precariousness rather than on sex violence can lead to sophisticated analyses that take into account the material histories that position women as cheap diversified labour force on neoliberal capitalist markets.



## 16. THE COSMOPOLITAN EVOLUTIONS OF OCTAVIA BUTLER, LARRY NIVEN AND DAVID BRIN

Kathryn Bell (Loyola University, New Orleans)

In most encounters between two groups or individuals, there exists an imbalance, whether it be in skills, authority, social class, or otherwise. Darwinian evolution, for example, is triggered by an imbalance in the relationship of a species versus its environment and is characterized by a species changing in order to restore balance. I propose that a similar evolution occurs when distinct groups or cultures face one another, thereby creating an urban space of exchange. I call this phenomenon *ideological evolution*, which is defined by the changes that occur to a group's traditions and beliefs in a process that ideally results in a homeostasis, which is itself key to the survival of both groups as separate, yet equal entities. In fiction, examples of ideological evolution, whether failed or successful, occur most often in the first contact scenario. The term 'first contact' is used in anthropology to refer to the first meeting of two cultures previously unaware of the other's existence; in science fiction, the term refers specifically to the first meeting of two sapient species. (Though rare variations involve first contact between two alien species, this paper will focus on first contact in terms of mankind's initial encounter with extraterrestrial life.) The first contact scenario is

unique in its exploration of the challenges that mankind faces when confronted with an unknown factor in the cosmos and the evolution that man must undergo in order to survive as a species. This evolution occurs as a trade in which both cultures come to adopt ways, practices and beliefs of the other until they come to resemble one another – becoming intertwined, almost interchangeable in their similarities. As a trade, both groups must approach the situation as equals, with offerings of equitable value. It is only through this achievement of homeostasis that the two groups can both hope to survive. In cases where this homeostasis does not occur, one culture will wipe out the other, either through an act of destruction, such as war, or one culture will be absorbed into the one more dominant. Three notable works in the first contact scenario, which exhibit potential for ideological evolution, are Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy (now published as *Lilith's Brood*) (1989), Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye* (1974), and David Brin's *Uplift* series (1987). By comparing the *Xenogenesis* trilogy and *The Mote in God's Eye*, both of which portray sapient species who will inevitably die out as a result of their inability to change and adapt, to the *Uplift* series in which sapient species are successfully set up to experience a full ideological evolution, it becomes clear that each text demonstrates an awareness of the importance of ideological evolution on a cosmological scale. This awareness, coupled with an environmentally conscious civilization, encourages the development of our own civilization toward this realization.

In Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy, the survivors of a devastating world war are abducted by the alien Oankali. The Oankali have three genders: male, female, and a third gender, the *ooloi*, which combines the genetic material from its partners into the most optimal offspring. The Oankali survive by incorporating genes from alien races into their children; their species is defined by this function – one of the meanings of Oankali is 'gene trader'.<sup>422</sup> As one Oankali explains it, 'We do what you would call genetic engineering. We know you had

begun to do it yourselves a little, but it's foreign to you. We do it naturally. We must do it. It renews us, enables us to survive as an evolving species instead of specializing ourselves into extinction or stagnation.<sup>423</sup> The very nature of the Oankali depends on the principle of physical evolution and they perceive that a cessation of this evolution will result in their species' doom, through 'extinction or stagnation.' In *Xenogenesis*, Butler explores an artificial evolution forced upon man with no control over his future: for the first time in man's history, he is powerless. With the genetic manipulations of the Oankali, Butler creates a disturbing future in which man is not only threatened with annihilation, ultimately he is annihilated. The destruction of mankind occurs not biologically, since a segment of the human population survives, but culturally as the Oankali destroy his history and society until all that is left is that which the Oankali have allowed to survive.

By not only evolving future generations of Oankali through the 'gene trade,' but also manipulating the next generation of humans to become human-Oankali hybrids, or 'constructs,' the surviving humans are denied the option to choose, as a species, whether or not to agree to the trade. The Oankali present crossbreeding as an inevitability, which will result in the 'rebirth' of both the Oankali and mankind.<sup>424</sup> However, this rebirth will only result in artificial hybridization, rather than natural ideological evolution. As dedicated as the Oankali are to the concept of Darwinian evolution, they resist ideological evolution – their salvation from stagnation and extinction – with the same passion. With the Oankali-human 'constructs', the Oankali would have mankind become something new, free of all previous history.<sup>425</sup> But this would achieve the exact opposite of true ideological evolution. Extrapolating from the model of Darwinian evolution, I believe that ideological evolution must come from a completely intact structure and feature mutations that spring up of their own accord.

By destroying humanity's history and culture and encouraging the

survivors to forget their past, the Oankali destroy man's chance to release negative traits and replace them with stronger, more idealized Oankali traits – yet nonetheless remain man.

In *Adulthood Rites*, the second book of the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, the Oankali and their 'construct' children attempt to make right with humans who do not wish to engage in the gene trade by giving these humans a colony on Mars. However, in my view, it is too late to hope for the successful ideological evolution of the colonists because their history and culture have already been interrupted and ruined: the Oankali have destroyed all the rubble and remnants of human civilization, and while some survivors may remember bits and pieces of the past, most is lost with the destruction of the museums and history books. Furthermore, the descendents of the gene trade are doomed because, as I will demonstrate, the Oankali are an evolutionary dead end.

When the Oankali give the remnants of mankind the choice to join in the trade or to colonize Mars, it appears as though man might have a chance to fulfil his role in proper ideological evolution: that is, choose to pursue it or choose to remain artificially unchanged. However, though the humans are given a choice, the Oankali are deceitful in their representation of the future and so any choice that is made is still an artificial, flawed choice that cannot fulfil the requirements that would lead to a stable homeostasis that is the final goal of ideological evolution. The Oankali do not tell the humans what will happen to Earth when their children leave it. The Oankali will not only genetically twist mankind, but they will also ravage mankind's home world as well, completely destroying it and leaving behind 'less than the corpse of a world.'<sup>426</sup> While this guarantees the destruction of all remnants of mankind's culture, additionally, and more importantly, the Oankali destroy the chance of any other species rising to sapience on Earth. The Oankali's philosophy is the antithesis of environmentalism. Any planet on which they conduct a gene trade will be laid to waste. The Oankali are not just dragging mankind down into the mire of an evolutionary dead end, they

are dragging the whole Earth and every living organism on the planet with them. And after Earth, the Oankali will move forward to the next planet to conduct another gene trade, until each planet that they find is eliminated and they have turned the whole universe into a barren wasteland. Since Oankali biology and mentality is based on the concept of the gene trade – on the physical act of changing – they are not susceptible to an ideological evolution that would alter their mentality in a way that would reject the gene trade. For the Oankali, an evolution to a better, healthier coexistence with the universe is not possible, and because of their resistance to change, they have doomed themselves to extinction in much the same way that we today may seal our own fate through mismanagement of the Earth.

In Butler's text, humans are positioned as the victims, and the Oankali are clearly the aggressors who remove all choice and control from mankind's hands. In contrast to this clear situation in which mankind has no control, the following discussion focuses on a text in which mankind retains all the power and the aliens are the ones who must submit.

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's novel *The Mote in God's Eye* focuses on man's discovery of alien life and the decision whether or not to allow the alien Moties out of the confines of their solar system. Contrary to the typical first contact scenario, which places mankind at the mercy of 'Great Galactic Wizards' in possession of advanced technology (such as Butler's Oankali) *The Mote in God's Eye* places mankind in a position of power over the alien species.<sup>427</sup>

Initially, the Moties attempt to hide their reproductive biology from the humans because they know it will be viewed as a threat. The Moties must reproduce periodically, or die. Their planet suffers from what they term 'Cycles': as their population exceeds their planet's ability to sustain life, war over available resources erupts, destroying the current civilization and throwing the survivors back to savagery to rebuild their civilization and begin the Cycle again. If the Moties are allowed out of their system, there will soon be a whole universe full of

Cycles, and this is the threat that man sees in the Moties. They are the ultimate Malthusian horror – unchecked population growth with no reproductive ‘off’ switch and insufficient resources to support all offspring. Even worse than the Oankali of *Xenogenesis*, who devour each planet that they visit, yet do so one by one, the Moties have the potential to swarm over the entire universe as their population exponentially grows. They will eventually fill all possible space and displace all other sapient species in order to eliminate competition for resources. After there is no more room left for expansion, the entire universe will be plunged into savagery through an all-encompassing war for resources. Niven and Pournelle create a future in which not only man, but every sapient, or potentially sapient, species is threatened by the expansion of a single species.

Yet, unlike the Oankali of *Xenogenesis*, the Moties are not in control of their own destiny – man is. By controlling access in and out of the system through the use of a blockade, man is able to stop the Moties from colonizing other worlds. In doing so, however, humans do not open themselves to ideological evolution; instead they effectively quarantine themselves. Even if they did open themselves up to such trade, the Moties’ mentality cannot evolve toward a homeostasis with mankind because they are, by nature, fatalistic, and see mankind’s natural optimism as insane.<sup>428</sup> The Moties have an inherent fatalistic viewpoint and, much like the Oankali, cannot change their mentality to agree with man’s viewpoint. The Moties apply the name ‘Crazy Eddie’ to any ideas that they believe are ridiculous or hopeless, including beliefs of idealism or optimism. The main issue with the human-Motie relationship is, through human influence, some Moties end up developing a sense of hope and optimism and, in other Moties’ eyes, going Crazy Eddie. This problem stems from the intrinsic optimistic nature of man, which the Moties find to be completely insane. The Moties are, as a result of innumerable Cycles, fatalistic to the core. By portraying a kind of stalemate that mankind and the Moties reach, Niven and Pournelle demonstrate the fate of civilizations with rigid, dogmatic mindsets.



*The Mote in God's Eye* presents a unique situation in which man is placed into the role of the less technologically advanced, but more mentally evolved of the two races. The Moties are comprised of subspecies, each serving a specific function, such as their Engineer class, described as 'an idiot savant tinker,' who functions only as a builder and worker, intelligent in the construction of technology but lacking the ability for linguistics or diplomacy.<sup>429</sup> This class gives the Moties a natural toolmaker, allowing them to analyze and replicate any technology to which they are exposed. Although the Moties possess great technology due to this subspecies, they lack the mental adaptability that defines our species.

Human ingenuity and the use of sapience and science compensate for our limitations. Mankind displays a mental adaptability that defines our species. The Moties view humans as 'amateurs at everything, second-best at everything they do,' but such adaptability allows humans to undergo ideological evolution after first contact.<sup>430</sup>

As stated by Arthur C. Clarke: to be human is to believe in the ideal that 'the only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible,' a concept that fatalistic Moties can never grasp.<sup>431</sup> In *The Mote in God's Eye*, Niven and Pournelle expose how this idealism and optimism partially defines the very nature of humanity and, without it, a civilization only stagnates and consumes itself. Human idealism and Motie fatalism are opposites: there can be no peaceful coexistence between the two. Because they are the antithesis of one another, the Moties cannot engage in an ideological trade with mankind. They are inherently incapable of it.

Nevertheless, in *The Gripping Hand*, the sequel to *The Mote in God's Eye*, the humans force change on the Moties. The humans develop a symbiote that can be used to sterilize Moties temporarily and thus prolong their life without the need to reproduce. However, the humans do not offer this to the Moties as a choice. Rather, they force the symbiote upon the Moties, poisoning them with it. In this

manner, the humans become the Oankali of Butler's *Xenogenesis*, forcing physical changes upon an alien species without its consent. Although humans do this in an act of self-preservation, to protect themselves from the threat of a universe full of Moties and Cycles, this does not justify their actions. Much like the humans in *Xenogenesis*, the Moties cannot evolve ideologically because they are not given a choice. They are in the same position that the humans were at the beginning of *Xenogenesis*: at the mercy of the 'Great Galactic Wizards' and without choice or control over their own future. Though the humans of *The Mote in God's Eye* and *The Gripping Hand* are the protagonists and heroes of the novels, they also become the antagonists and villains.

Through the human-Motie interactions of both *The Mote in God's Eye* and its sequel, Niven and Pournelle demonstrate the ways in which man becomes the villain even as he tries to insure his own survival. By contrasting Butler's weak and powerless humans to Niven and Pournelle's all-too-powerful humans, we see that both extremes are unhealthy and result in the inevitable destruction of one species or another, either Butler's humans or Niven and Pournelle's Moties. It is this contrast that highlights how the balance of power is essential to ideological evolution. One group must not have all the authority. It must be shared equally. This is related to the central idea of ideological evolution: that it is a trade between partners, with both sides having something of equal value to share. The Oankali view humans as objects, not as equals, and this is the flaw that prevents them from entering into an ideological evolution with man. The Moties cannot change their thought patterns to agree with man's so, rather than seek some other alternative way to come to a peaceful coexistence, man exerts his power over the Moties by subordinating them and sterilizing them like animals. Neither of the two examples I have traced thus far can result in the ideological evolution that must take place for both species to survive. It is in David Brin's *Uplift* series where a future in which ideological evolution will succeed and prosper can finally be realized.

The setting of Brin's *Uplift* series is that of a universe inhabited by a multitude of alien races – mankind is the latest to reach the stars and the only known species to have evolved to intelligence without alien interference. Galactic civilization exists on the premise of biological 'uplift,' genetic manipulation of pre-sapient species to true sapience. This system, set in place by the first race – the Progenitors – has a doctrine of environmentalism at its core. Before all else, space faring races must protect the ecosystems of the worlds they inhabit. By doing so, they insure that these worlds will survive and provide nourishing environments to the organisms which inhabit them and thus foster some future life form into pre-sapience. Man enters into Galactic civilization having suffered the extinction of a number of potentially pre-sapient species by his own hand, and through his own folly learned the importance of an environmentally conscious philosophy. Man's unique insight into the balance between societal advancement and environmental preservation is brought to Galactic civilization, which has fallen into a state of stagnation, crippled by tradition and a twisting of the tenets of biological uplift.

This sets the stage for an ideological evolution in which mankind must learn to adapt to the Galactic civilization's society and culture or else suffer further uplift at the hands of a guiding elder race. The Galactics, on the other hand, must learn from mankind's unique perspective and, through this cultural exchange, rejuvenate their stagnant civilization. Through the development of a galaxy-wide environmental ethos and the portrayal of two clashing cultures evolving toward a balanced coexistence, Brin shows a future in which a successful ideological evolution can occur and support future generations of sapient species.

In Brin's text, man is unique among the Galactics for having achieved sapience, spaceflight and the concept of biological uplift without a guiding 'patron' race. The mercy that Galactic civilization extends to man's crimes against pre-sapient species exposes the potential for an ideological evolution of

both societies toward a stable homeostasis, as it demonstrates a necessary flexibility of the relationship between two species. I believe this room for adaptation is what separates Galactic society from the Oankali of *Xenogenesis* or the Moties of *The Mote in God's Eye*. The Galactics accept humanity's uniqueness, albeit reluctantly, due to an injunction to 'respect 'Newness'.'<sup>432</sup> Though the Galactics' society is driven by tradition and conservatism, there is room to incorporate new ideas and philosophies if appropriate. While the Galactics allow their traditions and culture to be adapted when appropriate, the Oankali operate by absorbing and reshaping any 'Newness' that they encounter, whereas the Moties flat-out reject the possibility of adaptation and modification. The Galactics' method of adaptation resembles the natural evolution of a species whereby each mutation is tested for success and each variation, only after proven successful and environmentally viable, is preserved and passed on to the next generation.<sup>433</sup>

At the heart of these texts is the theme of ideological evolution, be it failed or successful, realized within an urbanized landscape. By this I mean that the exchange between one culture and another lays the foundation for what I am calling a 'city of thought.' Ideologies become the girders on which the finely detailed latticework of life (and its productions) rests. As concrete fills the mould that culture has etched out, such a city of thought takes shape. But, like our present cities, it is subjected to the passage of time and the ornamental friezes are exposed to and eroded by the elements. To survive, a city must experience ideological evolution – or, more plainly, urban renewal. New ideas gained from the constant exchange between groups breathe new life into a culture, much like families moving into an old town bringing fresh faces and new business. Without such an influx, a small town will eventually become a ghost town, the only occupants the tumbleweeds of ideas past.

If I might close on a note *à propos* of our 2010 conference location: New Orleans is a prime example of a city of thought, a cosmopolitan space renewed

through constant flux. As a port town, New Orleans was founded on a steady stream of people and trade. It performs in real time, and in microcosm, what all three of the texts I have discussed here do on a grand, cosmological scale. It is, as I understand it, the city's embrace of ideological evolution that has allowed it to flourish again after Katrina. And while it will not return to what it was before the storm, New Orleans demonstrates in real time how the cities of thought presented by Butler, Niven and Pournelle, and Brin prove together the necessity of keeping open the ports of ideological trade.

New Orleans is a city that is truly unique in its development and history. Founded in 1718 by the French Mississippi Company, the city has experienced influences from a number of different places and cultures. This is due in part to possession of the city changing hands over the course of time; in 1763, New Orleans became a Spanish colony and was reacquired by the French in 1801 before being sold to the United States in 1803. New Orleans was influenced by the political powers that ruled the city, as well as the people, goods and services received through its port. This colourful and varied history established New Orleans as 'an alternative American history all in itself.'<sup>434</sup> At the time the city was founded, New Orleans was well on its way to a tradition of multicultural diversity, being already inhabited by French colonists, free blacks, Canadian fur traders, and Native American slaves.<sup>435</sup>

The city continued to grow through immigration and the importation of slaves. The people who came to settle were varied in their cultures and backgrounds: though emigration was encouraged and the French government and press sang the colony's praises, French citizens were reluctant to emigrate, believing the colony to be a wasteland. (This view is evident in the 1731 publication of the short novel *Manon Lescaut*, the plot of which features the death of the titular character in the 'deserts' of Louisiana). The government eventually resorted to converting Louisiana into a penal colony and forced the emigration of thousands of French criminals and prostitutes. At this time, a population of

Germans immigrated and settled above New Orleans along what became known as the German Coast.<sup>436</sup> A large enough Irish population immigrated that a tradition of celebrating St. Patrick's Day was established in the early 1800s, and during the Haitian Revolution of 1804, New Orleans experienced a large influx of refugees from Saint-Domingue.

Presented with such a varied populace, New Orleans embraced ideological evolution not out of a desire to evolve, but out of necessity. The history of the city is one of flux, of trading hands and waves of immigration, of exposure to new cultures and influences. New Orleans' role as a trade centre and port city demanded that these new cultures be studied and absorbed. To profit, cities must be open to the 'Newness' that Brin's Galactics spoke of. If a city clings too tightly to tradition and rejects new influences, it will fall behind in fashion and trends and, as a result, lose profits. A trade centre must absorb influences through an unbidden osmosis and in doing so stay renewed and avoid stagnation.

The cultural development of New Orleans is an example of a city's growth through ideological evolution. This is not to say that New Orleans provides a perfect example of successful ideological evolution. Far from it, New Orleans' ideological evolution is still ongoing, and has been hampered by the mistreatment and abuse of certain groups of individuals, most notably among these, the African peoples imported as slaves.

A good deal of New Orleans' history is covered by the cloud of slavery. I believe that the history of slavery and treatment of slaves demonstrates most effectively the course that ideological evolution took within New Orleans, and the effect of African culture upon New Orleans tradition provides a real example of ideological evolution in action. As previously discussed with the works of Butler and Niven and Pournelle, an unequal balance of power results in the destruction or absorption of another culture within the larger culture. As an African-American writer, Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy can be viewed as a retelling of the extinction of the cultural heritage of slaves within the United States. Slaves experienced a

destruction of culture and identity as they were discouraged from speaking their native languages, practicing their spiritual beliefs, and otherwise denied their connection to their former lives. This cultural destruction was also carried out through the systematic dismantling of families by auction. At auction, slaves were separated from their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, never to see them again. This was common practice in the South and a constant reminder to slaves of the fact that they were considered property, without rights and without a voice.

While still legally property, in New Orleans, there were certain liberties given to slaves, especially during Spanish rule, that were unavailable to slaves elsewhere in the United States. The French had the *Code Noir de la Louisiane*, which governed the treatment of slaves and specified how and why slaves might be punished. Under the Spanish, the regulations regarding slaves were looser and gave them some fundamental rights denied under French rule, such as the right to own property; to purchase their own freedom, the price of which was adjudicated; and to have their complaints heard in a court specifically designated to hear slave complaints regarding abuse and to authorize the sale of a mistreated slave to another owner.<sup>437</sup> In New Orleans, there was an established culture of a small amount of leniency towards slaves that did not exist elsewhere in the South. It was these simple freedoms that allowed slaves to keep their culture alive.

With Sundays as their day free from labour, hundreds of African slaves would gather in Congo Square to play music and dance.<sup>438</sup> They were allowed to play their drums and speak their native languages, a privilege that did not extend to slaves elsewhere in the United States due to a fear that such large gatherings would incite a rebellion like that which occurred in Saint-Domingue.<sup>439</sup> Because of this, African slaves in New Orleans were able to maintain their past and culture to a greater extent than elsewhere in the South. Within the confines of an oppressive society, they found ways to retain their humanity, and in doing so resisted total destruction of their culture.

Perhaps one of the strongest examples today in New Orleans of rebellion against the destruction of African culture is the Mardi Gras Indians. The Mardi Gras Indians are not part of the typical Mardi Gras parades or balls, and they are not the same as the 'krewes,' or organizations, that put on the parades and balls. They are made up of working-class African-American men and they do not parade with the krewes. Instead, they walk the back streets of New Orleans, through the poor black neighbourhoods neglected by the parade routes. The Mardi Gras Indians are made up of 'tribes' that compete to have the best suits, dance, and song. The suits that the Indians wear, though the style imitates the Plains Indians costumes from Wild West shows of the 1880s, are themselves an echo of an African heritage, where the wearing of feathers and horns is prominent.<sup>440</sup>

The tradition of the Mardi Gras Indians grew out of a rebellion against the societal constraints on the black community. In the past, African-Americans were often unable to participate in Mardi Gras krewes, blocked either by racism or because they were unable to pay the krewes' membership fees. African-Americans began the tradition of 'masking' Indians to claim the Mardi Gras tradition for themselves. The tribes do not conform to the requirements of Mardi Gras parades: they do not publish their schedule and routes, nor do they obtain permits from the police as is required of parade organizations. Their song 'My Indian Red' is a song of resistance, emphasized in the line 'we won't bow down.' The Mardi Gras Indians embody the resistance of African-American culture against absorption by the surrounding larger body of culture.

In this way, New Orleans demonstrates ideological evolution in action. The culture of Mardi Gras is being influenced by the role of the Mardi Gras Indians and the tribes are encouraged to perform for audiences and become more mainstream, while the tradition of parading through poor neighbourhoods without a schedule or planned route is maintained. The Indians are a welcome sight and their presence continues to influence the city and the celebration of Mardi Gras



and make a positive impact on the African-American community through a demonstration of solidarity and force that has been absent in the past.

New Orleans is a city that encapsulates the concept of ideological evolution. Its culture and traditions have changed over the years as each group to arrive in the city has left a mark of some kind, whether large or small. Through its history and the strong African-American traditions of the city, it is clear that ideological evolution is responsible for the gradual integration of African-American culture within New Orleans. It is also evident that ideological evolution is occurring still, and only time will tell whether this evolution will become fully realized and create a hybridization of New Orleans' European and African heritage, or whether the African influences will be absorbed until they are so diluted as to be indistinguishable amidst the greater culture.



## 17. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE WORK OF BOSNIAN WRITER ALEKSANDAR HEMON

Laurel K. Seely Voloder (University of California, Santa Cruz)

He went hiking with his father more often. It was fall already, and they didn't go far because it was cold and wet and they had heard rumors of army patrols shooting at people who drifted close to their position. Father Pronek, in fact, saw army units digging trenches in the mountains near Sarajevo, but he thought they were doing that to protect the city. The last time Pronek went with his father, in October, they looked at Sarajevo, muffled by the dusk. They heard a hum, a gigantic hum, like the Big Bang echo. It was the sum of all the life noises Sarajevo produced, his father said: the clattering of dishwashers and buses; the music from bars and radios; the bawling of spoiled children; doors slamming; engines running; people fucking – and he nudged his son. They looked up and there were disinterested stars in the sky. Some of those stars didn't exist any longer, they had become black holes, Pronek said. Black holes, Father said, and nudged him again. – Aleksandar Hemon, *Nowhere Man*.<sup>441</sup>

In the introduction to his 1999 anthology of Bosnian diaspora literature, Dragoslav Dedović writes that his motivation as editor was to 'measure the distance' from the apex of Bosnia's pre-war, transnational sense of community in 1991 to the present moment. Dedović describes the unique situation immediately before the war, when various 'symptoms' began to appear, including economic recession and the crisis of socialism:

When the Communists could no longer rule and chauvinists had not yet consolidated their power, the old rules hardly applied, and the new ones were unclear. In this vacuum a series of names appeared at the edges of the literary scene which announced a re-assessment of received literary tradition [...]. The tendency of these pronounced individualists toward a nonchalant, at times snobby urban distance from nationalist hysteria would later prove superior to all other models produced in the literary scene at the time [...]. In post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, tormented by war and still paralyzed by the ideological autism of all three ethnic systems, the only supranational synthesis possible for now is on the fictional level – in the form of a literary metasystem.<sup>442</sup>

Dedović goes on to evoke Bosnian diaspora literature as the deterritorialized remnant of this community of cosmopolitan, non-nationalist artists, whose members practice what Dedović has termed ‘čitanje izdaleka [reading from afar]’<sup>443</sup> from the countries where they now live in exile; as Dedović writes, ‘It’s now easier to see Bosnia from Köln than from Sarajevo.’<sup>444</sup> In their ongoing political engagement with their homeland, these writers continue to challenge the ideological role that language and literature have played in the revival and propagation of national identities. In the early 1980s, nationalists began to agitate for differentiated Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian languages in place of the synthetic Serbo-Croatian language, and for separate ethno-national literary canons. However, writers of the Bosnian diaspora, who reject the yoking together of language and national identity, are recuperating a sense of individual agency by making linguistic choices that defy the agendas set by the region’s cultural ‘elites’ and the institutions they run. Like light from a dead star, the literary works produced by the Bosnian diaspora are helping to rebuild bridges among those divided by war and to revive the critical discourse and reading public that the conflict shattered, thus countering the provincializing agenda of nationalists intent on solidifying their power by intellectually segregating and impoverishing ordinary people. In so doing, they inscribe themselves within a long Yugoslav polemic between nationalistic provincialism and internationalist cosmopolitanism in which language and literature have constituted a key battleground. Proponents

of the latter worldview, who sought to link the region with greater artistic and political networks, have included the historical Yugoslav avant-gardes from the 1920s and the post-avant-gardes and punk movement in the 1980s, all of which experimented with language in ways that defied its standardization by official institutions. In this paper I focus on the ways in which the formal qualities of the work of Bosnian American writer Aleksandar Hemon – in particular the language in which he writes, his stylistic choices, and his experimentation with paratextual elements – reclaim language as a free territory, preserving the spirit of a transnational or even supranational identity that nationalists in his country tried to destroy.

One morning in 1992, 28-year-old Hemon, who was visiting the United States through an exchange program for young journalists, woke up to discover that he no longer had a country. He found himself stranded in Chicago, where, at his parents' urging, he decided to remain for the duration of the war. He ended up never leaving. The editors of the literary and cultural journal *Sarajevo Notebooks*, one of the few institutions that has sought to rebuild networks among the writers, artists, and intellectuals in the region of the former Yugoslavia, has described the shock of this experience:

Our generation grew up with [Yugoslavia] and we didn't know any other. We traveled from one part to the other with a feeling of security. We always loved Bled, Ohrid and Dubrovnik more than our own great dark cities full of snow, rain, and noise. Suddenly there was a border on the road to Dubrovnik, with a grim policeman who examined us carefully, and a visa for travel to our beloved Slovenia [...].<sup>445</sup>

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and ensuing war from 1992-1995 had the most profound repercussions for Bosnia, the most ethnically mixed of the Yugoslav republics; by the time of the war, the population was 43.7 percent Muslim (or Bosniak), 31.3 percent Serb (or Orthodox Christian), 17.3 percent Croat (or Catholic), and 7.7 percent 'Yugoslav' and 'Other.'<sup>446</sup> Starting with the death of

Tito in 1980 and subsequent erosion of the Yugoslav consensus, and further propelled by the fear-mongering nationalist rhetoric emanating from Belgrade and Zagreb, Bosnians who had peacefully co-existed for decades faced pressure to choose sides and align themselves with one of these three ethno-religious groups.

Bosnian identity had long been a vexed issue, from the withdrawal of the Ottomans from the Balkans and annexation of Bosnia by Austria in 1878, to the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia and 1943 establishment of the Communist state. With its diverse population, the republic had the greatest potential for either ethnic strife or socialist transcendence. In his efforts to patch the tattered remnants of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into a unified country, Tito envisioned Bosnia as a microcosm of Yugoslavia, an ideal that was to some extent realized in urban areas; between World War II and 1991, around 40 percent of urban marriages in Bosnia were 'mixed' (between members of different religions), and more than 20 percent of urban Bosnians identified themselves as 'Yugoslavs.'<sup>447</sup> However, the creation of a transnational Yugoslav Bosnian identity came with a price. Throughout the territory of Yugoslavia, the history of the internecine warfare that occurred during World War II was papered over by the official myth of interethnic Partisan brotherhood. Due to its ethnic sensitivities, Bosnia's public discourse was even more restricted than in the other Yugoslav republics, with its media absolutely forbidden from discussing national questions, a repression that likely made Bosnians more vulnerable to nationalist propaganda in the 1980s and 1990s. In the post-Yugoslav arithmetic of identity, which divided up the population into Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks, those Bosnians who had identified with the Yugoslav ideal suddenly found that they constituted a remainder that nationalists aimed to cross out. Bosnian diaspora writer Bekim Sejranović has described the anguish of suddenly having to arbitrarily categorize oneself:

They force you to take a stance, to choose a side, to declare yourself, to explain, support, respond, listen, be afraid. I felt like I was filling in a form, and there wasn't a single rubric offered, not one little box, not one

option that fit me, but I had no choice, they were forcing me to fill it in.<sup>448</sup>

The war had a centrifugal effect on Bosnians at a number of levels. At the ideological level, the 1990s Yugoslav war dismantled long-established community bonds between members of Bosnia's constituent ethnic groups and irreparably damaged the notion of a transnational 'Yugoslav' identity that had taken especially deep root in Sarajevo. And at the demographic level, many Bosnians were uprooted from their homes, resulting in massive internal population displacement and in the creation of a worldwide diaspora of around 1 million. Simultaneously, the nationalist rhetoric that had laid the groundwork for the physical violence of the war exerted a centripetal force, spinning Bosnians into separate camps. What began for many as a pragmatic alignment for the sake of survival later consolidated during the post-war period into more rigid identity formations through the creation of national institutions in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo.<sup>449</sup> While the more ethnically homogeneous populations of Croatia and Serbia enabled these states to rapidly articulate a consensus notion of national identity that Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs could latch onto, the question of what it means to be 'Bosnian' has proven more contentious among both Bosnian Muslims and those of other ethnicities who continue, in diminishing numbers, to identify as Bosnian.

During the war, both nationalists and their Bosnian targets had tremendous stakes in affixing a distinct concept of national identity to Muslims, whose link between religion and nation was relatively loose as compared with Serbs and Croats.<sup>450</sup> After all, one cannot perpetrate genocide if there is no national group to eliminate. Nor could those who identified as Bosnian justify their charges of genocide and bolster their appeal for help without a credible national identity that was readable within the framework of the Western nation-state. In line with Iain Chambers' argument that deterritorialization produces both diasporic identities and new fundamentalisms,<sup>451</sup> those who continue to identify as Bosnian have split

among those who embrace the notion of an essentialist Bosniak identity, with strong ties to Islam and an Ottoman cultural and linguistic heritage, and those who stayed true to the notion of a multi-ethnic Bosnian identity. This fissure continues to this day, with some members of Bosnia's official institutions, like the University of Sarajevo and the government, and of certain mainstream media outlets, espousing the former identity formation, and with many in the diaspora upholding the latter.

Today there exist two Bosnias. First there is the Bosnia at home, struggling with seemingly insurmountable economic and political challenges and vulnerable to the essentializing discourses of identity with which many leaders continue to manipulate the public. And then there is the Bosnia abroad, in exile, whose leading voices like Aleksandar Hemon belong to members of the 'lost generation' that came of age in the 1980s and saw themselves as the first truly cosmopolitan, transnational Bosnians. These diasporic voices serve as an important counter-discourse to the nationalists who have embedded themselves in home institutions and as a crucial buttress to local non-nationalist voices, keeping alive the vision of a Bosnian identity that burgeoned in the 1980s and was cut short by war.

Arjun Appadurai has written that, in many societies, the nation and the state have become one another's projects, and that 'the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture [...] there is a battle of the imagination, with state and nation seeking to cannibalize one another.'<sup>452</sup> Appadurai argues that technological advances have toppled the supremacy of the nation-state and supplanted it with transnational identities marked by migration, diaspora, and the movement of people and capital. The discourse among Bosnia's cultural elite at home and abroad is rife with ironies. Some intellectuals in Bosnia's official institutions are desperately trying to fuse the nation and the state according to a political model that may already be growing obsolete in much of the world. Meanwhile the diaspora, in seeking to recuperate the lost values of a



transnational Yugoslav identity, is in fact inscribing Bosnia within the more modern world of transnational political and cultural flows. The two Bosnias are thus in constant tension; as Bosnia at home labours to erect borders, Bosnia abroad seeks to undo them. The official territory of Bosnia is superimposed by this spectral other Bosnia, one that champions a transnational, often supranational, identity that simultaneously belongs to the country's past and represents a utopian future toward which its younger generation could potentially project itself. Moreover, the works of the Bosnian diaspora grapple with issues that transcend the specific geopolitical context of Bosnia, questioning a nation-state system that has failed to preserve internal differences and re-imagining identity in a manner that disarticulates the problematic, at times fatal, identification of nation with ethnicity, culture, religion, and territory.

Sarajevo-born Aleksandar Hemon has emerged as perhaps the most prominent anti-nationalist voice in the Bosnian diaspora. Since arriving in the U.S., Hemon has published two novels and two collections of short stories, had numerous stories appear in *The New Yorker* and other journals, and was awarded the MacArthur genius grant in 2004. While nationalists conflate language, canonical literary works, and official history with the nation, Hemon insists on his right to interrogate and rework these concepts in ways that are both theoretically sophisticated and commensurate with the everyday lived experience of exile. In so doing, he breaks ranks not only with nationalists but also with theorists of diaspora who celebrate migration and exile as posing an epistemological challenge to essentialist notions like nation and identity, while denigrating as ideologically suspect anything claiming to be rooted or stable. This stance at times fails to distinguish between diaspora as a counter-hegemonic epistemology and diaspora as a lived experience. While the former may be celebrated as a valuable disruption of essentializing discourses, there is a risk of reducing real human beings to tropes of modernity, to discursive functions, or to metaphors for the ways in which cultural studies eludes disciplinary boundaries. Such arguments

may make valid points, but they tend to instrumentalize the immigrant experience (as if its chief value lay in the interventions it effects in the hegemonic discourses of the Western metropolis), occlude the traumas of displacement and exile, assimilate the wide differences among diasporic individuals to the same framework, and privilege territorial markers of identity while ignoring the other, less tangible, ways in which diasporic identity can remain very much rooted. Somewhere between nationalists, who claim that identity ossified sometime during the Middle Ages, and those diaspora theorists who celebrate the endless instability and heterogeneity of the immigrant experience, lies the everyday struggle of individuals navigating the post-apocalyptic psychological landscape located on the other side of war and loss of home. Hemon attempts to translate this experience into epistemology in ways that avoid these pitfalls. The themes that underlie his work include the nature of identity, the interplay of memory and history, a concern with the ethics of storytelling, and, most of all, the dynamics of inter-cultural contact – all of which he explores in depth in his two novels *Nowhere Man* (2002) and *The Lazarus Project* (2008). However, the seemingly apolitical formal qualities of Hemon's works are in fact just as crucial to the elaboration of a non-national identity as their thematic content, but in ways that may not be immediately evident to readers unfamiliar with the socio-political and linguistic context from which he originates.

In Western Europe and the U.S., the stance of modernist writers was apolitical, in contradistinction to the defiantly political orientation of avant-garde movements. In the socialist 'second world,' however, which had absorbed the historical avant-gardes and replaced them with state-dictated socialist realism, it was modernism, with its supposedly apolitical concern for language itself, which offered a site of resistance and critique. In his identification with East and Central European modernisms, Hemon situates himself within a tradition which combines an investigation of the formal properties of language with an ethical engagement with the social and political world. Like other writers in this tradition, including

Bruno Schultz, Franz Kafka, and Isaac Babel, Hemon's work is informed by an inherent understanding that aesthetics is always political and can function as a counter-force to all forms of totalitarianism, including the nationalism that destroyed his country; it is no accident that many of these writers were Jewish, a category of person that also faced pressure to assimilate or be annihilated due to ambiguous national identity, as Kurspahić indicates. Hemon and many other politically-engaged Bosnian writers have looked to the dissident Yugoslav writer Danilo Kiš as a model for this principled approach to literature. Here, Hemon articulates Kiš's profound influence on his work:

From Kiš I learned that literature [...] is based on the sovereignty of the individual. Kiš's literature derives from the axiom that every life is unique and unrepeatably. It's this sovereignty of the individual that totalitarian or genocidal regimes disrupt or destroy. Every form of racism disrupts this sovereignty. The ethical engagement of literature consists of the defense or establishment of this sovereignty in language.<sup>453</sup>

Nationalists, by contrast, seek to destroy the sovereignty of the individual – and the status of language as a 'free territory' – by linking language to specific types of national identity, a strategy which in fact taps in to a long tradition in the region.

Since its inception, Yugoslavia's linguistic sphere was marked by tension between two opposing political agendas: to codify the standard language in an expansive manner that would facilitate communication and include as many people as possible, and to narrow the language in order to impede communication and exclude those who did not 'belong.' The former impulse was reflected in the long-term effort by proponents of a transnational Yugoslav identity to create a synthetic Serbo-Croatian (or Croato-Serbian) language. Of course, the issue of which particular dialectal features would prevail over others was contentious from the start, and linguistic polemics served as a vehicle through which repressed national rivalries could be obliquely articulated, leading to seemingly absurd

situations in which publishing a grammar manual could be akin to treason.<sup>454</sup> Since the early nineteenth century, the notion that language expresses national identity has played a central role in validating claims of sovereignty among the small nations of Central and Southeast Europe. Serbs and Croats grasped the political potential of their cultural capital early on, during their respective national awakening movements, and have since used language as a proxy for national identity. Given the symbolic load that language in the region bears, it is not surprising that the link between language and national identity has been re-emphasized with increasing intensity since the 1980s.<sup>455</sup> With the fall of Yugoslavia and the struggle among its constituent ethnic groups for dominance and territory, language differentiation projects – the drive to create separate Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian languages – have been deployed as instruments of war and of nation-building.

While language differentiation started out as a game played by Serbs and Croats, Yugoslavia's two primary rival ethnic groups, Bosnians belatedly joined in. The 'Bosnian' language was declared in 1992, the same year the republic officially seceded from Yugoslavia. Since then, prescriptivist linguists have turned to language as the solution to Bosnia's national identity dilemma, producing textbooks arguing for the existence of a continuous Bosnian language community dating back to the medieval Bosnian kingdom. The ultimate aim of these texts is to reify the Bosnian language's historical links to Ottoman culture, Islam, and the Bosnian territory, an agenda that of course sends the message to Bosnia's other ethnic groups that they have no legitimate claims on the territory. This political agenda was laid out by the compiler of the first Bosnian lexicon in the midst of the war. In the English-language prologue to the 1993 edition of his text, Alija Isaković, called 'the father of the Bosnian language,' appeals to the notion of the 1,000-year-old Bosnian state: 'A people which in its original geopolitical community has named its language spontaneously, as all independent peoples do [...] will not die out, emigrate, or be assimilated by other peoples.

Descendants of ancient Bosnians are still using the Bosnian language, which has left an intensive trace, an almost perfect continuity.<sup>456</sup> Isaković's prologue elides Bosnian and Bosniak identity; he claims that Bosnian is the language spoken by all Bosnians and Herzegovinians of all religions and nationalities, yet he considers the Muslim population to have most perfectly preserved the Bosnian language from its medieval instantiation to the present day and even lists exemplary Muslim writers going back to the seventeenth century. This line of reasoning excludes Bosnia's ethnic minorities from having a full stake in Bosnian nationhood and also implies that those Bosnian Muslim writers who do not use the 'characteristic' idiom (as defined by him) have suspect national credentials.<sup>457</sup>

In *After Babel*, George Steiner points out that language not only unites, but excludes and differentiates as well; language reflects, reinforces, and creates differences on many levels, including class, gender, profession, and ethnicity. In a divided community – or in this case, a community that desires division – the agonistic, representative function of speech, which seeks to fix the identity of both speaker and interlocutor, can outweigh its communicative function. Many Bosnian diaspora writers continue to use the now-dead language of Serbo-Croatian seek to disrupt the link between language and representation and restore its communicative function by repatriating themselves within the same language from which nationalists tried to expel them. In a more radical response to linguistic nationalists, Hemon himself has opted out of using his mother tongue altogether in his fiction (although he continues to employ it in journalism destined for Bosnian media outlets). Rather than writing in Serbo-Croatian, Hemon has chosen to compose his novels and short stories in the English of his adopted country. He has cited several reasons for this decision. On a personal level, he feels that he lost a connection with Serbo-Croatian at the same time that he was cut off from the experience of people in Sarajevo, 'not to mention that the 'official' language was spoken and written at some point by [...] Karadžić and others like that.'<sup>458</sup> He also realized that he would likely spend the rest of his life

in America and did not want to be trapped in a 'nostalgic vacuum,' cut off from the full experience of life where he was living it.<sup>459</sup> Hemon has denied that his choice of language has anything to do with commercial interest, but the truth is that writing in (astonishingly erudite) English has enabled his works to enter the world literature circuit, thus winning a wider audience than his counterparts who write in Serbo-Croatian and rendering him a more forceful voice against nationalism.

On an artistic level, Hemon, who has described his impetus to write as an obsession with language itself, feels an affinity for the richness of the English language:

Our language isn't small because we don't have a lot of words [...]. The problem is that the cultures are small, and they're small because they're organized around nation and national identity. Few translations are published, there is the ever-present xenophobic feeling of cultural endangeredness and so on. National cultures are always provincial, and especially those monstrous transitional entities, where it seems that illiteracy is not only normal but indispensable for the functioning of these crippled states. One of the advantages of the English language is that it's transnational. Modern American literature succeeded in absorbing a great number of writers whose mother tongue wasn't necessarily English, writers whom you don't expect to express some national essence.<sup>460</sup>

Hemon barely knew English when he moved to the United States in his late 20s, and he taught himself the language by reading novels by fellow immigrant Vladimir Nabokov and making vocabulary flashcards, a technique which may in part explain his unusual lexicon. What is perhaps most striking about Hemon's prose, however, is his use of everyday words in unusual contexts, generating effects that range from the jarring to the unexpectedly beautiful and making the English language newly alien to the native speaker.<sup>461</sup> By constantly drawing attention back to the formal properties of the language itself, Hemon's defamiliarized English disrupts the reader's instinct to sink uncritically into emotional identification with the characters or become absorbed by plot twists.

While many novels strive to render the word as transparent as possible in service to the story, Hemon restores its opacity, reminding the reader that meaning and identity are not natural, pre-existent entities but the by-products of language itself – a fact that should engender both scepticism and awe of language in the reader. This insight is perhaps not surprising in a writer who came of age in Communist Yugoslavia, where official ideology, disseminated until the early 1980s through state-supervised media, set definite limits on the horizons of possibility for individual and group identity.

Hemon also, however, witnessed the increasing gap between official discourse and everyday lived identity in Yugoslavia's last decade, a development fuelled by competition from other, non-official discourses that sought to re-accentuate the meaning of official ideology (such that, for example, 'Yugoslavism' was re-inflected to read as 'Serbism'). The disintegration of the relationship between sign and referent that official discourse sought to cement, made writers like Hemon well aware of the semantic instability of language. Voloshinov and the structuralists of the Bakhtin group shifted Saussure's emphasis on the relationship between sign and referent to the relationship between sign and sign, depicting language as an agonistic terrain on which the meaning of linguistic signs is kept in perpetual flux by speech utterances in concrete circumstances. According to these Marxist linguists, the aim of the dominant ideology is to mask the inherently dialectic nature of the sign.<sup>462</sup> In light of this insight, the instability of the linguistic sign itself renders any effort to use language as the signifier of national identity patently absurd.<sup>463</sup> American English's obvious heterogeneity and mutability unmasks this same quality in Serbo-Croatian (or Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian/Montenegrin, however you name it) and in every language, making it a fitting medium for the interrogations of identity that lie at the core of Hemon's fiction. His vision of American English as permeated by the countless language communities and cultures that immigrants have brought to its shores, as being defined by its very multiplicity and diversity,

suggests a very different notion of identity than that purveyed by linguistic nationalists, one that is improvised, contingent, and constantly at risk of dissolution.

For Hemon, personal identity, while enmeshed with language, can never be reduced to simplistic, pre-fabricated rubrics like national language. For him, identity is ever a work in progress, a translation between contexts, a best approximation based on the exigencies of the present moment. The experience of the immigrant, who faces the daunting task of acquiring a foreign language and employing it to present a coherent self to others, exemplifies a process that all individuals in fact undertake at every moment in their daily lives but that is usually masked by seemingly stable cultural, linguistic, and social contexts. The quintessential immigrant story of ‘becoming’ – of arriving a stranger and eventually achieving membership in one’s new community – inevitably occurs within language. While Communist Yugoslavia had offered a limited range of discourses with which to construct one’s identity, the immigrant in America faces a bewildering panoply of options. As Hemon states in the interview cited above, American English may not be used to construct national identity, but how then is one to cobble together a self using the endless possibilities of this sprawling language? The first section of *Nowhere Man*, whose unnamed first-person narrator is a refugee from Bosnia living in Chicago in 1994, depicts the barrage of undifferentiated discourses that confront the immigrant:

‘All we ask for,’ said a young man, with his hands folded over his crotch, ‘is to give your life to Jesus Christ and follow him to the Kingdom of God.’ His companion, wide-shouldered, bearded, walked through the train car offering everyone a brown bag of peanuts and salvation. An old lady with a plastic wrap on her bloated gray hair grinned abruptly, as if a shot of pain went through her body at that very instant. A wizened old man, wearing a grimace of perplexed horror, and a sallow straw fedora, looked up at the peanut man. A young woman in front of me – a pointed tongue of hair touched her collar, and she smelled like cinnamon and milk – was reading the paper. ‘Defenses collapse in Gorazde’, a headline read. I had



been in Goražde only once, only because I had vomited in the car, on our way somewhere, and my parents stopped in Goražde to clean the mess up. All I remembered was being thirsty and shivering on the front seat, as my father retched in the back seat, wiping it with a cloth; and then my father leaving my cloth-wrapped vomit by the road, and hungry, desperate little animals crawling out of the bushes to devour it. The woman gave a neatly creased dollar to the peanut man, took a bag from him and ripped it open, and then started crunching the nuts. I said: 'No, thank you.' Granville, Loyola, Morse. The woman flipped the page, a few nutshells pitter-pattered on it. 'Sunny skies warm most of nation'. We all disembarked from the train at Howard, leaving behind throngs of peanut shells, and a drunk in a Cubs hat, slumped in the dark corner.<sup>464</sup>

The immigrant's early days in a new culture inevitably involve an ongoing dialectic between present and past that he negotiates within language. Here, the narrator clings numbly to the surface of things, immersing himself in sensory stimuli in order to avoid the painful work of remembering where he came from. The headline referring to atrocities in the East Bosnian town of Goražde elicits an unbidden memory, but the narrator quickly retrains his attention on the people in the compartment and then allows a more neutral headline to absorb his attention. The narrator's will to forget is echoed in the experience of Lazarus in *The Lazarus Project*, who in order to make a new life in Chicago must disremember the pogrom in his native Ukraine that had compelled him to immigrate. According to Hemon, 'to 'disremember' is to reorganize one's experience under the new narrative. Especially for people who have come through a form of actual, physical slaughter, and to the extent the construction of narrative is memory, then that narrative, for them, has to involve a quantity of amnesia. More amnesia than is involved in most narratives.'<sup>465</sup>

The improvised revision of one's own personal narrative through the work of selective remembering and disremembering occurs through storytelling, a process that *Nowhere Man* protagonist Jozef Pronek has been frantically engaged in since arriving in the U.S., until he realizes that his girlfriend, and even he himself, does not know exactly who he is:

It was while Rachel was in the kitchen – glasses clinking, water running, indeterminate noises ebbing – that he imagined himself imagining himself in this room, dimly lit, waiting for a woman who could only know what he told her in his sloppy English and distorting accent. He saw clearly that who he thought he was and who she thought he was were two different persons. He imagined himself doubled, the two of them sitting next to each other on the damn sofa. The Cat was suddenly across the table, nestling in the armchair, panning from Pronek to his twin and back.<sup>466</sup>

As long as Pronek's stay in the U.S. had felt like a temporary lark, the freedom to re-imagine himself in any manner he wishes – a game he plays while working as a Greenpeace canvasser going door to door in various Chicago neighbourhoods – could seem like a playful adventure. Faced with the realization that he is likely going to spend the rest of his life in a foreign land, this freedom transmogrifies into something horrifying. It becomes unclear whether there is any continuity between the Bosnian Pronek, whom only he himself knows, and the American Pronek, who feels like a stranger to him. Pronek, in Scheherazade mode, has been fabricating new identities so furiously, seeing himself exclusively through the eyes of others, that he has left his own sense of self behind. The resulting state of alienation is captured by the passage's last image, in which, in an allusion to the performativity of identity, the cat's gaze is likened to a camera 'panning' back and forth between his two selves. This passage poses the question of what has held Pronek's various selves together up until this point, and what could possibly re-integrate them. Is it national identity? Language? Personal memories? Place of origin? A sense of home? This theoretical question assumes a grave urgency for the recent immigrant, plumbing the outer limits of identity change. To what extent can you alter your sense of self without disintegrating into schizophrenia?

The crisis experienced by Pronek suggests that, while the self is constructed by the way in which it remembers or disremembers the past, this does not mean that the past can be entirely re-invented. *Nowhere Man's* investigation of the construction of personal history is expanded in *The Lazarus Project* to the

level of public history; if the mutability of the self has psychological bounds, what provides ethical bounds for historiography, which has been notoriously abused by nationalists in the former Yugoslav republics who freely rewrote history to suit their own political agendas? The fragmented narrative structure of *Nowhere Man* reflects on the formal level the questions about identity explored at the thematic level, constituting an interrogation of the coherent, reliable authorial voice and a challenge to narrative authority; the structure draws attention to the ways in which the 'truth' about Pronek's identity is constructed differently depending on voice. The split structure of *The Lazarus Project* – the narrative cuts back and forth between the real-life murder and public vilification of Jewish-Ukrainian immigrant Lazarus Averbuch in 1908, and Bosnian immigrant Brik's journey to his grandfather's Ukraine in the present day – explores the ways in which the construction of autobiographical and public history depend on one another, raising the questions: Does a different set of ethics apply to the stories that an individual tells about his past and the stories that an historian tells about a collectively experienced event? Where does an individual's right to re-invent his own past end and the abuse of history begin?

Hemon's works evince a deep scepticism toward the metanarratives and collective mythologies that tend to constitute public history; his experimentation with paratextual elements repeatedly unmasks the formal devices that historiography deploys to generate truth effects and guard its monopoly on facticity. His first literary work, 'The Life and Work of Alphonse Kauders,' is a collection of fictional biographical fragments that mimics entries in an encyclopaedia about an actual historical figure which he read on Radio Sarajevo II's Omladinski Program in the late '80s. In a Wells-esque experience, Hemon's listeners actually believed that he was an historian reporting historical fact, confirming his dictum that 'verisimilitude of fiction is achieved by exactness of detail.'<sup>467</sup> Hemon, who served as the cultural editor of the political-cultural magazine *Naši Dani* in the early 1990s, reports: 'I learned that the difference

between reality and fantasy, between history and fiction is often just a thing of perspective and approach of the narrator, just as I learned that the media has an inherent realistic authority – the media doesn't report on reality but creates it, which enables them, as we know, to live without any sort of limits.<sup>468</sup> In his story 'The Sorge Spy Ring,' Hemon tries his hand at two further generators of verisimilitude – the scholarly footnote and the photographic image. *The Lazarus Project* further explores the relationship between image and text, juxtaposing the two media without any linking captions in a manner reminiscent of W. G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten* (The Emigrants, 1993), thereby inviting readers to furnish their own interpretative frameworks in order to generate meaning from their contiguity. The formal structure of *The Lazarus Project* disaggregates image and text, depriving the photograph of its usual role as warrant of truth and exposing the constructedness of any meaning that might link them. *The Lazarus Project* depicts the ways in which the media, under the sway of various powerful interests, cannibalizes the personal histories of individuals, employing rhetorical strategies borrowed from fiction to re-package them into fetching headlines and images designed to seduce the reader into a state of credulity. In this way the media constructs a type of public history – 'news' – that bears no relation to lived reality.

For Hemon, history is a vast, impersonal force that pulverizes individual lives; his stories grapple with 'the fact that history never notices its own victims, that literature is *de facto* insignificant, except maybe as an ethical expression.'<sup>469</sup> Literature represents a small counter-discourse to History by valorising the subjective experience of the individual; in fact, literature as a form of witnessing can set limits on the fabrications of supposedly objective historiography. Many contemporary writers living both in Bosnia and in the diaspora view the function of literature in part to bear testament, a reaction to wartime propaganda that sought to erase atrocities and muddle the line between aggressor and victim. Bosnian critic Enver Kazaz suggests that the younger generation of writers has

sought to make literature 'an ethical document of historical horrors,' one which rivals other discourses, whether historiographic, political, or ideological.<sup>470</sup>

Hence the appearance of storytelling, in the midst of the chaos of war and the hopelessness of Bosnia's present transition, as a discourse which redefines historical memory and its strategies, deals with ideological and political transcendences, grapples with nationalism and with politically and ideologically defined narratives, establishes a new model of cultural remembering [...].<sup>471</sup>

Perhaps the most monstrous result of the war in Bosnia was that entire communities of people chose to put their faith in official History rather than individual histories. The continued denial of real atrocities in many depictions of the '90s war lends an ethical urgency to the work of cultural memory performed by Bosnian diaspora literature, the need for which is alluded to in *Nowhere Man* when Pronek encounters a Serb in Chicago who claims that the Sarajevo breadline massacre was a sham, staged by mujahedeen with dolls. Pronek counters this outrageous denial of suffering with his mother's eyewitness account of the event, to no avail.<sup>472</sup>

At its most playful moments, Hemon's work depicts the past – collective and personal – as a storage room of variegated items that can be drawn on and recombined in infinite variations. However, while both the individual self and public history are constructed through the selective remembering and disremembering of the past that occurs within language, and although the boundary between fact and fiction is never clear, this frees neither the individual nor the historian from the imperative of keeping this process within certain bounds. Through experimentation with the formal qualities of language, Hemon seeks to locate and inscribe these limits, a task that constitutes the underlying ethical impetus of his work. To transgress these bounds is to stray into the territory of schizophrenia in discourses of personal identity, and criminality in discourses of collective identity.



## **18. EUROPE AS ABRAHAMIC: NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARADIGMS RE-EXAMINED**

Emel Tastekin (University of British Columbia)

Abraham Geiger (1810-74) is a nineteenth century German-Jewish Orientalist, who is widely acknowledged for pioneering the scholarly study of Islam in the objective or non-polemical form it is practiced today in Middle Eastern or Islamic Studies departments. I would like to introduce Geiger's work as important in the formulation of Europe's modern identity, or more specifically, Geiger's achievement in Jewish and Islamic studies as a step in the dynamic process of constructing Europe as an idea. I start off with a reading of Jacques Derrida's essay 'The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe' (1992) and the use of his term 'hospitality' in order to clarify my theoretical premise. I do this to highlight the unique perspective that Geiger brings into the study of Islam as a member of the Jewish diaspora, who was offering the category of 'Abrahamic' as an alternative to the discriminatory philological categories of Indo-European versus Semitic in the biblical scholarship of his time.

Jacques Derrida in his essay 'The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe' (1992) evokes François Mitterand's speech in which the French president

speaks about a Europe that is 'returning in its history and its geography like one who is returning home.' Derrida begins by asking what this 'home' might be, what it was in the past and what it is expected to be; what is specific to European identity, or how can Europe culturally be identified? However, instead of offering answers to these questions, Derrida leads us into the axiom of cultural identity and suggests that at the core of any identity is 'a difference at once internal and irreducible to the at home (with itself).'<sup>473</sup> Therefore, for example, when one asserts that Europe is responsible towards its others, one assumes that there is a Europe within itself. Whereas, Derrida thinks that European responsibility starts with the acknowledgement that its identity is not a coherent entity posed against 'others' but that the other is constitutive of European identity itself.

The essay 'The Other Heading' was first published as an article in newspapers in 1990 in all the major European capitals such as Frankfurt, Paris, Turin, and Madrid. Derrida himself refers to this journalistic background in a preface titled 'Today,' which indicates that it was written with such a responsibility in mind. More than just an explanatory preface, it becomes apparent that the title 'Today' is closely related to Derrida's definition of European responsibility. What was happening in Europe at the time the essay was written? It was the bicentennial of the French revolution and the fall of the Berlin wall the year before. The First Gulf War had also started only two months before the publication. The Soviet Union was falling apart and the expansion of the European Union to the former communist countries was under debate. In the background, there was also an increasing anxiety, particularly in France and Germany, about a certain 'foreigner problem.' All of these events, with more or less emphasis, are mentioned in the essay.

The other exemplary date that Derrida evokes in the essay is the one marked in Paul Valéry's historical writings that are 'bear[ing] the marks of an urgency, [...] or imminence,' namely the advent of World War II.<sup>474</sup> Derrida notes that in Valéry's work *The Freedom of Spirit*, published in 1939, the tremors



of a partitioning Europe and the imminence of its destruction were felt. Therefore, precisely at such a date, Valéry makes an appeal for a unified European spirit. To counter the existing east-central-west alliances and conflicts within Europe, Valéry offers, as a subject from the Mediterranean coast of France, a Mediterranean spirit as a current 'heading' for Europe.<sup>475</sup> What Derrida reads in Valéry's appeal to the Mediterranean is the expression of the particularity of European identity through universal paradigms, such as 'spirit, capital, and culture.' At the same time, it appeals to the singularity of the date, to Valéry's 'today,' where the threat of losing Europe's function as a capital example was imminent in the violent claims for particularity, such as that of Nazism. On the other hand, Derrida also draws attention to the singularity of his own 'today,' where Valéry's appeal seems violent in its hegemonic and capitalist Eurocentrism for appealing to a European 'spirit, culture, and trade.' What I want to point out in Derrida's gesture is that he reads the utterance of European identity, or a suggested heading for Europe such as that of Mediterranean, as the unique product of three historical vectors:

The first one is the unrepeatable and irreplaceable particularity of the uttering subject, which in the case of Valéry is Mediterranean, French, male; particularities that are usually and always in one or more hyphenated forms. The second vector marks the singularity of the date, 'today,' usually underlined by the imminence or urgency of a war. The third vector stands for the unavoidable appeal to a universal language current at the time. The last vector, I would emphasize, is unavoidable and necessary for Derrida's understanding of political ethics, even though he is popularly known as the philosopher of particularity and difference.

It is a universality that does not inscribe permanence or centralization, but one that takes the risk of being overcome and overturned. As Giovanna Borradori comments, '[f]ar from curtailing the demand for universal justice and freedom, deconstruction renews it infinitely.'<sup>476</sup>

I suggest that reading the various headings and constructions of European identities of the past through these vectors constitutes what Derrida calls a ‘deconstructive genealogy,’<sup>477</sup> and I call hermeneutics of hospitality, or, reading history against all expectations. Hospitality is welcoming that which cannot be prescribed and a heading that has not been explored and one that is not yet expected. This is what Derrida has to say about the need for headings:

It is necessary to make ourselves the guardians of an idea of Europe, of a difference of Europe, but of a Europe that consists precisely in not closing itself off in its own identity and in advancing itself off in an exemplary way toward what it is not, toward the other heading or the heading of the other, which would be the beyond of this modern tradition, another border structure, another shore.<sup>478</sup>

A hospitable reading of identity constructions in the past means reading them as rhetorical acts that assume responsibility in the face of their current urgencies but that create a violence in the face of other differences. Thus, every heading, such as Valéry’s Mediterranean and Geiger’s Abrahamic, however temporary, will inevitably contain elements of violence as well as hospitality. As a matter of fact, genuine hospitality, according to Derrida, is impossible. He exemplifies this by the double meaning of the word *hostis* in Latin, meaning both the host and enemy; hence, the neologism in the title ‘Hostipitality,’ a title given to an essay in the collection *Acts of Religion* (2002). Hospitality is a contradictory term. In order to be hospitable one must be ready to be overtaken and be surprised; the self of the host must be violated and therefore at the moment of hospitality the host becomes obsolete; thus it becomes impossible to talk about hospitality. Whereas, when the rules of hospitality are circumvented by the strict definitions of the host and the guest, or it is done as an acquired *habitus*, as a duty, again hospitality fails because it is not the opening of oneself to the unexpected, or to quote Derrida ‘let oneself be swept by the coming of wholly other, the absolute unforeseeable stranger, the uninvited visitor, the unexpected visitation beyond any welcoming

apparatuses.<sup>479</sup> This contradiction of hospitality is the very act of deconstruction itself.

Let us recap: What is *my* responsibility today? The first vector dictates that I disclose my own subject position, which is never one thing but a set of adjectives in endless and sometimes imbalanced hyphenated constructions, such as, Oriental, German, Canadian, female, literary critic. The second vector consists of the urgencies today: On one hand, there is the war between the West (North America and Europe) and the violent terrorism conducted in the name of Islam, a war that implicates territories where Muslims outside the West live. On the other hand we have the question of integrating Islam into Europe as posed by the challenge of Turkey's possible membership in the EU and the presence of Muslim minorities within Europe as the seemingly inassimilable religious others within. The third vector is the universal language I chose to speak through, namely, the language of an hospitable (as opposed to tolerant)<sup>480</sup> multiculturalism, of de-territorializing and making heterogeneous the cultural and religious differences we build our communities on, and an understanding of literature as democracy and 'the right to say everything' as Derrida defines it.<sup>481</sup>

Under the circumstances of today, the religious issues seem to be the most pressing. Therefore, a genealogy of the heading 'Abrahamic' for Europe needs to be explored.

Given the circumstances of today, literary criticism's current responsibility should be to join the conversations on Islam. Thus, I devised a hermeneutics of hospitality based on Derrida's philosophy and on some recent Jewish cultural theory influenced by postcolonialism that will draw a genealogical link between the disciplines of Islamic/Qur'anic studies and literary studies. The absence of Islam's primary texts and its interpretive traditions within literary studies is a curious subject, particularly when compared to the prominent presence of the Bible. I argue that Geiger's and other German-Jewish Orientalists' perception of Islam as an equal and respectable partner in dialogue in the late

nineteenth century were the first attempts to counter the internal imperialism of Western/European culture and, as such, the precursor of comparative and postcolonial literary studies of the twentieth century.

Edward Said's move to leave out German academic Orientalism from his postcolonial criticism in *Orientalism* (1978) has been treated with interest and puzzlement by many critics so far. Said apparently failed to notice that the first example of the critical branch historical-philological study of Islam was Geiger's prize-winning essay and doctoral dissertation of 1833 entitled *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (What did Muhammad take from Judaism?).<sup>482</sup> In other words, current critical scholarship on Islam and the Qur'an was inaugurated by Jewish scholars who also worked within the tradition of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the scientific and historical study of Judaism), rather than the mainly British and French figures that Said puts under anti-imperialist scrutiny in *Orientalism*. This peculiar observation was first mentioned in an article by Bernard Lewis on pro-Muslim sentiments among late nineteenth century Jews, which was then followed by the publication of a volume titled *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*.<sup>483</sup> The subject has not drawn much attention outside these polemical attacks against Said, most of which defended Jewish Orientalism's role in liberating Islam from its existing dogmas. However, recently a group of German scholars of the Qur'an published a volume exclusively dedicated to this subject, entitled *'Im vollen Licht der Geschichte': die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung* ('In the full light of history': *The Science of Judaism and the Beginnings of Critical Qur'anic Research* (2008)).<sup>484</sup> At least a quarter of the book is dedicated to Geiger. Angelika Neuwirth in the introduction to this book explains that Geiger's work was the first 'non-theological perspective on Islam, a novelty in European scholarship at the time.'<sup>485</sup> She confirms that it could almost be seen as a sympathetic and more humane approach to Islam compared to what was being written among established Orientalists.

Geiger's role as a Jewish reformer, on the other hand, has been receiving significant attention since the publication of Susannah Heschel's book *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (1998). Heschel in her book utilizes current Jewish theories and the postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha to bring to the foreground the subversive aspects of Geiger's work on Jewish history, which by modern Jewish historians after the Holocaust had been seen as an effect of assimilation into the Protestant and liberal scientism of the age.

Heschel argues that Geiger's revision of Christian origins was 'an attempt to subvert Christian hegemony and establish a new position for Judaism within European history and thought.'<sup>486</sup> These recent perspectives on Geiger can be combined in order to offer a more hospitable genealogy of the Western Orientalist scholarship with the aim to create a crack on the disciplinary walls between Qur'anic studies and literary studies. Such a deconstructive genealogy, as I have explained before, requires that I explore the vectors of my chosen subject, Abraham Geiger.

First of all, Geiger was a German rabbi from Frankfurt and was better known as the intellectual leader of the Jewish Reformation, which came out of Moses Mendelssohn's Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) that sought to revise Judaism's nationalist and ritualistic elements to support the modernization and emancipation struggles of Jewish minorities in Europe.

Even though he started his scholarly life with the above-mentioned seminal work on Islam, he devoted himself to the historical study of Judaism for the rest of his life. However, because *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was not accepted as an academic discipline until after World War II, Geiger, despite his numerous scholarly contributions to Jewish history, remained a rabbi professionally throughout his life and in a way an exilic scholar within his own country. He devoted his life to the actualization of a plausible and yet non-assimilating hyphen between German Enlightenment culture and Jewish tradition. Second, what were the urgencies of Geiger's day? In the Germany of Geiger's

day, anti-imperialist sentiments towards France and the unification attempts of the German-speaking lands under the leadership of Prussia created a unique predicament for German Orientalism, namely, it posed Enlightenment cosmopolitanism against romantic nationalism. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's famous speech about the inassimilable nature of the Jews into the German nation was held only a few years before Geiger was born.<sup>487</sup> At the same time, the Hebraism/Hellenism binary had an important place in the critical traditions of the nineteenth century. Originally employed in biblical hermeneutics, the binary was carried over to secular philology during the nineteenth century and adapted as a formula for the respectively moral and aesthetic values in a literary work. As Maurice Olender argues, the emphasis on Hebrew and Hellene qualities in literary and historical criticism came out of a complex network of race, religion and language theories, and the Hebraism/Hellenism binary was used interchangeably with another binary – now largely abandoned in the vaults of history – namely that of Indo-European (or Aryan) and Semitic.<sup>488</sup> It was at this critical time of discursive formations that Geiger, as a German-Jewish scholar, promoted the category 'Semitic monotheism' over the Philhellenism and Christian-Protestant bias in contemporary scholarship by suggesting an historical allegiance between Islam and Judaism as a corrective to Christian polytheistic degeneration. Geiger's discomfort for the prioritizing of the Indo-European and Hellenic sides of these binaries within the discursive fields he was working in was directly related to his Jewish subject position and his urge to prove Judaism's validity for modern life. As for the universal language at the time, our third vector, it was scientific reasoning based on evidence, which for humanities was the historical-philological interpretation of texts. Geiger chose the language of scientific rationalism for a reading of the Qur'an over the romantic nationalism prevalent at the time in Germany because the latter territorialized identity, valorised fixed roots and presented literature, myth and folklore as its ally.

The novel perspective that Geiger brought to Oriental studies consisted of

mainly two claims: First, unlike preceding studies that saw Muhammad as an ‘imposter’ and ‘barbaric heretic’ (Sacy), Geiger suggested that the author of the Qur’an indeed was a ‘genuine enthusiast.’<sup>489</sup> Second, he argued that Muhammad borrowed his Qur’anic stories from Jewish sources more than he did from Christianity mainly through verbal encounters rather than directly reading the scriptures or Talmudic literature. After the success of his doctoral thesis, Geiger turned his attention to the Jewish sources of Christianity. The premise of his argument was the same. However, the claim that Christianity was never meant to be a separate religion but started simply as a Jewish sect and was later distorted was not as welcome by the scholarly community. Geiger’s real motive was to continue *Haskalah*’s mission to promote Judaism as the source of Enlightenment values instead of Pauline Christianity as the Tübingen School of Theology at the time was famously claiming.

As Bach comments, ‘Geiger was deeply convinced that universal humanity ha[d] its roots in Israel.’<sup>490</sup> For Geiger, Jewish diasporic presence around the Mediterranean basin throughout history was more important for the shaping of Europe’s identity than some Indo-European roots in the Far East. Such motives led him to explore heading Abrahamic in place of the imagined separation of Indo-European and Semitic cultures.

I wish to argue that Geiger in *WMJ* forges the heading ‘Abrahamic’ as a European identity by first creating a link between the prophet Muhammad and Abraham the patriarch, and then between himself and these two figures. The figures of Muhammad and Abraham as represented in *WMJ* correspond to Geiger’s own mission in the present to reform Judaism and to make it the source of Enlightenment modernity via ethical monotheism.<sup>491</sup> Geiger describes Muhammad in terms of Abraham, whom he considers the bearer of a monotheistic Jewish spirit. On the other hand, Geiger’s sensitivity towards pagan and Hellenic flights and anti-Jewish views within the Christian scholarship of his time leads him to turn to both Abraham and Muhammad as his role models. His

Muhammad in *WMJ*, like himself, tries to adapt Jewish monotheistic principles to his own time and milieu, while striving to purify this monotheistic essence from the corrupting influences of Christianity and of certain particularistic Jewish sects. In short, Geiger reads the history of Qur'an in response to his present need to reform Judaism of its particularistic and antiquated elements and to find a comfortable position for an unassimilated Jewish community within modern and secular German surroundings.

A prospective reader might infer from the title of *WMJ* that Muhammad authored the Qur'an and that he did so by 'borrowing' extensively from the Jewish sources around him.<sup>492</sup> However, as soon as we look more closely at the text itself and the discursive strategies it employs, we discover that this is far from Geiger's intention. Rather than seeking to demonstrate the human authorship and lack of authenticity of the Qur'an or Muhammad's lack of originality, Geiger seems to be ignoring such controversial topics intentionally for the sake of establishing an objective and scientific language. In fact, it is this sensitivity that makes Geiger's approach to the Qur'an in *WMJ* so pioneering. He states, for instance, that the Jewish sources appealed to 'the poetic genius of the prophet,' who took material over from Judaism 'as long as the Jewish views were not in direct opposition to his own' and in order to 'restore' earlier revelations that 'had been spoiled by additions and perversions' (AG 17- 22). We see here a depiction of Muhammad as a person with principles, whose mission was driven by poetic and reformist motives. As Geiger himself notes, this constitutes a stark contrast to the previous depictions of Muhammad as someone who 'deceived intentionally, and with a well-weighted consideration of each step as to whether or not it would help him towards his aim of deluding others' (AG 24). Geiger distinguishes his image of Muhammad from the 'unjustifiable [...] harsh judgments generally passed upon him,' for example by S.F.G. Wahl (the German translator of the Qur'an which Geiger also consulted for his Qur'anic citations). He then emphasizes that Muhammad was a 'genuine enthusiast, who was himself convinced of his divine



mission, and to whom the union of all religions appeared necessary to the welfare of mankind' (AG 25). This neutral approach to the character of Muhammad (neither disparaging nor praising) and the 'scientific precision' used to 'evidence' (AG 1) the Jewish sources of Muhammad's Qur'an make *WMJ* a pioneering work among the existing Orientalist studies. At the same time, Geiger curiously describes Muhammad's mission as a universalizing one and as an attempt to unify the three Abrahamic religions. It is hard to overlook the fact that the Enlightenment ideals of universal morality are embodied in the character of Muhammad. I will look at Geiger's discursive choice – of objective scholarship – as one of the three vectors constituting Geiger's hospitable hermeneutics towards Islam, and argue that what motivated this choice were the two other vectors, namely his German-Jewish subject position and his chosen responsibility to reform and elevate Judaism within Enlightenment modernity.

Geiger's motivation to elevate the historical image of Judaism shows itself most obviously when he proves the direct Jewish influence on Muhammad, that is, whether historically and geographically Muhammad was in close contact with Jewish sources and figures in the First Division of *WMJ*. Geiger deduces Jewish influence on Muhammad not only from the 'fear' and 'respect' in Muhammad's mind towards the 'physical power' of Jews, but also from his awareness of their 'mental superiority' and their 'intellect and wit' (AG 6, AG 14). In fact, Geiger makes the intellectual challenges that the Jews were posing as the primary motive for Muhammad's adaptations, rather than his political struggle for power. Such a perspective on Muhammad as an intelligently strategizing agent is not only in contrast with existing depictions of Muhammad as a barbaric warrior-prophet, but it also shows that Geiger wants to align the Prophet with the monotheistic message of Judaism.

Thus, Geiger states that Muhammad wished to have the Jews as 'adherents' because 'though themselves ignorant, [they were] far in advance of other religious bodies in that knowledge which [he] professed to have received by

Divine revelation' (AG 4). Clearly, the 'knowledge' that Muhammad distinguishes from the other religions in his region is that of monotheism. Geiger therefore claims that Muhammad took over material from Judaism as the best model for the monotheistic worldview he wanted to promote among the polytheistic Arabs of his time, which he called the ignorant age (*jahlilia*) (AG 41).

In effect, Geiger describes Muhammad as the heir of Abraham, who in a polytheistic and fragmented world discovers the possibility of monotheism (AG 95). Only in the case of Muhammad, there is already a rich scriptural tradition that has established such monotheism and it happens to be mainly in the possession of his Jewish neighbours. Geiger even argues that Muhammad was not just uncritically taking over religious tenets from Judaism for the attainment of power but eliminating certain aspects, such as the particularistic ideas found among his Jewish contemporaries while emphasizing certain others and the universality that the attachment to monotheism implies. Thus, Geiger accentuates the universalizing mission of Islam. When examining the transmission of the concept of *Furqan* (deliverance), he explains that:

Muhammad entirely diverging from Jewish ideas, intended to establish his religion as that of the world in general. He declared his creed to have been revealed through God's Apostles from the earliest times, and to have been only renewed and put into a clearer and more convincing form by himself. (AG 41-2)

He explains that Muhammad 'desired no peculiarity, no new religion' and that his idea was in 'harmony with the spirit of Judaism' and that it was 'in fact only an offshoot of a great tree' (AG 21 and 45). Clearly, 'tree' does not mean Judaism in its latest form as it was lived in Arabia at the time. On the contrary, we should conclude from Geiger's emphasis on Muhammad's own selectiveness and corrections that it was a certain 'essence' of Judaism that Muhammad wanted to revive.

Particularly in the section of *WMJ* that is about the transmission of the

stories about the prophet Abraham, there are clear signs that Geiger aligns Muhammad with the teachings and figure of the patriarch. He points to the passages in the Qur'an that state that 'Abraham's faith [...] is preached in the Qur'an' and that Abraham 'was the believer in the unity of God [...], neither Jew nor Christian, but he was a believer in the unity of God, given up to God (a Muslim).'<sup>493</sup> Geiger is determined to prove the immense influence that the midrashic stories of Abraham had on Muhammad. For example, he shows how 'Abraham is intended to be a type of Muhammad' and how Muhammad, when reporting the speeches ascribed to Abraham, 'indulges in digressions unsuitable to any but himself, and thus falls from the part of narrator into that of admonisher' (AG 99). By emphasizing Muhammad's affinity with the mythical father of monotheism – particularly in the context of Muhammad's narration of Abraham's destruction of the idols – Geiger seeks to demonstrate that Muhammad was not seeking to be the founder of yet another sect of Judaism with minor differences in practice but a progenitor of another Abrahamic faith. For Geiger's Muhammad this Judaism was not the religion under its current forms and practices, but an Abrahamic brand of monotheism fit to serve as a model for universal morality. Through his desire to reform Judaism through scholarship and through his contempt for current Christianity, Geiger provides a respectful depiction of Islam as a genuine religious movement, and thus, in my terms, practices a hermeneutics of hospitality.

It is likely that Geiger thought that a reformist and intelligently critical Muhammad would better suit his own Jewish subject position and the urgencies he perceived around him. Muhammad, like Abraham the prophet, stood up against the polytheism and idolatry that he perceived in his surroundings, just as Geiger fought the discriminatory, nativistic and 'Hellenic' flights he observed in the Protestant biblical scholarship of his time. It is a purified monotheism that Geiger depicts in the guise of Muhammad and the Jewish influences that surrounded him:

[The] idea of the unity of God [is] the fundamental doctrine of Israel and Islam. At the time of the rise of the latter, this view was to be found in Judaism alone, and therefore Muhammad must have borrowed it from that religion. (AG 46)

Geiger elevates the ‘unity of God’ as the supreme value in Judaism and as one that Muhammad also aspired to preserve in the Qur’an. In the context of the Hellenism-versus-Hebraism, or Indo-European-versus-Semitic, debates within the discursive practices that Geiger was writing from, *WMJ* raises the flag of monotheism against the Hellenism of contemporary Protestant biblical scholarship of his time.

Geiger’s opposition to Christian hegemony in European thought shows itself only subtly and on few occasions within the scientific language he so carefully employs to study the Qur’an. His main thesis that Jewish sources had a greater influence on Muhammad than Christian ones can be regarded as an argument against the existing scholarship’s claim that Islam was just an historical heresy of Christianity. As we have seen, Geiger’s study successfully and convincingly documents how Muhammad not only instigated a local reaction to existing forms of Christianity and paganism in the Arabian peninsula, but also offered a Jewish-Abrahamic correction to these in the Qur’an.

On other occasions, Geiger enters a direct conversation with the Christian scholars of his time. We are clearly told, for example, that he intentionally ‘limits’ himself to the doctrines in the Qur’an adopted from Judaism instead of attempting to ‘expound the whole Qur’an [or] set forth the theology of the Qur’an; an undertaking which was begun with considerable success in the *Tübingen Zeitschrift für Evangelische Theologie* [Tübingen Journal for Evangelical Theology]’ (AG 45). We can understand this as another of Geiger’s rhetorical strategies for distinguishing his approach from the Christian-biased scholarship of his time. Geiger’s most direct confrontation with this Christian scholarship in *WMJ* is also one that highlights his own Jewish subject position:

In those days people had not reached such a pitch of so-called enlightenment, as to consider the followers of one creed only as in the right, and to regard everything belonging to another belief as worthless; to restrict to Christians the elements common to humanity, and to condemn Judaism as crafty and lifeless. (AG 23)

This passage suddenly emerges from the examination of Muhammad's life and times as a comment on Geiger's own life and times. In this section of *WMJ*, Geiger undertakes to discover whether it was Muhammad's intention to adapt from Judaism. He concludes that much of Judaism 'accorded with the Prophet's poetic spirit' and that therefore it was indeed Muhammad's intention to adopt those views because he meant to 'prove the harmony which must necessarily exist between the various revelations of the same God.' Adding that nobody among Muhammad's contemporaries would have objected to such appropriations, Geiger suddenly turns his critique towards his own milieu in which Enlightenment ideals were manipulated and subordinated to a Christian worldview. Geiger cleverly lets Muhammad voice his own reaction to his scholarly context. For Geiger, it is only a certain interpretation of Enlightenment that imposes an exclusionist view and that relies on a 'lifeless and crafty' image of Judaism to do this. We understand that Geiger does not discredit Enlightenment as a whole. The passage quoted above is directed at a phenomenon that we nowadays would call Eurocentrism, in other words, the hegemonic dissemination of certain local and transient values to all of humanity. Bearing in mind that his project on the Qur'an is only one reflection of Geiger's lifetime mission to promote an ethical monotheism as the 'true' Enlightenment – which he at that time could not do with Judaism – we realize that Geiger himself in fact universalizes Abrahamic values over others. Geiger's reading of the Qur'an therefore can be best explained in terms of deconstructive hospitality, since we admitted that – following Derrida's argument – genuine hospitality is impossible. As we have seen, Geiger gives consideration to Muhammad's revisions and changes, he does so out of the loyalty to his chosen

‘scientific’ discourse in *WMJ*. The hospitality towards Muhammad and his religion, then, is contingent on Geiger’s discourse (the language of objective scholarship), chosen by him to serve his German-Jewish subject position in order to resist an encompassing Christian hegemony.

To summarize, Geiger’s hospitable representation of Islam in *WMJ* – the work’s description of Muhammad as an original religious figure adhering to the monotheistic worldview of the prophet Abraham – is a rhetorical strategy that is highly entangled with Geiger’s own subject position and his reaction to the Christian bias in the historical and theological scholarship of his time. Geiger, through his depiction of Muhammad in *WMJ*, was revising Enlightenment thought to exclude everything Hellenic and Indo-European and insisted that the concept of universal morality could only stem from the monotheistic and Semitic Abraham. This is not an insignificant achievement. It does in fact establish Islam as a world religion based on Abrahamic monotheism in the European psyche altering the previously prevalent opinion of Islam as a heresy or pagan religion. On the other hand, Geiger’s analysis of the Qur’an borders at the polemical or at least apologetic form of scholarship, since in the spirit of defending Jewish identity against Christian narratives, Geiger undermines Islam’s originality and makes it mainly a continuation of Judaism. Moreover, his construct leads to a homogenization of Islam as Abrahamic, strictly monotheistic and universal, and largely rational.<sup>494</sup> Islam, due to Geiger’s desire to define Judaism as different and oppositional to Christianity, is itself defined and frozen into a set of qualities in this process. Geiger’s construction of Islam, therefore, can be considered hegemonic and effacing, as possibly an example of Orientalism in the Saidean sense. However, such violence is contradictorily in the very heart of hospitality.

Let us remember Derrida’s call to Europe to take responsibility for this grave and urgent moment, for this discourse of war against terrorism, when Islam is least welcome in Europe. His call is for an exploration of the ‘reciprocal fertilization of the Greek, the Muslim (or the Arab) and the Jew.’<sup>495</sup> This is

exactly what Geiger was doing in the name of Judaism while in effect creating an opening towards Islam. Like many Jewish intellectuals at the time, he was attempting to revive the Abrahamic heritage that passed over to Europe via medieval Spain.

Creating an historical link between Islam and Europe, via Judaism, in the fashion of nineteenth-century Jewish intellectuals such as Geiger would be a gesture that maintains the radical difference of the Other. However, it will not do this as two separate *ipseities*, as Islam and the West, but as a temporary hyphen between the European and the Muslim, where the two sides are unthinkable by themselves. The responsibility that literary studies must take today to re-establish a connection to Islam is to recognize the Abrahamic roots of Western civilization as a temporary necessity, for this urgent moment, without expecting a reward, open to all risks. It must also recognize that this Abrahamic 'heading' bears its own violence against other differences. This is the only way the other will be allowed into the institutional realm, first into our departments then into the laws, the laws of immigration, citizenship and of hospitality in general, to be changed until a new urgency appears on the horizon.





## 19. BENEATH COMPLEXIONS: THE SHAPE OF THE DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL IN *THE EXILES* BY DVORA BARON

Orian Zakai (University of Michigan)

Dvora Baron (1887-1956) is considered a unique figure in the Hebrew literary landscape for she was the first woman prose-writer who entered the canon of Hebrew literature. Born in a small Jewish town in Lithuania, and daughter of the local rabbi, she received extensive religious Jewish education which was unusual for Jewish girls at the time. As the story goes, her father let her listen in on the boys' lessons, as long as she sat in the women's section of the town's small *beit midrash* (Jewish schoolhouse) where he taught. At the young age of fifteen Baron left the family home and went to study in the city of Minsk, again a remarkable venture for girls at the time. As of 1903 she began publishing stories in Hebrew and Yiddish, and by 1910, when she immigrated to Palestine, she was already marked as a promising young author. In Palestine she met Yosef Aaharonovitz, a prominent figure in the Zionist workers' movement, *Ha-po'el ha-tza'ir*,<sup>496</sup> whom she married in 1911. Baron and Aaharonowitz also cooperated professionally, as she became editor of the literary section of the movement's publication, of which he was the chief editor. This, of course, placed Baron at the very heart of the

emerging Zionist cultural scene in Palestine. In the beginning of World War One, the Ottoman authorities deported a few hundred Jewish families from Palestine to Egypt including the Baron-Aaharonowitz family.<sup>497</sup> The time in Egypt was painful for Baron who became sick and depressed. After the war, the family returned to Palestine, where the couple assumed again their editing positions in *Ha-po'el ha-tza'ir*. In 1923, however, Baron and Aharonowitz startled the small Zionist community in Palestine when they laconically announced their resignation from the publication. While Aharonowitz continued to hold public offices in the years to come, Baron shut herself in her Tel Aviv apartment, which she literally did not leave from 1923 to the time of her death in 1956. During this thirty-three year period of seclusion, she wrote what is considered to be the more significant part of her literary work.<sup>498</sup>

Baron is the only woman prose-writer who was established as a prominent figure in the Hebrew literature of the pre-state period (that is, the first half of the twentieth century). In their introduction to a recent collection of essays on Baron, Shachar Pinsker and Sheila Jelen remark that the enthusiastic reception of her work, since her very first appearance on the Hebrew literary arena was to a large extent related to her singularity as a woman-writer.<sup>499</sup> According to Pinsker and Jelen, however, while she was celebrated as 'a social and cultural' phenomenon, i.e. a woman writer within an exclusively masculine milieu, for many years readers did not appreciate the 'poetic significance' of her work.<sup>500</sup> Jelen's and Pinsker's collection reflects the changes in the critical reception of Baron from the late 1950s to the present. It includes Dan Miron's seminal 1959 essay, which construes Baron's late stories as producing cyclical a-historical metaphysics.<sup>501</sup> While this framing of Baron dominated the critical discourse of her oeuvre for several decades, recently feminist scholars have begun to challenge Miron's reading of Baron for its detachment from the specific historical and political contexts in which Baron wrote. These scholars have ventured to trace the subversive potential of the stories especially in the context of Jewish and Zionist

gender politics, discerning in her work subtle gestures of protest both against the patriarchy of the traditional Jewish world and against the androcentrism of the Zionist project.<sup>502</sup>

One aspect of Baron's work which drew the attention of critical readers is the setting of most of her stories in the scenery of her childhood, the *shtetlekh*, the small Jewish towns of Eastern Europe, rather than in the Zionist space. This choice, unusual for a member of Zionist intellectual elite, is considered one of the reasons for her problematic position within the Hebrew canon for many years.<sup>503</sup>

For the critics mentioned above, however, the diasporic setting has a subversive force, as it frustrates the Zionist demand for a clear break with the Diaspora. Given Zionism's intense investment in the construction of Jewish masculinity and the negation of the Diaspora as effeminate,<sup>504</sup> Baron's focus upon life in the *shtetl* is also compellingly assigned gendered significance. 'By resisting the dominant trends of Hebrew fiction in her day', Wendy Zierler claims, 'Baron effectively resisted 'literary immigration' into the realm of male Hebrew letters'.<sup>505</sup>

'Furthermore', Jelen and Pinsker argue, 'in those instances in which Baron wrote about the move to Palestine, her representation was not much different from her literary depiction of the *shtetl*'.<sup>506</sup> Instead of a clear rift between the diasporic Jewish life and the new Zionist life grounded in the land, Baron radically forges, according to this approach, continuity between the old and the new, the Diaspora and the Land.

The novel *The Exiles (Ha-golim; 1943, 1956)*<sup>507</sup> is one of Baron's few pieces that focus on the Zionist settlement in Palestine. It narrates the story of a community of Jewish settlers deported by the Turks from Palestine to Egypt during World War One.<sup>508</sup> It takes place not in Europe, but in Palestine, in Alexandria, and then back in Palestine. Do these places matter, Palestine, Alexandria, Palestine, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Europe, East, West? The critical discourse delineated above implies that places do not matter so much in the case of Baron,

as the representations of the Land and the Diaspora are enmeshed together constituting a kind of an undifferentiated flux. While Miron's claim concerning Baron's a-historical metaphysics was the object of much feminist critique, I would argue that feminist and politically engaged critics such as Zierler, Jelen, Pinsker and Lubin also keep Baron secluded from Zionist politics as they construe in her stories alternative feminine space and time.<sup>509</sup>

The way Wendy Zierler describes her critical move in reading Baron is telling in this context. Contrary to earlier Zionist critics, who fault Baron for failing to represent the *Eretz Yisraeli* Zionist experience, Zierler proclaims that she joins other feminist readers in highlighting the way Baron's stories 'respond to the problematic of early twentieth-century Jewish women's experience'.<sup>510</sup> However, Baron's exploration of 'women's experience' entails, according to Zierler, her detachment from the politics of Zionism insofar as these are embodied in the act of *Aliyah* (Jewish immigration to Palestine; meaning literally 'ascend'). 'Baron's fiction (when it touches upon these topics)', Zierler exclaims, 'typically depicts Zionist immigration either as a male phenomenon from which women are excluded or as a thoroughly futile exercise'.<sup>511</sup> Thus, Baron's fictions are, for Zierler, fictions of 'female 'non-immigration'';<sup>512</sup> Baron's women do not immigrate, because Zionism is not theirs, so to speak, because women, in this approach, do not really belong to the Zionist dream; instead, '[they] find solace in the notion of a separate female community experience'.<sup>513</sup> By discarding Zionist readings in favour of a feminist reading, Zierler is supposedly transitioning to a realm where all movement stops. For Zierler, Baron's intervention in Zionist politics is, paradoxically, her detachment from it. As powerful as this claim is, it also, I argue, limits our understanding of the crucial ways in which Zionist ideology shapes Baron's work, and, even more importantly for the purpose of this essay, eludes the subtle intersections between gender, race, ethnicity and the Nation that some of her stories furnish. Tracing these aspects in the work of Baron, again, the only esteemed Hebrew woman prose-writer of her time, I hope

to shed new light on women's complicated position with the Zionist project.

Is it the case that in Baron's stories, as inside Baron's secluded Tel Aviv apartment, such an intense feminine experience prevails that it makes Zionist trajectories and narratives irrelevant? Is it true that places do not matter for women in Baron's work? My reading of *The Exiles* would suggest that places, trajectories, journeys, from here to there and back, do matter for reading Baron. I take into account here the crucial political significance of transitions to and from Palestine within the Zionist context, in which Baron does write, and postulate that not even women can imagine themselves as being beyond this context. Conversely, I argue that *The Exiles*, in fact, does represent 'female immigration', as well as women's complicity in the colonialist politics that emanate from the Jewish *Ashkenazi* settlement in Palestine. I contend, however, that Baron's fiction is indeed an exploration of 'women's experience', and that, as such, it revises nationalist and Orientalist discourses in accordance with women's particular gendered investment in Zionism.

Of the multiple families and individuals entangled in *The Exiles*, I shall focus on the stories of three young women: Ita Blokh, a new Jewish arrival to Palestine at the beginning of the novel; Brakha Rothstein, the daughter of a bourgeois Zionist Jewish family settled in Jaffa; and Lulu, a Jewish Egyptian embroiderer, whom the deportees encounter in Alexandria. Ita arrives in Palestine from Lithuania at the beginning of the novel, as a 'tourist to the Orient', accompanied by her relative Menahem Gutt, who is hopelessly in love with her. In Jaffa, they stay at the inn of Nehama Rothstein, whose daughter Brakha develops through the course of the novel an admiration for the beautiful Ita. When Jaffa's Jewish community is deported by the Turks to Alexandria, Ita and Menahem accompany the deportees and continue their tours of the East in Egypt. In Alexandria, Ita again lodges with the Rothsteins.

Eventually though, she falls in love with a Jewish Egyptian cotton merchant, whom she follows to Cairo, where she dies while giving birth to their

daughter. After news of Ita's death becomes known to the community of exiles in Alexandria, in the hopes of learning more information about Ita's tragic fate, Brakha Rothstein goes to visit Lulu the embroiderer, an acquaintance of Ita and a relative of Ita's Egyptian lover. With this encounter that intertwines the stories of three young women, I would like to begin my reading.

Before this visit, we are told, Brakha Rothstein used to avoid Lulu 'because of Lulu's adornment and outlandish dress',<sup>514</sup> and in this context we may understand the emotional strain that accompanies her entry into Lulu's space, which also seems to be burdened by the excessive ornamentality of the 'Orient':

When she saw the small sign with the embroidery-yarn outside, she knew she had found the house she was looking for. She looked about to be sure she wouldn't see anyone she knew in this 'forbidden' courtyard before she turned into the building and walked up the stairs to the top floor. The stairs creaked beneath every step she took, and as she climbed she saw the dizzying sight of countless roofs, laundry blowing in the breeze domes and towers suspended over the abyss. Finally, another sign with a ball of yarn whitened before her eyes, and the girl she sought appeared in the entrance to one of the rooms with her sewing in her hand.<sup>515</sup>

The thread of the story would entangle the stories of Brakha, Lulu and Ita but also, in the end, unravels their knot, just as, in the quotation above, the round shape of the ball both coincides with the spiral confusing space of the Alexandrian neighbourhood, and points toward the limits of that space, for it appears at the entrance to the building and on the door to Lulu's apartment, at the beginning and at the end of Brakha's dizzying Journey upstairs.<sup>516</sup>

The ball of yarn thus lures Brakha into the unsettling space of spinning rooftops and suspended towers, but also signals a way out of that space, and into another space, where, Lulu, the woman Brakha is looking for, also stands both for a beginning and an end. Indeed, the ball of yarn is a sign of a journey in search of a woman, the beautiful Ita, who was 'lost' in the 'Oriental' dizzying space. It also, however, stands for the search of a way out of that space. In this sense, as we shall

see, it is an end of a journey into the 'Orient' and a beginning of Brakha's trajectory back home.

Brakha's visit to Lulu's 'forbidden' space 'to know the truth of things' about Ita's death,<sup>517</sup> concludes another kind of exploration of a 'forbidden' knowledge. Earlier in the novel, while cleaning Ita's room at the lodge, Brakha admires all the 'marvelous objects' Ita has in her room, 'among them a tiny, delicate manicure kit, and a hand-embroidered handkerchief bordered by an azure thread'.<sup>518</sup>

While 'the truth is, she had seen all these things more than once', as Ita has also stayed in the family hotel in Jaffa, in Alexandria, we are told, Brakha's 'eyes were opened and she looked at all this differently',<sup>519</sup> because in Alexandria she learns that 'washing floors and dishes, peeling eggplants and zucchini for frying, and listening to her father's history lessons on the Shabbath', all of this is not 'in the least bit interesting'.<sup>520</sup>

What is interesting is standing 'outside a beauty shop called 'Paris'[...] and observing [...] all the young women emerging from there looking the same [...] with loose, almost sloppy curls in their hair, the same white powdery countenances, and the same red tinge on the cheekbones'.<sup>521</sup> This is, indeed, the forbidden but interesting knowledge Alexandria offers Brakha; it is tied, at the beginning, to 'Paris', to cosmopolitanism, and to the European 'tourist', Ita Blokh.

Lulu, who, as we recall, is 'too outlandish and adorned' for Brakha's taste, notably describes the admired Ita Blokh as the opposite of herself: 'and what a beauty [...] everyone thought she walked around in satins and silks, when all she wore was simple cotton, unadorned *cotton and flannel*. She had no *need* for anything fancier'.<sup>522</sup> Earlier in the novel, however, when Ita is still alive, we find her walking around the guesthouse in Alexandria, wearing not merely 'cotton and flannel', but also a 'pink silk scarf' that makes Brakha envious, because it makes Ita's face 'shine pink and rosy in its light'.<sup>523</sup> Brakha's own face, we should note,

bears the marks of the eastern sun, and is covered with ‘pimples, freckles, and light spots’.<sup>524</sup> Unfortunately for Brakha, while Ita indeed owns some silk, she does not really need it for her face to shine, since her skin-tone is completely natural, as an Italian neighbour assures Brakha. For the same reason, Ita does not really need all the ‘marvelous’ beautification equipment Brakha finds while cleaning her room for her beauty too is completely natural, as we know by the fact that her room has ‘a special scent, not the scent of perfumes, but the scent of a tree in bloom’,<sup>525</sup> which reminds us how as they were leaving Palestine, one Zionist man ‘tore some twigs off a tree [...] saying ‘these will be a symbol to us of what they have done. This tree will stay here, in its flesh, in its place [...] [while] we, in contrast, are being uprooted’.<sup>526</sup> Ita, thus, is ‘a tourist from Europe’ but she is also the scent of the tree that remains in the Land. Ita is not just ‘cotton and flannel’, just as she is not only ‘silk scarves’; she is both; she is ‘natural skin tone’ and ‘marvelous equipment’; she is the scent of an *Eretz Yisraeli* tree and foreign perfumes; she does not need anything; she has it all; whereas Brakha is in need of so many things.

Lulu herself, merely by speaking of Ita, is ‘purified’ of external decorations with ‘the rouge on her face and the blue eye shadow becoming no longer visible to Brakha – only her sad good eyes’.<sup>527</sup> That is, through Brakha’s eyes, Lulu too, like Ita, is undergoing the process of being unmade-up of all unneeded adornments. While before she entered Lulu’s room, the new knowledge of femininity Alexandria opened for Brakha seemed to indulge the desire to make up a ‘European look’. In Lulu’s room Brakha finds that real European women, like Ita, do not need to be made up; in fact, they need nothing more than ‘cotton and flannel’, whereas ‘Oriental’ women are embroidery, outlandishness, and excess. When Brakha exits Lulu’s room, she goes down the stairs notably ‘without feeling at all dizzy’,<sup>528</sup> as if the space too, like Lulu’s face, is stabilized as it is stripped of some dazzling ornamentality. On her way home, contemplating all the confusion that Alexandria was for her, Brakha concludes that ‘this girl



[Lulu] had made it all clear. Like a good exegete, she had explained all that had seemed impenetrable. And suddenly Brakha knew all there was to know'.<sup>529</sup>

Disentangling Ita from everything she does not need, all that is beyond 'cotton and flannel', it is, curiously, Lulu who takes Hebrew femininity back home. Later in the day, after going through Ita's left-behind closet, and finding there indeed only 'cotton and flannel', Brakha is also transformed:

This was the first time since they had been here that she did not put her hair in curlers before going to bed. She saw no need to. In order to keep her hair out of the way she braided it, as she used to do, in Jaffa, and she felt as she did this that she had returned to the way she had been in those days: A simple girl, helping her poor mother with the house work so they could provide food and shelter for the family.<sup>530</sup>

Rediscovering the memory of Ita, thus, enables a return home, and indeed soon afterwards, at the end of War World One, the exiles will return to Palestine. The trajectory of homecoming here, we note, coincides with the path leading from artificial curled hair to natural straight, from the outlandish femininity of 'Oriental' Alexandria, that dizzying dangerous space, to the simplicity of the home in Jaffa, where Brakha too 'has no need' for anything but the basics. For this is indeed what one needs, Brakha discovers through Lulu's 'explanation', 'food and shelter', 'cotton and flannel', a home, and functional braids to keep the hair out of the way, whereas 'silk and satin', 'sloppy curls', 'rouge and eye-shadows', 'dizzying [...] countless roofs', all this one does not need; all this is part of the dizzying Orient and is to be left in Egypt, so that the exiles may find their way home. But this is only the beginning and the end of a story.

In his seminal work on representations of whiteness, Richard Dyer recounts how 'much of the history of Western make-up is a history of whitening the face'.<sup>531</sup> Brakha's unfortunate attempt at the beginning of the novel to emulate Ita's natural complexion using pharmaceutical lotions is embedded in this racist history, stemming from the cultural construction of white femininity as the

beautiful and virtuous epitome of Western civilization, and thus the embodiment of racial superiority.<sup>532</sup> As Jews were never really included in the Western notion of whiteness, the painfully ridiculous result of Brakha's experiment seems like a mockery of the presumption of the Jewish girl to participate in colonial politics of colour. The grotesque is further exacerbated by the way Nehama, Brakha's mother, responds to her daughter's whitened facial skin crying 'Woe is I. A daughter of Israel, but this is a daughter of Israel!'<sup>533</sup> The 'daughter of Israel' – *bat yisrael* – is a common term for a Jewish woman in the Diasporic context often associated with images of purity and modesty;<sup>534</sup> thus, we may understand how Brakha's experiment is at odds with that image, as it culminates the young woman's fascination noted earlier with the new possibilities of femininity that Alexandria opens for her. While Ita's whiteness is 'natural' and, as such, metonymic of her virtue, Brakha's artificial whitening paradoxically distances her from the symbolic meaning of whiteness, that is, from purity, goodness, and respectability,<sup>535</sup> the attributes of 'the daughter of Israel'. If in the colonial context, Dyer argues, 'to be a lady is to be as white as it gets',<sup>536</sup> Baron's 'daughter of Israel' furnishes a more subtle distinction. To be *bat yisrael* is to be 'as white as it gets', but not whitened.

Dyer discusses the tension between three layers of whiteness: whiteness as hue; whiteness as skin colour; and whiteness as symbol.<sup>537</sup> The aforementioned evolution of Western cosmetics 'as a history of whitening the face' derives to a large extent from the persistent rift between the skin colour we term 'white' and whiteness as hue (no 'white' person is really white as a blank page), as well as from the desire to achieve the symbolic superiority assigned to whiteness in white cultures. This superiority, however, according to Dyer, derives not only from the marking of whiteness as 'good' as opposed to the 'bad' blackness, but also from the cultural perception of white as transparent, as no colour at all, but, rather, a universal essence in relation to which all colours are to be understood.<sup>538</sup> In this context, if whiteness reveals itself as an excessive cover of the face, if whiteness

appears as a colour – as it does with Brakha’s unfortunate experiment – it loses all meaning; it loses its superiority and becomes grotesque.

Only back in Palestine the true meaning of the whiteness for the ‘daughter of Israel’ emerges. Shortly after the return of the deportees, Brakha and Lulu (who has decided to immigrate to Palestine) meet again by chance, on the streets of Jaffa. Initially Lulu has difficulty recognizing Brakha, but eventually she knows her by her freckles, and comments: ‘I see that you don’t use lotions anymore [...]. I too have pushed all those creams and powders away, because my aunt with whom I’m staying said that here there’s no need for all this’.<sup>539</sup> Indeed, we learn shortly afterwards, Lulu herself, ‘having decided that she is not going back to Egypt has taken off the last of her jewellery: the earrings, the bracelets, the corals, and has combed her hair in a simple manner, thus achieving, according to Nehama Rothstein, the shape of a *daughter of Israel*’.<sup>540</sup> The image of the ‘daughter of Israel’ thus travels; she is not anymore just the chaste and pious Jewish Diasporic woman; she is a figure shaped ‘here’, that is, in the Land.

Like Ita Blokh she doesn’t need a thing; yet unlike her she is not a tourist from Europe; rather, she needs nothing because she is here, because here, that is in Palestine, paradoxically considering the weather-conditions, one does not need any lotions to heal the skin. Much has been said in recent gendered studies of Zionism of the way the Jewish masculine body is normalized in the land.<sup>541</sup>

Michael Gluzman, for example, in his notable work on *The Zionist Body*, establishes how the healing of the delicate and castrated masculine body of the Diasporic old Jew became in Zionist discourse a prominent metaphor for the revival of the Nation.<sup>542</sup> Against this backdrop, *The Exiles*, I argue, offers a feminine outlook on the story of Zionist body-healing. With Baron, the land is a supplement for the skin, better than any lotion, enabling the daughter of Israel to get closer to her admired European model, that is, to be all natural beauty, in need of nothing, to be ‘white’. What Brakha does not understand, when she whitens her face in Alexandria, is that whiteness as a colour, or rather whiteness as whitening

produced by lotions, is a horrifying sight; but what whiteness stands for, in fact, a lack of any colour or excess covering the feminine face and body, becomes, in the end, the marker of the 'daughter of Israel'. Indeed, even if Brakha's freckles in fact stay, they no longer matter. While the actual whiteness of Ita Blokh is not achieved, the body is ideologically 'normalized', 'whitened', to mirror Ita's figure as rediscovered in Lulu's room, simple, pure, all-natural; it now has the shape of the 'daughter of Israel', which bears no excess.

On the first year anniversary of Ita's death Brakha performs a secret memorial service for her commemorating her beauty. As she approaches Ita's clothes chest, it looks 'like *a wound* dressed and covered in all sorts of fabrics so that it cannot be seen',<sup>543</sup> and yet she takes out:

with wonderful gentility the magnificent cloths, straightened every fold, arranged the creases, and carried the dresses downstairs, to the ropes [...]. the dresses moved on the ropes when the wind blew, and with the swollen sleeves, each one of them seemed as someone spreading his arms in protest for the wrong that has been done to him.<sup>544</sup>

Again the myth of Ita's wearing only 'cotton and flannel' breaks, or, rather, it is exposed as a tale forged in the context of the distinction between East and West, and complicated by the contradictions between ideological 'whiteness' and what class and ethnicity allow and entail. Indeed, the myth of Ita Blokh becomes even more tenuous if we recall how she died in Egypt, while giving birth to her daughter, as consequence of her illicit affair with the Jewish Egyptian cotton-merchant. Lulu's praise according to which Ita only needed 'cotton and flannel' thus gains an ironic grim tone. If only she did not need so much cotton, as cotton became the sign of her death. In this context, we may also think of the whiteness of cotton as metaphorical of the whiteness of death, which, Richard Dyer proposes, is an important dimension of Western whiteness.<sup>545</sup> Inasmuch as white 'signifies the absence of colour', Dyer explains, it also signifies the absence of 'life and presence'.<sup>546</sup> Indeed, it seems, within this logic of whiteness Ita has to

die precisely because she is the ultimate impossible epitome of whiteness.

We may also recall the entanglement of the cotton industry with the history of colonialism. As John Singleton remarks in his study of the connection between imperial expansion and British cotton trade, ‘the empire was crucial to the prosperity of the cotton industry’,<sup>547</sup> as it is imperial power that made Asian markets available for British manufacturers of cotton products, and Egypt was in fact vital for preserving British mobility, especially since the opening of the Suez canal in 1869.<sup>548</sup> I invoke the imperial history of cotton, because I contend that *The Exiles* cannot be read outside a colonial context. I read Ita’s love affair with Morris Levy, the Egyptian cotton merchant, through the fraught colonial *topos* of the white woman as a victim of the non-white man’s sexuality. This is a notoriously constitutive narrative for racist discourse, crystallizing the anxiety regarding the fragile racial purity that white femininity stands for,<sup>549</sup> and, thus, that in *The Exiles* this narrative leads to Ita’s death is hardly surprising. It may be anticipated even at the beginning of the novel from the perspective of her forsaken *Ashkenazi* suitor, Menahem Gutt, who, sitting alone in an hotel room in Cairo, while Ita and her lover explore the city, imagines her ‘carelessly [getting] too close to the edge of the open balcony. No one would warn her to be careful not to fall into the abyss that lay beneath her’.<sup>550</sup>

Ita is ‘a fallen woman’, precisely insofar as this expression is inextricably bound with the sexuality of modern white women.<sup>551</sup> We know how she did fall into the abyss in the end through her love affair with the cotton merchant; how she fell into the heart of darkness of the Orient, running off with the Egyptian lover has ruined her. ‘No one would warn her’,<sup>552</sup> thinks Menahem Gutt. The image of the fallen woman encapsulates the two facets of Ita’s figure negotiated throughout the novel; she is both a transgressor and a victim. Notably, when after her death it is presumed that she has lived in sin with the cotton merchant, the Jewish community of deportees denounce her. ‘Shameful’, Nehama Rothstein comments when she hears the story. Just before the return of the deportees to

Palestine, however, they find out that, in fact, Ita did marry the merchant in Cairo, but that he has abandoned the baby she has bore him, because his parents opposed the match. ‘That good girl,’ Nehama then comments, ‘beautiful and good. Why did this happen to her?’<sup>553</sup> For the exiles to return, some distinctions have to be made clear; the narrative of the white woman victimized by the non-white man serves so as to set things straight, bolstering the constitutive dichotomies between West and East, good and bad, white and non-white.

In this setting, Ita, who never really identifies as a Zionist, as she is merely a tourist to the East, albeit Jewish, becomes a symbol of the presumed vulnerability of *Ashkenazi* Jews *vis-à-vis* the menacing ‘Orient’. Immediately after he imagines Ita in danger of falling into the abyss, Menahem Gutt himself experiences vertigo: ‘as he wandered, he found himself climbing a ladder to the roof where he arrived at a porch without a balustrade, and peered over the edge. Terrified of the abyss spreading before his eyes, he felt his way back to the stairs’.<sup>554</sup> The black abyss becomes a rift between Ita and Menahem – she would fall, he ‘terrified’ feels his way back; it is also a rift between Ita and everyone else in the novel for that matter – we recall how Brakha too struggles with the frightening architecture of the Orient, but finds her way back. Ita’s story thus embodies everyone’s worst fear. We recall how her clothes-chest, her memory, remains in the house ‘like *a wound* dressed and covered in all sorts of fabrics so that it cannot be seen’.<sup>555</sup>

The cotton merchant from Cairo, Morris Levy, came to spend the hot summer in Alexandria. He visited Ita Blokh’s room often. When she first saw his expressionless *brown face* – the face of an Egyptian – Nehama Rothstein was startled. But when she heard him speaking Yiddish, and even Hebrew with Natan Lev, she was put at ease and didn’t pay attention to his comings and goings any longer.<sup>556</sup>

How could Nehama be deceived that way? Looking at his brown face she should

have known, and she did know, that he would be nothing but trouble. How could she let him in then? After all anybody can learn Yiddish and Hebrew;<sup>557</sup> the colour of his skin should have served as a warning sign. But then how could we blame her, when, we, and women like us, also lose sight of colours while reading Baron's masterpiece.

To conclude I would like to return to what I see as a crucial moment in the feminist critical discourse of Baron's work, namely, Orly Lubin's fascinating close reading of the *The Exiles* (the only critical feminist intervention that comprehensively takes on this novel), and demonstrate through it the colour-blindness that characterizes feminist approaches to Baron in the scholarly field of Hebrew literature. With regards to the description quoted above then, Orly Lubin, a prominent feminist and post-Zionist critic, conspicuously overlooks the cotton merchant's colour:

The passage not only places a woman at the center of the action – she is the reason the man comes to visit – but it also immediately cites Mrs. Rothstein's point of view and opposes it to that of another woman, Brakha. The chapter abandons Morris Levy and instead addresses a matter no less dramatic than the Egyptian merchant's love life – Brakha's swing between her mother's perspective and values and those of Ita Blokh.<sup>558</sup>

What a tragic series of misrecognitions; as Nehama overlooks the darkness of Morris Levy, the feminist Israeli reader also loses track of him, carried away by the beautiful intricate ways in which women weave themselves into each other's lives in this novel – in any case he speaks Yiddish so why should we worry? Like Nehama, the feminist critic too is deceived; she too is blind of the colours in which the novel unfolds; instead, she skilfully shows us how the text works, how it foregrounds gender and women as alternative sites.

However, as much as we want to be blinded by this beautiful text, we cannot, we must not, at this point in time, read *The Exiles* colour-blind. Despite the way it reads sometimes, *The Exiles* does not take place in no place; it is set in

the Middle-East – in Egypt and Palestine – where the sun burns different skins in different ways. And, no less important, it is also set in time, not only the time of the plot, but also the publication-time. ‘For the Time Being’ (Le-‘et ‘ata), the first part of *The Exiles* is published in 1943; ‘Since Last Night’ (Me-e’mesh), the second part, is published in 1955; between the two, there is a horrible war and massive deportations – Israel’s 1948 Independence War during the course of which 700,000 Palestinians were exiled from Palestine; during the 1950s there are large waves of immigration to Palestine of Jews from Arab and Islamic countries, who are marginalized and oppressed by the Israeli dominant *Ashkenazi* society. These histories, of course, have everything to do with colour and racism. How can we then read *The Exiles* outside the context of 1943 and 1955? How can we read it colour-blind?

In this context I would like to read the end of the novel. At the beginning of the novel’s last chapter, Lulu takes off her jewellery ‘thus achieving, according to Nehama Rothstein, the shape of a *daughter of Israel*’,<sup>559</sup> and at the end of that chapter, the end of the novel, she marries an *Ashkenazi* man, Menahem Gutt, Ita’s forsaken lover, and becomes the adoptive mother of Ita’s baby-girl. For their wedding, Nehama Rothstein bakes cakes. Baron’s rich depiction of the baking is one of many moments in the novel that foreground food and food preparation:

And she [Nehama], as always, baked at night. She mixed, kneaded and where needed she stuffed. While doing that she fell asleep from time to time and was dreaming. And so it seemed to her that she is conducting over a few giant pots in which food from all the goodness of the land is cooking for those who are coming here from all parts of the world in these days of *aliyah*. It will be good, she thought, if they find here a hot dish when they come [...] the smell that came from the pots made her realize that in order for the food not to be burnt, there is a need to stir it, but because of her shortness of figure, she could not, regretfully, reach the pots. This was the first time in her life that she felt sorry that she did not grow a little bit more, and from this feeling of regret, and also because sleeping while sitting down was not comfortable, she woke up, and realized that the smell she scented was coming from the stuffed pies that



were already fully baked.<sup>560</sup>

In the article mentioned above, Orly Lubin makes beautiful observations about the role of food in the novel as an alternative ‘temporal axis, the alternative to the linearity of the hegemonic history’,<sup>561</sup> underpinning a feminine national narrative. ‘In Baron’s work’, Lubin argues:

even if the hegemonic national story is not entirely expunged, neither can it expunge the other story, the story of the body and food. In this way Baron maintains, by way of two alternative narrative sequences, a subversive text. It presents two options – the hegemonic option, both on the level of the story (a closed and linear or sequential story) and on the level of meaning (the story of constituting of modern Zionist nationalism as a canonic narrative). And it presents the story that subverts, or at least challenges, the exclusive authority of the hegemony: a broken narrative and alternative meaning, a different national story, in which the woman can constitute herself as a female Zionist subject.<sup>562</sup>

But, again, I ask, how can we read the preparation of the cakes for the wedding between the ‘Westernized’ Lulu to the lover of her European idol on an alternative ‘temporal axis’, outside the context of the year 1955, in which the second half of the novel is published, that is, the highpoint of the *Mizrahi* Jewish immigration to Palestine. Although the plot takes place around the time of World War One, we cannot, I argue, read the story of Lulu’s transformation in Palestine outside of 1955, when *Mizrahi* Jews are forced to suppress their cultures in order to ‘integrate’ into the dominant Zionist society, and, like Lulu, assume the shape assigned to them by *Ashkenazi* hegemony.

This end of the novel, when does it take place then? When Nehama dreams, in the baking scene cited above, that she is, in fact, ‘cooking for those who are coming here from all parts of the world in these days of *Aliyah*’,<sup>563</sup> who is she dreaming of? On the level of the represented time, it may very well be the large wave of Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine that came after the end of World War One.<sup>564</sup> And yet, how can we disregard 1955, the time of

publication, especially considering that this chapter begins and ends with Lulu's transformation from an Egyptian 'Oriental' girl to a 'daughter of Israel'. If we consider that, then what are those pots Nehama dreams of if not giant, steaming, 'melting pots'? While 'the melting pot' is a central metaphor in Zionist discourse for speaking of the negation of all diasporic cultures and the construction of a new unified Zionist culture in Palestine, the process of 'melting' was by no means equal for all ethnicities. The new Zionist culture created in the Land heavily relied on European ideas of modernity and enlightenment, while Arab and Muslim cultures that *Mizrahi* Jews brought with them were abhorred as primitive. Ruth Tsoffar speaks of 'the 'cannibalistic' mechanism of the melting pot',<sup>565</sup> as a counter-image to the 'normative ideal of 'a land flowing with milk and honey''.<sup>566</sup> I ask then, is Nehama's dream really to feed the new-comers with all 'the goodness of the land', its 'milk and honey', or is it to feed the Land with those new-comers by blending them together? When reading the novel with the 1950s in mind, suddenly the dream turns upside down, or inside-out.

But Nehama Rothstein, we recall, dreams of stirring big pots, while, in fact, she is baking stuffed cakes. I imagine Nehama's cakes as pastries covered with thick dry skin, like the kind you get when you let the Middle-Eastern sun burn with no protection, and inside there is a jelly-like, all red and gooey stuffing that bursts if you crack the crust seeming like a mesh of internal organs soaking in blood. The materials of the stuffed cake (a pie or a roulade maybe) do not blend together like those in the pots; instead they make a fragile, brittle, construct, which would immanently burst spilling out its intestines. I imagine the cakes like big crusted wounds that burn in the oven waiting to be opened up. In contrast with Lubin, I say that Baron's feminine narratives are not an alternative to national hegemony, but, rather, the hegemonic story is inscribed through the 'feminine' imagery of food and on the bodies of women. There is no 'women's time', which is alternative to hegemonic time here;<sup>567</sup> in 1955, in Israel, there is nothing else cooking but the melting-pot. Thus, the seemingly peaceful-feminine conclusion of

*The Exiles* – a woman sleeping in her kitchen, while cakes are being baked, dreaming a Zionist dream – would immanently become gooey and bloody, if we remember 1955, and if we remember 1943, 1948, and all the other years. Once we start remembering years, the novel would become an oven full of bloody cakes waiting to be aired. We may no longer long to read it, as if in a dream, timeless, placeless, and colourless.



## **20. INTENTIONAL AND ORGANIC HYBRIDITY, PLACE AND DIFFERENT SPEEDS OF CULTURAL BECOMING**

Sten Moslund (University of Southern Denmark)

The notion of cultural hybridity is probably one of the most striking, fruitful and thought-provoking theoretical concepts to have come out of post-colonial studies. It is certainly one of the most popular concepts of the field, celebrated over and over as a promising new outlook on reality: through mixture hybridity is supposed to break with and disintegrate any old idea of cultural homogeneity or oneness. And because hybrid heroes, or the hybrid theoretical gaze, are always double or hovering in a third space in-between, as in Homi Bhabha's theory, their pluralistic vision is seen as defeating all kinds of binary thinking, or even enunciating a kind of neutral ground of multiplicity and uncertainty where no language of representation rules over another. But the great popularity of hybridity has also turned out to be its great failure – although this is a failure with a blessing. Its popular reception takes the form of an uncritical celebration of cultural mixing which has exposed some severe limitations of hybridity as a theoretical paradigm, but, in turn, this exposure has also pointed to new ways of developing hybridity into a far more nuanced and complex theorem. Still, in order for the latter to happen, hybridity needs to phase out its exhilarating years of youth – of roaming

the ‘universalism of globalism’<sup>568</sup> – and commence a passage into the immanence and experienced complexity of particularity (which in this article will be looked at in terms of place).

In philosophical terms, the celebration of hybridity opposes the idea of sameness: the idea that our identities or cultures involve an unchanging continuation of something as the same. And what hybridity is assumed to offer instead is difference; difference as all that cancels sameness or oneness or the idea of a fixed being. In philosophy, difference is inseparably linked with becoming, or change or newness – as Bhabha also has it, when he asserts that newness is produced by the release of difference: In the essay ‘How Newness Enters the World’, for example, he speaks of the ‘newness’ of migrant or minority discourse’ as a newness that is produced by ‘the constant state of contestation and flux caused by differential systems of social and cultural signification’. Difference instigates a ‘*movement* of meaning [...] that [...] ‘puts the original in motion to decanonise it, giving it the movement of fragmentation, a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile’’.<sup>569</sup> If sameness involves an unmovable stillness, an unchanging being, the release of difference involves a disruption of the same which causes things to change, to become something else. In this respect, the story of hybridity is repeatedly told as the story of how a supposed cultural sameness in, say a western nation, is pushed into new multicultural and hybrid becoming by difference arriving from the non-western world.

The only problem with the popular assertion of the difference of hybridity is that it ends with a new set of unquestioned binaries. Many critics have already shown that Bhabha’s third space hybridity really depends on and is only sustained by a set of spectacular dichotomies (see for instance Ella Shohat, Benita Parry, Laura Chrisman, Tabish Khair).<sup>570</sup> It thrives on the high drama of pitting Difference against Sameness, Heterogeneity against Homogeneity, Hybridity against Purity. And within this scenario, all that may not be consciously or spectacularly hybrid (in the rhetoric of a post-national migratory paradigm: the

sedentary, the rooted, the ethnic) easily comes to get falsely represented as closed, static, and limited, if not unenlightened and oppressive (an often quoted passage in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) speaks to this effect: 'We pretend that we are trees and speak of 'roots'. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles. Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places').<sup>571</sup> This is the theoretical limitation of hybridity that we have been facing for a long time. It is a limitation that oddly contradicts Bhabha's (and Rushdie's) fundamental idea that nothing is ever pure and fixed. And it is a limitation that unfortunately causes hybridity to appear as a limited condition, rather than a dynamic process.

The moment we assert something as hybrid, we imply that something else is not. Hybridity then turns into a category that is boxed in and set apart from the rest of reality – as the Caribbean writer and theorist Édouard Glissant has expressed it (despite the fact that he also often falls back on the binary rhetoric of hybridity versus purity): we create a 'category of 'creolized'' or a 'creolness' understood as 'halfway between two 'pure' extremes'.<sup>572</sup> Of course, the idea of hybridity is valuable as a strategic or discursive opposition to ideologies of purity or the political exclusion of certain people based on myths of purity – and here Rushdie's assertion of a 'counter-force' of rootlessness against the myth of rootedness works well as a piece of political discourse.<sup>573</sup> But this dichotomy of a political discourse of hybridity versus a political discourse of purity limits the value of hybridity to a rhetorical level and cannot be carried directly over into any complex analysis of the hybrid nature of cultural identity outside the immediate battle of political oppositions.

One way out of the ideological fix of hybridity versus purity (beyond the political challenge to political intolerance) is to refine the concept of hybridity through differentiation. Instead of thinking of hybridity as opposed to something pure and homogeneous (which does not exist in the first place), we may try to immerse it in a space, or, rather, a place, that is already hybrid and polymorphic –

although often in less apparent or spectacular ways. This calls on us, firstly, to look for more than one form of hybridity and, secondly, to look for particular, contextualized, or, rather, emplaced forms of hybridity. And rather than celebrating hybrid becoming by opposing it to a static being of unchanging sameness (which does not exist in the first place), we may start looking for several speeds of cultural becoming caused by different processes of hybridisation.

In this article, I will make an attempt in this general direction by taking up Bakhtin's notion of two kinds of hybridity: organic hybridity and intentional hybridity. With Deleuze, I will examine those in terms of different speeds of change and, via Yuri Lotman's idea of the semiosphere, I will turn to look at the speeds of hybridization in relation to the particularity of place and illustrate the complexity that is added to the picture once cultural hybridity ceases to be a disembodied discourse and enters into a relation with the materiality of the world, as for example in Harold Sonny Ladoo's Indo-Caribbean novel *No Pain Like This Body* (1972).

So, what are organic and intentional hybridity then? Organic hybridity is what we may use instead of the fallacious assumption of cultural purity, or cultural homogeneity as something fixed and closed and unchanging. Starting from the idea that all cultures are already hybrid, Bakhtin explains organic hybridity as the unconscious processes by which a culture constantly incorporates difference into its sameness.<sup>574</sup> A simple example is the way in which a language continually incorporates foreign words into its body of sameness. Although all languages are hybrid and heterogeneous, we tend to experience each and every language as something unique and culturally homogeneous, as having a distinct identity (we can always speak of one language, or a language, or the language in paraphrase of Derrida):<sup>575</sup> Just think of how we experience English as a monoglot language despite the heterogeneous blend of words from Celtic, Norse, French, Latin, Greek, Hindu, Persian, and so on. This is where I would maintain that



Édouard Glissant is off the mark when he rages against the language of the English landscape as a monoglossia of the ‘down and barrow’ in contrast to the heterogeneous and rhizomatic language of the tropical forest in the Caribbean.<sup>576</sup> Glissant overlooks the long heterogeneous and rhizomatic history of what we could call the *lanscape* of the English countryside, evident in the very words he uses: ‘down’ from the Celtic *dun* and ‘barrow’ from the Sanskrit *b’rhant*.<sup>577</sup> In Bakhtin the difference in organic hybridity is appositely referred to as an opaque or muted difference.<sup>578</sup>

Bakhtin never looks at organic hybridity in terms of speeds of cultural change, but we are clearly dealing with a form of hybridisation that effects a very slow speed of change – slow enough for us to experience language and culture as a continuation of the same. This slowness may be explained via Deleuze and Lotman.

Deleuze tends to speak of difference as sheer becoming, as an absolute speed of change. It dissolves all identity, unity, and coherence, which causes nothing to remain the same: he speaks of ‘the mad-becoming’ as a becoming that ‘implies multiplicities, celerity, ubiquity, metamorphosis and treason’; ‘[o]nly affirmation returns – in other words, the Different, the Dissimilar [...]. At the cost of resemblance and identity’; it is only ‘absolute difference [that is] given in the repetition of eternal return’.<sup>579</sup> Yet, there is one thing that deprives difference of its speed, he says: representation. By representing something, we identify it, we give it a name; in other words, we arrest or slow down its condition as something without the sameness of an identity.<sup>580</sup> So, in any act of representation we may say that difference is still at play, but its power of transformation or disintegration is definitely reduced by the language of representation – or the language in which difference is given a name or described. In this way, we may understand any given culture or language as sustained by a mechanism of representation that generally or inevitably works to tame, or domesticate difference, to incorporate difference into sameness.

This is what Lotman shows with his idea of the semiosphere. Culture as a semiosphere is a dynamic, heterogeneous, and creolized semiotic space which is always in a state of change and transformation. Yet, by virtue of a porous boundary and the centripetal force of an organizing core, we may still observe the cultural semiosphere as a relatively discrete entity.<sup>581</sup> Lotman does not use the word ‘representation’ as that which tames difference, he chooses the word translation. In the semiosphere, translation constantly domesticates difference, or the foreign text, to a shared local code (issuing from the core of the semiosphere). Cultural difference may arrive into the semiosphere as a non-mediated force of change, but over time it is tamed by translations and appropriations. Eventually the imported word or text or worldview may have filtered so deeply into the importing culture’s self-image, into its core, that it completely ceases to trigger any association with the culture of its origin.<sup>582</sup> Consider the shock of the imperialist character Mrs March in E. M. Forster’s short story ‘The Other Boat’ (1972) when she is told by another character that her Christian faith derives from the Middle East – ‘she could not admit that Christianity had ever been oriental. What good thing can come out of the Levant, and is it likely that the apostles ever had a touch of the tar-brush?’<sup>583</sup> Consider also how in everyday life we do not go about using the words ‘mattress’, or ‘pyjama’ or ‘barbeque’ because of the cultural difference they may evoke as words that hail from Arabic, Hindi, and the Caribbean Arawaks. In this way translation mutes difference or causes it to disappear into a sameness, yet difference has still caused the language to change and to grow. And that is how any cultural identity, or ‘homogeneous’ culture, is really to be understood not as a pure oneness or an unchanging being, but as a continually changing sameness: through cultural representation or translation difference is not expelled, cancelled out or caused to disappear as much as the difference of this difference is caused to *unappear* beneath the surface of an only apparent continuity of the same.<sup>584</sup>

Intentional hybridity is something else. It is a highly conscious form of

hybridity, like Bhabha's. Rather than muting difference or causing it to *unappear*, intentional hybridity strives to make difference highly visible, as in Bhabha's view of 'translation as the staging of cultural *difference*' and his concomitant intention of doing what he can 'to *foreground* the '*foreignness*' of cultural translation' (as Forster does in the example above).<sup>585</sup> Intentional hybridity consciously asserts difference in order to accelerate change, or to bring newness into the world. To Bhabha, for instance, 'cultural hybridity [...] entertains difference *without an assumed hierarchy*'.<sup>586</sup>

As I have already said, the discourse of this kind of hybridity is a discourse of cultural doubleness and in-betweenness which is assumed to produce radical uncertainty and indeterminacy. Take for example the popular hyphenated hero in migration literature – say, an Indian-English character. This type of hero is supposed to erode any stable ground of sameness or identity by releasing difference in two ways: through the doubleness of cultural identity on either side of the hyphen and through the groundless 'in-between' of the hyphen itself. Disregarding the simplistic implications of Indian and English identity as homogeneous, there is certainly a release of difference at stake here. Yet, this release is greatly modified, or slowed down, by forces of representation and translation. Those who really want to assert this example as a radical release of Difference and Heterogeneity, have to disregard the fact that it is written in English! How Indian is the 'Indian' in the phrase 'Indian-English' when it comes down to it?

All we have is a mediated reference to or representation of something as Indian. There is no great, disturbing force of untranslated difference there; 'Indian' is a representation within the English language. For this reason we certainly cannot uncritically celebrate intentional hybridity as entertaining difference without any hierarchy or cultural asymmetry. Rather, it appears that intentional hybridity is deeply entangled with the homogenising modes and processes of organic hybridity.<sup>587</sup> This may not be a bad thing at all, though.

What seems to be emerging here is an interesting alternative to the limiting binaries of third space hybridity theory: a continuum of hybridity is emerging, where analyses cannot be reduced to the simple question whether something is hybrid or not. Rather than pitting cultural hybridity against purity, the continuum compels us always to analyse intentional hybridity in relation to the processes of organic hybridity – as speeding up the slow processes of organic hybridity (with the danger that the mechanism of organic hybridity falls apart if the force and speed of difference is too massive or accelerates too fast for the host culture to translate it into its changing sameness – as in the case of many African cultures that were overrun by the difference of European cultural structures in the process of colonization, or, some might argue, in African literature in English representing African cultural identities) or as being slowed down by the processes of translation of organic hybridity (as in the case today of the many new cultures arriving to be integrated into the cultural economies of western host countries, or in much contemporary migration literature of cultural difference written in English). Without a doubt, the massive increase in the scale and volume of cultural migrations since the latter half of the twentieth century has caused an acceleration of cultural change (the processes of organic hybridity often having difficulties in keeping up), but rather than celebrating global, hybrid heroes as the great transmitters of hybridity, we have to analyse their immersion in already hybrid and changing places.

And so, hybridity theory really comes down to earth. With the simple recognition that hybridity always takes place somewhere, hybridity theory (which up until now has more or less been a synonym for intentional hybridity only) shifts away from the assumed universality of global space and the placelessness of in-betweenness, and moves into the specificity of place with all that it entails of contextual conditioning. Semiospheres exist in places and as such they must necessarily be formed and modelled not only by their relations to the complexity of change in sociocultural contexts, but also to the physical circumstances of such

specific locations. No texts of migration and hybridity could be farther apart in these respects than Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (2000) and V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987).<sup>588</sup> In Rushdie's restless and energetic novel we rarely see the places the characters are in or travel through – we mostly see only the political discourses that are associated with the greater geographical territories his characters relate to (the national discourse of identity in England, the USA and India). Consequently, the characters mostly move around in a reality of oppositional ideas, or ideological cartographies, more than they seem to relate to any physical or embodied reality.

Or, to put it in another way, Rushdie's 'setting' is discursive, a globalism of political geographies, of national discourses challenged by transnational or post-national discourses. In marked contrast Naipaul's novel takes place in a place rather than a disembodied space; an embodied and sensed location which shows how cultural difference assumes another character once we shift from a mode of political discourse to a mode of aesthetics: here culture and language of representation relate to the physical properties of the local place which means that culture and language also work as a way into sensuous experience of the local world. The migrant's gaze of difference blends into this complexity of culture, language and place. Rather than disqualifying the 'sedentary' or 'rooted' as monadic, closed and exclusive, it connects with a complex interfusion of discursive and experience of reality as opposed to operating only on a discursive level about that reality, or relying solely on discursive modes of making meaning. Naipaul's character does not 'invent' the ground beneath his feet either, but enters a place of continual change and participates and contributes to the ongoing play of difference within the changing sameness of the place.

The speeds of difference and cultural change are equally far apart in the two novels: The radical discontinuity of spectacular changes in Rushdie's disembodied novel of ideas contrasts with the performance of a changing sameness in *The Enigma of Arrival* – yet Naipaul's novel is layered with a

multiplicity of difference that may return to the surface of the book and the place it portrays (rural Wiltshire) at any time, whereas the spectacular speed of radical difference and intentional hybridity in Rushdie's novel tends only to spin around on the surface of a deeper cultural representation or translation of all of these differences into an English and western-based cultural economy. The processes of organic hybridity are made visible on the surface of Naipaul's novel, while unexposed in Rushdie's discourse.<sup>589</sup>

With the specificity of place, hybridity theory really enters an even greater level of complexity: another localising and embodied dimension is added to the analysis, as in Naipaul's demonstration of how integration with a place is not only a matter of integration into the socio-political economy of a place but also a matter of embodied integration into the physicality of place – an embodied emplacement. It is possible in this regard that we also need to develop Lotman's semiosphere and understand culture as more than a crisscrossing of disembodied concepts, texts, and discursive relations – to see the space of the semiosphere as more than a discursive, socio-cultural sphere alone. Lotman speaks of translation primarily as a mechanism of consciousness within the semiosphere and when he touches on how the particularities of these languages are shaped and changed, he points to discursive, economic, political and historical circumstances and shifts within the semiosphere. He does not point to the significance of the material place of the semiosphere in shaping and changing its texts and languages of semiosis. Yet the semiosphere does not constitute a mere semiotic space, it is also a semiotic place – it has a felt quality too: it has a physical dimension that 'is animated by the lived bodies that are in it', to borrow a phrase from Edward Casey, just as the semiosphere as a lived place 'animates these same bodies as they become emplaced there'. If culture exists in interaction with a material reality, we may say that it also relates to and interacts with a palatial phusis, or has an 'active in-dwelling', as Casey puts it.<sup>590</sup> A local culture may then also be seen as 'becoming one with the landscape' (or perhaps rather becoming of, or

becoming along with the materiality of the place) through a continual process of *introjection*, of ‘internalising’, ‘interiorising’ the surrounding environment into individual and collective self-perception, ‘*incorporating*’ it as a central part of one’s cultural identity: Our cultures (or languages) are not only in places but always in a process of becoming of places, as well as places, we may add, are in a continual process of becoming of our cultures (and languages).<sup>591</sup> In this way places will always be speaking cultures, or places will be speaking through cultures and languages (Casey quotes Leibniz as saying that ‘that which has place must express place itself’).<sup>592</sup> Lucy Lippard connects place and language and cultural hybridity in this way and states that ‘[e]ach time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all ‘local places’ consist of’ – as in Naipaul this goes for the migrant’s embodied experience as well as any discursive difference he brings along (later Lippard adds that migratory elites move geographically without ever changing places or entering places, ‘they are never able to open themselves to local difference and change’.<sup>593</sup>

The emergence and changes of cultures invariably connect with processes of emplacement, of cultivating and caring for places, or at least relating to the materialities of places, and as a consequence we have to appreciate how the discursive and linguistic elements of the semiosphere are intertwined with processes of physical emplacement: how the socio-cultural processes in a place blend with physical experiences of local geographical properties like the local topography, climate, flora, and fauna – or infrastructures, roads, plazas, buildings and architecture.<sup>594</sup>

In other words, we must learn to understand how the core of the semiosphere’s translating language is partially shaped by the experience of the physical reality of its location. Or, in connection with hybridity theory, how hybridity is always emplaced hybridity, taking place in places and produced by the cultural languages that arise from embodied relations to place as much as by

the cultural languages that arise from the relations between people (and the two cultural languages as inseparably intertwined). A thesis that needs to be tested in this regard is the thesis that the slowness of the organic hybridity of a culture may also be connected with the slow changes of the physical or geographical elements of a place. If hybrid newness or difference also relates to the materialities of places, we must note how hybrid difference is translated into the ways in which language and place or culture and nature interrelate and interfuse in physical experiences of emplacement. Casey's idea of place as an in-gathering (inspired by Heidegger) may offer one theoretical angle of how to include material dimensions of place in analyses of cultural hybridity. A place is diversified by all the things that are in it and enter it, but it has a unique capacity to create connections. Casey says that it has an 'in-gathering' capacity, or a centripetality, we might say (with a pointer to the function of the core in Lotman's semiosphere). Thanks to 'its connection-making capacity', it gathers 'heterogeneous constituents into the arc of its space, giving place to what otherwise might be depthless or placeless'. Place connects 'the disparities of being and experience, of perception and language, of chaos and cosmos'.<sup>595</sup> With this, we might say that place draws things into a kind of 'sameness' or 'sharedness' – a 'sameness' or 'sharedness' produced by a connectedness or a nearness through a being-gathered-together.<sup>596</sup> Cultural difference does not disappear but is focused, or gathered-in, through the embodied experience of place as the experience of emplacement constitutes a shared ground for diverse cultural languages and experiences – this may possibly be the 'shaping power' (Casey's term) that place as a material entity has within the semiosphere. Significantly, Casey speaks of human relations to places as constituting a '*slowed-down speed*: [effected by] the need for the gradual re-acquisition of the right habits, the sedimentation of the appropriate habitudes, the growth of effective habituations' in relation to the (mostly slowly changing) material reality of the place.<sup>597</sup>

Along with Casey's notion of place as an in-gathering, we could also



examine the role of hybridisation as part of the continual process of re-emplacement: since both places and languages are not static but processual and in constant change, our emplacement is always a matter of *re-emplacement*, of constantly getting back into place, as Casey has it (which also takes us out of the melodramatic opposition of rootedness and rootlessness, or the sedentary and the nomadic – part of the enigma of arrival in Naipaul's novel is that one never arrives finally in a place, we are always in a process of arriving).<sup>598</sup> From this perspective, we may examine how organic and intentional hybridity, or the continually changing socio-cultural languages of emplacement, are tied up with the efforts of a continual cultural reconnection with changing physical circumstances of a place.

In any case, we would be required to examine the extent to which an intentionally hybrid gaze is gradually drawn in by the in-gathering force of place: how intentional hybridity, rather than preserving its initial position as speaking from a restless or groundless perspective that is really more outside than inside a place, or an 'emplaced' culture, is drawn into the density and intensity of the close vision of the place, and in that way comes to speak increasingly from within this particular culture's material or emplaced experience. I will briefly give an example of this from a reading of Harold Sonny Ladoo's Indo-Caribbean novel *No Pain Like This Body*.<sup>599</sup>

At a first glance Ladoo's *No Pain Like This Body* (1972) seems to be a novel about radical displacement, like so many other Caribbean novels. It takes place on Carib Island, a fictional rendition of Ladoo's native Trinidad, and is a story of the hardship of Indian indentured labourers and their descendants: their poverty and physical, cultural and spiritual dislocation and disintegration. All of this is expressed in the characters' apparent disconnection with the physical surroundings. The place, the landscape and its climate, is inhospitable and seems resilient to any emotional investment. In a word, the place offers no rest and, as such, Ladoo's novel exemplifies the extreme 'breathlessness' Glissant identifies

as a remarkable feature of the Caribbean folktale as a symptom of the characters' apparent incapacity of ever 'rooting' themselves – there is '[n]o time to gaze on things', no time for 'appreciating the world'<sup>600</sup> – or, in Heidegger's terminology, no time for dwelling on things or dwelling on earth.<sup>601</sup> Breathlessly, Ladoo's characters are running through this hostile landscape all through the novel, chased around on the edge of existence by thunder and lightning, heavy showers, storms, snakes, scorpions and large, red biting ants.

However, since Ladoo's book is also a novel of transcultural diasporas, offering a complex heterogeneous and hybridised language of Hindu, English, Muslim, African, French and pre-Columbian cultural fragments, there is a risk that the restlessness of Ladoo's novel, from the point of view of a purely discursive analysis, only blends into the common excitement of Caribbean literature as a 'limitless *métissage*' of displaced cultures without any ideological stability, offering the potential promise of a 'liberating force of diversity'.<sup>602</sup> To Glissant (in his most elated moments), the Caribbean experience of 'intensification, breathlessness, digression' invents a completely 'new relationship with the land' devoid of the 'sacred intolerance of the root'.<sup>603</sup> But Ladoo's novel does not lend itself to purely discursive readings as a Caribbean microcosm of a globalised world coming together in spectacular post structural processes of uprooted transculturation (the common gist of intentional hybridity in its most uncritical expressions). Rather, it shows how any such globalised vision depends on a disregard of the body and the significance of emplacement (or re-emplacement) and how any experience of displacement only serves as 'a sober reminder of the immense value of human emplacement', as Casey states.<sup>604</sup> The point is that at another level of the novel's language, which emerges only if we take the time to dwell on it, the breathlessness of the story and the restless temporality of the narrative recede while something else advances. At the level of the novel's 'landscape' – or language as it fuses with the properties of the local landscape – the text is sinking into the local soil and revealing a process of

emplacement regardless of the characters' brutal physical conditions and history of displacement, and regardless, even, of the fact that the adult characters in the novel are speaking explicitly of India as the real, but lost place of their identity (significantly the novel's main perspective is a children's view of the world with no other previous place experience than this). At a silent, unspoken level of the language of the characters – or a level that the story or conscious discourse of the text does not draw attention to – human features, actions, movements, and sensations are understood or evoked through the natural features of the place, its climate, weather, flora and fauna: eyes are 'bulging like ripe guavas', a man is 'strong like a carat tree', Rama's face is 'bluish like a kohong's wings', Pa is pulling at Ma 'as if he was uprooting a sapodilla tree', Ma is 'quiet as a mango skin' and shaking a rice bag sounds like 'opening a dry coconut with a dull cutlass'.<sup>605</sup>

And just as human features and actions are naturalised, or localised in this way, fusing with the local landscape, the local landscape and climate is humanised in turn: 'The rain sang and the thunder shouted and the lightning danced' and 'Clouds were running and piling up as a huge heap of black rice'.<sup>606</sup> In a Deleuzian reading the characters of the place no longer differ from the wind blowing or the colours of the landscapes or its sounds. Everything enters into composition, or *com-position*, with everything else.<sup>607</sup> Or in a Heideggerian perspective, the physical world in Ladoo is not an object that stands before the characters, observable from a state of outsidership, like a landscape that 'doesn't care',<sup>608</sup> the characters are subject to it and transported into its Being – gathered in to stand in relation to each other, where place and culture interact or become part of each other.<sup>609</sup> So despite the story of a hostile environment and all the breathless running, there is dwelling in the novel's language. The hybrid language of this story of cultural displacement is a unique language of emplacement: it dwells on the landscape, or is deeply dwelling in the landscape, thus fusing human life and whichever compositions of cultural mixture with the particularity

of this place. The hybrid and heterogeneous language of the text grows to become an entirely place-saturated language, emerging as a locally unique cultural language, a hybrid and heterogeneous cultural language of this place.

Appreciating the language of the novel in this way is to appreciate how the physiognomy of the place is not external to the human consciousness or external to some abstract, discursive or in any other way disembodied idea of a culturally hybrid identity, but indeed interiorised into the localised cultural self-perception, becoming part of the unconscious 'perceptual infrastructure' of the characters – as it is indeed part of the 'perceptual infrastructure' of Ladoo's text itself: the earth of this new place starts jutting through the cultural hybridity of the characters just as the earth of the place juts through the cultural hybridity of the novel itself. As for the intentionally hybrid globalist perspective on Caribbean literature, the deeper level of the novel's language shows how any ambition of a transcendent transnational or transcultural reading fades as the spectacular Caribbean history of intercultural relations sinks into the earth of the place and grows out again as a particular local, perhaps even parochial hybrid and heterogeneous culture, created through the embodied relation between people, culture and land. In Ladoo's novel, the Indian culture that has been brought to the Caribbean and mixed with other cultures is in the process of materially growing into this place, culminating at the very end of the story when an Indian goat skin drum fuses entirely with the sound of the weather and the landscape, each being the sound of the other. Within the unspoken, sensory dimensions of the book the world of the characters, their culture, becomes the sound of the natural environ and the natural environ becomes the sound of the culture. Such cultural emplacement, or cultural 'rooting' has nothing to do with any 'sacred intolerance of the root'.<sup>610</sup> It is a 're-emplacment', to repeat Casey's idea, where no individual or culture is ever fully in place, but always in a process of getting back into place – and so restlessness and unbelonging will always be part of a language of emplacement, part of its poetry, its earth; we 'must ever learn to dwell'.<sup>611</sup>

As I see it, these are the new frontiers of hybridity theory today: to analyse the difference of intentional hybridities in relation to the speeds of change of the organic hybridities they engage with, and, secondly, to include the material contexts of a culture into our analysis of cultural hybridity, that is, also to explore the role of processes of emplacement in hybridity: how organic hybridity also forms part of the unique connection-making matrix of specific places and how any event of intentional hybridity enters into that matrix. Or, to put it differently, how hybridity in many cases takes on a unique, vernacular or place-specific hue that greatly relativises its universal, global hue: To be a queer, Afghan Muslim neo-punk rocker, in the topography, climate, language, economy, and social reality of some small town in Denmark is not the same hybridity as being a queer, Afghan Muslim neo-punk rocker in any other place in the world. The task is to take hybridity out of the abstract space of third space rhetoric and into the lived spaces of places – out of the monologic discourse of international restlessness and globalism and into a dialogic with the complexities of place – which, among other things, requires that we do not read migration literature or hybridity literature conceptually only, but contextually and in relation to the specificities of locations. It is time for hybridity theory to go with Aristotle who said that human movements are always shaped by the shapes of places, which is to say that anything that becomes is always affected by the place in which it becomes: ‘change is change in respect of place, which we call locomotion’.<sup>612</sup>



## 21. HAUNTING PASTS AND EVASIVE PRESENT IN NURUDDIN FARAH'S *KNOTS*

Naglaa Abou-Agag (Alexandria University)

*Knots* presents another facet of Farah's unfinished big project; the project of writing Somalia. The heroine, Cambara, has spent most of her adult life as an immigrant in Canada, has kept strong ties with Somalia and has thought of it as being her only sanctuary in times of trouble. Due to the complicated history of Somalia, Farah grew up realizing his 'people's absence from the roll-call of world history as [they] were taught it'.<sup>613</sup> He then decided to write 'in the hope of enabling the Somali child at least to characterize his otherness and to point to himself as the unnamed, the divided *other*, a schizophrenic child living in the age of colonial contradiction'.<sup>614</sup> Within the framework of Farah's project, he has been concerned with a number of issues; prominent among these is individual freedom versus social and political constraints. His characters are the product of complex systems of oppression: political, economic, social and cultural. All these systems originate from practices in his homeland, Somalia.

Farah himself experienced relocation as a child and lived all his adult life as an exile writing about home though conscious that 'distance distills' and that he has 'in mind the salubrious sort of distance that made [him] appreciate not

Somalia itself, but versions thereof, a memory more real than the concrete physicalness of a building, a remembrance more spacious than the open fields [he] had grown up in'.<sup>615</sup> Born in Baidoa, he moved as a one year old child to the Ogaden where his father worked as a translator for the British who were controlling the area at the time.<sup>616</sup> When the British departed from the Ogaden, they left their Somali inhabitants to the Ethiopians, which created a region of conflict and this resulted in the relocation of Farah's family one more time to Mogadiscio in 1963, three years after Somalia gained its independence.<sup>617</sup> Another stage in Farah's personal history of displacement came when he went to The University of Chandigarh in India. Then, after a brief return to Somalia, Farah decided to leave in 1974 to begin 'a period of nomadic peregrination [...] living in Europe, North America, and Africa'.<sup>618</sup> In 1981, 'that pattern changed definitely [...] when he went to Jos, Nigeria, to teach and write. He resolved henceforth to keep his base in Africa and, furthermore, to live and work in as many different parts of the continent as possible. This plan reflected, in part, a personal need to be where he felt at home'.<sup>619</sup> Farah's life and work give scope to the examination of the impact of politics on the personal choices made by individuals. While Derek Wright believes that 'Somalia's political uncenteredness is matched by the decentered lives of its intellectuals',<sup>620</sup> Simon Gikandi advances that Farah's life in Somalia and his exile have provided his work with a rich and 'eclectic mixture of Somali oral traditions, Italian culture, and Anglo-Irish modernism'.<sup>621</sup>

Bearing the history and the heritage of Somalia as well as Farah's life in mind, Hema Chari maintains that 'Farah's works are marked by a series of thematic concerns that strongly characterize the postcolonial nature of his writings, and that underlie his unyielding criticism of neo-colonial practices in contemporary Somali politics'.<sup>622</sup> Along the same lines, M. Keith Booker asserts that 'the political engagement of Farah's fiction is unquestionable'.<sup>623</sup> Indeed, Farah's politics manifest themselves in various ways in almost all his writings.



The core of his politics is the investigation of human autonomy within the framework of complex social, familial, cultural, economic and political circumstances. One important aspect of Farah's politics is the interest in 'identity, whether personal or national, [which] is a complex matter of blood, language, and territory'.<sup>624</sup>

Hence, Farah's work is both documentary and imaginary, with background information about the political context in Somalia shaping the lives of Farah's fictitious characters and highlighting their personal dilemmas. Away from Somalia, in the new homeland of their choice, Somali immigrants in Farah's recent novels, *Links* (2005) and *Knots* (2007),<sup>625</sup> are engaged in negotiations and renegotiations with foreign cultural codes while maintaining relations with Somalia, thus living in a state of Diaspora as suggested by William Safran in his contention that 'Diasporas comprise special kinds of immigrants because they have retained a memory of, a cultural connection with, and a general orientation toward their homelands'.<sup>626</sup>

This explains the decision taken by Jeebleh in *Links* and Cambara in *Knots* to return to their respective homelands. Both are faced with difficulties and both reach the conclusion that an immigrant, who is usually forced to leave his/her homeland of origin as the result of social, political, or economic reasons, is never emotionally and morally separated from this homeland. Hence, moral responsibility and need for psychological comfort may drive an immigrant back to his/her homeland. In *Links*, Jeebleh's return to Somalia after twenty years of self-imposed exile is due to a sense of responsibility toward his mother's soul and his friend whose daughter and playmate were kidnapped. However, he realizes that he cannot accomplish the tasks he has assigned for himself unless he puts aside all his ideals and embraces a more pragmatic code of behaviour. Jeebleh's experience suggests that 'within the syncretic reality of a post-colonial society it is impossible to return to an idealized pure pre-colonial cultural condition'.<sup>627</sup> Therefore, he finds it difficult to keep his moral values and live in his homeland.

The Somalia that Jeebleh has come back to in *Links* is a place devoid of order and security and individuals have to resort to their own devices to protect themselves. *Knots* further investigates the theme of the 'return' presenting the attempt of Cambara, the heroine, to find meaning for her life in Somalia, her homeland, after she was exposed to a horrendous event that disrupted the luxurious life she had enjoyed for years in Canada. Against the backdrop of the violence of the Somali civil war and within patriarchal politics, Cambara sets herself the task of restoring her family's property and producing a play she has been writing for a long time as a means of creating a new life for herself in her homeland. The novel shows how Cambara attempts to construct her present in Somalia and stand up to the challenges of poverty, gender inequality, and the chaos dominant in that war-torn country.

The contention is that, in spite of Cambara's ability to restore her family's property and to produce her play, it may well be said that, similar to Jeebleh in *Links*, she has not come back to a homeland. Cambara's integration into Somalia after her return verges on the impossible for two reasons. First, the Somalia she returned to is not the Somalia she left. Secondly, she has changed due to the harrowing events she has passed through in Canada. She remains an 'exile [who] therefore exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another'.<sup>628</sup>

What accentuates Cambara's sense of her being an 'exile' in Somalia after her coming back from the new world is her realization that her homeland has changed immensely. It should be noted that, as Safran explains, 'the home country, in its stark reality, is never quite so good as its imagined form; often enough, 'coming home' results in the replacement of one nostalgia by another'.<sup>629</sup> However, in the case of Somalia the reason why Cambara finds it difficult to fit into the society she encounters – when she comes back after years of being away

from it – is that Somalia itself has changed drastically. Under the rule of militant Islamist groups, Somalia is no longer a safe place, especially not for women. In Somalia, Cambara ‘covers her head [...] with a plain scarf as the Islamic tradition dictates’ (K 2) and carries a ‘knife’ discreetly in her ‘custom-made caftan’ to protect herself just in case she gets into trouble in a war-torn country (K 7). Cambara also realizes that in a war-torn country, she has to ‘attach herself, perforce, to a broader constituency from which she may seek succor in the event of life-threatening complications [...]. Hence the need to locate Kiin, an active member of the Women’s Network’ (K 71). Then when Cambara encounters the two men: Dajaal and Bile in a street incident, she believes that ‘her life in Mogadiscio and her destiny have both taken decisive turns. She hopes that her encounter with the two men, Bile above all, will prove to be propitious’ (K 169).

The turns are not only defined by the immediate circumstances in war-torn Somalia, but they also come as the result of Cambara’s psychological state. Since ‘the personal meaning of the traumatic experience evolves over time, and often includes feelings of irretrievable loss, anger, betrayal, and helplessness’,<sup>630</sup> she realizes, for example, that she is incapable of composing herself when she listens to ‘a bird calling to its mate, in mourning’ because ‘she too is grieving’ (K 17). She wonders whether ‘her son’s death, the fierce falling out with Wardi, and her beating him up have made her reckless, unafraid, indifferent to danger’ (K 116)? Alone in Mogadiscio, Cambara remembers ‘how she rushed into loving and then marrying Wardi.

Now look where she has ended up: in Mogadiscio, childless, bitter, risking her life in order to get the better of her loss’ (K 146). She thinks of herself as being now ‘much older, grieving for her son and trying to build an alternative to the life she shared with Wardi, not to speak of the false life her mother had imposed on her, she does what she used to do as a child to fend off the oncoming feeling of fear. She improvises a song of her own composition and hums a half-remembered tune’ (K 334). She also allows Bile into her life believing that he

'not only will have supplemented and in the end completed her new self, but will have enriched it too. Like it or not, the question that comes to her mind now is whether or not she is exchanging Wardi, the estranged husband whom she has shed off, for Bile, and whether admitting SilkHair into the parameters of her newly reconstructed self will have given it a firmer format' (K 218-19). Cambara's twirling of her wedding ring (K 337) is an indication of her wish to break away from the relationship with Wardi, a wish that has manifested itself in the dream of killing him (K 284-85). This is an example of a wish-fulfilment dream where 'dreaming has taken the place of action'.<sup>631</sup> Cambara's wish to put an end to her life with Wardi does not find expression in reality. She cannot ask for a divorce and she has to get her mother's approval of any step she takes to separate herself from Wardi.

Therefore, she turns to the realm of dreams where her mother, traditions, and economic and social considerations do not shape her behaviour nor determine her reactions. In the dream, her anger is unleashed and her desire to free herself from her husband, who has cheated on her and caused her son's death, is translated into the act of murdering him. Along the same lines, Roger Horrock maintains that 'at the root of the dream, there is an unconscious wish or impulse, which Freud terms 'a child of night' – consciously we repudiate it'.<sup>632</sup> Therefore, Cambara consciously understands that she needs to put an end to her relationship with Wardi without reaching the point of actually murdering him. Aware of the 'child of night' within her, Cambara decides to go away where no immediate interaction with Wardi would be possible. Later in the novel, when Cambara feels she has some control over her life, thanks to the support of Bile and the success of her endeavour to restore the house and put together the play she has always wanted to produce, she 'pleasantly and absentmindedly removed her wedding ring' (K 339) in an act of defiance against her past.

However, Cambara's break with the past is not easily achieved and throughout the novel, she is haunted by her past memories. First, she is haunted

by her past in Canada where she 'was not doing well as she might have hoped in her dream profession, acting. She was worth no more than cameo parts, nothing big, and even then didn't have her name in lights' (K 18). On the social level, she is part of the Somali community which forms a diaspora in the new world as it 'consists of a relatively large number of people who maintain a common cultural identity which they use to distinguish themselves from other groups, as well as the host society'.<sup>633</sup> Therefore, Cambara takes part in the celebrations held by newly arrived Somali women living in Toronto (K 277) and her mother buys her a 'beautiful sleeveless up-and-down linen dress from a mainly African shopping mall in Toronto' (K 209). The dress has the Ashanti symbol attached to it; a symbol that Cambara finds extremely significant when she wears the dress at one of the parties of the Women's Network in Somalia: 'Like the crocodile, which lives in and off the bounty of water and the land surrounding it, she, Cambara, inhabits two contradictory states of mind: she dwells in peace even if the menacing closeness to the attrition that defines Somalia engulfs her' (K 209). Therefore, the life Cambara leads in Toronto proves Edward Said's notion that 'for an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally'.<sup>634</sup>

This adds to the confusion and the sense of displacement an exile feels living away from his/her homeland of origin and bringing along elements from this old environment and consciously or unconsciously forcing them into the structure of the homeland of his/her choice. Thus both environments are alive, calling upon the exile for allegiance and granting the exile two worldviews that remain contradictory, though each alluring in its own right.

Hence, the old environment presents the possibility of finding a new meaning for Cambara's life, 'an internal meaning, a meaning that connects the past with the present'.<sup>635</sup> In addition to this, 'she may have been attracted to the

idea of relocating here out of her desperate attempt to put an ocean between herself and Wardi, but told everyone else, apart from her mother and intimate friends, that she is here to mourn the passing of her only son' (K 4). To her the goal behind her trip back to Somalia is to lead 'a life that needs simple satisfactions' (K 82). She adds: 'I want my own property back, and I want to put my life together the best way I can, on my own terms and under my own steam' (K 82), thus rebelling against the view that she has long cultivated of herself as 'a woman in bondage' (K 121).

Many factors bring Cambara's feeling that she is 'a woman in bondage' (K 121) to the fore, most important is her experience with Wardi, her finding out about his mistress, Dalmar's death, hitting Wardi (K 59), and running into Wardi's mistress 'at the cemetery and later at her home: these gathered in her mind as storms do, culminating in a riotous spleen that deactivated her brain before it exploded in a total breakdown' (K 59). This anger is mentioned later as the reason that has spurred her 'into action' (K 251). The fight with Wardi is the origin of 'the story of her coming' to Somalia (K 268) and the dream of killing him (K 284-86) reflects her wish to get rid of him permanently and move on with her life. The journey to Somalia has, after all proven of therapeutic significance with Cambara professing interest in the lives and future plans of the two young boys, Gacal and SilkHair and developing emotions for Bile. It has also offered her the chance to 'liberate the forgotten material, the repressed contents of the unconscious so that [she] can go through the various thoughts and feelings and work through the traumatic aspects' of her life.<sup>636</sup>

Cambara, with the help of Kiin, fixes her family's house where she would live, do her rehearsals and eventually present her play. The family house symbolizes her life in the sense that it is damaged and in need of major work. When she goes into the house for the first time:

she sees irredeemable wreck everywhere she looks: the walls scaling in

large segments; the wood in the ceiling decomposing; the toilet facing her with its door gaping open emitting rank evidence of misuse; the windows emptied of glass panes; the carpets rolled up and stood against the outside wall, in a corner. Cambara retches at the sight of so much callousness; she places her hand in front of her mouth, as if needing to vomit into it. (K 115)

The process of repairing the house concretizes her endeavour to reconstruct her damaged self. Cambara comes back to Somalia after spending many years of failure and suffering away from her homeland. Her family relocated to Canada after the outbreak of the civil war and the rise of Islamist militiamen. In Canada, her inability to prove herself as full-time actress, in spite of her continuous attempts, and to create a happy marital life with Wardi, stands in stark contrast to the image of the young, popular, and intelligent Cambara (K121). Hence, positivity is associated in her mind with her early Somalia years and the house represents this period of her life. Therefore, any attempt at healing her soul and at overcoming her grief and failure should involve reconstructing the house where she would find a happy haven. The symbolic significance of the house is also revealed in the suggestion that it represents the whole country. In the postcolonial era, a time supposedly of independence, freedom, and prosperity, the state collapses in Somalia and no central government is capable of keeping order and maintaining security. The house comes under the control of militiamen and is in very bad shape, which symbolically reflects the 'general consensus that the ideals of nationalism had been betrayed by the postcolonial state'.<sup>637</sup> Thus, reconstructing the house is part of Cambara's endeavour to stand up to chaos in a country wrecked by civil war and to the meaninglessness of her life.

It is an endeavour reflected in Cambara's creation of the play which she describes as the 'yarn' in which 'she has woven nearly every thread of her private, professional, and public life' (K 417). However, believing in 'the camaraderie that is part of creating theater' (K 398), she also welcomes the contribution of others, such as Bile to the script (K 401). The basic story of the play is about an eagle

raised from boyhood among chickens. He is made to fend for his food by pecking on the ground, in the dust – and therefore he thinks of himself as a chicken [...]. The farmer who found the eagle several years earlier and who did not mind the bird's cohabiting with the chickens now wants to retrain the eagle so he will become what he has never been – a bird able to fly (K 387).

This is a rewriting of a famous African tale attributed to the Ghanaian educator Aggrey of Africa entitled 'Fly, Eagle, Fly'. The moral of the story is that human beings are not doomed to spend all their lives on earth, preoccupied with the petty tasks of survival, paying no attention to more profound missions. They 'are not mere chickens but eagles destined to soar to sublime heights: [they] are made for freedom and laughter and goodness and love and eternity, despite all appearances to the contrary'.<sup>638</sup> In Farah's *Knots*, the process of working on the play, the writing, the rehearsals, the problem SilkHair has with his role, the attempt to convince Kiin to do the leading female role (K 375-76), the help of volunteers such as the TeaWoman and the ScriptWoman, the contribution of Bile to the script (K 401), the decision to give the role of the female protagonist to Qaali (K 401), and Seamus making the masks, is described in great detail with the purpose of highlighting the power of art to bring people together and to create an atmosphere of peace and mutual understanding. However, it should be remembered that staging a play using masks carved in the likeness of eagles and chickens might antagonize the Islamist groups that are in power in Somalia because they believe it is 'forbidden to create a likeness of Allah's living creatures' (K 305). Dajaal explains to her that the only threat they need to bear in mind will come from hard-line Islamists (K310). If word reaches these groups about the production of the play or about the use of masks in it, the house will be attacked and the lives of Cambara and her friends will be in danger. In postcolonial Somalia, Islamist militiamen are in control of the streets, people's behaviour, and people's thoughts. They have made themselves judges over the whole society deciding what is permissible and what is forbidden, leaving almost



no scope for creativity and showing no respect for notions such as inclusion and citizenship. The existence of these groups throws doubt upon the success of Cambara's endeavour.

Yet, the play is about co-habitation, tapping inner potential and bringing people together and therefore it is a significant part of Cambara's big plan for Somalia and for herself in Somalia. This comes across through the dream she has of producing the play (K 384-85). In the dream:

there is an abundant fund of fellow feelings [...]. Everyone at the party whether dancing, swimming, feeding each other on orchids and red roses, performing menial tasks, giving a hand at the cookout, or waiting to eat – is a willing partner in this hour of rejoicing, striving to contribute to the well-being of the entire community. (K 384)

Later, Arda appears and acknowledges Cambara's achievements (K 385). The dream, thus, brings the personal, societal and political together as it celebrates Cambara's open defiance of Islamist militiamen and therefore her vision of a new Somalia, where the culture of dialogue and peace would be appreciated on the one hand, and on the other brings together threads of her personal life, highlighting her need of her mother's approval.

The success of the play is celebrated with 'buckets of emotion [that] spill over, with tears of joy coursing down many a throat, Cambara blinking away the wet overflow, Raxma flashing a radiant one, [and] Kiin expressing her feelings with repeated hugs' (K 403). It is also an occasion that is worthy of Arda's presence (K 409-11) and that requires the support of Bile, who is 'unfailingly' at Cambara's side (K 414). As such, Cambara's return does not achieve its desired goal as the novel presents an ambiguous end with Cambara not knowing what Bile and her mother are talking about. These are the two most influential characters in her life and her individual decisions are not possible without their approval and support. Cambara's helplessness with regard to her future plans is reflected in her standing alone during the party her mother gives to thank

‘everyone who has been sweet to or supportive of her daughter’ (K 419). Wondering about the conversation between her mother and the man she is in love with is evidence enough of her unalleviated sense of exile.

Cambara is, indeed, marginalized on a number of levels. She is marginalized as an immigrant who cannot integrate easily with the Canadian society, though lives very comfortably there, nor can relate to the newly formed society in Somalia, nor can go back to the happy past of her childhood. She is also marginalized as a woman and therefore, she may be seen as another of Farah’s women whose oppression is ‘used as a paradigm for the fate of Africa since the time of colonialism’.<sup>639</sup> However, these women are also ‘complex individuals and full subjects in their lives’.<sup>640</sup> The examples are Medina in *Sardines*, Duniya in *Gifts*, Misra in *Maps* and Ebla in *From a Crooked Rib*. Finally, Cambara is marginalized as a human being struggling with various forms of oppression, familial and societal. Under these forms, producing the play does not mean that Cambara emerges triumphant at the end of the novel. The play is staged for a special audience so as not to put Cambara in danger (K 414). This means that the play will not reach the larger section of the Somalis and will not fulfil its function of bringing peace and order. Cambara’s very personal endeavour to find meaning for her life back in her homeland of origin as well as her concern for the welfare of Somalia that is behind staging the play cannot be translated easily into action within the power structures to which she is tied. Hence, *Knots* is one of Farah’s novels that may be described as being ‘political’,<sup>641</sup> showing the individual struggling against ‘all the oppressive stabilities, whether rooted in the family, the clan, the nation, or in the supranational claims of religion and political systems’.<sup>642</sup>

Unfortunately, Cambara remains an individual in isolation engaged in a fierce struggle for freedom of choice and self-realization to no avail. The process of isolation began when she left Somalia and relocated to Canada. Ever since, she has been haunted by fears, failures, and sorrows. It is true that she was endowed

every now and then with a pinch of hope that she may create her own life in a present that keeps deluding her and that crushes all her dreams. Hence, *Knots* seems to sustain the contention that exiles dwell as strangers in a world where they have no place they may call home. Once the decision to leave the homeland of origin is forced upon an individual due to political, social, religious, or economic reasons, the individual is stripped of the power to create a niche for himself/herself where a meaningful life would be possible. Ties to the homeland of origin, whether cultural, familial, linguistic, or political remain influential, emphasizing the sense of estrangement in the new homeland. The immigrant in this case, like Cambara, is haunted by the past and deluded in a present where he/she remains a helpless stranger.



## **22. IRANGELES: A FANTASY COMMUNITY OF IRANIAN EXILES**

Ali M. Meghdadi (University of California, Irvine)

During the last thirty-five years, a furtive society of Iranians has quietly settled in Los Angeles. Following the Islamic revolution of 1979, a massive influx of refugees made their way to America and to Los Angeles in particular, making the city an adopted home to the largest gathering of Iranians outside of Iran. Born from their desperate hopes of assimilation, Iranians have endowed Los Angeles with its informal moniker: Irangeles. That few non-Iranians have ever heard of Irangeles stands as a consequence of their need to survive, Los Angeles Iranians exist in hiding. Although they are many things, a community they can never be.

Irangeles is a fantasy. An attempt to re-create an idea that never existed anywhere: a community of Iranians in a secular democracy. They try to affix themselves to a history and culture whose roots have long evaporated. A people without a home, forced into exile, they attempt to recuperate their identity by layering native customs and traditions upon an appropriated landscape and culture. However rather than successfully hybridizing their identity, they end up abominating their past in a misbegotten understanding of their present, which only further splinters instead of unifies them. Displaced by a society that crumbled in their wake and so often perceived with suspicion by the one they have tried to

join, these Iranian immigrants suffer myriad identity crises given that their best efforts to identify with either their old or new society fail them.

On the one hand, their escape from Iran to America could be seen as a threshold moment whereupon they hoped to achieve recuperation from the geopolitical turmoil that defined Iran's history throughout the twentieth century. However, as they have yet to achieve a space for convalescence and confrontation with that history, they remain incapable of washing away the residue of their experiences. Until they invest in a conversation with themselves and the society they have immigrated into about where they come from, who they are, and what they hope for, these exiles will continue to operate from shadowy apogees as unidentifiable chameleons stranded evermore disconnected and unwelcome.

More of a myth than a place, Los Angeles forgets itself, forbids historicity, and forges sentimentality, while ever forgoing authenticity. In such a place, identity fast dissolves beneath the quagmire of aspirations to realize false promises. Seen from several thousand feet above, the centre of the city appears enclosed by freeways and mountains. The Pacific Ocean marks its western end, the 5 and 10 freeways demarcate its eastern and southern borders respectively, and the Santa Monica Mountains form the north side. Unlike most refugees and immigrants, the Iranians settled in near absolute centre of this city rather than on the periphery. The bulk of Iranian urban life occurs in Westwood, a couple blocks south of UCLA. There are so many Iranians in Beverly Hills that they even elected one of their own as the mayor of this fantasy city. More aptly described as a liquescent delusion than a city, Los Angeles re-forms itself to the whims of the immigrants who reform themselves to live there.

With a moveable foundation that accommodates the fickle gurgling of the San Andreas Fault, always so eager to tremble and quake, Los Angeles was not built to last – it was built to be constantly rebuilt. This problematic evanescence of Los Angeles, lacking any reference to a past and assuming perpetuity as its presence, confounds discerning the city as anything other than in constant motion.

The city is for sale and consumption. Los Angeles city engineers invented the radical concept of 'mountain cropping,' that is, 'scraping away the mountain until you have enough horizontal surface, not to create merely a levelled terrace in a front of a house but to create a street-sized terrace to carry a dozen or more houses, or a plateau big enough to carry a whole tract.'<sup>643</sup> Even the mountains surrounding Los Angeles have been reshaped, remoulded, and redefined so as to boast that in this town everything is movable, nothing is permanent.

Los Angeles defies meaning. It privileges itself as an endless chain of deferrals to concepts and nostalgia embedded as its essence, but in fact, the city is entirely vacuous. It refers back to things that never existed in this place or as this place. Los Angeles functions best as an empty vessel where the interplay of all possibilities is possible. It is not so much a city, as much as an apparition of a city that despite lacking memory and history, desperately works to remember itself. This amnesia is the plague of the landscape and it makes lotus-eaters of all who escape there, none perhaps more than a race of poets like Iranians.

A city constantly being reborn, devoid of history and without memory, Los Angeles nevertheless infused itself into the memories of people the world over. The streets seem recognizable, the buildings comfortable, if not comforting somehow, like a home long missed but never before visited. The juxtaposition of the familiar and foreign underpins all perceptions of this city and experiences within it as a constant paradoxical vacillation.

Every moment of life is constructed from all past experiences clashing with the real moment of the present. Memories tailor the boundaries of presence. Trapped as a landscape that forbids and evades memory, Los Angeles constructs synthetic frameworks to compensate for all that it has forgotten.

Time, or perhaps its absence, is a critical component to understanding Los Angeles, as it is a city that situates itself outside of time. The seasons fixed at spring almost all year round, but for a couple weeks of hot days in the late August and maybe a few brief rainstorms. It has created for itself an artificial scaffold to

evade aging or to be aged. A place renowned for plastic surgery and Botox injections, L.A. itself is a gluttonous addict of the cosmetic knife. The city must remain timeless so that it can be all cities to all the people who abscond here.

In many ways, Los Angeles does not exist. Without memory, a victim to its own ephemeral boundaries, it is not a city as much as a mythology. In this fabled place a group of refugees escaped just over thirty years ago and tried to create a new identity for themselves. Iranians ran here in fear of what they foresaw about to happen to their homeland. History has shown us that they were correct in their doomed prophecy about the soon to be state of their nation. However in their forlorn escape, they mistakenly assumed that to survive in a place like Los Angeles, they ought to no longer be Iranian. And desperate as they might be to become American, or Iranian-Americans, some settled for the empty cloak of Persian, but far too many Negars, Babaks, Borzous, and Dokhis lost themselves in becoming Nicole, Phil, Thom, and Diane. Committed to neither nor conceding to a bit of both, they are resigned to abject confusion.

Forgoing an exhaustive explication of the historical elements that stained Iran during the twentieth century, it should be summarily noted that Iran experienced three coups, two from within and one organized by the CIA; in 1941 Iran suffered the Anglo-Soviet invasion. Iran underwent a series of radical reforms that affected all aspects of life, including the changing of the nation's name from Persia to Iran in 1934, as well as the adoption of a new calendar and a ban on traditional clothing in favour of Western garb, all of which also occurred under the Pahlavi regime. Iranians deposed two dynastic regimes and inducted an Islamic theocracy following a vicious revolution in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the Iran-Iraq war so ravaged the population of Iran, that to this day the repercussions are still felt; 75% of the nation's population is under 35 years of age, mostly born after or just before the war – as such too young to fight, which at the time meant under 14 years of age. The youngest men were sent to the front to act as human minesweepers. The legacy of martyrdom adoration speaks directly to the fact that



human life is so undervalued in this country.<sup>644</sup>

Furthermore, in the last three decades life for immigrant Iranians has been informed by the Iranian hostage crisis, the Iran-Contra affair, as well as the constant suspicion of Iranian dollars supporting terrorists, most notoriously, Hamas. Recently, Iran's pursuit of nuclear power combined with the U.S. targeting of Iran as an international wildcard and the media vilification that followed has given Iranians ever greater cause to remain underground – off local, political, and social radars.

Unlike many modern refugees, a goodly contingent of the Iranians immigrating to Los Angeles arrived well-educated. The Iranians who came to the U.S. in the late 1970s were largely the children of wealthy families who were sent here to study, thus they were able to settle in affluent neighbourhoods, like Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, and Westwood.

Before going any further, a critical distinction between exiles and expatriates ought to be delineated as it relates to these individuals. Iranians in America are almost entirely in exile, forced from their homeland and often refused the option of returning. What most confirms them in this exilic state is that the Iran they left no longer exists and any hope of it returning one day ought to be thoroughly extinguished as it cannot and will not happen. Even if they wanted to return to Iran, they would not be able to go home again. Whereas expatriates on the other hand choose to depart and are usually free to return.

Following from my assertion that this community does not exist, or rather that there is no community amongst the Iranians in Los Angeles, I will refrain from referring to them as such. Rather, I will use the innocuous term 'collective' to distinguish the group of Iranians that has come to call itself Irangeles. What makes the Los Angeles collective unique is its gross population. Nevertheless, despite being the largest collection of Iranians outside of Iran, a state of flux and doubt persists among them. The longer they live in America, the more impossible returning to Iran becomes. Likewise, no matter how long they stay here, they will

never be recognized as a bona fide member of American society.

This collective is resigned to a two-fold disenfranchisement, both within the Los Angeles suburbs of Beverly Hills and Westwood as well as in Iran. Removed from their heritage, history, and home, these exiles can neither fully engage in American nor Iranian culture and politics. At best they can become puppet figures or celebrity politicians like our beloved Beverly Hills mayor. Voted in to office surely, but empowered to effect any significant change or flex some actual political muscle, not remotely. Still, this often proves to be a blessed dispossession, for the Irangeles collective assumes its paramount solace not in financial success or social flexibility, but rather by the somewhat ill-fitting cloak of ethnic neutrality afforded specifically by their nebulous identity.

In their 1996 study of Middle Easterners in Los Angeles, Bozorgmehr, Der-Martirosian, and Sabagh describe the Iranian collective as one that preferred to remain 'invisible.' A dire attempt at self-preservation in the face of nefarious opinions and propagation of the idea that they were all somehow linked to terrorist plots born in the Middle East. The Iranian hostage crisis, for obvious reasons, had particularly devastating reverberations for Iranians in America at that time, and quite frankly, still to this day. However, Bozorgmehr, Der-Martirosian, and Sabagh note that even before the hostage crisis, Iranians were inclined toward imperceptibility for security:

For the most part, the students were invisible, and so they remained until the hostage crisis, when Washington decided to police the Iranians living in the United States and discovered it had no idea how many Iranians were actually here. Even years later, an American who had lived nearly a decade in the Middle East observed that 'what most LA Iranians did have in common was a wish to be invisible, which may have stemmed from the anti-Iranian feeling during the U.S. hostage episode.'<sup>645</sup>

This hidden conglomeration of people, by sheer need for safety, must remain a non-community. They fear exposure and hostility, especially given that during the last thirty years media and political antagonism toward the Middle East has

consistently intensified in tandem with the animosity toward the immigrants from that region residing in America. Bozorgmehr, Der-Martirosian, and Sabagh explain:

Whenever anti-American sentiments surge in the Middle East, all Middle Easterners in the United States are victimized. During the Iranian hostage crisis, arson of Arab-owned business caused Arab shopkeepers to put up signs stating that they were not Iranian. Ironically similar signs were displayed during the Persian Gulf War, only this time the roles were reversed, with Iranian shopkeepers indicating that they were not Arabs.<sup>646</sup>

Subjected to such threats and violence, it is no wonder that Iranian immigrants would opt for avoidance of detection. However, before they can too readily slip into the benighting dress of assimilation, Iranian exiles must be willing to shed centuries of cultural and psychological encoding. This too proves to be a formidable challenge, thus stranding them somewhere between two cultures where neither fully accepts nor rejects them as a result of their prevaricating identity. This estranged existence manifests even in their self-perceptions, as they are confronted by the enmity and suspicion of Americans, Iranian exiles adopt euphemisms and double-speak to further disappear. A collective that fears being surrounded by people who hate them, they pass as 'Persians' and shy away from explaining exactly what that means. An ambiguous and meaningless reference to an ancient civilization that does not exist on any map other than as descriptor for a narrow and contentious strip of water so filled with warships and oil tankers one can nearly cross from Iran to Qatar without getting her feet wet. (The irony here is that although these Iranian immigrants are attempting to assume as benign of an ethnic reference as possible, the only modern and accurate employment of 'Persian' is in association with the Persian Gulf, which is most often discussed as the site of terrorist attacks, confrontations between Iranian and American naval forces, and constant proprietary debates. Not exactly the vision of tranquillity, harmony, hospitality, luxury, and amity that such a disingenuous self-description

these fear-driven Iranians are likely hoping to inspire. Moreover the common usage of 'Persian' by the Irangeles collective offers a rather telling testimony to the mindset of an immigrant population that prefers to self-identify as people from a place that does not exist, living in a city world renown for manufacturing modern day myths recorded on celluloid. Hamid Dabashi explains that the Iran v. Persia debate, both in terms of language and nationalistic appellation, is a lingering vestige of the imperialistic missions that disparaged Iran for much of the twentieth century:

It is of course a horrid legacy of colonialism that a people with a long and proud culture behind them still have to haggle and argue over such rudimentary issues as what to call themselves or even the language they speak – as in this recent Los Angeles affectedness of calling the Persian language 'Farsi.' You only refer to Persian as 'Farsi' when and if you speak Persian. We don't say, 'Do you speak Deutsch?' or 'I speak français.' This particular banality started in the United States during the hostage crisis of 1979-80, when suddenly Iran became 'Persia' and 'Persian' became 'Farsi.' Iranian expatriate bourgeoisie trying to distance themselves from the clerical rule of their country stopped calling themselves Iranians and started referring to themselves as 'Persians' because Americans, with their legendary and spectacular knowledge of geography, had no blasted clue where this Persia was. 'It's somewhere near Transylvania,' an acquaintance of mine at Penn used to say upon further inquiry.<sup>647</sup>

Perhaps the hope is that through confusion they will slip passed unnoticed. A neutral ethnicity next door with a decidedly less negative connotation than Iranian, 'Persian' attempts to invoke exotic images associated with sumptuous rugs and opulent felines. The nefarious propagandization of Iran in American media immediately infests thoughts of hostages, Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, and nuclear devastation. Although all too often the propaganda machine on the Iranian side is quick to blame the Western imperialists as the cause for problems in the Middle East, a fundamental lack of individual identity as well as a collective unity play an infinitely more critical role in this.

In 1962, Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi (Weststruckness)*, an indictment of the Western influence on Iran, appeared and was instantly embraced as an insightful diagnosis of the country's disposition and a prophetic text that predicted the radical changes imminent in the following decades. Although the book had a clandestine circulation until 1978 due to censorship by the Iranian Secret police (SAVAK), it nevertheless had a stark effect on the nation's revolutionary thinkers, not the least of which included Ali Shariati and Ruhollah Khomeini.

Al-e Ahmad delineated the roots and conditions of what he referred to as the choleric domination of Iran by the West and prescribes as its remedy a return to self vis-à-vis a fundamental embrace of Islam to guide the national ethos and identity. Thereupon, Shariati divulged the course that Al-e Ahmad introduces and later Khomeini fervently directs the nation to its new order.

Despite the development in thinking from Al-e Ahmad to Shariati to Khomeini, what most critics, and these thinkers themselves failed to consider, is that imperialism was not the cause of a dissolved Iranian identity. In fact, it was an initial loss of self, a disposition entirely founded within Iranian society that in turn opened the door to colonial influence. Too often Iranian thinkers are quick to blame outside forces for conditions that develop within their society. Although all obtain the lacuna of Iranian identity as rooted in imperialistic invasion, a re-examination of their texts and ideologies reveals the primary cause as an intrinsic wearing away rather than some external hollowing out. The fanatical embrace of Islamic fundamentalism and authoritarian theocracy manifests the dire psychic state of a people reconciling a trauma so detrimental that it demanded an antidote to enshroud the body as well as the spirit of the nation.

The residue of this fractured identity has underpinned Iranian society and politics for nearly the last century and unfortunately trailed even the most self-effacing of refugees. Although so many came with nothing but the clothes on their backs, in their flight from a chaotic revolution and a burgeoning Islamic Republic they failed to exorcise the demons burning in their guts.

In explaining one's relationship to his or her community, Jean-Luc Nancy points out that the appearance of the individual occurs upon the dissolution of the community. 'By its nature – as its name indicates, it is an atom, the indivisible – the individual reveals that it is the abstract result of a decomposition.'<sup>648</sup> Thus, the Iranian exile lingers amidst the fog of other atomized individuals; however, despite their best efforts to form a community, they must at some point realize that they are, in fact, a disparate collective at best. Although these individuals share a rich cultural legacy, their sole present commonality is a conscious decision to deny this history so as to slip more readily into their current vapid society.

Irangenes refutes the essential unification through identity required for a community to exist, for no other reason than because the exiles forming this collective have forsaken any identity, much less a pluralized one that they could profess to share with others in some sort of unified fog. Such plurality only evidences the extremity of their forced individuation in the American landscape. They have atomized specifically so that they would not be recognized as part of a larger whole, since it was association with their disreputable aggregate that they hoped to escape in the first place.

Given the one hundred years of consistent social upheaval, revolutions, coups, fascism, and imperialism that defined Iran's twentieth-century history, the people have come to suffer various psychological conditions. Myriad Iran scholars ranging from Jalal Al-e Ahmad in the 1960's to Darush Shayegan in the present day have referred to the Iranian psychic condition as everything from paranoia to schizophrenia to depression, rarely, if ever as happy, joyous, or free.

Homa Mahmoudi, a Clinical Psychologist at Cedar-Sinai Hospital, as well as the founder and president of the Transcultural Communications Center in Los Angeles, explains some of the principal psychological conditions affecting the Irangenes collective:

One of the main areas that the younger groups like college students are having such a hard time understanding, focusing on, is which way of living is right. If this is right – but causes so much tension that it makes me feel superficial and dishonest – then how can I deal with it? [...] [The most difficult problem I deal with] is depression. Isolation, depression, a sense of uprootedness [...]. Men feel disconnected, not successful. They fear old age and all that. The second is that marriages are in great trouble in Los Angeles. The tension in marriages is tremendous. There is such a vast difference in the way their parents lived in Iran and the way they live here. They have no role models. Women don't know what they're doing. Men don't know what they're doing.<sup>649</sup>

As the first generation of this sort of exile, they trudge through their lives in a daze without direction. The lack of a normative guide for what it is to be an Iranian-American creates a befuddled collection of people seeking comfort in those who seem most like them, however, when they attempt to engage each other, they realize that they have no clue how to interact. Long before this collective confronts its incapacity to unify as a community we see them suffering the same form of identity breakdown that Al-e Ahmad wrote about nearly five decades ago. Although they no longer envy the West from afar, they exhibit similar frustrations and anxieties from within the object of their desires. The symptoms are the same but the diagnosis is far more complicated. At least when they were still in Iran some solace could be mined in the comfort of familiar surroundings, shared history and language, familial ties, clearly defined social roles, and common religious affiliations. In America most of those things are denied to them, quite often radically deprived by themselves in a desperate effort to fit in.

Already unfamiliar and besieged by the need to ascertain identity and authenticity, the exile devolves further within this morass of doubt insofar as to what is the correct way for them to live. The resultant juxtapositions and contradictions that underpin the Iranian exiles experience of America and its people should be expected, Mahmoudi continues:

[Iranians] see American society and culture as sick. They see the loss of family – that old people are alone and lonely and have no respect. Children don't respect their parents. Parents don't care about their children. It's the whole control issue [...]. They see all the illnesses of society rooted in the lack of family structure, lack of control, lack of depth in the culture.

Given that their individual identities are in such flux and conflict, the aggregate reality of the Irangeles collective only magnifies this state exponentially. Certainly all immigrants change to assimilate in their newly adopted society; however the Irangeles collective is crushed between two demonizing propaganda machines. Just as the Islamic Republic constantly damns the 'Great Satan,' America never relents its unending terror campaign against Iran. In the midst of all this, a dejected immigrant collective tries to navigate a course toward peaceful existence, but at every turn encounters incomprehensible and merciless obstacles. As such, they try harder to fit in and find a place for themselves, but in doing so, they must sacrifice what they feel characterizes everything that keeps them out. Iranian scholar Nayereh Tohidi explains the cognitive and physical adaptations that occur within this exile collective and the consequential effect with which these changes are often received:

Iranian women who successfully adapt to American society are often rejected by the home culture. Iranian immigrants in Los Angeles, especially the women, have a reputation for conspicuous consumption among other Iranian immigrants in this country and in Europe, as well as back home. They are stereotyped as *taghooti*, a term rooted in idolatry that in this context implies decadence, narcissism, immorality, and hedonism. The Iranian community in Los Angeles is known in Iran as the source of contraband music videos – vulgar and commercial, these represent the worst elements of westernization.<sup>650</sup>

Because of such love-hate sentiments toward the West in general and Americans in particular, immigrants in Los Angeles, particularly women, must prove that such stereotypes do not apply to them. Iranians who immigrated to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s frequently struggle with desires to fit in while laden



with lingering antipathy toward their new surroundings. Given that for much of their lives back in Iran many of them learned to apprehend Westernization or Americanization with strong negative connotations, politically, culturally, and sexually.<sup>651</sup>

The ways of the old country fail them in the new one, so they must figure out a way to unify, even if that unity is founded upon their collective disparity and displacement. The 1979 revolution imbued Iranian exiles with a profound tolerance toward the devils they know, for as tyrannical as the Shah may have been, the Islamic Republic that succeeded him plunged the nation unto a previously unimaginable nadir of despotism, misogyny, authoritarianism, oppression, brutality, cruelty, and misery.

Nevertheless, such attempts to overcome trauma and dogma achieve fruition over generations. In the meantime, this massive collective of Iranian exiles fails to recognize which culture is the correct one, where they most belong, and who they are. Rejected, both as an Iranian and as an American, they discover that beyond missing identity and community, they lack a distinct course they can pursue to recuperate these losses.

If there is no going home for the exile, then they are stuck where they are. However unless a method is discovered for the exile to create a new home, not as a stranger passing through, but as a native planting roots, this collective will wither. A hybridized identity is frankly their only refuge. The hollowed identity bemoaned by Al-e Ahmad and his ilk can find its long sought supplement in this new land. In a particularly serendipitous twist of fortune, as it turns out, Los Angeles may in fact be the ideal environment for identity reconstruction to occur. Specifically because it is a city with no memory, a place so obsessed with the future that it recognizes itself as forever becoming, Los Angeles offers a unique freedom for the sublime cultivation of such cosmopolitanism. Appealing to the foreign because it all seems so spookily familiar, with weather so inviting, nature so forgiving, if there is a place for the collective to transcend its splintered legacy

and evolve into a community it will be there. However for this to happen, the people of this collective must realize that it will not be through self-denial that they will melt into this pot, but rather by bringing their culture and history into the mix to form a newer, better, stronger alloy. A fundamental call for conversation without reproach for the road that led them to this place, not merely for the sake of catharsis, but as sincere disclosure of experiences and insights. A telling of stories to craft and enculturate a society aimed not necessarily toward immediate acceptance as much as continued exploration and discussion.

Everyday, the media reminds us of the threats posed by America's Middle Eastern enemies: Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We are warned that cells of these enemies are hiding right here, waiting for their call from God to enact their lunacy. Oddly, the Irangeles collective can be viewed as a cell isolating itself against unfounded suspicion and hyperbole or it can be lauded as a new type of immigrant – a breed of traveller who has come to America not to change it, but to be changed by it.

A wonderful Iranian-American comedian named Maz Jobrani represents this new model of the Iranian exile, an individual fully cognizant of his history although not trapped by it. He frontloads his routine with his Iranian history, but then spends the rest of his time deconstructing the vilification that those first tense moments generate. Early in his routine, he states:

I tell my American friends that, you know, I'm Iranian, and they say, 'oh so you're Arab.' No actually, we're different. We're similar, but we're not Arabs. I mean, we're similar because we're all getting shot at. You know that's one thing. But you know, Iranians we're actually ethnically Aryans. We're white. We're white. So stop shooting. That's what I'm trying to say.<sup>652</sup>

He does not work to create a community where one does not exist. In the midst of his humour, he makes a request for recognition of Iranians' racial similarity with Americans and for them to stop shooting at him. He yearns for acceptance in a

broader conversation where their voices are heard above the wails of Islamic fundamentalism, where discourse satiates discord, and laughter allows for harmony. And perhaps eventually, Iranians will no longer fear themselves, and their need for invisibility will prove to be an artefact of history. Toward the end of establishing a viable and open community, they will stop being atomized exiles and reincarnate in the fog of American society as citizens.



### **23. GUEVARA'S 'CONGOLIZATION': TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION FOR THE INTERTEXTUALITY BETWEEN GUEVARA'S *AFRICAN DREAM* AND CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS***

Eve J. Eisenberg (Indiana University Bloomington)

Se vera que el efecto fue diametralmente opuesto y como se produjo con el tiempo la 'congolizacion' de los cubanos. – Che Guevara

In April of 1965, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Argentine by birth but a hero of the Cuban Revolution, led a small group of Cubans into the Congo for the purpose of supporting the revolution against the 'neocolonialist' regime which had been responsible for the assassination of the socialist-identified Patrice Lumumba, the Congo's first elected premiere since decolonization.<sup>653</sup> Many presumed that those who overthrew Lumumba<sup>654</sup> were working with the American Central Intelligence Agency and the Belgians, protecting Cold War/imperial interests in the Congo and preventing the formation of the socialist state Lumumba had envisioned, an emergent state which had the political, material and moral support of many of the then-Communist countries, including China, Cuba and the USSR.<sup>655</sup> Guevara thought of his small band of Cubans as experts in guerrilla warfare, and he wanted the Cubans to train the Congolese in the methods that had been effective in the Cuban Revolution.

Guevara's desire fits into the larger framework of his Marxist-internationalist philosophy, which emphasizes the portability of the class revolt, the idea that a revolution in one locale can and should be the impetus for similar uprisings in other places leading, ultimately, to a world freed from a capitalist labor economy.<sup>656</sup> In his account of the seven months he spent in the Congo, *Moments from the Revolutionary War: Congo*,<sup>657</sup> Guevara laments that his intent to 'cubanize' the Congolese was foiled when the Cubans instead became 'congolized'.<sup>658</sup> In Guevara's lexicology, becoming 'congolized' refers generally to a loss of proper revolutionary spirit, and a descent into 'organizational chaos'.<sup>659</sup>

In this chapter I question Guevara's explanations for the 'failure' of his mission in the Congo by interrogating the manner in which those explanations propose the Congo as the source of a mysterious entropic force, and as a space whose chaos both calls out to Guevara for salvation even as it consistently undoes his best efforts at ordering. By using Edward Said and Michel Foucault to interrogate Guevara's notions of order itself, I hope to uncover the inconsistencies in Guevara's explanations for his failure in the Congo.

In debunking Guevara's explanations, we uncover what they elide, and in doing so we see how discourses of Africa perpetually invoke both crisis and the insoluble qualities of African problems as both *a priori* cover story and *a posteriori* alibi for normative projects and their failures, both Western-imperialist and communist-imperialist. Ultimately, these explanations put African resistance under erasure, forever casting the African as too passive or too disorganized to mount effective resistance, or too quick to accept defeat. Given the momentous events of the era of decolonization, and the role of sustained, courageous African resistances in those events, such narratological erasure of African resistance deserves to be challenged in the strongest terms. Moreover, alternate explanations for African 'chaos' and 'passivity' ought to be sought, explanations which break away from the discursive dead ends of imperialist logic.<sup>660</sup>

In the first place let us establish that Guevara's explanation for his failure in the Congo – the 'congolization' of his troops because of exposure to the Congo as a place and the Congolese as people – holds no water and depends upon imperialist dogma for its logic. The most likely location for an explanation of Guevara's failure is surely in the very idea that the Lumumbist forces would welcome Cuban assistance of the variety Guevara offered – that is, Cuban leadership of Congolese military personnel. It would be just as plausible to explain Guevara's failure in terms of basic numbers and strategy: was it ever realistic to expect two hundred Cubans to turn the tide of a struggle against those who already controlled most of the important territory, who had the money to employ mercenaries, and who had the financial and material backing of the United States and Belgium?

The very difficulty Guevara encountered in trying to meet with the highest-ranking officials in the Lumumbist revolutionary forces suggests how little those officials welcomed this white Argentine's interference. An excellent example occurs in Guevara's chapter 'The Shooting Star,' during Laurent Kabila's July 7 meeting with Guevara; for months, Guevara had been attempting to meet with Kabila – no doubt the shooting star of the chapter's title, blazing by almost too briefly to be seen – who frequently promised to appear but typically cancelled at the last minute.<sup>661</sup>

Guevara's sense of disappointed anticipation emerges when he describes Kabila as 'pleasant yet reserved'.<sup>662</sup> During the same meeting with these Congolese officials, Guevara continues to insist that he wants to go to the front. Despite the earnestness of Guevara's prose, an almost farcical subtext lingers over the statement of one of the officials, who gently tells Guevara that he is too important to the 'world revolution,' and that he should not risk himself at the front.<sup>663</sup>

As one would with any ideologue whose grasp of reality remains at best tentative, the Congolese official speaks to Guevara in the language of Guevara's

own ideology in order to prevent, without giving offence, his interference at the front.<sup>664</sup>

These and many other examples suggest how little Kabila and the other supposed Lumumbists welcomed Cuba's aid. Throughout the text, what Guevara attributes to Congolese mismanagement and disorganization may often be just as easily read as deliberate efforts to keep Guevara himself away from any actual fighting. In the end, many of Guevara's misreadings of conversations and situations result from his basic misunderstanding of the motivations of the Congolese 'revolutionaries.'

Indeed, why should Kabila or any of his compatriots have wanted to follow in Lumumba's footsteps? Those footsteps led directly to an appointment with a firing squad, one arranged by Belgium and arguably also by the United States; strategically speaking, the Lumumbists had little incentive to carry on with the creation of an explicitly socialist state. The Congo had enough problems without taking up the mantle of the world socialist revolution and thereby also taking on its enemies, formidable as they were. Indeed, Guevara's timing was bad; some military historians suggest that the revolution had lost viability about six months prior to Guevara's arrival.<sup>665</sup>

At the same time, the absence of any obvious rebuff to Guevara's presence in the Congo suggests how savvy the Lumumbists were in regards to international relations: to offend Guevara would be to offend Fidel Castro, an unwise move for an aspirant African socialist state in the 1960s.<sup>666</sup> Over seven months of completely failing to help Guevara achieve his aims in any material manner, somehow Kabila and his compatriots managed never once to commit any actual offence which might have changed the Cuban stance toward them from annoyed to outraged. This seems quite a remarkable diplomatic accomplishment.

Moreover, what Guevara calls the 'congolization' of the Cubans under his command – the deterioration of morale amongst the Cubans, their repeated requests to return to Cuba and give up trying to assist the Congolese – provides a



logically shaky explanation for the failure of Cuban efforts in the Congo. Quite deliberately, Guevara brought highly experienced soldiers with him to the Congo with the explicit intention of using their expertise to help train 'cadres' of Congolese fighters. Therefore Guevara brought with him those least likely to succumb to poor morale, those most committed to Marxist militancy, indeed those most tested – and proven – on the battlefield.<sup>667</sup>

A more feasible explanation for the 'loss of morale' amongst the Cubans involves their ability to perceive – where their leader could or would not – the real attitude of the Congolese towards the Cubans. Said the medic Rafael Zerquera, 'We want to fight elsewhere, perhaps Vietnam or Peru [...] we are no cowards, but the majority of the Congolese are not interested in the liberation of the Congo'.<sup>668</sup>

Their pleas to return to Cuba, read by Guevara as a sign of their 'congolization,' most likely represent their growing understanding that Kabila and the other Lumumbists were suing for a cease fire with their opponents rather than trying to inaugurate a socialist republic in the Congo. And Guevara's blindness to what was really happening around him, a blindness signalled by his increasingly over-determined, bitter characterizations of the Congolese as chaotically disorganized, represents his own dogged efforts at stabilizing and inflating his own reputation (and, perhaps as importantly, his own self-conception) as the revolutionary leader *par excellence*.

Here it is useful to pause to both compare and contrast my reading of Guevara and his narrative tactics with a similar reading by María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo in her book *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (2003). Saldaña-Portillo's thesis concerns the way that a 'normative theory of human transformation and agency [...] is at the heart of the discursive collusion between revolutionary and development discourses'.<sup>669</sup> While I concur with Saldaña-Portillo's assessment of the ways in which 'revolutionary and development discourses' – in my own terminology, Marxist and imperialist

discourses – operate out of an episteme which conceives of humankind’s struggle to make progress along a rigid (in Saldaña-Portillo’s terms, ‘normative’) track towards ‘transcendence,’ I wish to complicate the way she maps her thesis onto Guevara.

First let me note that Saldaña-Portillo is working with the Guevara of the Cuban revolution. In my opinion, the differences between Saldaña-Portillo’s reading of Guevara and mine most likely result from two factors: that Saldaña-Portillo is reading Guevara’s estimation of Latin Americans, and I am reading Guevara’s account of African people, and that Saldaña-Portillo deals with a successful revolution – and Guevara’s explanations for success – whereas I am reading Guevara’s ‘history of a failure’ and his explanations for that failure.

Saldaña-Portillo traces how the peasant in Guevara’s writing moves from a feminized state of oppression through a set of pre-determined Marxist ‘stages,’ an evolutionary passage from weak to strong, passive to active, female to male. I agree with Saldaña-Portillo that Guevara’s narrative ‘effac[es]’ the ‘specificity of Cuban peasant culture’ as he tells the story of its evolutionary progress.<sup>670</sup> She links her compelling reading of Guevara back to the thesis of her book when she points out that ‘Guevara’s [...] representations of revolutionary subjection conform as well to the terms of colonial history in Latin America for representing indigenous peasants, and to the paradigmatic masculinity of imperial reason’.<sup>671</sup> To summarize, Saldaña-Portillo finds that Guevara’s masculinist revolutionary project of subject (trans)formation shares epistemic logical and ordering paradigms with empire.

Indeed, I would add to Saldaña-Portillo’s argument by pointing out how this shared episteme also incorporates the mutually constructive model of subject formation so important to Edward Said’s ideas in *Orientalism*. In Said, the racial Other embodies that which the white-subject must repress, those aspects of his own psyche – such as ‘Oriental sensuality’ and ‘Oriental despotism’ – which contest his self-image of goodness and propriety.<sup>672</sup> In Said’s theorization, ‘the

Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'.<sup>673</sup> Thus the project of the orientalist involves demonstrating how the ethnic Other embodies (in a Manichaean fashion) those characteristics which the white-subject most wishes to displace from himself. Yet the subject cannot exist without its Other, its Lacanian mirror reflection; Said calls the Orient the Occident's 'complementary opposite'.<sup>674</sup> All of these displacements are part of an orientalist discursive practice meant to manage the troubling encounter with difference that supposedly occurs at the site where the occident meets the orient.

Thus where Saldaña-Portillo emphasizes the way a certain stagist progress narrative informs Guevara's conception of subject formation, I wish to re-focus on the way the failure of that subject formation signals the entropic unravelling of Guevara's internationalist philosophy. In Guevara's account of his adventures in the Congo, the confrontation between his dearly-held episteme and its failure in the face of overwhelming odds becomes reconciled via a discursive framing of the Congo as the space in which all proper order breaks down, in which all rationality becomes irrational, the real surreal.

By explaining his failure this way, Guevara adopts an orientalist framework for displacing onto an Other the faults in his own plan, in his own thinking. Furthermore, his text takes its place within a literary-discursive tradition – extant before Guevara's birth, continuing long past his death, into today – in which the Congo serves as a signifier for surrealistic disordering, for an essentialized African illogicality. As with Guevara's Congo diary, so with many of these other texts: the Congo as signifier of chaos provides an alibi for many varieties of illogical thinking and bad planning, not to mention an excuse for Western intervention into Congolese affairs.

But from the outset we must acknowledge that Guevara was by no means naïve regarding how his representations of his Congo 'failure' would be read by future generations. Thus his real explanation for his failure emerges via a

heteroglossia of chaos, one that nestles amidst a remarkably thick – and often self-contradictory – firestorm of explanations. At different points in the text, he blames himself, his failure to learn Swahili, his over-reactions to setbacks, his lack of foreknowledge of the Congolese terrain, infighting amongst the Lumumbists, his ill-timed renunciation of his Cuban citizenship, Congolese superstitions and belief in *dawa* (magical protection in battle), the lack of revolutionary commitment on the part of the Rwandan fighters,<sup>675</sup> an attitude of ‘superiority’ on the part of the Afro-Cubans towards the Congolese, and the fact that the Congolese peasantry were not oppressed enough to become proletarianized and radicalized.

His gestures of self-blame, especially, seem insincere, given that they do not proceed from nor lead to a more profound re-thinking of the very logic which made possible his venture into the Congo – the chauvinist logic Saldaña-Portillo describes so well in her book, the logic which makes possible the presumption that every local uprising is a Marxist struggle waiting for its proper leader, who will sweep in and transform the local peasants into real revolutionary subjects.

In fact, Guevara’s decision to repeat the entire Congolese venture in Bolivia suggests the complete insincerity of his gestures of self-blame. Says one of Guevara’s biographers, ‘Just as in the Congo, the idea of guerilla *foco* spreading across borders and appealing directly to the oppressed, whatever the different countries in which they lived, was one of the most important factors in [Guevara’s] decision to target Bolivia’.<sup>676</sup> Thus, in sifting through Guevara’s pile of explanations, we are obliged to push aside the ones that his own later actions prove insincere. That is, we acknowledge our mistakes in order to correct them later; the fact that Guevara seems to have learned nothing from the Congo, that he repeats many of the same gestures in Bolivia, suggests that he calls these actions ‘mistakes’ in his Congo diary only to provide cover for a more deeply buried explanatory system.

In fact, the language of chaos and disorganization running throughout

Guevara's text points to the one explanation for failure to which he seems most sincerely attached – the theory of the 'congolization' of the Cubans, a failure model based upon the notion that 'the Congo' signifies a contagious anti-revolutionary pathogen, or a state from which progress up the evolutionary ladder is impossible. Paradoxically, whilst Guevara insists that a man only knows he is a real man if he can respond courageously in the face of the disorganization and chaos of the battlefield, he frames the Congo as the chaotic space out of which there is no possibility of claiming a masculinist revolutionary identity. He refers to a 'lack of organization', 'organizational chaos', a 'remarkable lack of organization', 'abominable organization', and so on.<sup>677</sup> When he exhausts ways of discussing Congolese disorganization he switches to a vocabulary of 'indiscipline'.<sup>678</sup>

Meaningfully, he shades his language of indiscipline and chaos with terms of 'decomposition' and 'regression', which link his picture of Congolese chaos with his notion that the Congolese are moving backwards down the evolutionary ladder, and taking the Cubans with them.<sup>679</sup>

At this point it is useful to compare Guevara's Congo narrative with some of the other texts that follow the same general plot. Most notably, Joseph Conrad's Kurtz (the tragic antihero of his 1899 novella *Heart of Darkness*) ventures into the Congo both to procure ivory and to bring the light of civilization to the savages in the wilderness. In a remarkable parallel with Guevara's account of the 'congolization' of the Cubans, Kurtz finds that, instead of bringing the Congolese upwards along the evolutionary ladder towards civilization, the 'darkness' at the heart of the Congolese wilderness – a darkness characterized, moreover, by a strange intermixture of uncanny silence and surreal chaos – pulls Kurtz downward along that same ladder into a state of horrific savagery. The Congo works a similar reverse-evolution on characters from texts as diverse as Barbara Kingsolver's novel *The Poisonwood Bible* (1999), the novel *Congo* by Michael Crichton (1980), and even a Porky the Pig Looney Tunes cartoon from

1949. In each of these texts, the borders of the Congo region delineate the space in which logical, rational systems of ordering and of understanding devolve into chaotic disorganization or into absolute opposition and reversal.

While we could point to many texts which narrate Congolese disorder, the particular parallels between Guevara's 'congolized' Cubans and Conrad's mad Kurtz provide the most fruitful opportunity for developing a theory regarding the utility of representing the Congo as the space in which altruism confronts supreme entropy. In both texts, a narrator seeks an explanation for the failure of an altruistic mission into the Congo. In both texts, the narrator makes gestures of explanation towards the brutality of empire. Yet in both texts the superficial explanatory gestures slip unconvincingly across the surface of a more profoundly resonant reason for the failure of altruism in the Congo: in both texts, a pernicious, entropic, chaotic force within the Congo insinuates itself into the heart of the altruistic outsider, rendering futile his efforts to improve the lives of the Congolese. Unnamed, invisible – except for its effects – unstoppable, this mysterious quality of the Congo confronts the best intentions of the Western intervener, subverts or perverts them, until in the end he has taken on the characteristics of the savage, the cowardly, the feminized Congolese.

The term 'congolization' could well stand in for the fear of the return of the displaced savagery inherent in Said's theory of orientalism. Back down the ladder of evolutionary progress, back in time, something dark and illogical resides at the heart of the Congolese wilderness. What looks like the ultimate masculinist playground for the Westerner fed up with the effeminate trappings of civilization turns out to be the space in which a pre-modern savagery lingers, waiting to awaken the feminized, hysterical kernel long repressed in the Western breast, yet never completely banished. Indeed, Guevara's narrative describes the mutually constitutive nature of African crisis and Western imperial intervention; the appearance of Congolese distress cries out for paternalistic, modern, altruistic intrusion, yet the insoluble (static, unchanging, unchangeable) nature of

Congolese problems renders aid efforts ineffectual, leaving the interventionist with two options: leave the Congolese to their nightmarish pre-historic hysteria, or make the best of a bad situation and extract Congolese resources lest they rot uselessly in a place which progress will never know.

Texts such as Guevara's Congo diary and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* serve to isolate problems of the Western episteme, to contain them, to force them into a discursive construction of 'the past' over which the 'we' of the First World have triumphed. The many texts which represent the Congo as a surreal, disordered space stabilize the Western episteme which Michel Foucault attempts to flesh out in *The Order of Things*, an episteme which calls itself 'natural,' which could never accept that its classificatory and taxonomic systems are as arbitrary as any which have come before. Foucault says,

Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the *episteme* without that at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself, at its borders yet also in its very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught. The unthought (whatever name we give it) is not lodged in man like a shriveled-up nature or a stratified history; it is, in relation to man, the Other: the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, but beside him and at the same time, in an identical newness, in an unavoidable duality. This obscure space so readily interpreted as an abyssal region in man's nature [...] is both exterior to him and indispensable to him: in one sense, the shadow cast by man as he emerged in the field of knowledge; in another, the blind stain by which it is possible to know him.<sup>680</sup>

Thus goes Foucault's answer to the problem of how this episteme understands man as subject-of-thought/knowledge when the *cogito* ceases to function, a cessation that occurs because it fails to account for man's birth into language, into history. Both simultaneous to man and representative of his anterior, the Other in this passage represents that which man cannot think but which nevertheless shapes thought. One way of reading these representations of Congolese darkness,

chaos and disorder thus involves noting how the altruist invokes them at moments in which his own sense of a proper and orderly universe comes under fire. As an explanation for the breakdown of logic, rather than accept the notion that his classificatory practices have no basis in anything but arbitrary resemblance, the subject devises – and then displaces, externalizes, Otherizes – a story in which the ‘obscure space’ of his lost origin, his pre-history, provides the illegible but (presumably) logical supplement to his failed narrative of altruism.

To put it more plainly, Guevara’s representation of a chaotic and disordered Congo stands in for the psychic location of the unthought, the catch-all space of pre-history in which the logical only seems illogical because we have no access to this lost epoch of our species development, this pre-time location which has contributed to but fails to benefit from the system of ordering and logic now at work in thought, in the conscious mind of the revolutionary subject. Guevara needs only gesture to the chaos to invoke it as the explanation for his failure; rather than reading his experiences in the Congo as reason to revise the logical underpinnings of *foco*, his particular theory of Marxist revolution, Guevara writes the Congo off as the blind spot in history, the temporally anterior space out of which modern logic emerges, but to which it could never apply.



## **24. POINT OF VIEW AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL COSMOPOLITANISM**

Ming Xie (University of Toronto)

Cosmopolitanism is as much practice as discourse, as much process as outcome, as much ethos as principle. It is both epistemological and ethical, as it is both a cognitive outlook and a character disposition that need to be actively cultivated. This chapter draws upon important reflections on the notion of ‘point of view’ in thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, T. S. Eliot, and Kenneth Burke, in order to explore the epistemology of cosmopolitanism. I will approach cosmopolitanism not primarily as a political or ethical notion, though undoubtedly it is, but from the point of view of epistemology.<sup>681</sup> What I mean by epistemology here concerns the epistemological conditions of cosmopolitanism. In order to be cosmopolitan, one needs to become aware of one’s own position and viewpoint vis-à-vis other positions and viewpoints, which together form a ‘world,’ or ‘cosmo-polis.’ Yet the very notion of a viewpoint or perspective is paradoxical. In Hegelian terms, ‘the very fact that something is determined as a limitation implies that the limitation is already transcended.’<sup>682</sup> The reason is that a complex reality exists independently of what we can observe or say about it. Reality is ontologically complex and independent of our knowing and beyond our knowing. Hence knowledge of such reality is always limited and partial and contingent upon how

we conceive of reality. This awareness of the limits of our knowing pertains not just to ontology, but also to epistemology. There are always gaps and remainders that cannot in principle be captured by any one viewpoint or perspective.

In his doctoral dissertation on the British Idealist philosopher F. H. Bradley, on which he worked between 1911 and 1914, before he made the decisive shift from philosophy to poetry, T. S. Eliot had worked out a theory of viewpoints. Eliot posits the basic premise as follows, 'To understand anything is to understand from a point of view.'<sup>683</sup> What matters here is the systematic nature of our knowledge of reality, that is, how any single and singular point of view necessarily presupposes other points of view and hence transcends its own limitations in the very constitution of a point of view. 'Experience is certainly more real than anything else, but any experience demands reference to something real which lies outside of that experience.' The framework within which experience is mediated and makes sense is always larger than any particular experience. What liberates one from the limitations of one's particular perspective is precisely the fact that one understands the limitations of one's perspective. A more encompassing perspective is inclusive of and better than narrower perspectives. But different perspectives do not become 'fused,' as in a 'fusion of horizons,' which does not mean the fusion of different horizons into one, but the preservation of a tension between them and their mutual clarification and critique, since when two horizons become 'fused,' the fusion itself needs to be grasped within an even larger encompassing horizon. The limits of our horizons are liminal boundaries or thresholds over which our habitual ways of thinking give way to new and alternative ways of seeing ourselves and others.

Furthermore, facts are always already implicated in a system: 'Facts are not merely found in the world and laid together like bricks, but every fact has in a sense its place prepared before it arrives, and without the implication of a system in which it belongs the fact is not a fact at all.' What Eliot tries to establish is that entities are not complete in themselves and nothing has complete meaning in

itself. Hence the importance of relations and connections between what are inherently fragments and parts of an all-embracing whole or totality. Hence relations that connect parts are external to these parts and may be more important than the parts standing alone. 'The only real truth is the whole truth,' but the whole truth consists of all the partial truths, of all the degrees of truth and degrees of reality. 'In a change of viewpoint, there is [in] some sense at least a total change' because a change of viewpoint implicates a change in seeing its relation to the whole in a different way.<sup>684</sup>

Eliot reasons further along this line: 'To realize that a point of view is a point of view is already to have transcended it: what was merely a picture in two dimensions (if you please) becomes a real landscape with an infinity of aspects as the 'what' disengages itself from the 'that'. The 'what' continues to be recognized as a true qualification of the 'that', but is as well a qualification of the apprehending consciousness, and the real object results from the abstraction and comparison of the various points of view.' In this sense, points of view do not exist in isolation, but affect each other simply by way of their difference: 'What constitutes the difference, therefore, between two points of view, is the difference which each is capable of making to the other.'<sup>685</sup> At the pre-suppositional level, a given viewpoint implicitly challenges the validity or authority of other viewpoints.

At the same time, a particular viewpoint functions as the necessary transcendental condition of a given worldview, 'transcendental' in the sense of the 'self-transcending' that a particular viewpoint necessarily enacts and performs in order precisely to affirm its own particular worldview as a worldview by demarcating itself from other worldviews. Here, diversity or plurality itself does not guarantee that all viewpoints or perspectives are equally valid. '[I]n the 'transcendence' of error,' insists Eliot, 'the error, as a real object, is not got rid of. *An object is not transcended, though a point of view is.*'<sup>686</sup> To focus more precisely on the object while transcending (initial) partial points of view is one of

the epistemological conditions of a cosmopolitan point of view. A plurality of viewpoints points to, or points up, a complex reality. The crucial point here is that 'reality' or its 'essence' is not limited to our access or relation to it. Inherent limitations of all perspectives can point to a realist conception of reality, the existence of a reality independent of human perspectives, precisely because perspectives by nature fail to do (full) justice to reality. Reality as such inevitably and intrinsically exceeds any description or interpretation of it and hence acquires a depth beyond human cognitive access. This may be called a 'negatively' inverse conception of realism precisely for reasons of the partiality and fallibility of all perspectives. Perspectives can and should be compared and contrasted in relation to and against that something of which they are supposedly (only) perspectives. On this view, there exists something 'unmediated' beyond all perspectives. To say that something is seen from a perspective is to presume that this something exists apart from all perspectives. Hence perspectivism implies realism.

Eliot gives the example of being hit on the head with a club and coming to know the club as 'objective': 'We do, of course, partially put ourselves at the point of view of the man who hit us, and partially at each other's points of view; and it is the interweaving of these viewpoints which gives us the objective club. *There is no one club, no one world, without a diversity of points of view for it to be one to.*'<sup>687</sup> If we reverse Eliot's reasoning on this point, we could get a clue to Eliot's conception of metaphysics. Eliot defines metaphysics as an attempt to bind all points of view into one point of view. This one point of view is of course unattainable, but we can move towards it by way of dualisms which are only 'tentative and provisional, a moment in a process.'<sup>688</sup> Herein lies what may be called the 'metaphysical advantage' of a cosmopolitan perspective. Eliot's philosophical scepticism teaches at least one thing: no epistemology can be infallible. All it takes to see the defects and shortcomings – and perhaps also the strong points – of a point of view is to shift one's point of view. 'Any assertion about the *world*, or any *ultimate* statement about any *object in the world*, will

inevitably be an interpretation. It is a valuation and an assignment of meaning. The things of which we are collectively certain, we may say our common formulae, are certainly not true. *What makes a real world is difference of opinion.*<sup>698</sup> Differences of opinion may even be figured as incommensurable viewpoints, yet such incommensurability of viewpoints is not the endpoint, but the point of departure and the *point de repère* of a cosmopolitan sensibility. In any case, incommensurability does not mean or entail total untranslatability or even incomprehensibility. Incommensurability can simply mean the absence or lack of shared criteria and standards with reference to the same conceptual framework. Thus, frameworks that are genuinely different and incommensurable can still be understood and are in fact understandable, just as translation is possible between radically different languages, even though they are fundamentally untranslatable.

What matters in cosmopolitanism is ‘the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible [viewpoints], and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them.’ To pass from one viewpoint to another means that ‘one point of view takes cognizance of another.’<sup>690</sup> In spite of his Hegelian language, Eliot takes a more self-reflexive view of each of the two initial ‘theses.’ Here is another set of terms to help us think about what constitutes a cosmopolitan perspective: ‘point of view’ goes hand in hand with what Eliot calls the ‘half-object.’ What enables us to escape the solipsism and partiality of a single perspective is the ability to switch our viewpoint, to see an object from a different angle.

These two viewpoints create ‘half-objects,’ since they are seen from two viewpoints at once. ‘Two points of view take cognizance of each other, I suppose, by each making a half-object of the other. Strictly speaking, a point of view taking note of another is no longer the same, but a third, centre of feeling; yet it is something different from a centre of feeling: more properly a self, a ‘construction based on, and itself transcending, immediate experience.’<sup>691</sup> To assert that a

certain point of view is right and another is wrong already implies a vantage point from which to understand both. Thus, Eliot writes that ‘the assertion of one point of view against another must be made from a third point of view, which somehow contains the first and second. And yet it must be noticed (for I see no way to avoid this hair-splitting) that *it is only from the third point of view that the first two are therein contained*. For as soon as we have realized that we have reached a third point of view we are already at a fourth, in which the first and second reassert themselves once more.’<sup>692</sup> It is important to emphasize that Eliot is not so much advocating a kind of epistemological progressivism whereby every viewpoint will be surpassed by the next, as pointing up the mutual imbrications of viewpoints in movement.

What Eliot alludes to here is in fact the idea of triangulation, a method of fixing a point by using directions from two known points to construct a triangle. Triangulation, like the ‘third point of view,’ points up the possibility of how different perspectives can correct each other and gradually through continual trial and error and mutual persuasion converge towards a more accurate and objective view of the object. Triangulation as such can be seen as a form of cross-checking. But approaching the world from different viewpoints can at best produce different perspectives on the world, none of which can be final or definitive or absolute. Thus triangulation seems to presuppose a realist view of the world, yet it also seems to entail a non-realist or relativist view of human access to the world.

However, Eliot’s scepticism draws us further into the problematic of what might be meant by ‘a real world.’ First, Eliot defines an object as only a ‘point of attention, and thus anything and everything to which we may be said to direct attention is an object [...] but the point of attention is of course only an abstraction.’<sup>693</sup> A point of attention as such is only a temporary focus, or the temporary conjunction of an object and its hypothesis: ‘From one point of view we know that the object exists; but from another point of view this is mere hypothesis.’<sup>694</sup> Eliot’s scepticism leads him to question the absolute distinction

between real and unreal. Instead, he insists that we should not think of the world as 'ready made,' but as 'constructed, or constructing itself [...] at every moment, and never more than an approximate construction, a construction essentially practical in its nature.'<sup>695</sup> Eliot highlights the inadequacy of the theoretical explanatory point of view, 'because this world is what it is by reason of the practical point of view and the world which we try to explain is a world spread out upon a table – simply there!'<sup>696</sup>

Yet Eliot's sceptical and even relativist account of the real world made by the practical point of view needs to be further complicated, because what should be emphasized here is precisely that reality is what (perspectival) representations or interpretations answer to. In this sense, there must be an absolute conception of reality against which perspectival representations can be measured. And this is in fact the theoretical point of view. But this absolute conception can only be a regulative idea. The very existence of points of view or perspectival representations may tend to mislead us in the direction of the relativity of reality itself, as if we see different and even conflicting realities.

But this illusion may be due to the adoption of different frames of reference. What is seen under different frames of reference may be equally true (or wrong). The obverse side of this phenomenon is that we tend not to see disagreement or conflict where we see points of view or representations as merely perspectival.

As A. W. Moore rightly argues, it seems that postulation of reality conceived and represented absolutely is needed to prevent the relativization of reality itself. It seems possible and necessary that at least some of our representations are (or should be) 'absolute' rather than 'perspectival.' A perspectival representation is true or false from a point of view, while an absolute representation is true or false without being from a point of view. What makes representations true is 'how the world is anyway.' But the moot point here is how a representation is or can be made true by reality.<sup>697</sup>

Apart from the influence of British idealist philosophy, Eliot also clearly belongs to the tradition of American pragmatist thinkers – those that have also influenced Kenneth Burke – but it is Nietzsche who is really the source of modern perspectivism. In the ‘Foreword’ to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche emphasizes ‘the perspectival’ as ‘the fundamental condition of all life.’ Bernard Williams compares Nietzsche’s idea of perspective with that of Kant. The Kantian transcendental sense of perspective offers a form for experience. In these terms, it is hard to conceive of the existence of more than one perspective, or of having a perspective at all, if there are no other perspectives. Nietzsche’s idea of transcendence, on the other hand, is concerned with the need to recognize not only that there exist many different perspectives but also that they are, indeed, plausible perspectives.<sup>698</sup> Such plausible perspectives call for more than just notional conflicts. But perspectivism is not relativism, nor does it entail any doctrine of ‘anything goes’ in interpretation. Indeed, some perspectives are better than others because they are more self-reflexive about themselves and more inclusive of other perspectives. Nietzsche’s point is thus not about relativism as it is usually understood, but about the need to have different and many eyes to look at the world. Many eyes are needed to get as full a picture of the world as possible: we must try ‘to think an eye which cannot be thought at all, an eye turned in no direction at all, an eye where the active and interpretative powers are to be suppressed, absent, but through which seeing still becomes a seeing-something [...]. There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective knowing; the more affects we allow to speak about a thing, the more eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity.’<sup>699</sup>

Thus Nietzsche’s perspectivism is not relativist, but world-affirming and reality-affirming. In this Nietzsche follows and develops Leibniz’s view of monadic perspectivism. For Leibniz, a city viewed from different points of view is still the same city, but each view is a whole viewpoint intrinsically connected to



the city in its wholeness, even though each monadic view of it is only partial and imperfect. All views of the city, or all viewpoints on the city, presuppose and converge on the city in its unified reality. However, perspectivism is not just a visual-spatial metaphor but also a temporal one, for it applies to the unfolding and becoming of being in time, just as our views also change in time. In this sense, perspectivism, as a form of fallibilism, also makes it possible for what is universal to emerge and become actualized. For the purpose of my argument in this chapter, Nietzsche's perspectivism has at least three important implications for epistemological cosmopolitanism.

First, perspective seeing or knowing has to do with the multiplicity of viewpoints from which a thing may and should be viewed. Second, such multiple viewpoints must be plausible perspectives. Perspectives are recognizable as perspectives only because they are different and conflict with one another. Third, it has to do with different forms of recalcitrance, that is, how a thing elicits different forms of resistance to human access or interpretation. Hence also the diverse ways in which the world can be disclosed. For Nietzsche, the certainty of one's viewpoint based on a presumed objectivity may in fact be a mask of one's weakness, since one is foreclosed to the possibility and stimulus of new and different perspectives. The precondition of the transvaluation of all values is distance: as Nietzsche puts it, it is 'the art of separating without creating enemies; not conflating, not 'reconciling' anything; an immense multiplicity which is nevertheless the opposite of chaos.'<sup>700</sup> It is no mere reconciliation of contrary forces or capacities but the maintaining of the tension between them.

In Kenneth Burke's work, recalcitrance is inextricably linked with the notion of perspective. In this, as he himself acknowledges, Burke inherits and develops Nietzsche's perspectivism as an instrument of the transvaluation of all values. What is significant is that Burke situates Nietzsche's influence within the tradition of perspectivist reflections by American pragmatist philosophers such as C. S. Peirce, William James, and later Donald Davidson. Burke's originality lies

in emphasizing the correlation between recalcitrance and perspective. The recalcitrance of reality admits of being encountered only if there are multiple perspectives from which it can be discernible or made perspicuous: 'The universe 'yields' to our point of view by disclosing the different orders of recalcitrance which arise when the universe is considered from this point of view.'<sup>701</sup> Thus there is no recalcitrance without a point of view to disclose it; conversely, there is no point of view if there is no recalcitrance. A point of view intrinsically discloses an order of recalcitrance.

Specifically, Burke focuses on three forms or functions of recalcitrance: 'One may note subtle shifts from the similar to the antithetical in a word like 'counterpart,' which may mean replica (homeopathic), complement (intermediate), and opposite (allopathic). We believe that in *Permanence and Change* we employed the concept of 'recalcitrance' thus ambiguously. It refers to the factors that substantiate a statement, the factors that incite a statement, and the factors that correct a statement.'<sup>702</sup> In other words, recalcitrance gives substance to a statement by means of its reality, motivates a statement by means of its resistance, and modifies a statement by means of its incongruity. Burke develops this last function into the notion of 'perspective by incongruity,' which is 'a method for gauging situations by verbal atom cracking. That is, a word belongs by custom to a certain category and by rational planning you wrench it loose and metaphorically apply it to a different category.'<sup>703</sup> Through defamiliarization and unexpected juxtaposition, incongruous perspectives undermine the certainty and taken-for-granted character of our usual assumptions and beliefs. Perspective by incongruity yields a new perspective by 'violating the 'proprieties' of [a] word in its previous linkages'<sup>704</sup> and dislocating them to a new context, thus breaking up its previously seemingly fixed associations and creating new linkages with other viewpoints. Perspective by incongruity is necessary, 'inasmuch as a given classification cuts across other classifications on the bias and each new mode of classification produces new alignments incongruous with the alignments flowing

from other modes of classification.<sup>705</sup> For Burke, any one voice in a dialogue or dialectical exchange is ‘necessarily a restricted perspective, since it represents but one voice in the dialogue, and not the perspective-of-perspectives that arises from the cooperative competition of all the voices as they modify one another’s assertions; so that the whole transcends the partiality of its parts.’<sup>706</sup>

However, Burke quite rightly insists that this perspectivism ‘does not imply that the universe is merely the product of our interpretations. For the interpretations themselves must be altered as the universe displays various orders of recalcitrance to them.’<sup>707</sup> This is because ‘the ‘discoveries’ which flow from a point of view are nothing other than revisions made necessary by the nature of the world itself. They thus have an objective validity.’<sup>708</sup> As a rule, our perspectives are only pseudo-perspectives. If ‘pseudo-statements,’ a notion Burke borrows from I. A. Richards, are only assertions that have ‘not yet undergone the scope of revision required by the recalcitrance of the material which would be disclosed were we to extend them into all walks of investigation,’<sup>709</sup> then perspectives would remain ‘pseudo-perspectives’ unless they have been engaged and contested by other perspectives.

Our own perspective, however special or unique it might be, is only one among numerous possibilities. The world is what resists me (or us). Every perspective is located in a place and occupied by someone.

The first person, whether singular or plural, is the person who must encounter and experience the world as resistance or recalcitrance. The first person must feel oneself to be resisted and constrained by the world. No one perspective can fully disclose and articulate all the dimensions of recalcitrance of a given situation. Each perspective must be intrinsically supplemented and compensated for by other perspectives, which disclose other dimensions of recalcitrance not encompassed by that single perspective, so as to open up different ways of looking at the world.

Points of view are starting points and initiate a process of discovery. The

purposiveness or motivation of one's point of view must be discovered, though initially only assumed, and cannot be known in advance, at least not fully or self-consciously or explicitly. Cosmopolitanism is thus fundamentally not concerned with any single point of view. A single point of view, especially an absolutist or privileged one, is easily conducive to reduction or reification. If there can be no (complete) identification with any single viewpoints, then we are more open to other viewpoints. A cosmopolitan disposition values seeing differently. A way of seeing may be entrenched, being at once enabled and constrained by its conditions of possibility, but a focus is moveable and can be shifted and adjusted when the status of its foregrounding is made visible. What this contrast between a way of seeing and a focus means in epistemological terms is that the intrinsic value of a different perspective lies not in its being a superior perspective, nor even a neutral one, but in its being a different and alternative perspective that is equally, but differently, marked by its own (different) limitations. Thus the two perspectives can be made to reveal what would otherwise have remained invisible to each other's own original perspectives, through suspending one's original viewpoint and learning to see from another perspective. Yet this learning to see from a different perspective is not a matter of translation as such, of translation into commensuration, but a matter of thinking differently, thereby going beyond the issue of whether different viewpoints are incommensurable in the first place.

Here, I would like to draw on and further develop Gadamer's notion of *die Sache*, the 'matter' or 'subject matter' of the text.<sup>710</sup> One view might be that without the *Sachen* there can be no overlap of concern between people from different cultures and hence there would be total incommensurability as a result. This view takes differences of cultural viewpoints primarily as different articulations or perspectives on the same given issue. However, the *Sachen* are matters of concern that are not merely common topics on which different cultures can have different 'takes,' so to speak, or merely different variations. In a fundamental sense, the *Sachen* should be conceived as 'transcendent' matters of

concern that can perhaps never be adequately or fully identified or defined by any existing natural languages. The *Sachen* point to what is fundamentally at stake or in dispute. What matters is that different cultural perceptions are not variations on a common scale but reactivate in specific ways the magma of significations that are brought into being only in the specific ways in which they emerge. The notion of ‘magma’ (as in Cornelius Castoriadis for example) posits the irreducible and indefinite multiplicity of the real prior to interpretation and the incomplete and partial determinations of the real in interpretation.<sup>711</sup> The object or matter of understanding or interpretation can be accessed only by way of the multiple interpretations that it elicits. These interpretations cannot exhaust the object of interpretation. The fact that different cultures may identify different *Sachen* as matters of fundamental concern should prompt different cultures to realize what is fundamentally at stake or in dispute, and also to recognize that there are other matters of concern to recognize or confront. A plurality of representations or interpretations is open to the magma of imaginary significations, and the only access to the magma is via the plurality of interpretations. Intercultural ‘difficulty’ and ‘opacity’ is not (necessarily) a matter of meaning, or meaning as a separate problem, that is, meaning as something to be deciphered and then grasped or understood.

The degree of difficulty and opacity is inherent in the magma of significations in intercultural encounter and exchange. There is no ‘proper’ meaning to be first unearthed and deciphered, since the magma is inexhaustible and its interpretation is always plural and contestable. Difficulty of understanding one’s own culture and difficulty of understanding another culture should be brought to the fore as one of the central concerns of cosmopolitanism.

What a culture or a mode of thinking has to leave out of consideration in order to think at all, even the very form of thinking, impinges on what can be thought. Thus every culture has its own ‘unthought’ implicit to its episteme, irreducible to the mode of the unthought of another culture. What needs to be

thought are the unthought categories of thought. This is an important task of a critical intercultural hermeneutics. Here, the unthought is akin to the untranslatable, in the sense that the untranslatable does not signify the 'failure' of translating from one language to another. Rather, it signifies the untranslatable as the ontological condition of translation and knowledge. Or to put it differently, the untranslatable is an ontological distance and as such precisely and paradoxically enables intercultural understanding and translation. The untranslatable should be construed as the 'limit' in the Kantian sense: *die Grenze* as the positive delimitation which makes knowledge possible. Hence the untranslatable is ontological in function, not in the sense of an external obstacle (*die Schranke*).<sup>712</sup> Intercultural knowledge presupposes the untranslatable, that is, the non-representable or unrepresentable, as a limit-condition of knowing otherness. The untranslatable is to intercultural knowledge what limit is to Kant's critical delimitation. The limit is both epistemological and ontological. Like the horizon, or the boundedness of horizon, limit is what enables the object to be thinkable. What the limit points to or beyond is the non-meaning, or unthought, not something that is represented as unintelligible or meaningless. Thus, the intercultural space is a dialogic and pragmatic construction, not a neutral or autonomous space. So there is an important sense in which intercultural interpretation is concerned with the invention of the unthought, that is, the invention of 'possible objects' of knowledge for intercultural dialogue, critique, and transformation.

Objects of interpretation exist independently of our interpretative access or relation to them. There is always a plurality and hence conflict of interpretations about such objects. Yet such plurality or conflict affirms the existence of the same underlying Being, or of a common world or reality. In this discrepancy between objects and interpretations lies the possibility of cosmopolitanism, and of cultural transformation. Interpretation is critical in its awareness of its own partiality and incompleteness, and in its taking into account or contesting interpretations by

others. Even in a 'post-metaphysical' age, normative constraints posed by conflicts and hence politics of interpretations are inescapable. If norms are no longer seen as grounded in a notion of reason underwritten by 'metaphysics,' the plurality of interpretations in fact constitutes the politics of the normative. Cosmopolitanism may be seen as a philosophical discourse that grapples with the publicity and normativity of intercultural reason. It is necessary to recognize the normative politics of intercultural reason, and this recognition is in its turn interculturally recognized. Conflict or disagreement may be largely about what a particular conflict or disagreement is (about).

The ground of contestation is also the ground of intercultural reason. If the ordering of Being can be seen as relative, variable, provisional, and specific to each level or epoch of being, then the meanings of cultural categories of Being are co-determined by that which they determine. Every order is only contingently actualized and can be organized otherwise. But the inherent conflict or contestation between diverse or rival interpretations is paradoxically non-agonistic, because plurality should be construed as the indeterminate and indeterminable magma, which preserves a plurality of ontological forms that are irreducible to a univocal logical determination and cannot be unified or synthesized in an *a priori* way.

Different perspectives can reveal or highlight different aspects or dimensions of Being. The possibility of different perspectives means that one's particular world is not the whole world but only a part of it. The perspectival nature of perception itself means that perception cannot exhaustively experience what is perceived. One always perceives the world from some location or other. The world is always perceived or constituted perspectivally, which means that the world is always only given as different worlds. The moot question here is the very possibility of the world being conceived as one totality as opposed to being different worlds. There exists a single world, but there are multiple ways of knowing (about) it or interacting with it. Yet a single world can and should also

be understood as several worlds, 'worlds' to be construed here as symbolic universes made possible by our different ways and levels of knowing and engaging with the world construed as a single entity or totality. These worlds are in fact different dimensions or moments or domains of the same world.

What a viewpoint asserts is not really important. What is important is the real that the viewpoint points to. Between two or more different or opposing viewpoints there may not be any neutral or objective arbitration. All that differing viewpoints accentuate is the existence of something about which the viewpoints differ, disagree, or even contradict each other. Points of view are in this way instruments of accessing the real. Alasdair MacIntyre describes the notion of autonomous reason as an 'illusion to suppose that there is some neutral standing ground, some locus of rationality as such, which can afford rational resources sufficient for enquiry independent of all traditions. Those who have maintained otherwise either have covertly been adopting the standpoint of a tradition and deceiving themselves and perhaps others into supposing that theirs was just such a neutral ground or else have simply been in error.'<sup>713</sup> What is often obscured is the fact that it is precisely through disagreement that rationality functions, not just between cultures but also between different domains and modes of inquiry, not by stipulating a shared rational standard of truth, but by enabling an interaction (and hence disagreement) of conflicting perspectives. The real tests viewpoints or perspectives, while the latter test themselves against the real. The world, or reality, as a whole is not an object or entity, but can be accessed only through the multiplicity of viewpoints taken on it.

William James describes the psycho-epistemological conditions of opening up one's perspective, or the give and take between old opinion and new experience as a process of epistemological revision. James emphasizes the 'strain' and 'trouble' induced by such confrontation or contradiction. But as James indicates, in this matter of changing perspectives and enlarging experience, 'we are extreme conservatives.'<sup>714</sup> So being passively forced to modify one's opinions



and perspectives is not enough; rather, the cosmopolitan frame of mind is a radically intersubjective awareness of the logic of being in common between different perspectives. To see, but also to affirm, the limitations of one's point of view as limitations is to refuse being deprived of the stimulus of new or even opposing perspectives. To affirm one's limitations in this way is paradoxically also to master one's perspective. Here, 'mastering' does not mean 'totalizing' one's perspective. The very notion of a 'global' or 'total' perspective is a contradiction of terms. One's grasp of contextual wholes embedded in one's perspectives can only be partial and indeterminate. There is no point of view from which the totality of one's world can be seen as a whole. One can only have a piecemeal view or knowledge of one's own cultural context. So there is always a gap between trying to articulate one's total context and actually achieving such a total view.

But the crucial point is that one can be distanced from, while still rooted in, one's own perspective. Such a disposition requires a commitment to our own particular perspective but with a sense of the contingency of this very commitment. The imperative is the wholeness of a point of view, which is precisely elusive and inaccessible. Instead, a point of view perceives only a fragment of the whole. So points of view necessitate a double or split awareness. Figures of double or split awareness such as ambiguity, irony, contradiction and paradox can in fact accentuate the distinction, and the inherent tension, between any one perspective and a (or the) perspective beyond all perspectives. This distinction may be only conceptual, since in practice a perspective beyond perspectives would seem impossible. Figures of double awareness usually involve perception of two perspectives, one particular and situated, the other supposedly neutral and without context. But in practice it is difficult to abstract or retrieve a so-called 'nonfigurative' perspective, so to speak, from a localized and partial perspective on reality, since 'perspective' is precisely only a metaphor.

To have any perspective at all is already to presuppose what transcends it.

It is precisely because our perspectives are not transcendent in and by themselves that we experience transcendence precisely as a kind of perspective beyond perspectives. Thus a transcendental perspective is not limited in any way and is to be conceptualized as a perfect condition of understanding. To put this in another way, perspectives already presuppose transcendental ideals that cannot be (fully) realized but nevertheless function as the necessary horizon of criticism in relation to perspectives. For John Rawls, a rational point of view is not a transcendent perspective or a 'view from nowhere,' but rather 'a certain form of thought and feeling,' which I would rephrase as a mode of being. Rawls's formulation of a perspective beyond perspectives that is abstracted from all temporal points of view seems to be an excellent definition of the cosmopolitan point of view.<sup>715</sup> Thus the cosmopolitan viewpoint is at the same time particular and universal; it is at once an all-encompassing perspective as regulative principle and an individual standpoint that articulates and thus affirms the universal regulative perspective. The cosmopolitan perspective comprises both a particular *ad hominem* viewpoint located in a particular context and an objective (or a more objective) view of a larger context within which the particular context is embedded. Between viewpoints in a dialogic situation emerges a process of continual emergence of a new perspective that is common to but transcends all the viewpoints in exchange. Transcendence here means the creation of a perspective new to the parties involved in dialogic exchange.

A transcendental value or ideal cannot be identical with or equalized to the values or ideals of any particular perspective. Indeed, a transcendental value, which we can call a universal value, can emerge and become increasingly articulated only through the confrontation of different and conflicting perspectives. The pragmatic or communicative horizons of such confrontation of perspectives are in fact both the epistemological and the ethical horizons of cosmopolitanism. Yet more than mere confrontation it is also an exchange and dialogue of perspectives, which is a mutual clarification, critique, and hence

modification. Thus the transcendent is in fact immanent in the incessant movement between different perspectives, in what may be called a processual perspectivism. A transcendent perspective is immanent in the process precisely because it is not predetermined by what is taken to be given in a given perspective. The given then becomes contingent actuality, which could have been, and can be, re-actualized differently.

To assert a finite point of view is at the same time to express the partial and the contingent. The partial and the contingent are also a sign of the existence of alternatives or unactualized possibilities, which prevent a finite point of view from degenerating into a dogmatic assertion. Thus to acknowledge and affirm one's point of view as finite, partial, and contingent is to acknowledge and affirm (self-)criticism as the necessary condition of justified assertion. Epistemological cosmopolitanism is a dynamic relational practice that helps us to perceive different domains and dimensions of the world otherwise hidden or inaccessible to us and in the process discloses to us new horizons of interpretation and understanding.

So the transcendent perspective serves as the regulative framework for understanding particular perspectives. To sum up, there are two aspects of a regulative transcendent perspective: first, it enables a given perspective to transcend its own particular location; second, it functions as the normative horizon of understanding between particular perspectives. To adapt Paul Ricoeur's formulation from a different context, the unity of the perspective-transcending world against which all perspectives stand out is merely the horizon of all these perspectives.<sup>716</sup> This is the dialectical process of intercultural hermeneutic distanciation and re-contextualization. A particular local perspective is constantly held back but never really disappears. In this light, universality resides in the potential of an individual or culture in terms of its becoming what it truly can be and should be. The universal as such represents going beyond the limitations of one's initial contextual perspective. The universal is intrinsically

bound up with our limitations. It is this very exceeding of existing limits and boundaries that constitutes the nature of the cosmopolitan outlook.

Placing oneself in the perspective of another is of course not to be construed in purely epistemological terms alone, since imagining oneself seeing from the perspective of another already presupposes a kind of openness to the other, a kind of charity in terms not just of interpretative openness but also of ethical openness. Herein lies the ethical dimension of cosmopolitan perspectivism: there is an inevitable conflict when one perspective runs up against a different or alternative perspective. The *Sachen* can be understood as matters of concern that are to be articulated through different perspectives precisely by means of shifting and dislocating one perspective or context to another. Only in the process of immanent critical articulation between perspectives can fundamental matters of concern, pertaining to not only the human but also the so-called 'non-human,' as well as the 'a-human,' become identifiable, contestable, affirmable, and shareable.

## 25. STYLE: DE QUINCEY ON KANT

Jonathan S. Luftig (Morgan State University)

Published in *Blackwood's* in 1830 and written in the form of a letter to the journal's editor, 'Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays' is an introduction to Kant's occasional writings, a translation of portions of *On Theory and Practice* and *Towards Perpetual Peace* and both an exegesis and critique of significant excerpts from these texts. In its informality and breaking with conventional argumentative genres (including the essay as it is traditionally conceived), the piece implicitly raises the question of style from the start. The question of style, and thus of popularization, is bound up with what for De Quincey is an allergy to metaphysics proper both to England and, as he puts it, to an 'age which, if it ever did, idolatrizes the tangible and the material'.<sup>717</sup> After examining De Quincey's description, in his 1836 *Autobiography*, of his early encounter with Kant's style, I take a closer look at Kant's own comments on style. Finally, I turn to 'Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays', where the question of style in Kant leads to a highly charged political encounter.<sup>718</sup> Of particular importance in De Quincey's reading of Kant is the issue of exemplarity, in terms both of how Kant characterizes examples when explicitly considering the question of style and of what happens to particular examples under the pressure of his system. De Quincey's polemical

reading of Kant is, I argue, an intervention that seeks to reinscribe the question of exemplarity in a system and style of philosophy that treats examples as secondary and inessential.

Before turning to ‘Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays’ – where Kant’s style is put on trial – it will be helpful to take a closer look at some passages from De Quincey’s 1836 *Autobiography*, first published in *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* and subsequently included in Masson’s 1889 edition of *De Quincey’s Collected Writings* under the posthumous title of ‘German Studies and Kant in Particular’. In this text, which Masson rightfully describes as ‘one of the toughest things that De Quincey ever wrote’, style emerges as a central category.<sup>719</sup> Even as De Quincey explains both the impact of Kantian philosophy on his life and painstakingly lays out the foundations of Kant’s theoretical philosophy, he uses Kant as a central example of the inability of the ‘German intellect’ to conceive of ‘style, in any sense’ (GS 83). In response to Friedrich Schlegel’s praise of Kant’s ‘original’ style, De Quincey responds by comparing the composition of Kant’s sentences to the process of packing up for a long trip, an analogy in which he substitutes English idioms for German philosophical terminology:

[Kant’s] idea of a sentence was as follows : – We have all seen, or read of, an old family coach, and the process of packing it for a journey to London some seventy or eighty years ago. Night and day, for a week at least, sate the housekeeper, the lady’s maid, the butler, the gentleman’s gentlemen, &c, packing the huge ark in all its recesses, its ‘imperials,’ its ‘wells,’ its ‘Salisbury boots,’ its ‘sword-cases,’ its front pockets, side pockets, rear pockets, its ‘hammer-cloth cellars’[...] until all the uses and needs of man, and of human life, savage or civilized, were met with separate provision by the infinite chaos. Pretty nearly upon the model of such an old family coach packing did Kant institute and pursue the packing and stuffing of one of his regular sentences. Everything that could ever be needed in the way of explanation, illustration, restraint, inference, by-clause, or indirect comment, was to be crammed, according to this German philosopher’s taste, into the front pockets, side pockets, or rear pockets, of the one original sentence. Hence it is that a sentence will last in reading whilst a man ‘Might reap an acre of his neighbour’s corn.’ (GS 83-84)

What is first of all striking is the incongruity between Kant's systematic thought and De Quincey's vivid analogy. In Kantian terminology, De Quincey here uses a process of intuitive presentation to shed light on a philosophical style in which discursive, or logical presentation, is privileged.<sup>720</sup> It is, in any case, through this stylistic method of bringing Kant's language 'down to earth' that De Quincey largely achieves his most striking effects. Yet, absurd as it at first seems, De Quincey's reference to the 'packing' and 'stuffing' of sentences like the various pieces of luggage enumerated by De Quincey suggests Kant's purely instrumental relation to language. How much can a sentence bear and still be a sentence? Language here as Kant employs it can no longer be said to follow the conventions of traditional syntax but instead expands exponentially upon an 'original sentence' that is itself brought to the point of near-bursting. Even as Kant includes in his sentences 'everything that could be needed', then, he also simultaneously impedes the communication of his own insights:

'Kant is the most unhappy champion of his own doctrines, the most infelicitous expounder of his own meaning, that has ever existed'(GS 97).<sup>721</sup>

Rather than 'smoothing over the 'hindrances' of Kant's style, moreover, his interpreters only exacerbate them, transforming what is still original in Kant into mere cant. Kant's style is thus doubly problematic because it not only hinders an understanding of the philosopher's thought, but also implicitly encourages readers and commentators to add further hindrances.

De Quincey links the problem of understanding Kant's prose to the more fundamental limits that his philosophy places on metaphysical speculation, especially as it bears on traditional moral and religious beliefs. Kant's philosophy, De Quincey realizes by 1805, is 'a philosophy of destruction, and scarcely in any one chapter so much as *tending* to a philosophy of reconstruction. It destroys by wholesale, and it substitutes nothing' (GS 86).<sup>722</sup> Indeed, what De Quincey in

part finds fascinating about Kant's philosophy is the fascination it holds to readers who are offered 'nothing seducing to human aspirations, nothing splendid to the human imagination, nothing even positive and affirmative to the human understanding' (GS 86). The negations in this passage ('nothing', 'nothing', 'nothing') serve to emphasize those fundamental limitations associated by him with Kant.<sup>723</sup> That 'many thousands of books' attempt to teach, discuss, extend and oppose a body of thought whose 'doctrines are negative', and which teaches not 'what we *are*, but simply what we are *not*, to believe'(GS 86), leads De Quincey to a rather surprising conclusion, one that brings the question of philosophical style to bear on nationality.

'The German people', he suggests, 'have received [Kant's writing] with so much ardour from profound incomprehension of its meaning, and utter blindness to its drift' (GS 86-87). If the popularity of Kant's philosophy in Germany, according to De Quincey, is due merely to the incomprehension it produces in its readers, De Quincey will, in presenting only Kant's popular writings to an English audience, attempt to redress the problem of Kant's incomprehensibility. At the same time, this encounter with an English audience from a popular point of view leads De Quincey to put in question one of the methodological presuppositions of Kant's transcendental philosophy as well: the essential *inessentiality* of style: more specifically, the inessentiality of both illustrations and examples for philosophical presentation, or style. If a 'German style' is inconceivable, and if Kant exhibits what is most Teutonic in that (lack of) style, to the point where the incomprehensibility of his transcendental philosophy has become contagious in Germany, then De Quincey's task in 'Kant in His Miscellaneous Essays' will not simply be to present Kant to an English audience. Rather by staging an encounter with Kant's style on the decidedly English stylistic terrain of his own prose, De Quincey is uniquely positioned to address the philosophical and political exigencies bound up with the question of Kant's style.

De Quincey begins 'Kant in His Miscellaneous Essays' by explaining the



deleterious effect that Kant's prose has had not only in Germany but also in England. According to De Quincey, English readers and translators of Kant err by one of two defects, 'being either 'mere nonsense' or 'so close a translation of the *ipsissima verba* of Kant' as to offer no sort of assistance to an uninitiated student' (KM 48). In Germany too, he argues, exposition of Kant has been too often reduced to the 'uniform caution of simply rehearsing and echoing the identical words (unaltered, uncleared, unexpanded by so much as a parenthesis of note) of the master himself' (KM 49). As he does in his 1936 *Autobiography*, De Quincey links this stylistic problem among Kant's commentators to the question of style in Kant himself:

And this is the more disgusting, because Kant not only had no talent for communicating ideas luminously, but had even the good sense to be aware of his own deficiencies in that respect, and publicly to avow them. After that avowal, it became criminal in a soi-distant commentator on Kant to rest contentedly in the words as he found them [...]. For it is evident, upon the faith even of a *fancied* knowledge, they would have courage to venture some fragment at least of an occasional illustration from their own stores. It must happen too, in some instances, that they would differ a little from their master. (KM 50)

What De Quincey articulates as a stylistic imperative ('it must happen') is not merely that Kant's disciples should 'differ a little' from their master but rather they should include 'occasional illustrations from their own stores'. On this point, however, De Quincey could not be further removed from Kant, for whom exemplarity is a derivative mode of philosophical presentation. Indeed, what De Quincey reads as the 'public avowal' of a flawed style in Kant is, it turns out, an explicit denigration of just those kinds of 'occasional illustrations' that De Quincey wishes to promote.

In the 'public avowal' to which De Quincey is probably alluding, an important passage in the first Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant does admit an inability to furnish sufficient illustrations and examples to accompany

the logical presentation of his system. A closer look at the passage in question, however, reveals to be less an admission of error but rather a fundamental claim for *inessentiality* of style as a philosophical criterion. Kant does this by introducing a central distinction that implicitly denigrates any style that would become ‘popularly’ accessible by relying on ‘concrete illustrations’ for clarity. In the passage that introduces his supposed ‘avowal’ of stylistic deficiency, Kant explains that philosophical presentation must *firstly* exhibit ‘discursive (logical) clearness, through *concepts*, and secondly, an intuitive (aesthetic) clearness, through *intuitions*, that is, through examples and other concrete illustrations’.<sup>724</sup> Although he claims to have ‘sufficiently provided’ discursive clarity, which ‘was essential’ to his purpose, Kant found himself ‘almost continually at a loss’ to provide ‘intuitive (aesthetic) clearness by means of illustrations and examples’ (CPR XII, A xviii). Yet the fact that Kant presents ‘intuitive (aesthetic) clearness’ *secondly* is not accidental. What at first reads as an inability – ‘being continually at a loss’ to furnish examples – soon becomes a decision that it was ‘inadvisable to enlarge [the Critique] yet further through examples and illustrations’ because they are ‘necessary only from a *popular* point of view’. ‘This work,’ writes Kant categorically, ‘can never be made suitable for popular consumption’ (CPR XIII, A xix).

Kant thus justifies his relative neglect of examples – and of what De Quincey calls ‘style’ – as a requirement of his critical system. The ‘assistance’ of examples and illustrations, ‘although pleasing, might very well have been self-defeating in its effects’.<sup>725</sup> According to Kant, while ‘examples’ may aid us in the comprehension of parts, they often interfere with our grasp of the whole’:

The reader is not allowed to arrive sufficiently quickly at a conspectus of the whole; the bright colouring of the illustrative material intervenes to cover over and conceal the articulation and organization of the system, which, if we are to be able to judge of its unity and solidity, are what chiefly concern us. (CPR XIII, A xix)

Far from furthering the philosophical project, then, the kind of focus on examples linked by De Quincey to style runs the danger of impeding the organization and articulation of the critical system by distracting the reader with ‘counter-purposive’ (*zweckwidriges*) or ‘materially interven[ing]’ examples and illustrations.<sup>726</sup> While Kant, like De Quincey, links illustrations and examples to a popularly accessible style, he argues that the adoption of such a style would impede rather than further the aims of his critical system. De Quincey’s call for a stylistic supplement to Kant is thus an implicit challenge to one of Kant’s central methodological presuppositions.

Clearly, De Quincey radically departs from Kant’s primary emphasis on ‘discursive or logical clearness’, and in place of Kant’s insistence on the integrity of the system, sets his sights on just those parts (and textual passages) that, as Kant would put it, ‘interfere with our grasp of the whole’:

The main doctrines of a great systematic work may have too logical a cohesion to allow of this: grant one, you grant all; but still, in a very diffusive philosophy, there is room in some minor point for the most confident disciple to hang a doubt perhaps, or an insinuation of a conditional demur. If nothing must be absolutely suspected, still (as in the French Revolution) it may be suspected of being suspicious. (KM 50)

De Quincey here provides negatively a rough methodology for the commentary of Kant’s philosophy that follows: not the wholesale presentation or rejection of Kant’s system, but rather a reading of the philosopher with a keen eye for examples and especially to those questions that might otherwise be overlooked by more ‘faithful’ commentators. In this way, De Quincey’s focus on particular textual dilemmas in Kant becomes a defence of style against a universalist discourse that has become suspicious to the very extent that it would seem to leave nothing left to suspect.

That De Quincey includes a reference to the French Revolution in a discussion of critical philosophy is suggestive of the political stakes he will link to

the question of style in Kant. It should be noted, however, that the question of style in Kant and the question of the political were already linked before De Quincey's intervention. Kant's scattered political writings, which De Quincey already began to introduce to the English public with his translation of *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*, were intended to be comprehensible to a general audience. While an English audience, according to De Quincey, may not be ready for a full account of Kant's systematic philosophy, Kant's occasional writings are a different story, as they presuppose only the moral law, which, according to Kant, can already be found in the breast of every human being. De Quincey thus announces that he will 'cautiously abstain from every part of [Kant's] works which belongs to him in his quality of founder of a new philosophical system'. Although he has by 1830 (and had already by 1804) worked his way through the intricate system of Kant's theoretical philosophy, especially the First Critique, De Quincey feigns ignorance in order to meet the needs of his English audience: 'The best way to a presumptive or analogical appreciation of a man's pretensions in matters which we do not well understand,' he writes, 'is to try him in those which we do' (KM 50). De Quincey thus includes himself in a 'we' who would not understand Kant's system in order to address what, from a Kantian perspective, can only be addressed by an outsider to the system: the question of style. To address this question, De Quincey must position himself within the 'we' of the English nation, which he nevertheless implicitly derides precisely because of its commonsensical antipathy to metaphysical questioning.

If metaphysics is 'out of the reach of a nation made up of practical men of business' and 'judging a metaphysician is therefore out of our province,' an English audience may nevertheless be able 'indirectly' to 'fairly compute his amount of power, by how he acquits himself on that neutral ground which is common to all intellectual nations,' on 'those parts of knowledge which furnish an arena, not less to the subtleties of the speculative, than to the good sense of the

practical' (KM 50). Remaining within his 'province,' with an eye to 'that neutral ground common to all nations' and, self-consciously clearing his language of metaphysical baggage, De Quincey, one could say, puts on his British armour for his encounter in an 'arena' that is no longer the *Kampfplatz* (battleground) of metaphysics, but one tied only to the 'good sense of the practical.' Nevertheless, this statement of purpose should not be taken too strictly, as De Quincey has already deployed a Kantian terminology of 'analogy' and 'indirect presentation' in order to address those problems that will, for his English readership, arise in the process of reading Kant. Even Kant's occasional writings, argues De Quincey, are marred by a lack of style, 'In reality Kant was a bad writer, and in some respects a pedant, and also, in a qualified sense (and without meaning the least disrespect to him), something of a brute' (KM 51). The sense of this qualified brutality, linked by De Quincey to Kant, becomes clearer as the essay progresses, but it is related to what De Quincey calls Kant's 'secret contempt for literature':

In spite of Kant's social affectation [...] of the manners and knowledge of a man of the world and season[ing] all of his works with elegant citations from classical poets – always apposite, however trite; yet in all these disguises, it is very evident that Kant's original determination was to a coarse, masculine pursuit of science; and that literature, in its finer departments, whose essence is power and not knowledge, was to him, at all parts of his life, an object of secret contempt. (KM 51)

De Quincey claims, however, that Kant did a 'good job of concealing this contempt': to the point, he suggests, that 'perhaps, in its whole extent, he did not even avow it to himself' (KM 51),<sup>727</sup> a claim that subtly echoes Kant's own comments on the court of conscience, where secrets and self-deception are the surest signs of failure to obey the moral law.

De Quincey then echoes another important passage in Kant, the claim, in *The Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>728</sup> to have known Plato better than he knew himself: 'What, then? Do I pretend to know Kant better than he knew himself? In some things, perhaps I do' (KM 51). For when it comes to the sense of style, De

Quincey argues:

in a question of ‘manner,’ he knows of no higher purpose that a man can, or ought to have, than in any way whatsoever, no matter how clumsily, disordinately, ungracefully [...] no matter what perplexity or confusion, tautology or circumlocution, to deliver himself of a meaning. (KM 51)

Echoing Kant even as he supplies the ‘ought’ of a stylistic imperative that would not resound with him, the suppressed question of style becomes Kant’s court of conscience in De Quincey. But De Quincey does not limit his critique of Kant’s style to a criticism of his use of language. After praising Kant’s Latin only in order to further criticize his unwieldy German, De Quincey makes a rather astounding claim:

One fact which struck me by accident and not until a long familiarity with Kant’s writings, is this, that in all probability Kant never read a book in his life. This is paradoxical, and undoubtedly is in the very teeth of general fame, which represents him to have been a prodigious student in all parts of knowledge, and therefore, of necessity, it may be thought, a vast reader. A pretty general student he certainly was, but not, therefore, a great reader. And, fully conceding his great attainments, I still adhere to my thesis, that Kant never read a book. What! None? No, none at all; no book whatsoever. (KM 52)

After making the surprising claim that ‘Kant’s power of thought gave him a ready means of evading the labour of reading a book’, De Quincey reconstructs what can only be called a method of reading *a priori*:

Taking the elementary principles of the writer, as stated by himself or another, and supposing that he thought it worth his pains, he would then integrate these principles for himself; that is to say he would supply all that was wanting as a complement to an entire systematic hypothesis. (KM 52)

De Quincey lists Plato, Berkeley, Locke, and Plotinus as authors Kant read only in outline, describing Kant as a reader who ‘glanced his eye probably over the whole’ and only infrequently paused over particular passages. While De Quincey

lauds Kant for this ‘abstinence’ while still forming his system, it ‘became,’ he argues, Kant’s ‘duty to have examined the writings of others who trod the same ground’ after the system was completed (KM 53). The ‘duties’ Kant has ignored here become clearer. For Kant, the system has priority over the book, the whole over any particular passage or example within it. De Quincey’s repeated claim ‘that Kant never read a book’ thus becomes shorthand for everything that critical philosophy methodically and necessarily overlooks.<sup>729</sup>

Following a lengthy critique of Kant’s relation to Christianity as one of secret hatred, a particularly intriguing moment in the essay concerns Kant’s response to a rebuke from the censors in 1794, in a letter that was published in *The Conflict of the Faculties*. The case in question concerns Kant’s unorthodox discussion of the religious institutions in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793), which King Frederick William found so objectionable that Kant, via the King’s censor, was threatened with punishment were he to publish further on the topic of religion. Although Kant complied with this demand, he included in his letter a loophole that limited this compliance to the duration of the King’s lifetime:

What was Kant’s reply? [...] And melancholy it is to report that Kant – the upright, stern, stoical Kant – in his answer to the king, shuffled, juggled, equivocated, in fact (it must be avowed) *lied*. To what an extravagant height Kant carried his general reverence for the truth, is well known. So sacred, in his estimate, was the obligation to unconditional veracity that he declared it to be a duty, in case a murderer should apply to you for information as to the route taken by a man who had just escaped from his murderous fangs, to tell him the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. (KM 61)

De Quincey’s reference here is to ‘On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy’ (1797), where Kant refers to Benjamin Constant’s suggestion that, in that case of such a murderer, the duty to tell the truth might be relative. Kant refutes the argument as follows: ‘To be *truthful* (honest) in all declarations is therefore a sacred command of reason prescribing unconditionally, one not to be

restricted by any conveniences.<sup>730</sup> Untruthfulness, Kant suggests, is a greater ‘violation of duty to oneself’ than anything a murderer might do.<sup>731</sup> At stake for De Quincey is not merely the evident pleasure in catching a man wholly dedicated to truth in a lie, but also the unbending character of Kant’s notion of duty in the face even of this most extreme (and even macabre) example. Kant singles out Constant’s example because no example, no matter how extreme, can be conceived that would justify a lie. Yet by reading Kant’s rhetorical equivocation as a ‘lie’, De Quincey finds in Kant’s letter an example that is irreconcilable with the universal and ‘sacred’ duty not to lie. Because this example arises in a text included in *Conflict of the Faculties*, it is not merely a matter of biography but is part of the body of Kant’s thought that De Quincey is simultaneously introducing to an English audience. In making an example out of Kant,<sup>732</sup> De Quincey from the outset privileges a mode of presentation (the use of examples) that, as we have seen, Kant generally dismisses, or at least regards as secondary and inessential. Moreover, by citing, translating and examining examples from Kant’s body of writing that run counter to his systematic intentions, De Quincey brings Kant’s text in proximity to the ‘literature of power’: to a style that privileges the ‘intuitive (aesthetic) presentation’ that Kant associates with examples.

De Quincey addresses the question of style in Kant’s letter to King of Prussia first by translating it and then by examining the letter as a perfect model of:

all that a letter to a king ought-*not* to be: long, wordy, perplexed, miserably pedantic, and, by its tortuous involution in some passages (if *that* were not the ordinary character of Kant’s style), one might think expressly designed to mystify the king, and throw dust in his eyes.<sup>733</sup> (KM 53)

Yet again, a stylistic ‘ought,’ an ought that has no place as far as Kant’s notions either of duty or of philosophical presentation are concerned, but that has everything to do with style as De Quincey understands it, is brought to bear at



once on Kant's philosophy and his relation to the political. In addition to emphasizing the 'Jesuitical reserve' that Kant practised in limiting the promise made by 'your Majesty's faithful subject' to the duration of the King's life, De Quincey argues that Kant's claim that *Religion* was not intended for a general audience was disingenuous, noting that Kant 'had not so much as interposed a thin veil of Latin betwixt himself and the public' (KM 62). As De Quincey notes, Kant seems to be blurring the generic line between systematic and occasional writing to his own strategic advantage. More importantly, in the case of *Religion*, which gave rise to a conflict between the theology and philosophy faculties that Kant discusses in *Conflict of the Faculties*, the disciplinary provenance of the text was unclear to begin with.

In this context, De Quincey provides an alternate letter to the king that Kant could have written if he 'had spoken the 'naked truth':<sup>734</sup>

It is most true that I have done the worst of what your Majesty imputes to me, and even worse; but however, my book was written in such a disgusting style, very much resembling that of my present letter, that I am inclined to think very few people will read twenty pages without finding it act upon them as an emetic; on which count it may be considered as a book not written, or self-cancelled. (KM 62)

Kant's 'avowed' sacrifice of a graceful style reads here like an ethical liability, a way of evading authorial responsibility for the potential consequences of what he has written by underlining the obscurity of his own book. In De Quincey's account, a 'man who never read a book' thus becomes the author of a book that 'may be considered as a book not written'.

The underlying political stakes of De Quincey's hyper-polemical critique of Kant's style become especially clear in his discussion of the philosopher's refusal of the right to revolution in *On the Common Saying*. After translating several pages of the important essay and explicating its argument, De Quincey turns to the second section, which concerns 'moral obligation [...] as it respects

juristic or political obligation, with a view to the welfare of states' (KM 66). This section, De Quincey writes, is 'to a high degree interesting to ourselves' because it is of 'real historical importance in determining the merits of our ancestors at the great epoch of our Revolution':

The question I mean respects the right of subjects to resist, in case of fundamental violation of the contract (implicit contract) between themselves and the supreme power. The origin and the limits of this right might still give room to much metaphysical casuistry. But it must excite the burning indignation of Englishmen to find Kant roundly and broadly denying the existence of any such right in the uttermost extremity; and that too with a special regard to the particular case of England; yet with all that ignorance of the facts which we might look for in a man who (as I have said before) never read anything at all. (KM 66)

In this context, De Quincey goes on to present a comical mock conversation and juridical process between Grotius (Groot), Barclay, and Pufendorf on the right to resistance, before deciding on an appropriate punishment for them:

I Sir Christopher, as you well know, am no admirer of brutal punishments; in particular, the word knouting is abominable to mine as it is to all refined ears. Yet, even as Barclay and Grotius allow of resistance in cases which they conceive to be desperate, so even I would unwillingly concede the use of the knout in cases unsusceptible to other remedies. To some people the only appropriate style of reasoning is by kicking them. *A posteriori* arguments are alone intelligible to their perverse senses. (KM 67)

In response to a legalistic mode of reasoning that would pretend to assess the legitimacy of a sovereign nation's origin from a politically neutral perspective,<sup>735</sup> De Quincey responds with a partisan rhetorical violence that is powerful to the very extent that it is presented as something unwilling: a gut response to a perversion of law itself that, like disgust, cannot be reasoned away. De Quincey's introduction of the term '*a posteriori* arguments' already suggests where this is going with respect to Kant: 'The same feeling,' he writes, 'the same unwilling side-glance at the knout as the appropriate instrument of reply – must come over

everybody, friend or foe who reads Kant's attack on the English nation for their political Revolution of 1688-9' (KM 67). Like the right to resistance allowed for in 'desperate' cases even by Barclay and Grotius (but not by Kant), the 'knout' is De Quincey's violent disruption of an unjust system. It is an '*a posteriori* argument' only in the sense that it breaks with argumentation and gestures toward the *a posteriori* itself: what can only be gathered from experience. What 'must come over everybody, friend or foe' is thus the imperative not of duty but of the duty to resist a style of philosophical argumentation that is as consistent as it is oblivious to its own implicit geo-political positioning. If Kant's general approach to revolution is, as Hans Saner has argued,<sup>736</sup> to reject revolutions to come while justifying those that have already come and managed to establish a state of law,<sup>737</sup> the case of England, becomes an example that Kant, who in De Quincey's account never read a book, is unable to read. Before providing a translation of the relevant sections from the essay that contains this implicit attack on the English constitution, De Quincey again speaks in Kant's voice:

You think yourselves very clever fellows in all this affair, and strut about Europe like so many peacocks on the score of your imaginary merits; and you value yourselves much on the public prosperity you ascribe to this event. But, as to the results of it, take notice that if, in fact, you have prospered, yet, in good logic, you ought not to have prospered. And as to the event itself, apart from its results, just step into my closet, and I shall show you, in one volume octavo, that such conduct as yours merited capital punishment. (KM 68)

De Quincey's 'knout', it turns out, is the response to a violence that is already at work in the very pretension to play the judge over a matter such as the legitimacy of a foreign, sovereign nation's origins. Even if only in principle (and in a philosophical 'closet'), the philosopher's 'ought', his 'good logic' and his 'one volume octavo' lead straight to a death sentence. More specifically, De Quincey takes Kant to task for the formalistic manner in which he dismisses the right to revolution, putting his finger on a problem that Kant scholars would continue to

debate. By refusing to step into Kant's transcendental 'closet' and instead focusing on an historical example that happens to be 'highly interesting' to himself as an Englishman, De Quincey thus pits Kant's 'ought' (you ought not have flourished) against the empirical 'is' of the English nation.

In a footnote to his own translation of several lengthy passages from *On the Common Saying: That may be correct in theory but it is of no use in practice*. De Quincey addresses Kant's contention that, because the British constitution is 'wholly silent about the rights which belong to the people,' it 'consequently [...] reserves the right of rebellion against the king' (KM 71). De Quincey zeroes in on the word 'consequently' (*mithin*):

Few people, it is to be hoped, out of Germany, or rather the cloisters of German universities, will see much logical consequence in this 'consequently'[*mithin*], i.e., because the English constitution does not openly provide for rebellion, it must secretly reserve such a right! Had Kant, instead of speculating on the subject, *read* a little of such works as we English allow for faithful expounders of our constitution, he would not have need to Romance in this way. But, as usual, he read nothing. (KM 71)

De Quincey's focus on a particular word ('*mithin*') is suggestive of the attention he pays to Kant's text throughout 'Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays', supplementing Kant's failure to read with an aggressively close reading. His account of Kant's unwillingness to read is also particularly suggestive in light of the important role Kant gives to a free press in the essay under discussion. Although he clearly believes in 'the power of the pen', De Quincey is skeptical of Kant's substitution of a right to resist with the allowance of a free press: 'What happens if the king refuses to allow them a free press (this being the sole resource conceded to the people?) Why in that case, they are to wait until he takes a more transcendental view of the case' (KM 72).

Although De Quincey himself, who goes on to translate and explicate *Towards Perpetual Peace*, proves himself capable of taking such a transcendental

view, he will, if only by teasing out the implications of some of Kant's most problematic passages in light of the question of style, have made his point. If De Quincey's polemic fails to rise to the level of universality necessary to do properly philosophical battle with Kant, his focus on what would otherwise be beneath comment nevertheless enables him to raise the question of style as the very hinge between theory and practice. The question of style exposes transcendental philosophy to what it no longer can account for: the 'not', for example, that De Quincey's prose brings to bear on the Kantian 'ought', and the 'side glance' at the 'knout' that is not too far behind. Focused on what from a Kantian standpoint are *minutiae*, De Quincey's argument cannot touch the critical edifice as a whole, but, if only so as not to render the whole of Kant's system suspect, 'hangs it doubt' and thereby takes its aim at those points where a concern for systematic rigour and an eye toward the whole seem to have eclipsed a genuine concern for the singularity of any example: for the book as well as the system, the individual as well as the species and the nation as well as the cosmopolitical ideal.



## **26. THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN IN MODERNIZING LITERATURE AND SOCIETY**

David Benhammou (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Literature cannot be thoroughly discussed without a brief mention of its historical context. In particular, when a country redefines its literary canon, as did Russia in the eighteenth century, an analysis of the history of that time can afford insight into the motives and results of the change. The Tsars Peter the Great and Catherine the Great had done much to bring Russia to where it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Historian John Thompson writes that Catherine completed the process that Peter had initiated, but in such a way as to create ‘an almost schizophrenic country,’ wherein many sectors were heavily influenced by European precedents, while others remained deeply rooted in Russian tradition, and still others – such as the economy and social system – were backward and inefficient.<sup>738</sup>

Russia was undergoing a transformation into a more modern state. There were still many steps yet to be taken, of course, but the massive change in social structure led to a change in literary styles. Not half a century before the Genbunitchi Movement began in Japan,<sup>739</sup> a similar process took place in Russia. While written Japanese struggled to find an appropriate medium for

communication through its four different literary styles, Carl Proffer writes that Russian novels from the late eighteenth century suffered from 'clumsy combinations of spoken Russian and Russian Church Slavic, laced with lexical borrowings from Polish, French, German, and English. Labyrinthine syntax made comprehension difficult, pleasure improbable.'<sup>740</sup> Author Nikolai Karamzin was among the first to try simplifying the prose writing of his time, though the impact he had on Russian literature went beyond stylistic changes. Before considering the lasting effects of Karamzin's writing, consider the writing style itself. He shortened and simplified sentence structures, preferring to construct longer sentences from shorter independent clauses if he decided to use them. He would not use archaic language in his stories, and even introduced a level of symmetry to the syntax of his clauses. This kind of parallel structure made his prose more accessible and fluid. Furthermore, Karamzin tried to write in a language that approached some middle-ground between the polite 'high style' of the liturgy and the 'low style', which was riddled with colloquialisms and slang. A striking resemblance arises when these changes are considered alongside the aims of the Genbunitchi Movement, which sought to 'replace the difficult literary styles used in the Tokugawa period with a simple style which approximated the spoken language.'<sup>741</sup>

Karamzin's style was quickly imitated and adopted by other writers of his time. Several of his stories, including one published in 1792 called 'Poor Liza', were copied in other stories, bearing such titles as 'Unfortunate Liza', 'Poor Chloe', and 'Lovely Tatyana'.<sup>742</sup> Part of what made his work so popular was that he not only abandoned the cumbersome, complicated writing style of novelists before him, but he also depicted a different sort of tale. Russian novels from the 1760s to the 1790s typically depicted grandiose adventures, 'lengthy tales of persevering heroes who overcome bandits and typhoons'<sup>743</sup> to rescue loving heroines. 'Poor Liza', on the other hand, features an innocent peasant girl, Liza, and a young rich nobleman, Erast. Liza leads an uneventful peasant life, selling



flowers in the city until she meets Erast. She is drawn to him by his looks and social standing, and he to her by her purity and earthly appeal. Some time passes, and after many innocent meetings, Erast gives into desire and takes Liza's virginity. Once he has robbed her of what he sees as her one truly redeeming feature, Erast quickly gets bored with Liza and leaves her. Distraught, she seeks him out in the city. Not wanting anything to do with her, he simply gives her money and tells her to go away, having a servant see her to the street. Liza drowns herself soon after, and Erast, hearing of this, leads a miserable life for the rest of his days.

This story is among the first in Russia's literary tradition to include dark endings, relatively normal characters, and superfluous men, without the romantic elements of heroes, quests, and the fantastic. We see less of Erast than of Liza throughout the short piece, and yet Liza's role is predictable due to her poverty and lower-class standing. Erast, well-to-do and bored, is restless and his actions more difficult to anticipate. Proffer writes that he is 'one of the first in a long line of Russian cads and superfluous men'<sup>744</sup> who follow similar patterns due to their class and groundless idealism. At no point in the story is Erast content, and once he decides to take Liza's virginity, he realizes she has nothing more to offer him. 'Poor Liza' is fundamentally a story about the demise of a girl ruined by a careless young man. The focus, however, is on Erast, this new character to literature who is far from ideal and who happens to be simultaneously more human and yet less sympathetic than the heroes of the novels that preceded him.

Erast is superfluous to the very definition of the word: an obsolete member of society, he benefits no one in his story. He earned the fitting title and was quick to impact other Russian writers. One of the better-known superfluous men to follow in Erast's footsteps is Pechorin, the main character in Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of our Time*. Pechorin, while fundamentally similar to Erast, set a precedent for a slightly altered superfluous man, one who would take some amount of action and exercise just a touch of decisiveness. Raskolnikov, of

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, comes from this prototype. Ivan Turgenev wrote many stories that involved, or revolved around, superfluous men, including a story bearing the title 'The Diary of a Superfluous Man.' Jesse and Betty Clardy write that Chulkaturin, the main character of that particular story, 'possesses many of the same qualities that Lermontov's hero had – engrossment in himself, ruthlessness, coarse and self-indulgent behavior' – even if Lermontov's book had only been published a few years before. The similarities between these two also include having glorified the intensity of their humiliation and using this to justify feeling sorry for themselves.<sup>745</sup>

We can draw a line from Karamzin's Erast through characters from Lermontov, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and more up through the twentieth century. The line itself is made up of those specific motives and circumstances that surround those characters, and how each work attempts to deal with and present their psychology to the general reader. As Jesse and Betty Clardy concisely state, the superfluous heroes:

convey feelings of uselessness and gradually regress until they succumb to early deaths. Egocentrics and manic-depressives, they would have been termed 'melancholic' in an earlier time. Their most notable characteristic, however, is their fear. As Nicholas Dobrolyubov aptly observed in 'What is Oblomovism' they sought to establish some meaning for their existence in a society that denied them meaning – and, in fact, refused to allow them any function in it.<sup>746</sup>

We can now see the form of this line, how it stretches through and permeates Russian literary history, and we have an idea regarding the substance of this notion of a superfluous man. This enables us to consider finally the branch this line takes, going through Turgenev's tales and heading across to Japan, to Futabatei Shimei and through him to Tayama Katai and into Japanese literature.

Less than a century after 'Poor Liza' was published in Russia, Japanese author Futabatei Shimei wrote a novel with many of the same characteristics under the title *Ukigumo*. Futabatei wrote in an experimental genbunitchi style,

since by the time the full novel was published in 1889, the Genbunitchi Movement had not yet firmly established a written style that adequately bridged the gap between the literary and colloquial methods of communication. His style was nonetheless vastly different from the literature of previous generations. Also like 'Poor Liza', *Ukigumo* introduced an entirely new tradition for literature and re-shaped the idea of the novel, which contributed as much as the genbunitchi style to its popular title as 'Japan's first modern novel.'

*Ukigumo's* connection to Russian literature is neither tenuous nor haphazard; indeed, Futabatei was something of a scholar not only in the Russian language, but also in their literature and literary theory, having translated a number of short stories and critical essays. He intended to share these with Japan for two primary reasons: first, because he truly adored Western literature and wanted to re-create the beauty of Russian prose in Japanese; and second, because he saw Russia as one of Japan's primary threats and concerns, and wanted to arm the public with knowledge.

Futabatei led an interesting life up to the point where he began writing *Ukigumo*, but his purposes in writing this 'modern' novel differed somewhat from his reasons for translating. The plot, far from being convoluted and including a plethora of dashing characters, is as straightforward as that of 'Poor Liza' and revolves around a mere four ordinary people. Marleigh Ryan comments that in writing *Ukigumo*, 'It was Futabatei's intention to picture the nature of his society through these characters; to demonstrate by means of the words and actions of his characters the effect of Meiji life on Japanese society.'<sup>747</sup>

That Futabatei wanted to write about the change in lifestyle taking place in the Meiji era sets his work apart from fantastic tales of far-away places, and marks it as modern. This story demonstrates one of the first times that the reader is invited into the mind of the main characters, to face with them the internal dilemmas with which they struggle, making it a psychoanalytic story – yet another novelty. Finally, it is remarkable that all these elements that had emerged

for the first time in Russian literature less than a century before were now to be used 'to picture the nature of [Japanese] society.' *Ukigumo* does indeed follow the patterns established by the modern Russian novels. To demonstrate this, let us first consider Bunzō, the superfluous hero of the story.

The plot of *Ukigumo* is very simple: Bunzō, at the beginning of the story, loses his post:

in the lowest ranks of the government bureaucracy. As a consequence, he finds that his marriage to his cousin, Osei, which had been virtually assured, has now become impossible. Osei's affections soon turn to Bunzō's former colleague, the up-and-coming Honda Noboru (U xv).

If we consider the earlier description of superfluity, we see in Bunzō characteristic elements of the superfluous man from the very beginning. Bunzō had sought, presumably, to rise through the ranks in his government post; to save enough money to bring his mother to Tokyo and to support himself; to be accepted by his uncle's family, namely by his aunt; and to marry his cousin Osei, an educated and modern girl (U 210). Bunzō's being fired from his job sets him in the ideal position to become a brooding, depressed, indecisive superfluous hero. Bunzō had sought to establish meaning for himself in a society that absolutely denied him meaning.

Bunzō begins his self-centred, self-deprecating cycle moments after losing his job. 'How wretched I am!' (U 224), he exclaims, considering the bitterness of life and how difficult it will be to admit his 'evil fate' to his family. The reader is allowed into Bunzō's mind in the next pages, establishing the novel from the beginning as a psychoanalytical tale, a series of character sketches perhaps rather than a complete story. 'Why did they have to fire me?' Bunzō asks himself. 'I don't think I flatter myself when I say that I'm perfectly capable of doing my job' (U 226). Like Erast, we find that superficial idealism, lack of will, and financial problems contribute to his motivation. His financial problems are constantly brought to his attention by his aunt, who is taking care of him, and also by his

recurring urges to leave and find his own place to live; this would be difficult, however, without a job, and so we encounter his weak will as he consistently returns to his aunt's house, no matter how difficult the situation becomes.

Episodes to remind the reader of Bunzō's spinelessness are littered throughout *Ukigumo*, and deserve some attention. Part Three in particular seems to show Bunzō wavering back and forth with each short chapter. Furious at being told that Osei loves Honda, he storms to his room, where he seems to spend most of his time brooding. 'Soon after, he left the house, determined to rent a room somewhere. Not that he was fully resigned to giving up Osei' (U 321), the narrator adds significantly; and indeed, Bunzō soon convinces himself that he should consult Osei herself before going through with his quest for new lodgings. Having reasoned himself out of actually taking any action, he is able to peacefully return to his room. When he tries to talk to her later, feeling certain that she will confirm his notion of her love for him, she is sharp and refuses to talk. 'Bunzō realized that he had missed the opportunity he had been waiting for. He tried to go after her but his courage failed him. Slowly he dragged himself back upstairs' (U 329).

Later, when his aunt utterly humiliates him, we are told that 'Bunzō could not make up his mind to leave the house. Night and day he remained in his room, silent and withdrawn, not going downstairs unless he had to' (U 333). We are told a few lines down that, 'In some intangible way, Bunzō was reborn, although not completely, of course.' This is a significant line: Bunzō does manage to go through minute developments and experience infinitesimal enlightenment regarding his pathetic situation; yet he soon reverts to his superfluous state. In the very last lines of the novel, even though Bunzō has been harassed to the extreme, has given up hope countless times, and has no legitimate reason to think that he and Osei will be able to end up together, he decides to defer any real decision – once again – until he has talked to her and received her judgment. 'He went back upstairs to wait,' the novel concludes inconclusively; and yet we know that

nothing substantial can come of Bunzō, and that he must be doomed to the same tragic fate as all other superfluous men. It is best, perhaps, that Futabatei deemed it unnecessary to include the rest of Bunzō's life in *Ukigumo*.

Bunzō, in his constant and purposeless self-exile to his room, strongly resembles Raskolnikov, the main character from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* who spent months cooped up in his small apartment prior to committing the crime that sets the story in motion. Futabatei presents a handful of other scenes that seem borrowed from Dostoevsky: in one such instance, consumed with anger toward Honda, Bunzō takes to the streets, wandering about aimlessly and without a thought for his destination. 'Bunzō awoke from his trance and found himself standing at the entrance to Yasukuni shrine. He had only the vaguest recollection of crossing Manaita bridge.' (U 288). After wandering around and chatting with a former colleague, we are told that 'Bunzō went to Ishida's house and received some items for translation which had been left for him' (U 292). If we compare this with a passage in *Crime and Punishment*, where Raskolnikov had been walking about, brooding in a trancelike state, when:

near the bridge, he suddenly stopped. 'Here's where he lives, in that house,' he [Raskolnikov] thought. 'Well, well, I seem to have brought myself to Razumikhin! The same story all over again [...]. It's very curious, however: did I mean to come, or did I simply walk and end up here?'<sup>748</sup>

Razumikhin, like Ishida, offers the Raskolnikov a way out of his destitute situation: translation-related work. Furthermore, the significance of these parallel passages goes beyond their similarity, in that neither Bunzō nor Raskolnikov allow this translation work to save them from their circumstances – the circumstances that essentially shape them as superfluous men. In their refusal to accept what little help is offered here, not to mention other instances in both novels, both Bunzō and Raskolnikov repeatedly confirm their superfluous status, perpetuating the cycle of self-pity and gloomy, isolated brooding.

Japanese author Tayama Katai wrote for different purposes and using a distinct style from Futabatei Shimei. The two authors, however, shared much in their preferences for Western, and especially Russian literature; they had similar underlying themes in their stories; and they both greatly impacted Japan's literary history.

Unlike Futabatei, Katai began learning English at the age of 15 and immersed himself in European literature. His writing would later establish 'naturalist' fiction in Japan, but for a long time his style was criticized as being unoriginal. He borrowed plots from other writers, such as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, for his own stories before he managed to master a style of his own.<sup>749</sup> Taking a shot at originality, Katai wrote and published a story in the *Kokumin Shinbun* in 1892. Although the story was uncomplicated, its confessional tone and autobiographical content made it unprecedented among serial novels published at that time.<sup>750</sup> Katai managed to start a trend of autobiographical, confessional novels, later to be called *watakushi shosetsu* or I-novels.

Stylistically, Katai's early works resembled Futabatei's translations of Turgenev. Despite a life with little income, or perhaps because of it, Katai seemed to be very fond of the Great Russian writers now being introduced to Japanese literature. Despite the many stories he wrote in the early 1890s, he earned so little from them that he also worked as a copyist. Keene writes that at this time, Katai would spend as many as two or three days each week at the Ueno Library reading both Japanese and Russian literature, the latter including Turgenev and Dostoevsky.<sup>751</sup> Considering the similar tastes of Futabatei and Katai, not to mention Katai's admiration of Futabatei himself, it comes as no surprise that Katai would come to incorporate a number of elements from Russian literature into his own works, including the concept of the superfluous man.

Katai's *Futon*, often credited with launching the I-novel genre, was well-received and 'changed the course of Japanese literature.'<sup>752</sup> Therefore, it is

appropriate to restrict our discussion of superfluous men in Katai's works to this piece.

Takenaka Tokio, the protagonist of *Futon*, is not exactly poor; but neither is he appreciated as much as he values himself: 'A man of letters editing geographical works!'<sup>753</sup> he exclaims at the outset of the story, lamenting his mundane work, inappropriate as far as he is concerned for a man of such knowledge. He admits the next line, however, that his 'rather tardy literary career' and other misfortunes are a result of his not having had 'an opportunity for putting everything he had into a work'; yet he does not admit that his own lack of ambition may be the source of even this. The self-pity begins here, on the second page of the novel.

Tokio establishes himself as superfluous in the first few pages of his tale. At the start of the second chapter, he describes the basic circumstances that shape his life:

The busy affairs of the world had no meaning for him, he lacked even the enthusiasm to work on his life's masterpiece, and as for his everyday life – getting up in the morning, going off to work, coming home at four in the afternoon and seeing, as ever, his wife's face, eating his dinner and going off to bed – as for this monotonous existence, he was thoroughly and absolutely bored with it [...]. In fact, he even felt that the various forms of nature – the thickly growing trees in the garden, the raindrops, the blooming and withering of the flowers – were making his banal life even more banal. He was desperately lonely. (TQ 36)

Here Tokio clearly describes a world that rejects him, in his own opinion, and which he firmly rejects. He is not as sympathetic a figure as Bunzō or Raskolnikov, at least at the beginning of their respective novels, because he does not seem to be a victim of circumstances so much as a victim of his own chronic dissatisfaction and lack of motivation. He makes himself all the less sympathetic, and all the more superfluous, by demonstrating his profound inability for decision in the following pages: 'Tokio was always confused. The strength of morality,



that strength of convention – if only there were an opportunity, destroying these would be easier than tearing silk’ (TQ 45). Tokio carelessly claims that breaking these ‘would be easier than tearing silk’ was it not for the fact that he has not had the opportunity: he manages to keep a straight face while showing the reader his inability for action and ineffectual idealism. ‘My life would be so much better if only it were better,’ he seems to pout at every corner.

In an impressive episode of self-realization, Tokio goes so far as to identify himself as the superfluous hero of his pitiful narrative: ‘I am Turgenev’s ‘superfluous man’ (TQ 48) he thinks to himself, and then takes a moment to ponder the ‘transient life of that protagonist.’ He does not, however, seem to take into consideration the true meaning of the superfluous man. He identifies, in the end, not with what they symbolize – useless artefacts of a society that has already begun modernizing, leaving them behind – but with their pathetic condition and tragic, if pitiful, ends. Although Turgenev’s characters seek to ‘establish some meaning for their existence in a society that denied them meaning – and, in fact, refused to allow them any function in it,’ as cited above, Tokio prefers to create himself in the image of the superfluous man. He has not been rejected from society to the extent that both Bunzō and Raskolnikov have, but more closely resembles the bored Erast of ‘Poor Liza.’ He would, in the end, prefer to curse his fate, to identify with other superfluous men in their pitiful condition and early deaths, than to take his life into his own hands. And so he does, for the rest of the novel, to the effect that despite his slightly elevated circumstances, the only thing he manages to accomplish in the story is to effectively make himself a superfluous hero.

This final section will first thoroughly analyze how the typical Russian superfluous hero arose in Futabatei’s and Katai’s literature. We will then discuss what this means for the identity of the individual in Meiji Japan. Futabatei studied the Russian language and culture not because of a profound love of literature, although this too would develop, but primarily out of a sense of duty for Japan

and a sense of fear for Russia. 'To him Russia was the greatest threat to Japan's future,' Ryan states. She quotes Futabatei himself, saying, 'We would have to protect ourselves in some way. The Russian language would be the most essential weapon for our defense' (U 19).

As Futabatei began writing, his study of Russian literature certainly had an enormous impact on his style and character development. Ryan notes that 'his favourite author in those early years was Dostoevsky. He was especially interested in Dostoevsky's psychological approach [...]. He saw *Crime and Punishment* as a novel with an important moral theme: man cannot live by reason alone; sympathy and love must guide him' (U31). Futabatei took this fascination with the human psyche and used it in *Ukigumo*, clearly imitating Dostoevsky's approach to analyzing his characters. It is not so surprising, therefore, that we see such similarities between Bunzō and Raskolnikov.

Katai, as we have mentioned, also enjoyed Russian literature, although through translation. Keene writes that Katai became friends with a little-known writer, Takase Bun'en, who 'was a devoted reader of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and of Futabatei's *Drifting Cloud*.'<sup>754</sup> He apparently recommended several writers to Katai, including Futabatei. Despite their friendship, however, Katai writes that Takase 'led a completely solitary life, and told nobody about his circumstances or upbringing [...]. When I visited him he would always be lying on a dirty, thin quilt he had spread on the floor.'<sup>755</sup> Katai's ability to capture the superfluous man in his writing could come almost as easily from his friendship with Takase, as from his fondness of Russian literature.

Tokio, of Katai's *Futon*, resembles Erast more than he does Bunzō of Futabatei's *Ukigumo*, even if they share the same basic characteristics. This most likely stems from the fact that, as mentioned above, Katai's writing resembled Futabatei's translations of Turgenev; and Turgenev's superfluous characters relate more closely to Erast. That Tokio falls into this slightly separate sub-category may come more from Katai's personal life, however, than his stylistic attempts to

capture a character worthy of Turgenev's stories. Apart from his friendship with Takase, Katai himself resembled a superfluous man. Before publishing *Futon*, he was not making enough money through writing to support himself. He was completely infatuated with love itself, and as a result *Futon* was based on his own experience.

As we have mentioned, Futabatei wanted to capture the image of Japanese people in the Meiji era. There are several points throughout *Ukigumo* where he makes specific references to the effects of modernity and the changing times: 'You have to expect some difficulty when you destroy the traditions of two thousand years' (U 215). Osei tells Bunzō significantly at the beginning of the tale. Osei is repeatedly depicted as the epitome of how change was affecting Japanese society, and more specifically woman's changing place in that new society. The narrator makes this perfectly evident after a 'quarrel' between Osei and her mother, representing a paradigm shift through the gap of a single generation. 'Why even call it a quarrel? It is rather a fine example of the conflict between the marvellous new ways of future Japanese culture and the old habits of bygone times. We would do well to ponder it carefully' (U 243-44).<sup>756</sup>

Whether or not *Ukigumo* was Japan's first modern novel, it is undeniably modern, not only through its use of a new – and still evolving – written style, but also through its psychological approach to its characters and its representation of the paradigm shift going through Japan at the time. *Futon* too represents a changing, modernizing world. Tokio laments at the beginning of the story how 'nowadays, even if he wanted to, he wouldn't have been able to find the old-fashioned sort of girl he'd known in his courting days' (TQ 37). Tokio's pupil, Yoshiko, is similar to Osei in her education and ambition. When she is introduced to Tokio – through a letter, of course, as her presence in the novel is entirely epistolary – he is told that she attends the Kobe Girls' Academy. Moreover, although she was only nineteen years old, 'judging from the phrases in her letters, her powers of expression were surprisingly skilled.'<sup>757</sup> Despite the fact that Osei

and Yoshiko appear to represent more modern roles for women in a changing Japanese society, they both meet similar fates. Osei is subject to her fleeting desires and, as such, failed to ever fulfil a single one of them (U 209-10). Futabatei leaves her at the end of the novel in a precarious state:

Osei was in the gravest danger and did not know it. She was being swept blindly along by the life in this greedy, contaminated household, and she was thoroughly enjoying it. She was a very confused girl, living in this ugly situation without seeing its sordidness. Like a drunken woman, she was alert to only a few select impressions. (U 351)

Osei, like all of the characters in *Ukigumo*, is portrayed in such a way that the reader cannot expect change from her beyond the conclusion of the novel. Yoshiko is left in a similarly futureless role, pathetic in comparison with the bright and promising future that could potentially have been afforded to her: Tokio, feeling betrayed by Yoshiko's relationship with another man, calls on her father to take her home (TQ 90). Whether they actualize their dreams for more active roles in society or not, Osei and Yoshiko still represent more modern women. Their failure to achieve such dreams may symbolize a society that, although boasting of modernity, was still in the throes of modernization and many changes had yet to take place. Katai's work, therefore, was a product of this changing and modernizing society. Furthermore, he established 'naturalist' writing and the I-novel in Japan, marking his work as distinctly modern.

The superfluous man appeared in Russian literature at a time when Russia underwent changes very similar to Japan less than a century later. Written styles were simplified dramatically, themes for literature changed from the more heroic, adventurous and largely external to a more psychological and internal novel. Literature, rather than existing for the sake of entertainment, became a form of social commentary, and as a result the superfluous hero became necessary, as he represented an outdated and useless part of society.

The same became true of Japanese society as it modernized. Futabatei's work was certainly modern, as critic Tokutomi Soho (1863-1957) wrote:

This novel is far superior to anything we have had in the contemporary world of fiction. There is nothing especially funny or amusing in the novel. It is not magnificent or elegant. It is a banal, domestic novel. But the author must be recognized as an amazingly talented writer in that he can make men grieve or hate, be surprised or fascinated in such a banal context [...]. *Ukigumo* is a study of the human mind; its author is a master of analyzing human emotions.<sup>758</sup>

To appropriately analyze the human mind, the author must choose regular, recognizable characters as subjects for the study. If not, the audience would not care at all about the outcome or progression of the story; indeed, as Tokutomi states, the context of *Ukigumo* – like that of 'Poor Liza' or *Futon* – is banal and overly simple. The characters, however, represent characters or facets of modern Japanese society; and so, again, the superfluous man becomes necessary. He was brought to Japan through the research and translation of authors such as Turgenev and Dostoevsky, and through the writings of Futabatei and Katai.

The superfluous man could not have taken root in Japanese society, however, were it not for the fact that he fits there. Bunzō is not a very sympathetic character; while the story opens with him as a victim of circumstance, it concludes with him as a spineless, indecisive, and yet hopelessly idealistic young man. He is included, however, not for his sympathetic value, but because he is a recognizable figure in society. Ryan asserts that:

'Bunzō, the hero of *Ukigumo*, is a superfluous man, a direct literary descendant of the Russian type. The novel also has its new man in the person of Honda Noboru. The four main characters of the novel each symbolize certain aspects of modern Japan as Futabatei saw them, but they are all eminently human and fallible' (U 150-51).

The narrator of *Futon*, similarly, asserts that Tokio is a recognizable character in society, and it is for this reason that the piece was such a sensation. The

confession of a completely incomprehensible figure could not be so well taken as that of a familiar, if somewhat unlikeable, person. 'His was the anguish which in reality every man feels in his mid-thirties. Many men of this age flirt with low-class women for the sake, in the final analysis, of curing this loneliness. And many of those who divorce their wives are of this age' (TQ 38). Katai was writing for an audience that understood, through direct experience or those of close friends or husbands, the man Tokio represented. The novel's popularity therefore confirms the narrator's assertion above.

So it is that the superfluous man is a product of modernizing society. Futabatei conveniently borrowed him from Russian literature and appropriately established him in the foundation of the still-evolving Japanese literature of the time. Soon after, and in a slightly different style, Katai confirmed Futabatei's assertion that the superfluous man exists as much in Japanese modernizing society as he did in Russia. His writing – *Futon* in particular – 'changed the course of Japanese literature'<sup>759</sup> as Keene writes, selling the superfluous man wholesale in so doing. By considering the literature of changing and modernizing societies, we can trace similar elements, linking the societies themselves.

## 27. COSMOPOLITAN INTIMACIES IN NELLA LARSEN'S *QUICKSAND*

Hanna Musiol (Northeastern University)

'Cosmopolitanism is not just an idea. Cosmopolitanism is infinite ways of being.'  
– Sheldon Pollock et al.<sup>760</sup>

'Refocusing on the intimate opens up to what haunts [...] social relations, to the untoward, to the strangely familiar that proximities and inequalities may produce.'  
– Laura Ann Stoler<sup>761</sup>

Contradictory local and global forces, with their legacies in slavery and colonization, made the America of the first half of twentieth century into a complex social space, where the physical and symbolic proximity of bodies marked by racial, national, or sexual difference was at once common and feared, policed and punished, and celebrated. On the one hand, the increased intra- and transnational migration, developments in print and visual culture and transportation technologies, and the consumer boom, as well as rapid urbanization, literally and figuratively brought different human bodies into much closer contact with each other. On the other hand, local, state, and federal laws regulating many aspects of social activities, from how businesses could operate, to who could own property and where, to who could marry whom, to, literally,

how human bodies were distributed in physical spaces, placed firm restrictions on practices and representations of cross-racial, cross-class, same-sex, or transnational intimacies.<sup>762</sup> Thus, as Ann Laura Stoler reminds us, it is important to remember that human intimacies are never simply a matter of personal choices restricted to romantic and sexual relations within the domestic sphere;<sup>763</sup> instead, intimacies of human bodies are deeply ‘implicated in the exercise of power’<sup>764</sup> and thus are deeply, and intimately, political.

Early-twentieth-century national, institutionalized racism in the US – thriving on anxieties about interracial mixing and proximity – was met with several distinctly cosmopolitan reimaginings of human closeness and connectivity, and the nature of cosmopolitanism, then and now, is a most debated subject. Sheldon Pollock and others warn us against narrow, Eurocentric understanding of cosmopolitanism as simply a world citizenship.<sup>765</sup> They urge us to recognize that people ‘are and have always been cosmopolitan’,<sup>766</sup> but that human subjects also always redefine what cosmopolitanism is and what it should do for them. In other words, while human bodies are always connected, regulated, and influenced by national and transnational forces, frameworks, and grammars of meaning, people always engage in practices that redraw geographies of human belonging. In the US of the first half of the twentieth century, national legal frameworks failed to address and remedy localized racial discrimination and endemic patterns of social exclusion of certain human bodies in public spaces, and in response, phenomena such as primitivism, religiosity, and even consumerism provided hopes for new modes of cosmopolitan belonging, of rearranging humans and connecting them, physically or symbolically, across national boundaries.

Nella Larsen, an African American writer of the Harlem Renaissance, perhaps better than most female writers of the period, recognized the power of historically situated intimacies and cosmopolitanisms to shape the social identity of politically and economically marginalized social groups, and to actually define



the contours of one's lived experience in early-twentieth-century American culture. She also understood well the paradoxes of being a worldly biracial, bilingual African-American, and a Danish-American.<sup>767</sup> She was a cosmopolitan by the simple virtue of her complex background, but she was also a member of various collectivities that reinvented cosmopolitanism anew, stressing some globally-shared racial, class, gender, or religious similarities, and deemphasizing others.

Born close to 'the Western Hemisphere's most infamous red-light district' in Chicago – a crowded city 'bursting with families recently arrived'<sup>768</sup> – to a white Danish mother and a black father from the Danish West Indies, Larsen was haunted throughout her life by her parents' mysterious, possibly illicit relationship, and by her multiracial, multicultural, and multinational background. After Larsen's father's disappearance,<sup>769</sup> Larsen's mother married a white man and moved to a more respectable part of the city. However, as Chicago's racial segregation intensified mixed-race households were accepted in respectable areas only as long as their non-white members were servants, not family members.<sup>770</sup> Again, larger structures of oppression that relegated non-white bodies to subhuman status, and that regulated the conditions of interracial proximity at the time, entered into the intimate relations of the Larsens' family. In that period, Nella Larsen's multicultural heritage, but specifically her visibly raced body, 'continually threatened to compromise the safety and the livelihood of her family even within the bounds of the domestic space.'<sup>771</sup> Eventually, the family was forced to move back to Levee, the ill-reputed gambling and prostitution district of Chicago.<sup>772</sup>

Larsen's biographer, George Hutchinson, emphasizes the psychological trauma these events must have caused young Nella Larsen, who, by her sixteenth birthday, simply 'could no longer live with her family' in the same house.<sup>773</sup> As an adult, Larsen actively participated in Harlem's distinctly international culture,

and later, as a Harlem Renaissance literary celebrity of sorts, travelled in Europe on a Guggenheim fellowship.<sup>774</sup>

Larsen's 1928 novel, *Quicksand*, while not simply biographical, does tell the story of a woman whose life bears much similarity to Larsen's own. The novel's protagonist, Helga Crane, is a biracial woman who speaks Dutch and English but cannot revel in her multicultural and biracial background; she simply cannot 'have two lives' (Q 95). Helga endures a series of life complications caused by larger social forces that defined the social meaning of gender as well as race, and provided patterns for acceptable human intimacies at that time. As a result, she is never 'satisfied in once place' and never experiences fulfilling human intimacy with her relatives, sexual partners, or friends, whites and blacks, Americans and Europeans alike (Q 95).

Like Larsen herself, Helga is born in crowded Chicago, 'this dirty, mad, hurrying city but ha[s] no home [t]here' (Q 30). Throughout her life, Helga searches for happiness and fulfilment, for 'something else' (Q 14) she does not know how to describe, and which, readers find out, never materializes. Despite her efforts, she cannot find a social space where she could articulate her own desires outside of the context of stifling 'social relations' that invade, penetrate, and ultimately consume her.

We first meet her in Naxos, where she teaches in a Tuskegee-like university. She is hiding away in her sumptuously decorated room, and is already planning her escape from the oppressive 'atmosphere of Naxos, its air of self-rightness and intolerant dislike of difference' (Q 9). Disenchanted with the college's conservatism and with her engagement to James Vayle, whose family disapproves of her complicated, perhaps illegitimate ancestry, Helga quickly abandons her teaching position to travel to Chicago. There, in turn, she is shunned by her white family, the Nilssens, but manages to get a job working as an assistant to Mrs. Hayes-Rore, 'a prominent 'race' woman' (Q 40). Mrs. Hayes-Rore recommends Helga to Ann Grey in New York, and soon Helga trades Chicago for

New York, where she enjoys 'the continuously gorgeous panorama of Harlem' (Q 48) but is even happier with her new quarters, decorated with foreign Asian and Middle Eastern furniture that gratifies her 'aesthetic sense' (Q 47). When her uncle, Peter Nilssen, who had rejected her in Chicago, sends her a check for \$5000, Helga travels to Denmark to spend time with her mother's relatives. Her Danish family, the Dahls, is much kinder to her than the Nilssens, but Helga does not feel at home in Copenhagen, either. Dismayed with how her racial difference is constantly 'stressed, accented' (Q 74), and with how the Europeans constantly exoticize her – her suitor, painter Axel Olsen, sees her as a sexual, savage creature with 'the soul of prostitute' (Q 89) simply because of her skin colour<sup>775</sup> – she decides to move back to New York.

There, after being kissed and then rejected by Dr. Anderson, a married man she secretly desires, Helga decides to leave Harlem again. Following her accidental encounter with crowds in a religious frenzy in a Harlem church, Helga abruptly marries Reverend Pleasant Green, a 'rattish yellow man' (Q 119), who seems to offer stability Helga hopes would make her happy and anchor her in the world. Soon after relocating to rural Alabama with her preacher husband, she grows to regret her move to the South and her decision to marry. Moreover, despite the fact that she sees having children 'as a sin, an unforgivable outrage' (Q 77) – she believes bearing Negro children means 'more black folk to suffer indignities [and m]ore dark bodies for mobs to lynch' (Q 77) – she ends up having four children, and the novel concludes with the announcement of Helga's new pregnancy. In the end, we learn that she despises her husband and the local townsfolk, and if not for her children, she would leave Reverend Green and escape to the north.

*Quicksand* is often seen as an intimate examination of Helga's subjectivity, of her personal journey toward self-fulfilment, and it certainly explores Helga's unsuccessful quest for pleasure, happiness, stability, and freedom. What is fascinating about the novel is that by interrogating the very

intimate episodes in Helga's life – the crumbling of her career as a teacher; her family troubles; the ostracism she suffers from her white family in the US, the exoticization bestowed on her by her Scandinavian relatives in Europe; her misfortunes with men; the fiancée she abandons in Naxos; Dr. Anderson, whom she unsuccessfully desires; Axel Olson, who wants to marry her because she will not become his lover; and the unappealing Reverend Pleasant Green, whom she eventually marries and grows to hate; her fears, desires, confusions, pregnancies, and illness – Larsen returns us to the large-scale politics and ideologies of the era, to the very 'structures of dominance'<sup>776</sup> that Helga struggles to evade throughout her life. In other words, Nella Larsen narrates different stages of Helga's life journey as personal but always already political. Larsen brings attention to the different laws and customs that regulate Helga's mobility and closeness to people of different races, classes, religions, social and national backgrounds, and that limit the spaces she can inhabit and even define the clothes she can wear. However, Larsen simultaneously tackles key modernist cosmopolitanisms of the era, popular primitivism, consumerism, Pan-Africanism, and antiseccularism/religiosity.

In her novel, Larsen argues that these movements and their conflicting ideologies shaped cultural, social, and economic life in early-twentieth-century America. They all re-conceptualized notions of human intimacy, as well as provided models of collective practices aimed at reversing existing patterns of social exclusion. Pan-Africanism, primitivism, religion, and women's culture all offered new possibilities for public participation, and articulated their affiliations and solidarities, intentionally or not, in distinctly transnational terms. As such, Larson demonstrates, they had a direct impact on the process of individual and social formation of her novel's protagonist. Larsen stresses the promise and the seductive power that each of these trends initially wields for Helga Crane and that make her disillusionment so painful, so visceral in the end.<sup>777</sup>

In their work on cosmopolitanism, Sheldon Pollock and others argue that cosmopolitanism is 'not some known entity existing in the world, with a clear genealogy from the Stoics to Immanuel Kant'.<sup>778</sup> It is instead a myriad of theories and actual practices, or 'embodiments',<sup>779</sup> that are 'not pre-given or foreclosed by the definition of any particular society or discourse'.<sup>780</sup> Such an understanding of cosmopolitanism(s), as a practice concretely situated in history, can reveal to us how people manage to, or imagine that they can, 'live tenaciously in terrains of historic and cultural transition'.<sup>781</sup>

In this context, Larsen's attention to early-twentieth-century cosmopolitanisms is not accidental. Their diverse, overlapping and contradictory, articulations of transnational thought and human connections played a crucial role in providing models for how 'to live tenaciously' to those whose equal rights were not supported by national economic-legal frameworks at the time. In fact, diverse American instantiations of cosmopolitanism sealed the collective identities of some social groups – women, ethnic minorities, the poor, for example – and allowed them to demand or claim most basic human rights, which were consistently and explicitly denied by nationalist ideologies and institutions at the time.

What is surprising however is that Larsen critiques all key cosmopolitanisms of the era, regardless of their political ambitions, methods, or even historical record of political effectiveness. In order to understand why Larsen finds them ineffective, if not downright dangerous, for her female protagonist who attempts and fails at projects of 'tenacious living' in several different social and geopolitical environments, it is important to examine the kind of the social work such trends performed and how, in American and European culture.

As an expression of perceived cultural crisis in the West, primitivism depended on transnational exchanges of art, epistemologies, and experiences. While it was sometimes viewed as a trend in European and American visual arts,

in the first half of the twentieth century primitivism was as common in popular films,<sup>782</sup> in the human exhibits at the numerous and widely popular World's Fairs and Expositions,<sup>783</sup> and in social sciences, as it was in iconic paintings by Pablo Picasso or Paul Gauguin. In literature, the sciences, and the visual arts, in high and low culture, primitivists trespassed national boundaries, made references to foreign, exotic, mostly transhistorical 'them,' in order to remake the familiar 'us,' to revitalize 'our' arts, and 'our' society – or, as the Danish painter in *Quicksand*, Axel Olsen, says to proposing to Helga, to make him 'great. Immortal' (Q 88).

Not less (if differently) cosmopolitanism was early-twentieth-century consumerism, blending the cult of new consumer products with the rhetoric of transnational (although not transracial) suffrage. In popular articulations of consumerist ideology, modern(ist) commodities, the '[n]ice things' the protagonist of Larsen's novel, Helga Crane, loves so much in the novel (Q 10, 134, 136), were of particular importance to American women, who in the 1920s, despite the passage of the 19th Amendment, still enjoyed limited civil rights. Consumerism and modern advertising offered female consumers<sup>784</sup> the promise of social visibility and public participation; and their rhetoric and consumption practices hinted at the possibility of consumption-based female citizenship of the world.

Various racial uplift movements, from the Booker T. Washington kind to Marcus Garvey's racial nationalism to W. E. B. Du Bois' New Negro Pan-Africanism, emphasized ways in which racial heritage could override geopolitical boundaries and restrictions. Finally, the 'pie in the sky' religions Larsen describes in her novel, in references to Christian churches in Naxos, Alabama, and New York or in the texts Helga reads – Marmadouk Pickthall's *Saïd the Fisherman*, Anatole France's 'The Procurator of Judea' – emphasized the unity of all believers across man-produced boundaries, even as they had to accept deferred access to human rights on earth. In the case of religious movements, solidarity of all mankind was to be found not only in transnational, but also in otherworldly,

spaces. As Richard Wright poignantly put it in his visual documentary, '[w]e, who had had our personalities blasted with two hundred years of slavery'<sup>785</sup> and 'who needed the ritual and guidance of institutions,'<sup>786</sup> 'never belonged to any organizations except the church and burial societies.'<sup>787</sup> Wright's comments emphasize that in the segregated America, only these two social institutions 'welcomed' African American bodies, dead or alive.

These and earlier mentioned historic articulations of 'cosmopolitan coexistence,'<sup>788</sup> as well as their institutions, their publics, and social rituals, offered a much-needed critique of, the state-imposed architecture of exclusion of entire social groups from the public sphere. Thus, it is significant Nella Larsen, herself victimized by institutionalized racial and gender discrimination in the United States, chooses to examine only the crippling impact of such cosmopolitan ideologies and their 'intimate publics.'<sup>789</sup>

Lauren Berlant defines 'intimate publics' as human collectivities 'constituted by strangers who consume common things and texts.'<sup>790</sup> Berlant suggests that intimate publics depend on the assumption that their 'consumer participants [...] *already* share a world-view and emotional knowledge,' and that the texts and objects they consume are an expression of that knowledge, of a shared experience of oppression, and of 'embodied experience of living [...] in the world.'<sup>791</sup>

While Berlant references women's consumer culture of the era, I think that her definition can be extended to other cosmopolitan publics Larsen describes in the novel. 'Women's culture,' primitivist art, 'Pan-African culture,' and religious communities can be seen as examples of such 'intimate publics' because they each promise 'social belonging' but they also require a performance of a certain style of being from its members.

In *Quicksand*, Larsen argues, different 'intimate publics' do enable connectedness among strangers, but such intimacy is not liberating. Different cosmopolitan communities Helga is a willing or unwilling member of, provide

rigid modes of social participation, and their rules of 'intimate associations',<sup>792</sup> damage her emotionally, socially, and physically. As much as they invite participation, these 'intimate publics,' in Larsen's view, redraw their own boundaries and incorporate new members, voraciously consuming their bodies.<sup>793</sup> The process of inclusion is particularly cruel and violent to female and raced bodies, and in each community or public Helga passes through, she literally pays her membership dues in flesh (by dressing it down or up, repressing its needs, or, ultimately, by giving it up). Defined in large part by ideologies and aesthetics of consumerism, primitivism, and religiosity, these diverse publics carry with them recognition of the similarity of their members' shared gender, racial, or spiritual difference. At the same time, they homogenize difference by forcing their members to perform their social identity by adopting identical styles of being,<sup>794</sup> which they then inscribe on human bodies.

In other words, the publics that Helga Crane belongs to at various points in her life do indeed forge cosmopolitan, transnational connections among strangers. However, Larsen argues, the consensus-producing apparatus of publics, 'the machine' of them, as well as the 'general idea behind the system,' deprives them of transformative, liberatory potential (Q 8).<sup>795</sup> The demand for all members of such cosmopolitan publics to share an accepted style, to perform an accepted 'mode of living,' creates a rift between a cosmopolitan rhetoric of freedom and reciprocity and the practice of living based on collective uniformity and the rejection of difference.

Helga, whose multiracial, national, and class heritage enables and complicates her identification with many communities, is drawn to and repulsed by the ease with which these intimate publics attract, transform, and consume individuals. As powerful movements of social uplift, seemingly set to overcome the nation-sanctioned exclusion of entire groups from the public sphere, 'intimate publics' create spaces where socially marginalized subjects can bond by engaging in collective practices of consumption, religious worship, taste-making, or



political activism. For Larsen's protagonist, however, the forced, and often violent, public intimacy and imaginary cosmopolitan connectedness they rely on are not emancipatory to either individual or collective female bodies, nor do they mitigate the oppressions inflicted by the state. In fact, *Quicksand* argues that cosmopolitan publics simply transpose, dislocate, state-sanctioned oppression and, in fact, adapt to it in a mutated style and form.

In order for such styles and their new 'rituals of being' to be coherent and socially effective, they must be visible, performed by and on human bodies. Thus, Larsen pays close attention to the violence of this process, to how it fragments Helga's body. The simplistic cosmopolitan ideology of unity, its dangerous universalism, not only etches its social styles onto Helga's body; with each movement from one space and community to another, her complex multicultural identity is erased and then replaced with a new 'epidermal'<sup>796</sup> style, engraved on and within her body.

Over twenty years later, Franz Fanon will examine the horror of this predicament, of being 'sealed into [...] crushing objecthood'<sup>797</sup> that must always be externally confirmed or undermined. For Fanon, just as for Helga Crane, this process decomposes identity, makes it 'burst,' so when it is reconstructed 'from the fragments,' it is done 'again by another self.'<sup>798</sup> Moreover, such, difference-eliding cosmopolitanisms and their 'epidermal' ritual of unity obscure the ways in which they are themselves defined by local geopolitical, juridical, economic categories and practices of inclusion and exclusion. Based on (the visibility of) one's race, class, and gender, these categories of being are underwritten by Euro-American colonialism, with its own legacy of violent incorporations of raced, poor, and female bodies.

Larsen is particularly interested in the two most popular, if seemingly oppositional, discourses of emancipation and cultural uplift: consumerism and primitivism. American theorists and practitioners of consumerism argued that (over)consumption, or accelerated consumption, was instrumental to American

prosperity, to national, economic, cultural well-being,<sup>799</sup> and modern advertisers in the early twentieth century began to consistently infuse the act of purchase with liberatory meanings. In the late twenties, Edward Bernays would, for example, advertise *Lucky Strikes* for women as ‘torches of freedom’<sup>800</sup> that would help them gain gender equality in American society. Buying and consumption were to ‘rejuvenate’ American society and free women, who now could enter into the public sphere with the help of modern commodities. In fact, Veblenian ‘conspicuous consumption’ was often presented in consumer culture as a means towards full socialization, from a local consumer, to a US citizen, to an empowered cosmopolitan.<sup>801</sup>

Modern advertising, instrumental in the spread of consumerist ideals, was particularly sensitive to female desires, as its main audience was overwhelmingly – between 80% and 85% – composed of women<sup>802</sup> and as Roland Marchand pinpoints, it ‘rationalized and lubricated an impersonal marketplace of vast scale.’<sup>803</sup> As advertisements ‘facilitated an exchange of goods and services between a multitude of strangers on a (national) and international level,’<sup>804</sup> they inadvertently produced a sense of connection among consumers themselves. Like primitivism, consumerism consolidated disparate and anonymous audiences. Advertisements strove to produce a sense of shared connection among women, just as primitivist productions strove to produce a sense of intimacy across racial, class, and geopolitical boundaries sharpened by capitalist modernity. Significantly, the rise of modernist periodicals opened a space where these contradictory discourses blended in visuals and text.

For example, *Vogue*, a leading fashion and urban culture magazine of the twenties and thirties, advertised tools, cars, cosmetics, and clothes as cosmopolitan objects of freedom that could liberate women. The nature of this liberation was not centred on women’s role within the heteronormative family or on their social activism (as in, for example, *Ladies Home Journal* or *Good Housekeeping*). The advertisers and writers of *Vogue* seemed to argue that clothes

and fashion would allow women to perform themselves according to the requirements or norms of particular geopolitical contexts. The visual language of *Vogue* emphasized the constructedness of class and national identity, and provided tips on how to traverse national, geographical, and cultural boundaries and venture into exotic, foreign landscapes and locations by skilful application of makeup or a strategic choice of clothes, hairstyle, cars, and so on.

Such an understanding of fashion, style, and taste, as a tool or prosthetic, certainly influences Helga Crane's self-presentations in society, whether in Naxos, Chicago, Copenhagen, or a small town in Alabama. For an African, and Danish-American woman, however, using consumption and fashion performance is a radical and often dangerous strategy. Since in America Helga's body is categorized as 'coloured,' she is excluded from the consumerist fantasy of international citizenship, and dressing herself up, cozying up with luxurious objects, violates the rules of her class and of her race designation.

In *Quicksand*, the effectiveness of liberatory cross-dressing is quickly put to a test. Helga does attempt to escape the confines of racism, nationalism, sexism, and religion by deterritorializing, unmarking, and denationalizing her body with consumerist and primitivist objects: 'startling green and gold negligee[s]' (Q 13), 'queer-colored garments,' 'soft, luxurious woolens [and ] heavy clinging silks' (Q 21), or 'clothes and furs from Bendel's and Revillon Frères' (Q 48). She hopes that the consumption and display of objects such as 'Chinese tea-chests [...] lustrous Eastern rugs, [...] Japanese prints' can liberate her and make her happy. However, several communities she belongs to react negatively and even aggressively to her self-making efforts (Q 47), and in many places, Naxos and Copenhagen for instance, she is now allowed to dress as she pleases.

Moreover, *Vogue* fashion cartography of the world implied that the possession and application of commodities could empower women; it could increase their mobility across national and social borders and enable fulfilment of

their desires. Assessment of the quality, texture, colour, and possible use of fabrics, clothes, cosmetics was then an important socio-political skill, 'integral to the pursuit of social equality [and] not a frivolous sideline.'<sup>805</sup> Helga Crane, however, is shocked to find out how, for example, in Copenhagen little separates her and the consumerist-primitivist objects she adores; how, instead of being liberated by objects, she gets *thingified* by them. Constantly exoticized by the Dahls, dressed in outfits in 'screaming colors,' 'turban-like hats of metallic silks, feather and furs, strange jewelry,' and wearing 'a nauseous Eastern perfume' (Q 76), Helga eventually notices that she is being transformed into an object for others' pleasure. The primitivist portrait representing her as 'some disgusting sensual creature,' she fears, will eventually overtake her identity (Q 91). 'It isn't, it isn't at all [me]' she says about the painting, but Axel Olson is adamant that it is in fact 'the true Helga Crane,' and 'collectors, artists, and critics' agree (Q 91). Thus, Helga, displayed in salons of Copenhagen, has to share the fate of her portrait, displayed in an art gallery.

In other words, despite the claims that specific commodities or appropriation of certain styles would give women access to cosmopolitan citizenship in the world, it was the objects, not raced female subjects that enjoyed unrestricted cosmopolitan circulation. Larsen challenges, then, the consumerist and primitivist dreams of cosmopolitan belonging, arguing against the viability of transnational personhood based on either the concept of national citizenship or the free-market movement of things.<sup>806</sup> Moreover, since national magazines did not include non-white Americans – and African-American women in particular – in the fantasy of global equality and intimacy, only those who looked white and acted middle-class could act as global citizens. Where middle-class whites could easily become cosmopolitan world-citizens and tourists with a cunning use of thermal underwear or brand-name makeup, non-white<sup>807</sup> persons were relegated to the role of 'curios,' passive recipients of Western gaze, props complementing foreign locations and exotic landscapes in visual culture of the era.

In response to such representations, black presses such as the *Messenger*, *Opportunity*, *Crisis*, and *Fire!* embarked on a crusade to revise the vocabulary of nationalist consumerist primitivism. Illustrators such as Aaron Douglas, Charles Dawson, Laura Wheeler, and Gwendolyn Bennet sought to revise and popularize images of African-Americans in the American visual culture, to literally imprint new images of femaleness and blackness in the public consciousness.<sup>808</sup> Influenced by the 'Egyptomania of urban culture,' illustrators presented black characters as cultural connectors, transnational descendants of the Egyptian civilization who, like Euro-Americans, had a stake in the cultural heritage of the world.<sup>809</sup>

In most of these popular Harlem Renaissance images, race was still often conflated with class, as mainly light-skinned, fashionably dressed, middle-class educated women were icons of cosmopolitan modernity. Cosmopolitanism was again invoked as a 'global citizenship' in an all too familiar narrative of progress and achievement. Its proponents in Larsen's novel – black elites in Chicago and Harlem (and Ann Grey and Mrs. Hayes-Rore, specifically) – are oblivious to the fact that their slogans of 'social equality' and 'opportunity for all' (Q 51), their very concept of cosmopolitan solidarity, is thoroughly underwritten by a Eurocentric value system. Instead of promoting actual, unconditional equality for all human bodies, they advocate for the right of some black bodies to perform themselves. Such a privatization of cosmopolitan rights seems to Helga and Larsen to be deeply inadequate.

Interestingly, Nella Larsen frames Helga's story with experiences of participation in what might appear to be particularly unmodernist publics: religious communities. It is significant that Larsen sees religious thought and the church as powerful social forces dependant on cosmopolitan rhetoric. In theory, Christianity proposes a cosmopolitan worldview, oppositional to nationally imposed segregation and exploitation of non-white human bodies. Yet Larsen argues that religious movements and thought should not be taken as cosmopolitan

'projects toward planetary conviviality.'<sup>810</sup> Instead, they should be viewed as powerful 'global designs' of worldly management, transnational forces, structures that 'manage the world' and human diversity across national borders.

During her teaching tenure at Naxos, Helga is unhappy with how academic education and religious instruction there tolerate 'no innovations, no individualism' (Q 8). 'This great community,' she observes in the first chapter of the novel, 'has grown into a machine':

It was now a show place in the black belt, exemplification of the white man's magnanimity, refutation of the black man's inefficiency [...]. It was [...] now only a big knife with cruelly sharp edges ruthlessly cutting all to a pattern, the white man's pattern. (Q 8)

Using such violent imagery, Larsen reminds her readers of the epistemic and nearly physical violence involved in the production of the Naxos community, where disagreement and difference are not tolerated and are considered 'unladylike'! (Q 8). The religious instruction in the school provides ideological support to the school's mission of manufacturing a subservient black labour force, indispensable to the proper functioning of American capitalist economy. Sermons warn black people to show 'good taste,' 'know their place,' and be 'satisfied in the estate to which they had been called' (Q 7). Larsen exposes how, despite religious claims to transracial and cosmopolitan egalitarianism, the church is in fact instrumental to the success of the state-sanctioned project of reproduction of a racialized underclass.

Initially critical of the church as a site of reproduction of racism and of most violent consensus-making, in the final sections of *Quicksand*, Helga eventually is drawn to a different, all-black church in New York. She is first overwhelmed by the seemingly unbridled energy of a church crowd singing, dancing, and screaming. Rejected by Dr. Anderson and discontented with her transatlantic voyage and urban life, Helga, again, looks for a new way out, for a new sense of purpose, and for sexual fulfilment. What initially attracts her to

Reverend Pleasant Green and his church is the powerful expressiveness of black bodies, who articulate their passion with seeming abandon, as if outside acceptable norms. Helga quickly marries the pastor and converts to his faith, but after suffering from never ending pregnancies and difficult childbirths, she grows even more disillusioned with religion in Alabama than she was in Naxos. Yet, it is precisely in a religious community that she finally loses her body as she regains her sharpness of vision. She realizes that, like all other cosmopolitan publics, '[r]eligion had [...] its uses. It blunted the perceptions. Robbed life of its crudest truths' (Q 134).

Yet, as she cynically observes, it had uses mainly for 'the poor – and the blacks,' and particularly black women who trade their physical, sexual, and financial autonomy in exchange for a feeling of social belonging. In one of the harshest attacks on universalist cosmopolitanism, Larsen details how in the small community of Alabama, black women are told that they must give up their bodies to the 'Lawd' (Q 126). Since their bodies are meant for reproduction, the unending pregnancies, childbirths, and illness are a 'natural thing, an act of God' (Q 126). 'In de nex' worl' we's all recompense,' a fellow parishioner consoles Helga (Q 126). Helga eventually comes to despise her husband's 'great love for all people regardless of race,' and the delayed promise of paradise after death (Q 131; Q 136). Fully aware of her 'situatedness,'<sup>811</sup> Helga, however, ends up pregnant for a fourth time, and seems unable to carry out her escape plan.

In the end, we learn from *Quicksand* that Helga's body, marked by national, sexual, racial difference in multiple ways, cannot be emancipated with transnational fictions that obscure global and local 'designs' of inequality. Not surprisingly, Helga experiences the 'feeling of happiness and freedom, that blessed sense of belonging to herself alone and not to a race,' mainly when alone or in the ex-territorial space of the sea (Q 66). The ideology of cosmopolitan solidarity and the structures that normalize her experiences of difference, either in the conservative Naxos or among the liberal New Negro Harlem activists and

European primitivists, or in the South, work to sustain – not overcome – the racial, gender, and class inequalities national frameworks code her body with. Moreover, the struggle for new, cosmopolitan, human intimacies is still fought over Helga's body. She is either asked to give it up for the sexual and social pleasure of others, or asked to offer it to the Lord, or to her race to reproduce her 'good stock' (Q 24; 104), or it is simply taken as art material, and so on. The recognition of Helga's cosmopolitan identity always depends on 'others' views<sup>812</sup> of her body, and it is the publics that infuse it with meaning and then police her body's *stylistic* coherence. Intimate publics centred on fantasies of global citizenship, Helga finds out, exclude non-discriminatory reciprocity and mutuality, and make her intimacy with other people and material objects a reflection of larger structures of oppression, foreclosing the promise of transnational emancipation.



## **28. COSMOPOLITANISM AND NATIONALISM IN GEORGIAN CULTURE IN THE LIGHT OF INTERPRETING CLASSICAL HERITAGE**

Ketevan Nadareishvili (Tbilisi Ivane Javakishvili State University)

Cosmopolitanism, nationalism, patriotism seem to be very important philosophical and moral issues in the Georgian cultural context. The judgment and the discussion about these terms became especially intense in the 1860s after the awaking of the Georgian intellectual milieu. Along with the writings of the great thinkers and public men of other countries, the opposition between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, supranational and national concepts can be found in the discourses of the Georgian intellectuals as well. One part of the adherents of the patriotic concept blamed cosmopolitanism as an ideology, which neglected national feelings, denied existence of love towards the motherland. There also existed the other extreme, which on the contrary severely criticized patriotism and its supporters, for example, the Great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was one of the most eloquent speakers against patriotism. According to him, patriotism was nothing else but a relict of the barbaric era, evil, that caused aggression and hostility. Tolstoy considered that patriotism was utterly incompatible with Christianity. According to his words, his opponents did not

even try to find an answer to his arguments and all they did was to call him a mystic, anarchist and cosmopolitan as if the mere label of cosmopolitan was enough to destroy all his theses.<sup>813</sup>

Apart from these extremes there was a positive understanding of cosmopolitanism. According to this concept, individuals from different countries could form the interrelations of mutual respect. The Georgian public figures of the 1860s sharing the ideas of liberalism understood the concept of cosmopolitanism in the Hegelian sense and considered that there existed dialectical interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. In the famous essay of the great Georgian poet Vasha Pshavela called 'Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism' this attitude is revealed most eloquently. The essay was published in 1905 and had a quite polemical character. According to the writer, each real patriot is cosmopolitan. His logic develops in the following way: a person, who is of service to his nation and who tries to raise his mother-land either mentally, or morally, or materially serves the whole humankind as he prepares for it the best member. Such person facilitates the welfare of the entire humanity. According to Vasha Pshavela, it is impossible for a sane man not to love his country most of all as a man is born in one place, in one family and he has only one mother. These are what he loves most. One must not understand cosmopolitanism in such a way as to deny one's own identity. Each nation must develop itself by its own efforts, while development of each nation is the obligatory condition of the development of the entire humanity. The scientists and the men of genius like Edison, Shakespeare, Goethe, Cervantes and others clear a way to cosmopolitanism, but only by the means of nationalism.<sup>814</sup> It is obvious, that here 'cosmopolitan' is synonymous of 'Supranational', the terms – nationalism and patriotism are used together as interchangeable terms.

The same is true of Ilia Chavchavadze's attitude to this issue in general, though the interrelation of these concepts in his entire heritage is the subject of a separate investigation. We would like to mention here only one of his suggestions,

which he stated while discussing the lectures of another outstanding Georgian poet Akaki Tsereteli. In his lectures on the poem 'The Knight in the Panther's Skin' Tsereteli developed an idea, that through the images of three main heroes Rustaveli depicted three types of Georgians from different parts of the country. Chavchavadze considered such concretization of Rustaveli's heroes as humiliating of the poem. In his opinion, the poem is a masterpiece because the reality here, like in all great works of art, is generalized in such a way, that the characters appear to be universal and belong to the whole humanity.<sup>815</sup> Therefore, this opinion can be likened to Vasha Pshavela's concept. The work by men of genius cannot be of a local scale, it should be universal – that is, it clears a way to cosmopolitanism, naturally only through the national.

Alongside theoretical arguments for the study of the complex interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in Georgian mentality, the Georgian culture – literature, theatre, and fine art – seems to be extremely interesting and fruitful. In this cultural context the Georgian receptions of the classical heritage appear to be especially important as here we have a direct interrelation of these concepts, the classical heritage being universal, supranational and the Georgian receptions of it being national. In this light the Georgian receptions of the famous myth about the Argonauts deserve special attention.

The Argonaut myth is one of the best means for introducing Georgia's glorious history to the world. Anyway, up until the 1860s, there was no artistic interpretation of this myth notwithstanding the fact that Georgians knew the myth from the Byzantine sources.<sup>816</sup> We believe, that the main reason for such an attitude was the complex interrelation of universal (cosmopolitan) and national concepts, which exists in Georgian consciousness. In this respects two points are especially decisive: a) Medea's image (a mother-killer) comes in conflict with the Georgian traditional attitude towards women favouring the cult of mother; b) The capture of the golden fleece was associated with invasion, and for Georgia, a country which has been invaded many times, this myth proved to be a clear

reminder of the national trauma.

Only in the 1860s – during the crucial period of awakening of the Georgian nation, when the raising of patriotic spirit became urgent, the literature turned to the Argonautic myth – the desire to depict the ‘gold abundant Kolchis’ prevailed over the neglect and terror towards Medea.

In order to present the true picture of Georgia’s glorious history an outstanding Georgian poet and a very important public figure Akaki Tsereteli wrote the poem ‘Media’ (The name means ‘I am a woman’ in old Georgian). The poem depicts the glorious days of Kolchis, when the Argonauts had just arrived here for the Golden Fleece. Medea, so active in this segment of the myth, is a totally passive young maiden here, neither helping Jason, nor killing her brother. Her only fault, if it can be called a fault, is her love towards Jason, the abuser of her country. The aim of the author was Medea’s complete rehabilitation, but it caused her artistic image to lose its lustre. All that remains of Medea is a Kolchian woman as the evidence of Georgia’s glorious past recorded in the ancient sources. And yet, the poet failed to make Medea’s image popular in Georgia. Still, this version of Medea’s interpretation – namely, the comprehension of this myth in the context of Georgian ethno-historical problems turned out to be rather viable for Medea’s Georgian interpretations.

If we now turn to another cultural medium, namely, the theatre, which was and still is another very important milieu for the adoption of the classical heritage, we can see the same picture of the negligence and fear towards Medea theme. When in the beginning of the twentieth century the ancient tragedies with their high ethical values, heroism and ideals became popular on the Georgian scene and when several versions of ‘Antigone’ and ‘Oedipus Rex’ were staged, there was not a single attempt to stage Euripidean drama. Only one ‘Medea’, that of Suvorin and Burenin (Russian writers) was performed. This fear and negligence we call ‘The Medea Complex’ – the phenomenon still existing in Georgia’s reality.<sup>817</sup>

Only in 1962 did a famous Georgian director A. Chkhartishvili decide to

break the ice and stage Euripides' 'Medea'. The news was not welcomed with enthusiasm. Some people criticized the theatre from the patriotic viewpoint; others considered the creation of Euripides as alien to the contemporary audience.<sup>818</sup> The director himself fully acknowledged the delicacy and the complexity of the problem facing him. He wrote: 'What is the reason, that we took a dislike to the famous tragic image of a Georgian woman, pushed her aside and left her to 'others?' In his opinion Medea's image could not have been abused and insulted in Euripidean tragedy, as the aim of tragedy was catharsis – tragedy had to raise a hero to ethical heights through torture no matter how burdensome his crime was. The price Medea paid for her vengeance was terrible self-torture, so the director believed.<sup>819</sup>

Chkhartishvili invited Veriko Anjaparidze, an outstanding actress to play Medea. At first the actress refused to play the role. Her explanation of the refusal is very significant: 'Although I admire ancient tragedy [...] Medea, murderer of her own children, always frightened me to horror.'<sup>820</sup> The director began to prepare the Georgian audience. 'Writers speak', a special cycle of articles appeared in the periodicals aiming to clear the way for comprehending Euripides' tragic genius. Chkhartishvili started to stage the play without Veriko Anjaparidze. During the rehearsals he was playing Medea's role himself. After some hesitation the actress agreed to play Medea. Chkhartishvili did not change the text of the great tragedian seriously, although together with the actress offered the audience quite an original interpretation of Medea's image.

Spectators could see the distinguished pride of the Kolchian princess from the very start. Her self-esteem was terribly abused by Greeks and her whole personality arose to defend her dignity. Her blood relationship with her heroine and her exceptional pride appeared to be key features for the actress in Medea's interpretation.<sup>821</sup> Medea was interpreted as the symbolic image of legendary Kolchis. Medea is as beautiful and as majestic as the land of Kolchis itself and in this very beauty rests her tragedy. Greeks deprived her of her treasures, abducted

her beauty and then left her insulted and outraged as they did with Kolchis, her homeland.<sup>822</sup>

Treating Medea as a Kolchian woman was intensified by the director's innovative interpretation of the main issue of the play – betrayal of the motherland and not of love became central. Medea's tragedy started, when she betrayed her country.<sup>823</sup> The director wanted to say, that there is one, the most valuable thing in a human being – love for the native land. Betrayal of motherland will be never forgiven.

But the explanation of the dreadful deed of killing the children still remained the main difficulty in the interpretation of Medea's image. For a long time the actress was trying to find the explanation. At last she found it in Euripides' text itself.<sup>824</sup> In her great monologue (*Medea*, 1021-1080), when Euripides' Medea finally makes her fatal decision, she tries to present the murder of the children as a compelled act, which she was forced to carry out. After Creon's and Creusa's death, Corinthians will take a vengeance on Medea, they will kill her children, and so it will be better, if she, who bore them, did it herself.

‘No! – by the nether fiends that dwell with Hades,  
Never shall this betide, that I will leave  
My children for my foes to trample on!  
They needs must die. And, since it needs must be,  
Even I will slay them, I, who gave them life.  
All this is utter doom: – she shall not ‘scape!  
Yea, on her head the wreath is; in my robes  
The princess-bride is perishing – I know it!  
But – for I fare on journey most unhappy,  
And shall speed these on yet unhappier – (*Medea*, 1059-1068)

Such an explanation was acceptable for the actress. So only at this already quite late stage, Chkhartishvili's Medea decides to kill her children. All previous allusions to the murder were taken out of her text, as were the passages in the very beginning of the Euripidean play, where the Kolchian princess was cursing her children.<sup>825</sup>

Nevertheless, whether under compulsion or not – murdering her own flesh and blood still remained an unheard of crime. And Medea has to endure a dreadful torture: ‘Medea doesn’t take a vengeance; she punishes herself for the mistake she had made long before for the sake of Jason’s love’.<sup>826</sup> She must live to suffer. Naturally, such an understanding caused the change in the ending. In the final scene Medea did not appear on the dragon-chariot flying to Athens as it is in the Euripidean play. Instead spectators watch a woman hardened into stone, a woman, who veiled her face and started her journey walking down the narrow road. But where? Nowhere [...] into an infinite world of torture.

While speaking about the ‘Medea’ on the Georgian scene, the ballet ‘Medea’ staged on the motifs of Euripides’ tragedy is also to be mentioned, choreographed by G. Aleksidze. The ballet is significant first of all as a musical-choreographic embodiment of the Euripidean tragedy. The libretto’s author G. Aleksidze not only retained the main feature of Medea’s artistic image – killing of the children by her mother herself, but based on it the whole performance. Besides, some significant changes are made. The action takes place in two temporal dimensions – in the past and in the present, so almost the whole legend is presented before the audience. As the ballet aims at portraying the psychological images of the heroes, their feelings and their emotional experience of Jason’s and Creusa’s love and Medea’s jealousy become its leading themes. Critics considered the performance as the first successful monodrama in the history of Georgian ballet.<sup>827</sup>

Along with its success as dramatic productions, these performances were instrumental in its impact on the national mentality. To a certain extent it began the process of breaking the emotion of fear felt for Euripides’ heroine. These performances started the new tendency of the interpretation of the Argonaut myth – a tendency that no longer approached the myth with the aim to depict Georgia’s glorious past and to rehabilitate Medea.

Still the ice was in the process of breaking. In addition, another version

about killing Medea's children existed in the ancient sources. Georgian scholars of Classical Philology investigated the mythos of the Argonauts narrated in the ancient sources in detail. They paid special attention to the versions of the myth told by Parmeniscus and Didymus. In their writings, the children were murdered by the Corinthians, who afterwards declared that it was Medea who did it. A well-known specialist of the ancient history and writer L.Sanikidze decided to use this version to give a different story of the Georgian princess. He presents in two of his writings his own interpretation of the Argonauts' cycle: 'The Story of the Kolchian Maiden', a large narrative and a drama 'Medea'. In the preface to his narrative Sanikidze remarked that there is much fantasy in his book alongside the well-known stories about the Argonauts. 'But this isn't prompted only by the principle of fiction. The matter is that almost every Greek author seemed to be biased. They tended to belittle the achievements of 'alien-barbarian peoples and extolled excessively the deeds of their compatriots [...]. The author tried to reconstruct, at least approximately, the proper picture of the relationship of Ancient Kolchis and Greece'.<sup>828</sup> Sanikidze aimed to free Medea from the crime he believed she never committed and was only ascribed to her. His Medea is also a very proud woman. She desires to take revenge, but she plans only to kill Creusa and Creon. It is Jason, who suggests, that it would be better if children themselves give gifts to Creusa, this would touch her deeply. Medea hesitates and only agrees, when the husband promises not to leave the children for a single moment. But the king and his daughter are perished in terrible tortures and outraged Corinthians kill Medea's children before the mother's eyes. This drama was staged in the main regional theatres of the republic of Georgia during 1962-1982 (It was performed in seven theatres). But in the leading theatres of Georgia, which created the image of the Georgian theatre, L. Sanikidze's reception of 'Medea' was not produced. One exception is the opera 'The Kolchian Maiden', composed by B. Kvernadze, whose libretto was based on this play.

The viability of Tsereteli-Sanikidze's version is proven by Gocha



Kapanadze's apparently new performance staged in 2002 after a big interval in the 'Free Theatre'. The performance was a kind of compilation of Euripides', Anouilh's and Kapanadze's versions. The director endeavoured to show Medea's innocence and, in his own way, tried to develop the aforementioned version of the myth, in which Medea did not kill her children. The program of the play quotes the sources of this version (Parmeniscus, Didymus). However, it is worthy of mention that the actors themselves do not refer to these authors during the play. Therefore unless the spectator has read the program, he cannot guess that Medea too has her 'defenders'. Thus when at the end of the play Medea treads Euripides' charges under her feet, the audience is confused, it watches the woman obsessed with hysterics without bringing any argument against Euripides. This was exactly the reason why the press regarded the performance as weak from the point of view of dramaturgy.<sup>829</sup>

There are other novelties in the plot as well. The new characters are introduced, those of Destiny and Circe, Medea's aunt. Destiny stays on the stage throughout the whole play and conveys her attitude towards the characters without uttering a single word, merely through mimics and movements. Medea constantly struggles with her; at the end she is nevertheless defeated. Grieved she begins to justify herself: 'All what is written here is a total lie. Thousands of lies have been invented about me. O, Euripides, why don't you tell all around my true story! Yes, I loved my father, my brother, my motherland, but this is something you can't understand, because you belong to the race of the unfortunate.'<sup>830</sup>

It seems to us, that the critics were right in noticing the main flaw of Kapanadze's version – an attempt to explain events by the proud, self-respecting nature of Georgians. Hence, this brings us again to relating the attitude existing in the society towards so-called 'Medea's Complex' with certain traits of character of the nation. In Kapanadze's play one could still discern a negative feature hidden in the Georgian mentality – the principle of casting one's own blame on others instead of admitting it.<sup>831</sup>

A Greek director M. Marmarinos staged 'Medea' in M. Tumanishvili Georgian State Theatre in 2001. The performance was based on H. Müller's play 'Medeamaterial', translated into Georgian by I. Darchia and performed via the engagement of a Georgian theatrical troop. Only a few performances were held as it was soon taken out of the repertoire, because its aesthetics ran counter to those of the theatre.

Two monuments of Medea erected in Bichvinta, Abkhazia and in Batumi, present these two lines of the interpretation of Medea's myth. The magnificent monument of the outstanding Georgian sculptor M. Berdzenishvili in Bichvinta presents Medea, agitated like the sea, and her children in an extremely tense moment. The mother, overwhelmed with passion warmly puts hands on her children. Medea appears to be a beloved heroine of the artist. Naturally, he acknowledged fully the complexity of the artistic interpretation of this very controversial heroine. According to the well-known art critic Kagan, for the comprehension of the monument Berdzenishvili used the principle 'non finito', the principle of incompleteness of the artistic text.<sup>832</sup> The sculpture's content is not definite and straightforward just as Medea herself is full of paradoxes and contradictions. The sculptor allows the audience to decide themselves – is this woman ready to kill her children? Or maybe she tries to defend them from someone, even defend them from herself? Such an interesting solution makes Berdzenishvili's sculpture quite original and an extremely interesting art image, considered to be one of the most original interpretations of this heroine in Georgian culture.

In Batumi, in the central square, a monumental sculpture of Medea was erected a few years ago. The news about erecting the statue again caused anxiety. The debate about Medea was still traditional and very familiar. In this context the sculptor's interpretation of Medea deserves attention. Devi Khmaladze's Medea presents the figure of a woman standing on a high pedestal. Clothed in a long gown, she holds the Golden Fleece in her right hand, which she holds to the side.

The golden parts of the monument (the fleece, the crown, the collar) grant the sculpture a spirit of solemnity and grandeur. This interpretation presents Medea mainly as a symbol of the wealth and strength of Kolchis and as such appears to be somewhat a visiting card of Georgia. All that is tragic and ambivalent in her nature, her tremendous passions and her storms of emotion are left behind.<sup>833</sup> It seems to us, that this monument continues the traditional tendency of the interpretation of Medea by laconic forms characteristic of this kind of art.

One of the most original interpretations of the Argonaut myth in Georgian context is Otar Chiladze's novel *A Man Was Going down the Road* published in the 1970s. The novel presents one segment of the Argonautic cycle – starting with the arrival of Phryxus in Kolchis, and ending with the capture of the Golden Fleece from Kolchis by the Argonauts. The novel is an epos in prose of the so-called 'mythological plan'. Here the writer explores the famous myth without aiming to 'restore' the legend.<sup>834</sup> The Argonautic myth appears here as a tool for the allegoric *dénouement* of the real story 'placed' in the plot of the novel. Allegoric *dénouement* of the mythology was a widespread mode already existing in the Hellenistic period, when the Greeks tried to seek rational elements in interpreting their mythology.

Chiladze develops this approach with excellence and indeed, the Argonauts' cycle in the novel is deprived of all folk-tale attributes – one cannot find here Cypris' arrow, the cause of Medea's love, nor the fire-breathing bulls, nor the dragon or other supernatural elements. Therefore, the Argonauts' expedition is a real story for the writer just as the Greeks of the Hellenistic period believed that their compatriots really travelled to the coasts of the Black Sea. However, the reality of the novel is not the 'pure' realism we are used to, as the novel is synthetic in genre, where the realistic and non-realistic passages stand one next to the other, or to say more exactly, coexist.<sup>835</sup> The reality here is the so-called 'mythological reality' having no historical time, neither present nor past, with neither beginning nor end, everything is going round, the dead and the alive

exchange their places so naturally that one hardly notices it. All these features are characteristic of the world of myth. And in this very world live the inhabitants of Vani, the capital of Kolchis. One can only wonder whether this is a real world or a mirage, a world of fiction.

This ambiguity entails other ambiguities – the people of Vani are supranational, mythological people with their circular type of life and values, while at the same time one can discern the habits, the character traits of real Kolchian people in their lifestyle. It is a world of cheerful people, where everybody enjoys the company of others, where doors are open for all, where men are interested in what happens there around them. They are both kind and wicked, both devoted and crafty, as are people elsewhere in the world, though maybe with an exception – they have a special sense of humour and do not hesitate to mock themselves.<sup>836</sup>

In this happy and fabulous world the first stranger arrives and the mirages begin to disappear step by step after the very first touch from the world outside. The author brings into the novel the first mythological character of the Argonaut cycle – a fisher from Vani, named Bedia, finds a half alive boy together with a ram on the shore and takes them into his boat. There is nothing supernatural in Phryxus' arrival; all is presented here entirely realistically. The ram is also quite an ordinary one if only of a huge size, and its hair is like other rams' with one exception – when inhabitants of Vani took the ram through the goldsmiths' quarter, the golden dust stuck to its hair and remained on it forever. All is presented as it could have been in reality, though here too follows a non realistic element. When asked how he appeared here, the boy tells the people of Vani the story of Phryxus and Hele, well known to us from Mythology. Still nobody criticizes him. Afterwards the plot of the novel follows the myth – Aeëtes takes the boy into the palace, time passes, Phryxus grows up, then becomes the son-in-law of Aeëtes, fathers four sons and then dies. The people of Vani sacrifice the ram to him and Aeëtes hangs the fleece in a locked cupboard behind his throne.

After some time another stranger arrives and with this second touch from outside, the life of the happy people of Vani becomes more and more vulnerable.

The second stranger is already Jason with his Argonauts. But here Chiladze puts the famous myth aside and brings the 'real' story into the plot of the novel. The arrival of Phryxus as well as of Jason, is nothing else but the plan of the great king Minos for the intervention of Kolchis. Sending Phryxus was the first step of this plan. Phryxus' task was to make a nest and a grave in Kolchis. To take the fleece of the ram was the second step and the mission of Jason. But according to Chiladze, Jason's real mission was not to obtain the fleece at all. He was sent here by Minos to be killed by Kolchians, as Minos believed, that Aeëtes would never give him the fleece and leave alive. Only after Jason's murder could the great Cretan king fulfil the third, final step – the Greeks could invade Kolchis, claiming that they were only taking vengeance for Jason's murder. Such was the plan of Minos – the concrete plan of an invasion on one hand and the classical paradigm of intervention on the other hand. All contemporary parallels brought by Russian critic Annenski are appropriate here – the German empire needed German nationals in every part of the Europe, the disseminated Russian citizens were necessary for the Russian Empire as well, and the same applied to the Albanian 'nests and graves' in Kosovo. The plan of intervention many centuries ago seems to be the same as today.<sup>837</sup>

But what is more important here apart from this very interesting dialectical interrelation of the universal and the national is that O. Chiladze manages to overcome the unconscious fear of invasion, the national trauma. He tells the story of how Aeëtes was defeated by his own blood, the son of his second cousin Okhojado (whose family was expelled earlier by Aeëtes and who lived in Crete waiting for his time) and how Okhojado led the army of Minos, the enemy of Kolchis – another example of classical invasion. In Chiladzes' version the Golden Fleece is no longer the symbol of the thing one had and does not have any more, moreover, it ceases to be a symbol altogether.

As we see, Chiladze radically changes Tsereteli-Sanikidzes' line of interpretation of this myth. He does not use the myth to present the glorious days of Georgian history, it is no longer part of the National narrative. Here there is not an attempt to blame others because they captured the thing that belonged to you – the characteristic trait of the Georgian interpretations of this cycle. One can say even further – the famous myth is here only the tool for depicting philosophical and existentialistic issues, one of them being the global pilgrimage of humankind to arrive at prehistoric truth in order to rescue oneself from the madness of the industrial world.

Now we can turn to the second problem in the Georgian interpretations of the myth – Medea's image. Chiladze concludes his story of the Argonauts' expedition with their escape from Kolchis. Medea's story is ended by her leaving Kolchis as well. So discussing Chiladze's Medea we can speak only about what she was like in Kolchis and what her function was in the Argonauts' expedition to Kolchis.

Medea – the daughter of the powerful king of Kolchis – lives in a rich, fortunate and untroubled land. Trained by Aeëtes' sister Kamar, a sort of a witch, Medea from her childhood onwards is skilled in the secrets of nature. By the time the Argonauts arrive in Kolchis, she is a young maiden, who sees Jason for the first time in a dream and awakes already in love with the unseen foreigner. Neither Cypris, nor fire-breathing bulls nor other folk-tale attributes are found in the novel. All Medea's actions are caused by love. Because of this tragic force she becomes the betrayer of her father and her country – she helps Jason to obtain the Golden Fleece by making Aeëtes fall into an artificial sleep, while Jason creeps into the palace and steals the fleece. As in the myth, afterwards she helps Jason to kill her brother by treachery thus giving the Argonauts a chance to escape from the chasing Kolchians.

As we see, the function of Medea in this novel is very like Medea's function in Apollonius Rhodius' 'Argonautica', and on the whole Chiladze's

Medea can be considered to be a so-called 'Helper-Maiden' type as well.<sup>838</sup> The aim of the writer is not the rehabilitation of Medea. He strives to depict a subtle psychological portrait of the heroine, to give the original motivation of Medea's actions and portray her inner world in the moment, when two forces – love and obligation have a desperate struggle in her soul.

And still, Chiladze foretells Medea's tragic fate. At the end of the novel defeated Aeëtes, who is deprived now from power, army, country, who lost his son because of Medea's treachery, mourns only Medea's fate, he already foresees the humble life of the unworthy man's wife cut from the homeland : 'What will you do without me, my poor child', – desperately cries the king.

Approximately a year ago, in July 2010, one more 'Medea', namely, A. Machavariani's opera 'Medea' was staged in the National Musical Centre of Georgia. The libretto of the opera was written by his son, a composer and conductor Vachtang Machavariani.

The opera opens with the arrival of the Argonauts in Kolchis, who ask the king Aeetes to give them the Golden Fleece. The libretto initially follows the myth, though the author puts different accents on some segments of the myth. For example, from the start Medea is a more powerful person here than the one we are used to seeing in most interpretations. When the king of Kolchis, obsessed with violence, decides to kill the uninvited foreigners, it is Medea who interferes with her father's business and manages to change Aeetes' cruel decision by reminding him of the tradition of hospitality. We are used to Medea who falls in love at first sight, while Jason is somehow cool towards her and acts mainly out of practical reasons. Machavariani's Jason, on the contrary, is admired by the extraordinary beauty of the Kolchian maiden and also falls in love with her. Here too, in the opera, we watch the terrible struggle going on in Medea's soul, the struggle between two forces, that of duty and feeling of love, though the stress is laid on the distinguished pride of Medea, who announces that Jason will survive only because she wants him to live. One of most dramatic episodes of the opera is the

scene in which Aeetes terribly curses his daughter and foretells all misfortunes that she will have to endure in the future. This creates the atmosphere of extreme tension.

The opera proceeds with the Corinthian story and Medea's famous vengeance, though there are significant innovations here. Not the children, but Medea herself brings the poisoned gifts to the Corinthian princess. Possessed with horror, Jason runs to his spouse to defend his children from the outraged Corinthians. Left with her husband, Medea tells Jason that she murdered her sons and proceeds to demonstrate this by stabbing the sword into her breast, while saying 'Look, like this'. Machavariani offered us one more major novelty. Medea's suicide brightens Jason's mind. He realizes that without her he is not able to live any more, he acknowledges, that it was Medea whom he truly loved. The Greek hero commits suicide to atone for his guilt at least partly and to join his family in the new dimension.

As we see here, Medea tells her husband that she killed their children and admitting this explains why she has done so. If she had not murdered them, they would have been killed by a bitter hand, that of their Corinthian enemy. In such an interpretation Medea's deed seems to be the act of the desperate woman, who finds herself in an impasse and who suddenly realizes that the development of events does not depend on her any more. Such a resolution of the children murder by their mother herself obviously responds to the above interpretation of Chkhartishvili.

Machavariani's interpretation of the Medea theme has a particularly interesting focus. During the spectacle the audience has the possibility to get acquainted with the suggestions of the author about Medea, which are presented in quite a large booklet especially printed for the performance. In this booklet the author mainly focuses on what Medea tells Jason about the murder of the children. According to the author, although Medea announces that she has killed their sons, he – Vachtang Machavariani, puts a big question mark here: 'Has



Medea really slaughtered her children, or she is only telling Jason that to hurt him bitterly? Here, I, the author of the libretto, am not able to give an exact answer. I leave the answer to Medea, who knows much better where the truth lies.<sup>839</sup> It seems to us, that the same principle of 'non finito' seen above in Berdzenishvili's interpretation of Medea is used here by Machavariani. But here too we encounter the same problem we came across during the discussion of Kapanadze's performance. It would be really hard to imagine that there can be something else beyond Medea's words. What is obviously clear is the striving of the author to smooth somehow Medea's outrageous deed. The aim of Medea's rehabilitation is presented much more directly and sharply in the booklet, where Machavariani broadly discusses various interpretations of Medea in the ancient as well as in Western literature. Expressed in a new way the essence of the problem remains old and familiar and responds to the above interpretations of Tsereteli, Sanikidze and Kapanadze. Only here, in the opera, the author speaks not about the story of child murder Euripides had invented, but about the ways and the methods the tragedian used intentionally to demonize Medea's persona. According to Machavariani, right from the start of the play Euripides depicted Medea as a woman grown older, hating her children, as a foreigner arrived from barbarian Kolchis, who became boring to the civilized Corinthians. It is obvious, that the attitude towards such a woman would have been negative from the start. Afterwards the clash that arises between different cultures causes not only an antipathy, but an inexorable attitude towards the Kolchian princess, according to the author. In Machavariani's opinion, Euripides invented the meeting of Aegeus and Medea to show that Aetes's daughter is by no means a woman caught in the corner and seeking an escape, no, she rather is a beast, who preferred to perform an unheard massacre than live a safe life in Athens. Even after the murder of the children, this Euripidean Medea considers her escape and safety, a dilemma that is nothing else but a moral fiasco. In Machavariani's final analysis by the end of the play Euripides 'becomes himself the monster and the example of a pathological

consciousness. Perhaps this is the reason why Nietzsche calls him ‘the mask of tragedy’s killer’.<sup>840</sup>

Machavariani considers Medea to be a universal figure and a person who has the radiance of Apollo, the darkness characteristic of Hecate and the explosive talent of Dionysus. Both figures proved to be far ahead of their time, exceeding the human nature and as a result being ostracized and suppressed by society.

Finally, I would like to attract attention to one more suggestion of Machavariani as it concerns the problematic attitude of Georgian society towards Medea. According to the author of the libretto no Georgian has stunned humanity like Medea did; no woman has been discussed by the men of genius as Medea has been. Despite the immense interest towards Medea in world literature the Georgians themselves have not produced anything about her. Though Machavariani writes that he knows the reason for this silence and negligence, it is still painful for him to speak about it and therefore he can only preserve the hope that Georgians will someday lift up their voices for the unjustly oppressed titan. Thus as we see, we return to the theme of fear and negligence towards Medea discussed earlier.

Therefore, the discussion of the Georgian receptions of one mythological cycle, namely, the myth of the Argonauts presents quite a complex interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Naturally, one must not forget that the Argonautic myth has extraordinary meaning for Georgian culture. Although we have not discussed other Georgian receptions of this cycle, it seems that the picture would mainly remain the same.

The complex interrelation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism revealed in the Georgian interpretations of this myth causes, in my opinion, all the above tendencies seen in the interpretation of this cycle: silence, negligence, attempts to blame others, on the one hand, and the desire to rehabilitate Medea, on the other. As the Argonaut’s myth is associated, at least unconsciously, with the permanent threat of the invasion of a country and therefore becomes a reason for

national trauma, the strive to explore it in the context of Georgia's ethno-historical problems prevails mainly in the receptions of the story. Besides, Medea's image (a mother-killer) comes into conflict with the Georgian traditional attitude towards women that promotes the creation of the strong desire to free her from the terrible deed of children-murder. Notwithstanding that there exists this second line of interpretation, which successfully overcomes this traumatic attitude and creates the original receptions depicting the broad philosophical issues of universal value, the main tendency of the attitude towards the myth still remains the traditional one. The newest interpretation of 'Medea' proves to be another obvious example of the fact that we cycle around the same circle of problems. The very fact that the phenomenon of this legendary woman and the Argonautic cycle still excite Georgian society – be it a TV program discussing the films, a new performance on this theme, or even a statue of Medea designed to be erected, makes it obvious, that the 'Medea complex' as well as the national trauma connected with this myth still exist in our society. How far these factors are the obstacles for the Georgians to create high artistic representations of the myth is a very interesting and at the same time necessary question, one that remains unanswered as yet.



## **29. 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY REFLECTIONS ON G.I. GURDJIEFF AND LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY COSMOPOLITANISM IN THE CAUCASUS**

Michael Pittman (Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences)

G. I. Gurdjieff (1877-1949) was born in northwest, Armenia and was raised in the Caucasus and eastern Asia Minor. Although Gurdjieff's work is often overlooked in the scope of influential 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, director Peter Brook writes that Gurdjieff is, 'the most immediate, the most valid and most totally representative figure of our times'. As a polyglot and liminal figure, between East and West, his work has had a decisive influence in contemporary culture in such diverse areas as philosophy, religion, literature, psychology and ecology. In his semi-autobiographical work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff cites the formative influence of the Caucasus, including Tiflis, Georgia,<sup>841</sup> where he worked as a young man. Gurdjieff grew up speaking Greek and Armenian, and refers to the importance of Russian, Persian, and Turkish in his work and writings. Building further on his cosmopolitan orientation, Gurdjieff spent his early years travelling in Central Asia, Egypt, India, and Tibet in search of undiscovered knowledge; his driving desire was to find the 'sense and aim of organic and human life on Earth.' Reflecting modernist tendencies of the period, his major

work *Beelzebub's Tales* seeks to create a new discourse on the soul based on the teachings of the East and developed for the West. This essay seeks to demonstrate the ways that Gurdjieff's life and work, as well as his later influence, can be most productively analyzed through the lens of cosmopolitanism and as a product of the cosmopolitanism of the Caucasus during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

We have very little direct evidence or information about Gurdjieff's early life, except that which we find in his semi-autobiographical work *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. There have been three notable works that have attempted to reconstruct some details of Gurdjieff's early life (Webb, Moore, and more recently Taylor). It has been argued that his birth date is either 1866 or 1872, though some sources have cited a birth date as late as 1877.<sup>842</sup> Gurdjieff lived in Alexandropol, Armenia until around 1878, when he moved along with his family to Kars (presently in Eastern Turkey, some thirty miles from Alexandropol).<sup>843</sup> Here, he attended the Kars military academy. Over the course of his early years, he traveled in Europe, throughout Asia, and to Africa, returning to his family in Alexandropol periodically and until he immigrated to Europe in 1921. Recent scholarship on Western Esotericism by authors such as Antoine Faivre has placed Gurdjieff amongst a longer tradition of Western Esoteric Philosophy, with such authors as René Guénon, Rudolf Steiner, sometimes Carl Jung, and others. In important ways Gurdjieff's emphasis on spiritual transformation is similar to these authors, but the uniqueness of his approach to language, literature, and religion becomes more prominent when viewed through the lens of cosmopolitanism.

I begin, somewhat provisionally, with the notion that Gurdjieff's life and work reflects Kwame Appiah's notion of 'rooted Cosmopolitanism' – one that recognizes the importance of rootedness and the local, but one which also recognizes the importance of the cosmos as a whole while simultaneously feeling at home in both (and all intermediate) spheres. Gurdjieff's cosmopolitanism can be found and reflected not in the clues about his upbringing in the Caucasus, and

the multiple languages that he learned, but his travels and, then, perhaps more demonstrably, by the evidence found in his teachings and writings. His experiences and work carry the force of someone who was driven to know and understand the world, and, from a spiritual perspective, the purpose of life on this planet. In this essay, I frame some of Gurdjieff's experiences and travels as a young man, which set up his local/partial orientation to the world – one that was born in Armenia and the Caucasus – and then turn to some of the ways his writings reflect a literary, religious, and global cosmopolitanism.

Growing up in the Caucasus, Gurdjieff's life was a decidedly multicultural experience and he was exposed to a number of traditions, customs, and ideas from different sources. This environment established his sense of local rootedness – but also birthed his desire for a broader, more cosmopolitan, connectedness. His mother was Armenian, his father Greek, from the Cappadocia region of what is today modern Turkey. Alexandropol, at the time Gurdjieff was growing up, was culturally the third most important cultural city in the Caucasus (after Tbilisi, and Baku). It was an important center of both folk and high culture. It was home to the tradition of ashokhs or singer-storytellers,<sup>844</sup> such as Gurdjieff's own father, and another early cosmopolitan of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Caucasus, Sayat Nova.<sup>845</sup> In terms of the development of high culture, Alexandropol was, in 1912, the location of the first opera, as well as the state opera house. In particular, his father and his attitudes towards life and culture impacted the young Gurdjieff and the first chapter of *Meetings With Remarkable Men* is dedicated to him. As an ashokh, Gurdjieff's father sang 'poems, songs, legends, folk-tales, and all sorts of stories.'<sup>846</sup> The young Gurdjieff traveled with him to hear contests where the 'poet ashokhs coming from various countries, such as Persia, Turkey, the Caucasus and even parts of Turkestan competed before a great throng of people in improvising and singing.'<sup>847</sup> Gurdjieff's family eventually moved for a period to the city of Kars, then on the border of Turkey and Russia – but the influences and exposure to other cultures only increased.

All throughout this early period, while in Alexandropol and Kars, Gurdjieff was surrounded by influences from Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions – Armenian, Georgian, Russian, and Greek – all having a more explicit recognition of a mystical spirituality. He was also in close proximity to other traditions connected to Islam, from the more mystical strands of the Sufis, to more heterodox, ethnic-bound traditions, such as the Yezidis. Growing up amongst a variety of traditions and practices, Gurdjieff, even as a young man, began to question the beliefs and customs of those around him. In his semi-autobiographical work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff remarks that from an early age he was inspired to find answers to the questions about the things that intrigued him, and which no one could explain. In a fairly well-known episode, he describes a scene he witnessed in which a young Yezidi boy who had a ‘magic circle’ drawn around him in the dirt could not escape until someone marked an opening in it. Not one of his elders could explain the event – they only tried to explain it away – and this was the kind of challenge that inspired Gurdjieff to journey seeking ‘higher truths.’

Inspired by, and as a reaction to, these early years, Gurdjieff’s life became a journey – a quest for spiritual knowledge and truth. Reportedly around the age of seventeen, he recounts that he lived in Tiflis, Georgia – in what was the crossroads of the cultural capital of the Caucasus. Here he worked for the Transcaucasian Railway Company as a way to support himself and his growing search. During this period he also traveled to Etchmiadzin, the Holy See of the Armenian Church, and studied in Sanahin Monastery in Alaverdi, Armenia. Soon after, Gurdjieff traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, and on his return trip to the homes of the Sufi poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and to Hadji Bektash, both in central Anatolia, and to the old Christian monastery caves of Cappadocia. By the time he was twenty he was interested in archeological pursuits for knowledge, and spent time in the old capital of Armenia, Ani, not far from Kars. Next, he writes that he traveled to Egypt, and spent some time there, again, in search of spiritual



understanding of human's role on the earth. According to his autobiography, and what has been pieced together by later biographers, Gurdjieff also traveled to Crete, Jerusalem, Rome, and later Central Asia, Siberia, and Tibet.

Gurdjieff's notions of religion, spirituality, and the meaning of life were increasingly developing from a more cosmopolitan viewpoint. Dissatisfied with a single or absolute answers offered by his elders and community, he sought answers far and wide, and from a variety of sources, scientific and religious. Throughout this period, Gurdjieff was developing a discourse on the soul – and an understanding of the notion of work on the self, or soul, in order to attain spiritual enlightenment. Moreover, this spiritual discourse was articulated in ways that increasingly reflected his experiences with different traditions that he had been encountering throughout Asia. Again according to his own autobiography, after spending as much as two years with a Sufi brotherhood in Central Asia, Gurdjieff began to formulate his own ideas and teachings, and began introducing them to groups he gathered together. Gurdjieff sought to convey the sense and aim of his ideas, orally, through his teachings and through his school *The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man*. The first incarnation of his school was in Tiflis, Georgia, but he later founded the school again in Istanbul, and then again outside of Paris in Fontainebleau. In this early period of Gurdjieff's teaching career, he taught in cities throughout the region, including Tiflis, Georgia, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Essentuki, Russia before later traveling to Istanbul in 1920 and on to Europe in 1921. Gurdjieff lived in France from 1922 on and made visits to other parts of Europe and the U.S. until he died in 1949 in Paris.

Keeping more in line with Appiah's notion of rooted cosmopolitanism, Gurdjieff's travels took him throughout greater Asia, yet he always found his home with his parents in Alexandropol, often returning there to recuperate, rest, or simply visit. Throughout the period of his travels, his father, and the rest of his family maintained their residence there in Armenia. Yet, the definition of home for him seems to have been centered around his family. In *Meetings with*

*Remarkable Men*, he remarks that ‘...there constantly reigned in our family unusual concord, love and the wish to help one another.’<sup>849</sup> Certainly this was, as he notes, a founding influence upon the development of his worldview and, later, his writings and ideas. Gurdjieff tended at times to mythologize, perhaps opportunistically, the importance of this home in Armenia. In the well-known work by P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, Ouspensky describes a trip he made with Gurdjieff to Alexandropol.<sup>850</sup> Gurdjieff seemed to take delight in remarking to Ouspensky that his home was at the foot of the famous Mount Ararat. However, the mountain seen from Alexandropol would have been Mount Aragats – Mount Ararat being another seventy-five miles away from Alexandropol. Still, this mountain had and maintains a symbolic and mythical importance for the Armenians, and others. In a biblical reference, one that continues to be told and retold today, it is said that Noah, after the flood, came down from this mountain and is the father of the Armenian people.

Gurdjieff perhaps reflects some of the earlier usages of the term of Cosmopolitanism, such as the Cynic, Diogenes’ statement, ‘I am a citizen of the world.’ Yet, he also attempts to go beyond this in ways that are indicated in his use of oral traditions and literary references, but also in his use of language, and in his writing, and presumed audience. Gurdjieff’s life and journeys reflect a kind of worldliness born out of Armenia and the Caucasus, but it is one that increasingly grew, for him, beyond the boundaries of ethnicity, nation, region, or religion.

In terms of language, Gurdjieff himself was a polyglot and stood in between a number of different cultures. He knew a number of Asian languages (though he again may be giving into exaggeration with the number), but he certainly knew Greek, Armenian, Russian, and Turkish (among possible others), and, as he brought his ideas to the West, he learned some French and a modicum of English. In the introduction to his major writings, Gurdjieff narrates his consideration of all the possible languages in which he could have written. He

discusses the benefits of writing in Russian or Greek, Armenian or French, and inevitably, he notes, although the language of his household was Greek, that he decided to write his tales in Russian and Armenian, the two languages that he knows best, and which are also known by the people around him who can transcribe the text. About Armenian, he comments that ‘...in my early youth, when I became interested in and was greatly taken up by philological questions, I preferred the Armenian language to all others I then spoke [...]. This language was then my favorite chiefly because it was original and had nothing in common with the neighboring or kindred languages.’<sup>851</sup> The motivation for his use of Russian and Armenian is twofold: while he is capable of writing in different languages; he wants to be understood by those around him. Moreover, he hopes that his text will be easily and quickly translated into other languages in order to reach as wide as possible of an audience for his work, and as soon as possible. Thus, Gurdjieff’s notion of cosmos and community was not bound by space, context, or time. Hence, he sought a connection not just with the immediate world around him, but, though clearly with some sense of self-interest and importance, a world and community that would exist after his death, which he pursued particularly in his writings.

While Gurdjieff’s early travels mark the man himself as a cosmopolitan, his literary output undoubtedly reflects a cosmopolitan world view. The range of literary references that Gurdjieff employs resolutely resists any alignment with a particular national identity. With regard to cultural and literary references, Gurdjieff displayed a familiarity with a range of texts and cultural contexts of both Asian and European origins, without favoring any traditions that are specific to Armenia or the Caucasus. Most dramatically, these more worldly references are reflected in his magnum opus, *All and Everything*, or *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*. The task of the first book is, as Gurdjieff remarks in the introduction, ‘to destroy, mercilessly, without any compromises whatsoever, in the mentation and feelings of the reader, the beliefs and views, by centuries rooted in him, about

everything existing in the world.<sup>852</sup> This includes any prior or prioritized notions of ethic, national, or regional, affinity, definition, or identity. The chronotope of the story, and, by extension, of Gurdjieff's literary and religious cosmopolitanism is revealed in the introduction. Told from the point of view of the narrator Beelzebub, his *Tales* attempt to enlighten his grandson Hassein about the history of the Earth, framed in terms of its spiritual purpose, from the beginnings of the creation of the planet to the time of writing, in the 1920s. Gurdjieff's far reaching narrative reflects a hybridity of periods, genres, registers, and identities, and is simultaneously broad in the scope and depth of their representation of the spectrum of history, highlighting and creating not just a global identity – a sense of a man, or human, of the world – but a notion of identity on a more universal scale. Gurdjieff sought to be not just a man of the earth – but of the universe, the real cosmos – and as Kwame Appiah notes in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, this is the original import of 'cosmos' for the Cynics and the Stoics.<sup>853</sup> Gurdjieff's cosmology and cosmography of the universe at large are explored as the right and proper home of all humans. This, in Gurdjieff's language is highlighted by the repeated epithet used to describe humans of 'three-brained beings' – referring, generally, to the intellect, emotions, and body – and the notion that three-brained beings, not limited to human form, are found not just on the earth, but throughout the universe. Gurdjieff's notion of the cosmopolitan was one who was at home in the local, the regional, the global, and the universal.

Gurdjieff's vision of the cosmos, the universe at large, then, home for all three-brained beings, is informed by a range of literary, historical, and generic references. I argue that this reflects, at least in part, the recognition of the value of local forms to illuminate his universe-oriented narrative. Moreover, there is a sense of dialogue and exchange between these different traditions as well as a sense of a shared understanding and sense of at-homeness. Gurdjieff's familiarity with the teachings of many literary traditions and the extent of his knowledge of aphorisms, folk tales, and oral transmissions was enormous, and it is upon these

that he relied in his construction of *Beelzebub's Tales*. His story is told in the mode of a dialogue and reflects an influence, both direct and indirect, from oral story-telling, popular culture, and early literary forms that were prevalent in texts from Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Gurdjieff, in oral references, and in his writing, drew from other oral traditions such as the oral stories and jokes about the Mullah Nassr Eddin, which are common throughout the Middle East, and in Armenia – and continue to be so today. Gurdjieff also tells that he frequently heard his father, the ashokh, recite the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Gurdjieff also makes reference to Russian proverbs and sayings. In particular, *Beelzebub's Tales* has significant correspondences with in the early textualizations of oral culture and early literary works, including the *Arabian Nights*, Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, and Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. Gurdjieff, as has been argued, also perhaps drew from the Sufi Poet Jalal al-din Rumi's *Mathnawi* in terms of storytelling and the structure presentation of interwoven and overlapping stories, and even in the sense of humor he employed. Gurdjieff clearly feels at ease drawing on different literary traditions to inform his own cosmopolitan world view. This brief adumbration of references and texts is not exhaustive of the literary and oral references in Gurdjieff's work, but nonetheless indicates his approach and worldview. Gurdjieff was comfortable drawing on the local lore, folktales, and stories of the Caucasus, and the region, but did not hesitate also to employ a range of levels and layers of texts – even if sometimes critical of them, or the way they had arrived to us in the modern period.

While the complexity of Gurdjieff's presentation and use of religions, especially, in *Beelzebub's Tales*, cannot be addressed in full here, I will attempt to briefly assess the scope and focus of religion in his work, particularly as it pertains to the notion of a Cosmopolitan worldview or outlook. The center of gravity of Gurdjieff's writings is the development of a spiritual discourse, one that is, or should be, a unifying feature of different religious discourses and disciplines – and it should be general enough to be applied in different times and in different

contexts, as much as possible. It is an area that is often overlooked in Gurdjieff's work, both by those who are sympathetic or participants and by those who critique his work. The center of Gurdjieff's spiritual discourse, and the measure by which he evaluates other traditions, is the notion of conscious labor and intentional suffering, or, in his neologism, *being-partkdolg-duty*.<sup>854</sup> Gurdjieff grew up in a culture of oral teaching and tale telling, and, as noted above, a culture influenced by a variety of religious traditions. While in *Meetings with Remarkable Men* he marks the fact that he had an excellent academic education with regard to literature and the sciences, Gurdjieff stridently emphasizes the fact that these were inadequate in his search to understand the 'sense and aim of life on Earth.' The bulk of his ideas are derived from his investigations of teachings that he studied outside of academic or accepted literary and religious circles, that is, primarily from oral sources.

Figuring centrally in *Beelzebub's Tales*, in particular are the references to, reliance upon, and destruction of the narratives of numerous different traditions and myths, both orthodox and heterodox. J.G. Bennett, one of the main successors and interpreters of Gurdjieff, wrote about *Beelzebub's Tales*:

In detail, there is little new. Not much research is needed to discover the affinity of Gurdjieff's cosmology with Neo-Platonism in the West and Sankhya and the Abhidharma in the East. It is easy to show where he has drawn upon Christian (especially Greek Orthodox), Buddhist (chiefly Mahayana and Zen), Moslem (particularly Dervish and Sufi), and Ancient Egyptian and Assyrian sources.<sup>855</sup>

In examining the history of earth in *Beelzebub's Tales*, Gurdjieff (via Beelzebub) regards most religions to have been originally sent from 'Above' by our 'Common Creator God.' However, Beelzebub, the narrator of the *Tales*, often portrays Religion as a set of institutional practices and histories that are largely empty, ineffective, and even destructive – this is usually due, in particular to the absence or dilution of a practice of 'conscious labor and intentional suffering.'

Over time, religions become comprised of a variety of fictions which contain no mutually understandable language and which, consequently, dilute the power of the psyche of the humans of Earth. These distorted teachings, like other distractions in human life and culture, inappropriately and destructively garner the attention and faith of human beings.

In order to address the introduction, growth, and, often, dissolution of religions and religious teachings, Gurdjieff employs a mythical mode to the presentation of stories, episodes and histories in *Beelzebub's Tales*. The *Tales* simultaneously reflect and critique contemporary, ancient, and unknown myths and stories. Yet, he did not simply borrow myths, terms, and phrases; rather, he created his own language, inspired by his familiarity with more traditional forms. His task in part was to make his ideas understandable and also compelling to a variety of audiences that would otherwise be unfamiliar with these traditions. Here, in a more Cosmopolitan enterprise, Gurdjieff attempts to overcome, or supersede, the local, the partial – in order to enliven a more global (or universal) and redemptive notion of spiritual discourse. This universal discourse should be reflective, using Appiah's language, of a thick connection – one based on a sense of effort and striving for knowledge. Though, while nationalist or even religion-based identity politics – or any other *isms* that may be invoked – would be inveighed as a thin, and therefore inauthentic, connection.

What is perhaps most potent, and relevant, in Gurdjieff's discourse is that his cosmopolitan approach to religion and religiosity wields two distinct edges. The more exterior and readily comprehensible edge is the critical presentation and commentary on religions in general. As noted, Gurdjieff introduces discussions on Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, in particular – yet these are all primarily introduced to critique the ways in which they have been manipulated and distorted, particularly as they have become interpreted and institutionalized. The result of these manipulations and distortions is that they have been used to create hierarchies in society (classes, both social and religious)

and, worse still, but connected, they have been used to rationalize and justify war – the brutal, unfeeling destruction of other ‘beings like ourselves.’ The more latent, but positive, and ethical, overarching theme contained within *Beelzebub’s Tales* is the potential for an activating and actualizing notion of spirituality based on effort and development, as opposed to the passive obedience and glorification of religion generally.

The development of recognized fields such as Western Esotericism, and critical terms and theories, such as Cosmopolitanism, may help us gauge anew the role and importance of Gurdjieff and the cosmopolitanism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in lesser-known regions, such as the Caucasus. As a way of concluding, I propose that what might be most telling and even instructive comments in Gurdjieff’s narrative, especially given the context of today’s notions and debates about cosmopolitanism and nationalism are his remarks about his father’s death. Within Gurdjieff’s strident critique of war and the manipulations and distortions of state and religious institutions we find an approach to ethics and a potential antidote to current approaches to politics and business as usual. This is reflected in the first chapter of *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, dedicated to his father. In this chapter we are introduced to the foundational influence that this man had on Gurdjieff’s life, and it describes some episodes from his childhood, Gurdjieff’s father’s approach in raising him, and some of his oft-repeated sayings. As the chapter concludes, Gurdjieff remarks that he never got to see the grave of his father in Armenia – this was due to the fact that he left the region for Europe, perhaps in fear for his life, but primarily by the fact that his father was killed in Alexandropol by the Turks in 1915. Gurdjieff remarks without emphasis or ceremony in this text that his father’s grave was ‘abandoned by force of circumstances ensuing chiefly from that human scourge called the herd instinct.’<sup>856</sup> The notion of the centrality and the force of the ‘herd-instinct’ in human life reflect Gurdjieff’s general view of humanity. This herd instinct takes many forms, whether it be nationalism, fundamentalism, or a host of other ‘isms.’



For Gurdjieff, this is the result of a certain automatism that is inherent in all humans and which is at the root of war and conflict – and, in general, the bereft state of worldly and, especially, spiritual affairs. The corrective in this situation is, then, a transformed sense of self – one that is firmly rooted in seeing oneself in another (reciprocal maintenance). Treating the death of one's own loved one with this kind of attitude demonstrates well what Gurdjieff most heartily sought, the end of conflict, class or state division, and a more objective view of human foibles – one that we might frame in terms of a rooted cosmopolitanism – but one which will also demand further articulation and investigation.



### **30. INTERROGATING THE COSMOPOLITAN: CURVING AND CARVING A QUEER DISCURSIVE SPACE WITHIN THE ARMENIAN HETERONORMATIVE NATIONALISM**

Nelli Sargsyan-Pittman (State University of New York at Albany)

Like many, I am skeptical of the term cosmopolitanism: rather, of the ways in which it is most often defined, theorized, and applied: focused on nurturing ‘a citizen of the world,’ as a habit of mind and way of life; referencing Kant’s ethic of hospitality; or Mignolo’s planetary conviviality, transcending the local loyalties, being part of a global community. But, who is this ‘citizen,’ what is their class, ethnicity, gender, race, and so on? How do they engage with the global? What constitutes this ‘world’? Certain regions, cities, networks? Is it possible ‘to be a stranger nowhere’? From the perspective of various feminisms, these definitions point more to those excluded and unaccounted for. Could it be, then, that, as Koczanowicz notes, the different images of cosmopolitanism are ideological attempts to conceal the contradictory lived experiences?<sup>857</sup>

The term cosmopolitanism itself has been critically dissected for some time now (as Western cosmopolitanism vs. Eastern; new cosmopolitanism vs. old; cosmopolitanism from the centre vs. from the periphery; from the top vs. from the bottom, and so on). More often than not, however, cosmopolitanism itself as an

ideal and practice has been gendered heterosexual and with that, often male, and with that, of particular race, or of particular class, hence hardly inclusive, even when termed rooted, situated, flowing from the local rather than in opposition to it. Often heterosexist itself, and often racist, not recognizing the situated differences of the particularities, and the uneven participation that people have in what is termed cosmopolitan through their lived experiences, it does not render itself as a useful lens for analysis. For the purposes of my paper, in which I deal with counter-hegemonic female voices that challenge the imposed monolithic heteronormativity of the nationalist discourse of the Republic of Armenia, I find it more useful to let these counter-hegemonic female voices unhinge the cosmopolitan.

Although the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia has been modified in its treatment of non-normative sexualities and gender identities, the societal contempt for non-heterosexual people is still daunting. Unlike the concept of male gayness, female non-heterosexuality has been rejected a discursive space within the nationalist heteronormativity of Armenian society. In this paper I explore the identities that a group of (Armenian) lesbian, bisexual, and straight women artists, called Queering Yerevan collective (formerly known as Women Oriented Women collective) invoke in different spaces, historicizing queer women's presence and promoting their advocacy work for queer women on their online blog. I attempt to understand how the collective members assert and articulate their identities in the Armenian society that is bombarded by the hetero-patriarchal ideological messages under the guise of the culturally rich and ancient Armenian identity and new nationhood preservation.

Queering Yerevan (QY) members' sensibilities are informed by the particular socio-historical circumstances in which they have come of age and find themselves, for some Armenia (Soviet and post-Soviet), for others Western Europe or North America and post-Soviet Armenia, as well as various transnational feminisms, 'not necessarily shared in degree or in concept'.<sup>858</sup> The

collective members are rooted in their local circumstances that they tirelessly attempt to challenge.

At the same time they route towards their imagined global communities of feminists, women, artists, critics, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people through their use of, what Appadurai calls, techno-, media-, and 'ideoscapes'. In so doing, the artists act as agents of social change in the local society through various activist and art projects, articulating intertwined identities of queer Armenian women artists, writers, and activists problematizing variously guised normative ideologies at the same time complicating and nuancing what it means to be cosmopolitan.

I address the various layers of my research question through analyzing the material that can be found on the QY collective's project blog, called *Queering Yerevan* along with the articles and other blogs that have been written regarding and in response to this collective, its events, and blog.

The societal attitudes coupled with the homophobic law enforcers hold heterosexuality as the only acceptable form of relationship and frame homosexuality as a disorder or a national security threat and complicate the coming out of many homosexual individuals in Armenia. Out of the estimated 4,000 registered NGOs in Armenia, only a few have openly campaigned for and supported the human rights of LGBTQ people. Homosexuality is a taboo in the Armenian society that people often share with very few family members and friends. Albeit changing, the traditional roles designated for women (those of mother and wife) are still predominant.

The concept of human rights is perceived by many in Armenia as a Western notion, and the closeness with Europe means threatened institutions of marriage and ethno-cultural identity.<sup>859</sup> Mass media contributes to these circulating homophobic discourses of impending loss of cultural identity. So does the Armenian Apostolic Church, promoting and nurturing the already existing homophobia by framing homosexuality as a 'grave sin'. Although under the

Armenian constitution, all Armenian citizens irrespective of their sexuality and religion among other things have the same right to legal protection, in actuality LGBTQ people do not have any guarantee that their rights will be protected by state institutions, such as courts, or law enforcement agencies. Politicians often employ the word ‘homosexual’ in an attempt to denigrate their opponents.

Homosexuality has very limited coverage in the Armenian mass media. If the topic is covered, oftentimes it is tainted with scorn and irony and discussed within the frames of homosexual prostitution. The Armenian LGBTQ people have very limited influence on the kind of information that goes out regarding their sexuality and gender identity. Most importantly, within this hegemonic heteronormativity the undesirability and unacceptability of ‘homosexuality’ is gendered ‘male,’ depriving women of a discursive site of ‘non-heterosexuality’.<sup>860</sup>

As I mentioned earlier in the paper, *Queering Yerevan* is a QY project aiming at queering the self and the city of Yerevan of the early years of the second millennium that challenges the established topographies of both the urban space and the body of the individual within that space. This is an attempt to re-imagine the physical space differently from the normatively imposed topographies. The authors re-imagine their map(s) and signal various scales by referencing and blogging on: (1) local (Armenian) and international arts, artistic experimentation, writing, film, and exhibition in general; (2) issues of interest to women and women artists; (3) feminisms; (4) Diaspora Armenian artists and writers; (5) LGBTQ issues (both local and transnational; both art related and general); (6) human rights (locally and regionally); and more recently, (7) collaborations between writer and visual artist members of the QY collective to bridge the chronotopic gap between contemporary literature and art in Armenian society.

The QY-ers’ awareness of the marginalized role of women in general, and the societal lack of knowledge of or interest in queer women, in particular, inform the strategies that they employ in the articulation of their identities. Hence,

through their project, they seek to foster a safer environment for queer women in Armenia, where (a) queer women are oppressed by both women and men and; (b) queer women's culture is unknown to or misunderstood by the majority of Armenians,<sup>861</sup> echoing Rich's claim that heterosexism is a result of male dominance over both female and male non-heteronormativity.<sup>862</sup>

Posts queering the Armenian reality on different levels have become more prevalent, whether they be posts on challenging hetero-patriarchy in Armenia, or art interventions that problematize uniformity in art. Whether problematizing nepotism proliferating the contemporary Armenian art scene, or politics; the QY collective attempts to unhinge and unsettle the taken for granted embodiment of the status quo: from giving the word 'collective' a new meaning in their group name, to the symbolic use of a Soviet-era photo camera by one of the visual artists, to their various individual and collaborative artistic lenses.

At different times the bloggers are physically located in different countries on at least three continents: Egypt in Africa, Armenia in Europe or in Asia depending on your perspective, and the US in North America, to name a few. Sometimes the new places and spaces that they travel to or through, whether within the country they reside in or outside of it, trigger issues relevant to the project of queering the physical space and self, so they blog from these newly queered and queering locations. Different members actively blog at different times, yet the most active bloggers (at all times) are mostly from Armenia.

The blog is organized in two languages: Eastern Armenian (used in post-Soviet Armenia) and English with occasional posts in French by one of the collective members who is originally from Montreal; posts of exhibition or festival schedule of events in Europe, or articles about the collective members' exhibitions in German, Dutch, French, or Swedish. Most often than not, the posts are in English and Eastern Armenian. Sometimes, however, they are only in Eastern Armenian or English. So why do the bloggers code-switch and when?

Is this a metaphorical switching?

I viewed code switching from a couple of different perspectives; first, the technical mastery of the languages that the bloggers have. Most of the members of the collective are from Armenia. Two of them are from Canada. However, one of the local Armenian visual artists does not speak English. She always blogs with images and her comments are always in Armenian. The other local Armenian bloggers blog in both English and Eastern Armenian. Occasionally Diasporan Armenians living in Armenia or the Diaspora would blog or comment in Eastern Armenian and English, but seem to be more comfortable when blogging in English.

Second, I looked at the kinds of posts and the language utilized. The posts on local activist projects on women's rights or LGBTQ issues are usually in both Eastern Armenian and English (with comments mostly in Eastern Armenian, a few in English). This signals the rooted locality as well as routing alignment to larger scale translocal communities.

The posts on the success and activities of Diasporan Armenian authors and artists would be in English. English, in a way, is the medium connecting them to the larger scale communities they imagine themselves to be a part of: Diasporan Armenian LGBTQ communities and through them the larger global LGBTQ community as one route among many.

If a blogger posts her own short stories or parts of her book, those posts are in Armenian, primarily Eastern Armenian occasionally using Western Armenian words, or using Western Armenian orthography to spell Eastern Armenian words. This indexes an identity of a local Armenian writer whose linguistic and cultural sensibilities as a writer have also been shaped by her knowledge of Western Armenian literature and her own schooling. On one occasion, one of the bloggers, who herself is a writer, translates parts of a Diasporan Armenian writer's award winning book into Eastern Armenian and posts them. On another, she translates a poem by an Armenian woman poet into



English and posts it. In so doing, the blogger simultaneously projects an identity of a writer, translator, and activist bridging the Armenian locality with the many transnational networks.

The issue of translation as a hegemonic disciplining tool has had frequent coverage on the blog. The posts on translation and ideology from 2008-2009 were in Armenian, now they are in both Armenian and English. Through these posts the blogger analyzes the danger of the presence of the hegemonic citizen disciplining systems through the translated piece of work, thus articulating her identity of a professional, reflexive translator, an activist contemplating the mechanisms of suppression employed by disciplining institutions in an attempt to make sense of the hegemonic structures within which inequalities take place.<sup>863</sup>

The bloggers' attempts at subverting translation seem to have come to fruition through their latest activist project of *Queering Translation* from August of 2010 that attracted women artists locally, regionally, and trans-nationally. The QY collective members blog in both Eastern Armenian and English, invoking scales larger than local for this enterprise as well.

Of note is that in the Armenian version the names of the Diasporan Armenian participants are spelled following the Western Armenian orthography, e.g. իլեհին կրիկորիան, մելիսե տեր մինասեսան, and the names of the participants from post-Soviet Armenia are spelled following the Eastern Armenian orthography, e.g. լուսինե վայայյան, նուշիկ սմբատյան, signalling the diversity of socio-cultural places the Armenian participants come from with differing senses of Armenianness, among other things.

Yet in another queering effort, for the poster of the aforementioned art intervention the collective used a photograph made by one of the collective members who is herself a visual artist. In this photograph the author is queering the photograph of a sculpture of Anoush, a famous Armenian female literary character, particularly an interpretation of Anoush's suffering and insanity (over

the death of her beloved in the original literary text) by a female Armenian sculptor Aitsemnik Urartu through photomontage. A., a visual artist, a QY member, queers the instant of female suffering and insanity – that the sculptor had interpreted – into a moment of female desire.<sup>864</sup>

To historicize the women's presence in the Armenian public discourse and reality in general, and the presence of queer women in particular, a QY collective member posts poems by a female Armenian poet of the early twentieth century (that they have located as a result of their archival research) and reinterpret it through asynchronously co-writing the poem, developing themes of lesbian love, in which the woman is an active agent, who has desires, and expresses them. Through their archival work of bringing out Armenian female queer artists and meetings with other queer artists, filmmakers, and writers from elsewhere, the QY members attempt not only to claim discursive space synchronically but also diachronically.

This project of historicizing and, through it, the bloggers' claim to a diachronic discursive space is an ongoing project. And as one of the bloggers suggests, 'this is how I imagined the war. We'll unearth/out them all, one by one: from art galleries, archives, molded boxes, Soviet history books. Let it be an epic, yet by all means a new history that no one, except for us has ever written or imagined'.<sup>865</sup>

These posts seem to invoke both local and transnational scales, trying to keep the collective rooted in the local and connecting it to the global through making a local (Soviet Armenian) woman poet part of a global community of queer artists and transnationally rooted feminisms, and the collective itself as part of transnational queer women's community through film screenings and inviting writers and filmmakers from elsewhere, among other projects and blog entries.

The opportunity to publish the collective's two year correspondence exploring 'queer identity, language, and culture'<sup>866</sup> in Armenian and English that has become possible in the large part due to the on-line fundraising efforts of a

New York based LGBT Armenian organization is yet another instance of the collective's successful transnational networks.

Throughout their blog, the bloggers often provide a meta-commentary on their fragmented identities and the impossibility of having one stable, static identity, thus acknowledging its fluidity, malleability, instability, and undefinability. In their thoughts on identity the bloggers refer to Butler, Beauvoir, Bakhtin, Derrida, and more recently Ingraham. Through involving these scholars, the QY members transcend their own locality and the actual lived difficulties and engage with a community of scholars in a discursive site that allows them to make sense of the daily as well as attempts to educate those uninformed.

The first of the two posts that I would like to dwell on as a site where this collective applies its strategies, is their open letter against intolerance to the ombudsperson of Armenia, posted in both Eastern Armenian and English. I argue that the QY collective, is the base, in de Certeau's terms<sup>867</sup> that makes its members strong. According to one of the members, the collective is based on 'dis-identification' and 'dissensus' that they can go back to, to regroup and rethink the move that will follow.

In their crafting of the open letter to the ombudsperson of Armenia the QY collective members frame their rights as part of global human rights identified in the UN declaration against discrimination based on sexual orientation that Armenia signed in December of 2008. The QY collective expresses their key concern about the 'resurgence of hostile rhetoric against homosexuals both in official and oppositional media' and supports their claim by pointing out the lack of professionalism and research on the part of the journalists who author those pieces:

'After the government in Armenia signed the UN declaration against discrimination based on sexual orientation in December 2008, we have witnessed a resurgence of hostile rhetoric against homosexuals both in official and oppositional media. Many media outlets publish

professionally unqualified articles, which at best resemble neighborhood gossips. This phenomenon could have been overlooked if the danger of mass media becoming a platform to disseminate hatred and intolerance did not exist. These publications do not even demonstrate elementary journalistic professionalism and lack any kind of homework or research...[H]omosexual women have been denied of existence all together or condemned in not fitting into the image of a 'proper' Armenian woman'.<sup>868</sup>

The QY members problematize the societal perception of ascribing maleness to homosexuality, on the one hand, and senior public officials' view of homosexuality as a threat to national security (or a pathology), on the other. By doing this, they claim a place and presence in the gender identity and sexuality discourse of Armenia. They point to specific media outlets that publish unresearched homophobic articles misrepresenting and misconstruing homosexuality. The QY-ers frame the above homophobic views as reinforcing hetero-patriarchy in the Armenian society and promoting the dissemination of hatred through inaccurate information. They challenge the authority of the local public figures when framing the comments of the latter as uninformed. They frame their own response as supported by civic groups and individuals concerned with human rights, urging public officials and individuals to become familiar with the issues Armenian homosexual men and women face:

'Some of the most recent publications which disseminate hatred towards homosexuals and can potentially become a source of violence, include the article 'Armenian lesbians are becoming more active' in Aravot daily (Jan. 22, 2009, <http://new.aravot.am/am/articles/culture/54469/view>); an interview with the rising star of the Republican Party Edward Shahmazanov in the same newspaper, in which the prominent politician claims that he is anti-gay [...]. We believe that such statements are largely a result of illiteracy in issues of homosexuality which is reflected upon the prevalent obsession to defend the patriarchal structure of society and to present it as a national value. Nevertheless, we also realize that such statements uttered by prominent public figures and politicians could be received by mainstream society as the state official policy.'<sup>869</sup>

Thus, in this letter QY frames the cultural conservatives as homophobic, uninformed, and insular (assigning them a smaller scale) and reminds them of the obligations Armenia as a nation state has undertaken by signing the aforementioned UN declaration (assigning to this a global scale that they see themselves as part of).

The second post that I would like to discuss is on one of the QY's public performances, as an instance of subverting the heteropatriarchy in contemporary art on the one hand, and that of the ruling elites and society embodying the status quo, on the other.

This is a performance queering the Republic Square in Yerevan, the central square of the city that is politically charged with conflicting memories of pompous Soviet parades of showcasing military strength, of toppling Lenin's statue, of nationalist, anti-Soviet demonstrations at the point of the collapse of the Soviet Union, of Republic of Armenia's parades of military force, of statehood celebrations, and so on. Some of the key institutions strategically located around the square are worth mentioning: the National Gallery of Armenia that has long had desired and undesired artists working according to and against official scripts; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to name a few. The performance was titled '*Togh lini pat(k)erazm*,' (Let there be im(war)ge), which is a play on the viewer's perception: one could see it as 'Let there be image,' while another could see it as 'Let there be war'.

As one of the participants explains in her narrative, in their conceptualization of the performance, they critique 'ideological assumptions (and silences) about experimental queer art [...] in contemporary Armenian culture' through the method of defamiliarization. To its authors the concept of the performance suggests 'a representation of a mechanism that is at war with itself – a self-conflicted, unsettled and unsettling image of a Foucauldian panoptic space that is constructed by the continuous gazes of disciplinary powers (such as the city mayor, the city architect, the [National Gallery] curator, the security, etc.) and

the discontinuous gazes of dissident collectivities that aim to re-translate the space by queering the familiar, the normalized and the habituated construct'.<sup>870</sup> The three artists involved are reinventing the space from the bottom of the Singing Fountains at the Republic Square charged with conflicting symbolism of that are off at the time of the performance.

Through various symbolic movements the artists problematize the 'controlled ideological image of subservient artists' who always produce uniform 'realist' art, whether serving the (Communist) Party or post-Soviet nationalist authorities and *carnivalize* 'the repressive processes' of archiving the work of artists that challenge this subservient art.

At the same time, one of the artists is in partial drag with painted-on moustache, 'brandishing a blue dildo in [her] hand and symbolically 'shooting' passers-by'. The third artist comments on war and its dehumanizing rhetoric erasing the lives of Palestinian wo/men by '[I]ying on a headscarf [almost] identical with the keffiyeh famously worn by Yasser Arafat'. The artists use this as an iconic image of war that 'both contaminates and numbs the viewer'.<sup>871</sup>

This performance also points to the artists' psychogeography, a practice of 'rewriting the urban text in terms of a desire that snares the unexpected, the incalculable, the situation',<sup>872</sup> thus appropriating and queering the normative use of the topographical system and the public space,<sup>873</sup> along with destabilizing 'proper' gender representation.

The QY collective's political agenda, then, is put forth through aesthetic projects. The latter allow more room for the performativity of more complex identities not privileging sexuality over gender. Among other things, this strategy allows avoidance of a possible erasure or reduction of the gender-bound experiences that queer women have as women.<sup>874</sup>

The QY members situate themselves within the global by the force of the imagination of belongings: belonging to a global community of women (sharing a history of various oppressions); belonging to a global community of women

artists and aesthetes; belonging to the global community of queer women. Yet at the same time, as Tsing points out, by pulling the various global belongings together through locally rooted projects, the QY collective signals different identities at different times. The QY-ers act as agents of social change, whether they perform their identities as women's rights' advocates, or queer women's rights' advocates, or children's rights' advocates when protesting against child abuse, or LGBTQ people's rights' advocates.

Through their activist efforts the QY-ers attempt to curve the existing discursive space of homosexuality, gendered male, by carving a space for queer women. They seek media participation in the raising of the public's awareness of the various oppressions that women, in general, and queer women, in particular, face in Armenian society, partly in an attempt to address the gap between the queers depicted by the local Armenian mass media (weak, sick, promiscuous, dirty) and the identities of intelligent, creative, talented, and strong women they project through the discourse they develop within the walls of their blog that is nourished by experiences elsewhere (the US, Canada, Egypt, the Netherlands, Armenia), evoking their global connectedness through their local projects.<sup>875</sup>

QY-ers appropriate and localize various transnational feminisms projecting their creative reconfigurations of these feminisms through the discourse they develop on their blog. The evocation of the term 'collective' is yet another new reconfiguration and reformulation of a Soviet concept within post-Soviet reality faced with pressures of nationalism, European, Western in general, and other transnational integration processes.

Many aspects of power relations are intricately interwoven. And assuming that there is a 'hierarchy of significant and insignificant forms of power', as Abu Lughod reminds us, would limit our ability to examine 'the ways in which these forms may actually be working simultaneously, in concert or at cross-purposes'.<sup>876</sup> The collective members seem to be very aware of this, thus they are attempting to queer the mainstream power structures, albeit cautious not to

become an instrument for the hegemonic hetero-patriarchy they are attempting to challenge and disidentify themselves from, in an attempt not to reinforce the normalcy of the hetero-patriarchal hegemony.

The historicity of the lack of place in public discourse that the collective is trying to claim, tainted with the homophobic coverage of the Armenian media and the blessing of the Armenian Apostolic Church, complicates the constructive visibility of the collective. There is a significant scalar incongruity between the hegemonic cultural conservative media agenda, and women's and LGBTQ human rights' agendas of the QY collective, in that the former is predominantly in Armenian aimed at the local Armenian audience and local scale, and the latter is dialogic and evoking larger scale, and often jumping the local Armenian scale. The QY-ers attempt to understand where and how the inequalities they experience as queers, as women, as queer Armenian women, take place, to better deconstruct and fight them.<sup>877</sup>

So then, do the transnational networks that the QY-ers nurture and develop (and that sustain them) make them cosmopolitan, or their blog a cosmopolitan multi-author artistic, and often literary production bordering creative non-fiction? I suppose the answer would stem from your perspective on and definition of cosmopolitanism.

For their part, by employing post-Soviet, anti-colonial, and anti-Western self-aware and self-critical queering methods, QY-ers are, at the very least, problematizing, perhaps even defying, the cosmopolitan and the cosmopolitan gaze often fraught with colonizing condescension. To account for the potentially cosmopolitan engagements of counter-hegemonic subjects, Pollock and other critics' suggestion of cosmopolitanisms giving way to the plurality of modes and histories, much like the diverse discourses and differentiations in feminisms (in the plural) that are 'not necessarily shared in degree or in concept regionally, nationally, or internationally'<sup>878</sup> is instructive, so is one of the aspects of Mignolo's de-colonial cosmopolitanism that acknowledges multiple trajectories



and aims at a 'trans-modern world based on pluriversality rather than universality'.<sup>879</sup> This cosmofeminism, then, would, perhaps, allow for a space, where various pluriversalitys would enter 'into a broader debate based on a recognition of their own situatedness'.<sup>880</sup>



### 31. 'HOW I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW THIS WOMAN':<sup>881</sup> THE COSMOPOLITAN WRITING OF VITA SACKVILLE-WEST AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

Erika Baldt (Burlington County College)

Cosmopolitanism, as we know, comes from the ancient Greek idea of being a citizen of the world, of recognizing both local ties and affinities with the wider world. As David A. Hollinger suggests, 'Cosmopolitanism urges each individual and collective unit to absorb as much varied experience as it can, while retaining its capacity to achieve self-definition and to advance its own aims effectively'.<sup>882</sup> 'Varied experience' was not something Vita Sackville-West lacked as she travelled from England through Europe to India, Iraq, and on to Persia via train, boat, and car. However, the experience of cosmopolitanism and its expression are two different things, and Sackville-West's ability to convey these experiences proved to be a source of anxiety for the woman herself and of some confusion for her audience. As she writes early on in *Passenger to Teheran*, 'There would seem [...] to be something wrong about travel itself. Of what use is it, if we may communicate our experience neither verbally nor on paper?' (PT 27) It appears as if Sackville-West is giving the reader early warning that the text that follows will be only an approximation of her travels, one that can be nothing but unfamiliar to

the reader. Indeed, in a letter to Woolf during her travels in 1926, Sackville-West challenges, 'I should like to see you faced with the task of communicating Persia',<sup>883</sup> and it seems as if, with *Orlando*, her 'biography' of Sackville-West, Woolf takes up that challenge in a way, attempting to give a more familiar form to Sackville-West's sometimes too abstract cosmopolitan reflections, both for her own pleasure and for that of a wider audience. As she wrote to Sackville-West after her first reading of *Passenger to Teheran*, 'The whole book is full of nooks and corners which I enjoy exploring Sometimes one wants a candle in one's hand though – That's my only criticism – you've left (I daresay in haste) one or two dangling dim places. It's a delicious method, and one that takes the very skin of your shape'.<sup>884</sup> Thus while, according to Woolf, *Passenger to Teheran* only suggests the 'skin' of Sackville-West's shape, *Orlando* becomes flesh and blood, illuminating the 'nooks and corners' of Sackville-West's history and experiences that would have remained in darkness.

One of the first efforts Woolf makes to flesh out the skin Sackville-West limns is by actually providing images of her central character. Several critics have pointed out that, despite the fact that she is writing an account of her own travels, Sackville-West is purposely vague about her identity. Nigel Nicolson notes that 'she is reticent to the point of obscurity about her own identity',<sup>885</sup> while Joyce Kelley points out that in the original published work Sackville-West's 'image is absent from the text; no photograph reveals her to the reader'.<sup>886</sup> Though subsequent editions of *Passenger to Teheran* supplemented the text with photographs of, among others, both Sackville-West and Woolf, Sackville-West was careful not to reveal too much of herself either in text or image. There are clues, of course: a reference to 'my own fields, [...] my own station' through which the train passes, and to the bright orange luggage labels describing their owner's destination, and, perhaps, other, more personal details. Yet Sackville-West observes with what seems like glee that her fellow travellers find the tags inscrutable: 'It was quite unnecessary for me to have had those labels printed.

They did not help the railway authorities or the porters in the least. But I enjoyed seeing my fellow-passengers squint at the address'. In fact, it is the luggage and its contents, not the 'fellow-passengers', with whom Sackville-West feels a connection: 'They have shared his ordinary life; now they are sharing his truancy; when he and they get home again, they will look at one another with the glance of complicity.' The masculine pronoun here further confuses the actual identity of the luggage owner, and it becomes clear that Sackville-West has little interest in knowing or being known by the people around her, preferring to 'shar[e] [her] truancy' with inanimate objects, rather than individuals. She is focused solely on the journey itself, on the 'unexploited country whose very name, printed on my luggage labels, seemed to distil a faint, far aroma in the chill air of Victoria Station: PERSIA' (PT 31-33). As Martha Nussbaum suggests, 'Becoming a citizen of the world is often a lonely business',<sup>887</sup> but Sackville-West embraces the anonymity that travel provides.

However, Kelley points out that the title of the memoir is *Passenger*, not *Passage, to Teheran*, suggesting that the text is, or at least should be, as much about the individual as the journey,<sup>888</sup> and Woolf seemed to concur. For Woolf the identity of her muse was crucial to the biography of Orlando, and she took great pains not only to describe Sackville-West in terms such that there could be no doubt of her identity – no 'dangling dim places' – but also to photograph her, including three portraits as illustrations for the text. Woolf claimed in a letter to Sackville-West in 1928 that 'It has now become essential to have a photograph of Orlando in country clothes in a wood',<sup>889</sup> going so far as to invite herself and her husband Leonard to Vita's home at Long Barn to take just such a picture of the mistress.

Having an image for the reader to associate with the character was, as Woolf put it, 'essential' to the success of the story, and something that was lacking in Sackville-West's own text.

Yet at the same time, neither Sackville-West nor Woolf would agree that a

photograph could fully capture the many facets of the sitter. Hermione Lee argues in her biography of Woolf that ‘simplified readings of Vita ‘as’ Orlando [...] won’t do’,<sup>890</sup> and it is obvious from both Sackville-West’s and Woolf’s work that neither believes that individuals can be understood in such singular terms. For example, Georgia Johnston notes that Sackville-West describes a splitting of the self in some of her other texts, and she sees an attempt in *Orlando* to address that duality: ‘*Orlando*, Woolf’s spoof on Sackville-West’s life, incorporates Sackville-West’s self-understanding of a dual personality and her wish for more lives than one to embody all her selves.’<sup>891</sup> Johnston here specifically reads this ‘dual personality’ in terms of Sackville-West’s sexuality, referring to Sackville-West’s claim in the autobiographical writing of *Portrait of a Marriage* that she has ‘two halves’ – one evident in her marriage to Harold Nicolson, and another, lesbian, self.<sup>892</sup> However, I would argue that it is not only sexuality that divides Sackville-West, but a cosmopolitan desire for experience, as well. In fact, Sackville-West suggests in a letter to Woolf in 1926 that one of the benefits of travel is a freedom from sexual desire:

I have discovered my true function in life: I am a snob. A geographical snob. Every morning when I wake up, with the sun flooding into my white conventual [sic] room, I lie bewildered for a minute; then very slowly, like a child rolling toffee round in its mouth, I tell myself “You are in Central Asia.” And on the way here, crossing the brown plains, whenever the car stopped I got out, and taking a clod of earth in my hand looked at it and gave it its name: It satisfies my soul as the dissection of the human insect satisfies yours; and so, being satisfied, my soul is not prominent; a great mercy.<sup>893</sup>

The way Sackville-West describes herself and her surroundings it is as if she has given up, at least momentarily, the trappings of sexuality. She is an androgynous child in a ‘conventual’ or convent-like room, revelling in the pleasures of the land, of being thousands of miles from home. The phrase, ‘my soul is not prominent’ suggests that there is nothing to distinguish her – no one element of

her identity takes precedence over another – and the feeling of ‘great mercy’, the repetition of the sense of satisfaction, suggests that Sackville-West has found a kind of wholeness through her ‘true function in life’ as a traveller. The duality arises when she attempts to reconcile the satisfaction of the moment in Persia with her English ties:

Such a desultory life I lead, and the life of England falls away, or remains only as an image seen in an enchanted mirror, little separate images over which I pore, learning more from them than ever I learnt from the reality. I lead, in fact, two lives; an unfair advantage. This roof of the world blowing with yellow tulips; these dark bazaars, crawling with a mazy life; that tiny, far-off England; and what am I? and where am I? That is the problem: and where is my heart, home-sick at one moment, excited beyond reason the next? But at least I live, I feel, I endure the agonies of constancy and inconstancy; it is better to be alive and sentient, than dead and stagnant. (PT 96)

She would live ‘two lives’, one in England, one abroad, and for the sake of her ‘biography’, Woolf attempts to capture that longing displayed in *Passenger to Teheran*. She gives Orlando an interior monologue that is nearly identical to the one Sackville-West describes, even down to the flowers. As Orlando, at this point the ambassador to Constantinople, muses when faced with the Turkish landscape:

To the right and left rose in bald and stony prominence the inhospitable Asian mountains, to which the arid castle of a robber chief or two might hang; but parsonage there was none, nor manor house, nor cottage, nor oak, elm, violet, ivy, or wild eglantine. There were no hedges for ferns to grown on, and no fields for sheep to graze. The houses were white as eggshells and as bald. That he, who was English root and fibre, should yet exult to the depths of his heart in this wild panorama, and gaze and gaze at those passes and far heights planning journeys there alone on foot where only the goat and shepherd had gone before; should feel a passion of affection for the bright, unseasonable flowers, love the unkempt, pariah dogs beyond even his elk-hounds at home, and snuff the acrid, sharp smell of the streets eagerly into his nostrils, surprised him. He wondered if, in the season of the Crusades, one of his ancestors had taken up with a Circassian peasant woman; thought it possible; fancied a certain darkness in his complexion; and, going indoors again, withdrew to his bath.<sup>894</sup>

While Nigel Nicolson has suggested that the mention of ‘journeys there alone on foot’ recalls one of Sackville-West’s later trips to Persia, detailed in her book *Twelve Days*,<sup>895</sup> I would argue that this passage directly mimics that in *Passenger to Teheran*. Like Sackville-West, Orlando sees his experience as a matter of sharp contrasts: Turkey versus England, the wild against the tame. Yet whereas Sackville-West’s musing is vaguely philosophical, a cosmopolitan wandering within the mind, Woolf grounds Orlando’s flight of fancy, ironically, in fantasy. Throughout Orlando’s observations, there are signposts by which a reader can navigate the experience: the imagined castle of a robber chief, a possible Turkish ancestor who might be the cause of these thoughts. Sackville-West’s interpretation of her double life is hazy, full of unanswered questions – ‘what am I?’; ‘where am I?’; ‘where is my heart[?]’ – that give little sense of the landscape she purports to describe.<sup>896</sup> Woolf, on the other hand, shapes Sackville-West’s solipsistic rambling into a romantic, more readable form. It is almost as if Woolf takes to filtering the surroundings as a way to capture her subject, rather than attacking the identity of her muse head on. If she can make the locations through which Sackville-West travels more familiar – both to herself and to readers – with their sights out of an eighteenth-century gothic novel,<sup>897</sup> and even the ‘acid sharp smell of the streets’, the woman herself will be more easily readable.

Indeed, one of the first gestures Woolf makes towards familiarity is to change Sackville-West’s Persia described above to the more easily accessible Turkey. According to Sackville-West, Teheran and its surroundings remained a foreign land even for those who lived there, as she frequently notes with regret the attempts of Europeans in Persia to maintain the lives to which they were accustomed: ‘The Europeans like to pretend that they are living in Europe; each European house is a little resolute camp, and any coming and going between house and house is done with closed eyes’ (PT 91). The Europeans Sackville-West describes are blind to the unfamiliar, their attempts to recreate home in



Persia a mere pretence. Turkey, on the other hand, unlike Persia, was already well-trodden ground: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu – like Sackville-West, an aristocrat travelling with her husband, a diplomat – had described the life of Constantinople for her friends at home nearly a century and a half earlier in letters published in 1779, making the hammams and marketplaces familiar to the reading public. In fact, Alison Winch claims that ‘*Orlando* is [...] an elucidation, a re-enactment, an imitation, using Montagu’s texts as sources or prototypes.’<sup>898</sup> Although I would argue that Montagu’s texts serve as a way to elucidate Sackville-West’s as much as Woolf’s, I would agree that for Woolf and much of her audience, the near Eastern locale with one foot in Europe, as it were, and one foot in Asia, would have been much more relatable than the ‘savage, desolate country’ (PT 68) that Sackville-West describes.

In addition to making the setting a more familiar one, though still one that could not have been ‘less like the counties of Surrey and Kent or the towns of London and Tunbridge Wells’ (O 85), another means by which Woolf attempts the illumination of Vita’s dark places is through a love story. While Sackville-West’s memoir details her love for travel and for Persia, Woolf’s biography transforms that love into a human one. For, as Sackville-West herself declares during a sojourn in Isfahan, ‘These brief but frequent fallings-in-love gave me cause for serious anxiety; such vibrations of response ought, I felt, to be reserved for one’s contact with human beings’ (PT 111). Sackville-West acknowledges that the intensity of her feelings for a place rather than a person is cause for concern. Woolf therefore takes the details Sackville-West describes as the raw material for *Orlando*’s several love affairs. For instance, Sackville-West notes in a chapter called ‘Round Teheran’ that there is:

Nothing more tragic than this evidence of the Russian catastrophe; here is an old gramophone record, and here a pair of high button boots, very small in the foot, with a pair of skates screwed on; they speak, not only of present-day personal misery, but of a life once lived in gaiety; and all

theoretical sympathy with Lenin vanishes at the sight of this human, personal sacrifice made on the altar of a compulsory brotherhood. Russia seems very near (PT 96).

Sackville-West's observation is based on her exploration of the city's bazaars, which were then filled with Russian refugees: Russia was 'near' both geographically and culturally. Yet Woolf brings Russia even nearer with her transformation of Sackville-West's text, giving the high button ice skates to Orlando's first love interest, a Russian princess called Sasha, whom Orlando meets on the frozen Thames: 'the unknown skater came to a standstill. She was not a handsbreadth off. She was a woman. Orlando stared; trembled; turned hot; turned cold' (O 27).

Though critics have variously attributed the Russian subplot to Woolf's early interest in Richard Hakluyt's expeditions or her fascination with Russian ballet performances of the 1920s,<sup>899</sup> it becomes clear that a debt is also due to Sackville-West's text, which is not only preoccupied with 'the Russian catastrophe' itself but with Sackville-West's own journey through it on her return to England from Persia. Sackville-West's 'impression of a population furtively slinking along the walls' (PT 149) is even seemingly echoed in the shady dealings that foreshadow Sasha's eventual disloyalty to Orlando: '[Orlando] plunged the way he had seen them go into the hold of the ship; and, after stumbling among chests and barrels in the darkness, was made aware by a faint glimmer in a corner that they were seated there. For one second, he had a vision of them; saw Sasha seated on the sailor's knee; saw her bend towards him; saw them embrace before the light was blotted out in a red cloud by his rage' (O 37). Woolf takes the minor detail of an ice skate and what Sackville-West admits is only a vague 'impression' about the nature of the Russian people and transforms it into a clear-cut, albeit tragic, encounter that is all the more gripping for its human, rather than pastoral, drama.

After Sasha's ultimate betrayal, Orlando experiences many more love

affairs as Ambassador to Constantinople, including a secret marriage to a gypsy, Rosina Pepita. This liaison has a specific purpose in the novel in that it gives Orlando cause to travel with gypsies after the city is ransacked during an uprising against the English, and it is here that Woolf again manipulates Sackville-West's text to give her ideas more shape. Though Sackville-West demonstrates a cosmopolitan openness to all people, her aristocratic background cannot help but come through in her writing of the villagers and native peoples that she meets. Sackville-West came from a long line of British nobility, but the sense of superiority her upbringing encouraged was tempered by her pride in a less illustrious ancestor: a supposed gypsy grandmother. As Kirstie Blair notes, 'Sackville-West's alleged gypsy heritage [...] served as explanation and excuse for her unconventional behavior'.<sup>900</sup> This surprising contradiction is evident in *Passenger to Teheran* in that, though she is quick to mention that she is under no illusion that she is privy to 'the life of the people' – she herself puts that phrase in quotes – because 'no foreigner can ever do that' (PT 92), Sackville-West's observations of that very life she claims is closed to her tend toward generalizations. She writes of Persians' 'characteristic lack of foresight', their 'endearing' desire to impress Western guests, and, in her eyes, their biggest fault, cruelty to animals: 'It is not that these people are cruel, but that they are ignorant; this I do believe, for the Persians are gentle by inclination, fond of children, and easily moved to laughter in a simple way. But they seem to be ignorant of suffering; which is as much as to say, they are childish, they are untaught' (PT 79-80, 124, 126). For all her criticism of European blindness, Sackville-West still imposes specifically British and specifically upper class values on the Persians and is disappointed when they fail to meet the standards she expects.

Woolf, however, smoothes out Sackville-West's awkward accounts of how 'there is much that is irritating in Persia' (PT 91). Sackville-West's aloofness becomes a source of Orlando's character and its criticism:

The gypsies [sic], with whom it is obvious that she must have been in secret communication before the revolution, seem to have looked upon her as one of themselves [...]. Thus, though in many ways inferior to them, they were willing to help her become more like them [...]. But Orlando had contracted in England some of the customs or diseases (whatever you choose to consider them) which cannot, it seems, be expelled. (O 100)

The shoe is now on the other foot: it is Orlando, the Vita character, who is the subject of scrutiny, not the native people, and it is they, not her, who note the differences and inferiority of her English customs. The main source of discrepancy between the two parties is Orlando's love of nature, a notion that the gypsies find frivolous to the point of incomprehensibility. The issue becomes one not only of differing experiences, but of how those experiences are expressed, as:

One evening, when they were all sitting round the camp fire and the sunset was blazing over the Thessalian hills, Orlando exclaimed: 'How good to eat' (The gypsies [sic] have no words for 'beautiful'. This is the nearest.) All the young men and women burst out laughing uproariously. (O 100)

Woolf makes Orlando's ridicule as much a matter of a language barrier as one of nationality or class, yet, at the same time, by having the gypsies question Orlando's behaviour, rather than vice versa, Woolf actually offers the reader more of a sense of familiarity: to Woolf and much of the middle class, the behaviour of aristocrats like Sackville-West was 'a puzzle'<sup>901</sup> as confusing as that of any foreigner, so by making Orlando's behaviour the subject of scrutiny, she is actually putting the reader and the foreigner in the same shoes.

Yet why did Woolf feel it was necessary to make these changes to Sackville-West's text? For one, her additions and deletions would, perhaps, have made her 'biography' of Sackville-West more compelling to the reading public than Sackville-West's own 'curious amalgam of personal speculation, images, and emotions',<sup>902</sup> as Kelley calls *Passenger to Teheran*. Suzanne Raitt notes that biographies generally have a more straightforward form than that which

*Passenger to Teheran* takes: 'Biographies traditionally agree on a basic shape for their narratives. Like lives, they have their own specific rites of passage: birth, marriage, ageing, death'.<sup>903</sup> While, as Raitt also notes, *Orlando* certainly subverts those traditional rites of passage, following, as it does, an individual who changes sex and does not die, it still offers more structure than Sackville-West's text. However, it is not so much the nature of the narrative as the nature of the experience itself that needs adjustment, as Sackville-West notes at length in her book: 'Travel is the most private of pleasures. There is no greater bore than the travel bore. We do not in the least want to hear what he has seen in Hong-Kong. Not only do we not want to hear it verbally, but we do not want – we do not really want, not if we are to achieve a degree of honesty greater than that within the reach of most civilised beings – to hear it by letter either' (PT 25). The cosmopolitan experience, Sackville-West insists, is a solitary one, one that cannot be appreciated by anyone but the traveller, and the fault, if it may be called that, lies with both parties.

'We' the audience cannot imagine what we have not ourselves experienced, while the traveller cannot hope to express the nuances of the foreign land in the words that exist to do so: 'It may be that language, that distorted labyrinthine universe, was never designed to replace or even to complete the much simpler functions of the eye. We look; and there is the image in its entirety, three-dimensional, instantaneous. Language follows, a tortoise competing with the velocity of light; and after five pages of print succeeds in reproducing but a fraction of the registered vision' (PT 27). Sackville-West hints at the modernist preoccupation with the ability of language to represent lived experience, stating at the very beginning of her book that her words will not be able to truly convey the 'registered vision' of Persia.

Sackville-West certainly was not the first to address the issue of what she calls 'the travel bore'. Harry Liebersohn's *The Travelers' World* describes some of the eighteenth-century voyages that whet the public's appetite for accounts of

foreign travel. He notes, however, that no matter how cosmopolitan the intentions of the traveller, ‘sealing information abroad and opening it untampered at home’ was impossible. The reception of accounts often varied wildly from their production; as Liebersohn argues, ‘when travel accounts entered the public sphere, they spun further out of their authors’ control’.<sup>904</sup> Sackville-West acknowledges this lack of control from the beginning of *Passenger to Teheran*, but it is Woolf who explicitly addresses this notion of the inability to recreate images in words – as Victoria L. Smith suggests, *Orlando* ‘thematizes within the text how representation or, rather more particularly, how literary language finds itself at a loss’.<sup>905</sup> Yet, as suggested when Orlando can only declare of the mountain scenery ‘how good to eat!’ in the gypsy language, she takes a more playful approach to this ‘loss’, making Orlando’s history during his time in Constantinople literally unreadable:

the revolution which broke out during his period of office, and the fire which followed, have so damaged or destroyed all those papers from which any trustworthy record could be drawn, that what we can give is lamentably incomplete. Often the paper was scorched a deep brown in the middle of the most important sentence. Just when we thought to elucidate a secret that has puzzled historians for a hundred years, there was a hole in the manuscript big enough to put your finger through. We have done our best to piece out a meagre summary from the charred fragments that remain; but often it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination.’ (O 84)

It is not that Orlando’s experiences were not transcribed clearly enough originally – whether they were or not, the reader will never know – but the literary representation of the time in question has been so degraded that his biographer has had to ‘use the imagination’ to fill in what for Sackville-West would have been only metaphorical holes. Indeed, the text at the climax of Orlando’s stay in Constantinople, the party in honour of his Dukedom, is full of literal holes – ellipses indicating the ‘charred fragments’ of firsthand accounts. One such record, the diary of a British naval officer, reads:

Indeed, the sight was one of indescribable magnificence. I found myself alternately praising the Lord that he had permitted ... and wishing that my poor, dear mother ... By the Ambassador's orders, the long windows, which are so imposing a feature of Eastern architecture, for though ignorant in many ways ... were thrown wide; and within, we could see a tableau vivant or theatrical display in which English ladies and gentlemen ... represented a masque the work of one ... The words were inaudible, but the sight of so many of our countrymen and women, dressed with the highest elegance and distinction ... moved me to emotions of which I am certainly not ashamed, though unable... (O 91. All ellipses original.)

Woolf's text here acknowledges Sackville-West's assertion that language cannot fully register impressions by not even attempting to do so. The officer himself uses words such as 'indescribable', 'inaudible', and 'unable' in his description of the scene, and his muteness is underscored by the seven sets of ellipses that occur just when an attempt is made to reveal important facets of the evening. Just enough details are given that the reader can create a picture in his or her mind, as well as understand a sense of the emotion the scene stirred within the gentleman in question, but the rest is blank. Woolf abdicates the responsibility to which

Sackville-West eludes to complete the function of the eye and in so doing avoids what Sackville-West calls 'the travel bore' by adding an element of mystery and reliance on the reader's own powers of invention. As Sackville-West herself wrote, 'certainly it is a fine and delicate form of mental exercise to reconstruct a landscape, to capture so subtle a thing as the atmospheric significance of a place, from the indications given; rather, reconstruction and capture are words too gross for the lovelier unreality that emerges, a country wholly of the invention' (PT 26). A 'country wholly of the invention', both Sackville-West and Woolf seem to suggest, is somehow more familiar than a strict description of a landscape or a culture, and it is *Orlando*, rather than *Passenger to Teheran*, that, as Victoria Glendinning puts it, 'succeeded on the "public" level',<sup>906</sup> creating with its absences and fragments more possibilities for that 'lovelier unreality'.

The fact that Sackville-West appears to advocate invention over experience might at first seem to undermine her status as a citizen of the world, or, in her terms, a ‘geographical snob’, for, surely, the aim of cosmopolitanism is to understand and appreciate cultures different from one’s own, not to invent them. Yet, both *Passenger to Teheran* and *Orlando* suggest that that is not necessarily the case. It is the seeking, as it were, and not the finding out, that is the real pleasure, and an aim in itself. Sackville-West claims early on in *Passenger to Teheran* that ‘to hope for Paradise is to live in Paradise, a very different thing from actually getting there’ (PT 25), and she makes several references throughout the text to ‘the delights of ignorance’<sup>907</sup> that vanish once an undiscovered territory is finally experienced. She is suggesting not that one should ignore one’s surroundings or seek to force a new culture into a more familiar mould, but that the act of invention has no limit, while the experience itself is finite. It is that willingness to invent that sparks the true cosmopolitan moment, according to Kwame Anthony Appiah. In his definition, imagination is a key ingredient:

Conversations across boundaries of identity – whether national, religious, or something else – begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art that speaks from some place other than your own. So I’m using the word ‘conversation’ not only for literal talk but also as a metaphor for engagement with the experience and the ideas of others. And I stress the role of the imagination here because the encounters, properly conducted, are valuable in themselves. Conversation doesn’t have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it’s enough that it helps people get used to one another.<sup>908</sup>

Any ‘encounter’, he suggests, is valuable in creating an understanding of the unfamiliar, even if it is imaginary, and it is that notion which Woolf’s *Orlando* seems to exemplify in reworking Sackville-West’s text. On finishing *Orlando* Woolf wrote to Sackville-West, ‘I’ve lived in you all these months – coming out, what are you really like? Do you exist? Have I made you up?’<sup>909</sup> It is as if



Sackville-West becomes Woolf's unexplored territory, her Persia. It does not matter whether or not Woolf 'made [her] up', as, according to Sackville-West, 'Nothing is an adventure until it becomes an adventure in the mind; and if it be an adventure in the mind, then no circumstance, however trifling, shall be deemed unworthy of so high a name' (PT 29). Sackville-West suggests in *Passenger to Teheran* that experience, adventure, is one's highest aim. Such an attitude was unfamiliar to Virginia Woolf, but in turning to Sackville-West as a source for her novel, she claims such an 'adventure in the mind' for both herself and her readers, which is all a true cosmopolitan could want.



### **32. CAPITALISM AS TRAUMA: THE BIRTH OF THE EARLY EASTERN EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEUR IN PETER PISTANEK'S *RIVERS OF BABYLON***

Eva R Hudecova (University of Minnesota)

This small nation with its artificially hypertrophied and incomprehensible national pride is a nation of geniuses misunderstood and unrecognized by the rest of the world. They believe that they're better than they seem at first sight. The young hustler and unlicensed taxi driver thinks he is an artist. The blonde whore never fails to stress that she was originally a ballet dancer. – *Rivers of Babylon*.

Can Eastern Europe, after centuries of backwardness and a half-century of communism, withstand the rigors of a free-for-all likely to sweep away whatever political, social, and legal progress has been made? The West is an essential role-model, guide, and benefactor. However, parts of its history must be avoided, not emulated. – *The Grooves of Change*

*Rivers of Babylon* is the first part of a trilogy of novels written by the Slovak author Peter Pistanek. Written in 1991, with the second and third parts written in 1994 and 1999 respectively, it describes the transition from a socialist regime in Slovakia, to what the literary critic and translator Peter Petro calls 'robber baron capitalism.' The transition that the readers of the trilogy witness is anything but smooth. For the characters of *Rivers of Babylon* capitalism in 1989-1991 takes hold in fits and starts, with traumatic and unexpected results. Robber baron

capitalism is not a world in which the old traumas of a totalitarian regime are overcome and are replaced with freedom and democracy. Rather, in robber baron capitalism, the old traumas are added on to and multiplied by a rabid, unregulated, dog-eat-dog kind of pseudo-capitalism. The result is a monstrous, violent, albeit – in Pistanek’s rendition – also funny world which can faithfully only be described in tall-tale fashion.

In the transitional year 1989, the limitations and expectations of an isolated socialist society are still kept: the poor farm boy should still go to the city to find a good job and make a good name for his family (Racz); the man in the city should still entertain the tourists (Video Urban); the prostitute should still try to maintain her clientele (Silvia). With the relative opening of borders, the influx of aspects of capitalism and requirements of cosmopolitanism, however, now new tasks and desires are added onto the old ones: the poor farm boy still should go to the city and find a good job. Now, however, a good job is not good enough. The main character Racz starts off in Bratislava as a stoker at the hotel Ambassador. As Racz’s progress illustrates throughout *Rivers of Babylon*, if the farm boy wants to build a name for himself and wants to do well in the world of dying socialism and nascent capitalism, he needs to find someone to do his respectable job for him even if it involves enslaving two people (in Racz’s case, these people are two gypsies, who are forced to take over his stoking job after he moves on to bigger and better occupations). He needs to hone his entrepreneurial skills, build his fortune and refine his networking, even if these activities involve extortion, intimidation, rape, violence and even murder.

Racz’s character undergoes the most striking transformation out of all the characters in *Rivers of Babylon*. From the naïve village boy, he becomes the stoker for one of the biggest hotels in Bratislava. From there, through threats of withholding heat and causing violence, he gradually intimidates the manager and becomes the manager/owner of the hotel himself. (Due to Racz’s wheeling and dealing, the manager goes insane and barricades himself in his office, burning

furniture for heat, and luring dogs inside for food). Racz's peculiar – or perhaps bastardized – process of pulling himself up by his own bootstraps is only possible due to the very early, unregulated process of privatization (going on in all countries of the former Eastern Block), in which it did not matter as much whether one had sufficient funds to privatize something as large as an hotel. What mattered more were the connections and political allegiances one was required to have in order to be able to privatize. Pistanek gives his readers a glimpse of Racz in his very early efforts at refinement:

Racz moves into the hotel first thing in the morning. The receptionist gives him a suite with a river view. Racz likes it there. The bed is soft and smells clean. Racz lies down, but keeps his feet, still shod in work boots, on the carpet. After a moment's relaxation, he takes off his dungarees, which are covered in coal dust. He takes a shower. Then he puts on the new clothes that he's brought from downstairs. He has a loose fitting, fashionably loud orange and green tracksuit. The jacket has AMERICAN FOOTBALL printed on the back. The fabric is shiny and nice to touch. The leather laced Adidas that reach halfway up his calves smell seductively new. They're a couple of sizes too big, but the Italian who gave them to him in exchange for heating told him it was fashionable to wear oversize shoes. That's fashion for you [...]. It occurs to him that just six months ago he was still driving a tractor over his native fields. Old Kiss [the father of his fiancée] should see him now. For a moment he feels he hates the butcher, his daughter and all.<sup>910</sup>

What Pistanek has described above is a kind of Cosmopolitan-in-training; he is aware of the irony that in 1989, the aesthetic changes Racz goes through were indeed considered refinement. The West was consumed vigorously, without any understanding of the bits and pieces of the West that, frequently quite randomly, made it across the ghost of the iron curtain.<sup>911</sup> 'American football' did not imply the game to Racz. Even today, those in Eastern Europe who know that American football is not soccer do not understand the game. It was enough to Racz that the jacket said 'American,' in as much as it symbolized a world radically different and previously unknown in his homeland. This radical difference symbolized

power and superiority over the other figures at the hotel or in the city; this difference allowed him to inhabit a new kind of subjectivity, before he even quite understood what that subjectivity was. Pistanek describes Racz as a kind of idiot *savant*: in all his lack of understanding, Racz does understand one thing quite a bit quicker than anyone around him. Namely, he understands that with the Velvet Revolution, his world has changed radically and irretrievably, and, with this understanding, he makes sure he has a good 'spot' from which to inhabit or rule his part of it.

I have called Racz a Cosmopolitan-in-training. I would now like to briefly discuss the term Cosmopolitanism, specifically in as much as it illuminates the moment in history Pistanek strives to depict in *Rivers of Babylon*. Traditionally, the concept of Cosmopolitanism has evoked positive associations: Cosmopolitanism is supposed to be an ideology grouping various sets of people into one community based on the goals they have in common. Such goals may be: a mutual respect for varying beliefs, whether they are religious or political, a shared interest in international relations, ecology, or the pursuit of information and knowledge about the countries that suffered under Colonialism. All of these pursuits are of course valid and commendable.

The problem is that Cosmopolitanism as such also has other effects – effects, which, as Timothy Brennan argues in his essay 'Cosmo-Theory' – circle around money and class. In other words, to be a Cosmopolitan costs money: to learn several languages, to be able to travel, to be able to rally for a cause, invest in the environment, get to know the right people at the right time, all of these activities are conditional upon money and class. And, as Brennan argues, the fact that this term and this series of beliefs stem from a particular, Western, entitled class is reason for some suspicions, or at least closer, more critical examinations. When the revolutions of 1989 took place across Eastern Europe, one of the first declarations that the West (West Germany and the US in particular) rushed to make was that the fall of the iron curtain meant not only the end of the Cold War,

but also the end of history. This fact was suggested in various incarnations before it was finally officially expressed and made infamous by Francis Fukuyama.

One of the aspects of what Brennan calls ‘Cosmo-Theory,’ i.e. the dark underbelly of Cosmopolitanism, is the paradox that what Cosmopolitanism often celebrates as a multitude, as diversity, frequently tends to be promoting only one kind of ideology, the ideology of those who can afford to be Cosmopolitan. As Brennan puts it, what should be paid attention to is:

The process by which one – benevolently of course – expands his or her sensitivities toward the world while exporting a self-confident locality for consumption as the world. The problem exposed here consists of the ways in which an ideo-economic substructure is elaborately developed for the export of ‘idea products’ in a necessarily self-concealing act.<sup>912</sup>

Brennan is clearly suggesting here that becoming westernized, while having advantages, also has some negative effects. More specifically, the spreading of Western ideologies wholesale (along with the spreading of products and the democratization of political relations) has a normalizing effect that does introduce and naturalize capitalist ideals into a world that does not understand it, a world that never had the chance to learn to understand it due to the political, cultural, economic and ideological embargoes of the Cold War. Anyone who does not accept the ideology of the Western locality exported ‘as the world’ is invited to feel abnormal, behind the times, lacking.<sup>913</sup> This, then, is capitalism as trauma: a massive introduction of new ideas and ideologies, of new priorities and requirements with the suggestion that the only choices the ‘Cosmopolitan-in-training’ subjects of Eastern Europe have is that of a wholesale acceptance of something that is not quite understood, or of irrelevance, loss of agency and poverty amidst an all-encompassing system.

To complicate matters further, this choice is presented to the new subjects as one of extreme urgency: time is of the essence. Identities should be formed

immediately; the products needed for these identities should have been purchased yesterday. Only the backward, only those belonging to yesterday take their time. Reflection is overrated and unnecessary; time is money. J.F. Brown poignantly expresses the ideological, physical, and existential trap that the newly capitalist East European subject falls into in his book *The Grooves of Change: Eastern Europe at the Turn of the Millennium*:

After centuries of material deprivation, the vast majority of East Europeans have suddenly come face to face with the wonders of Western capitalist consumerism – indirectly through television, and directly through its burgeoning presence in their own midst. Presence, however, is not the same as availability – at least not for large sections of the population. They can only sit and gape. But many of these have-nots, too, determined not to be denied ‘their share’ of the new bonanza, succumb to dishonesty, corruption, and then to petty – or not so petty – crime in their efforts to get it. The same debility exists in the West, of course, but Western citizens have become inured to consumerism. In the East, they are still blinded by its dazzling suddenness. This massive, unconditional, and exclusive preoccupation with it worries many observers – all the more because no end seems to be in sight.<sup>914</sup>

Brown treats capitalism here as an illness that can perhaps be tolerated if its subjects are inoculated against it, but one that is devastating if this inoculation (in this case, most significantly represented by time) is absent. A certain tolerance (both in the colloquial and medical meaning of the word) to capitalism has to be built up. This lack of tolerance is where the new subject, who is both hard to name, yet in possession of so many names (‘robber-baron capitalist,’ ‘crony capitalist,’ ‘new-age Mafioso,’ ‘comrade capitalist,’ ‘vekslak,’ etc.) comes from. As Brown puts it, this new subject has an ‘*enrichissez-vous*’ opportunity that the emerging capitalist economic order was giving to a large and increasing number of younger East Europeans’.<sup>915</sup>

Racz, in his irrational, instinctual understanding of the ‘brave new world’ he is facing, chooses wholesale acceptance of the new system. In his new getup, he is the pioneer ‘vekslak,’ the common slang term in former Czechoslovakia to



describe an illegal money-changer. (The term 'vekslak' comes from the German verb 'wechseln,' meaning 'to change'). Even though 'vekslaci' existed during the era of socialism, they were also the first signs of robber baron capitalism; the initial small power they were given during socialism (by, for instance, capitalizing on the fact that the Czechoslovak government had a set minimal exchange amount for every foreigner who entered the country, or the fact that the government set an unrealistic exchange rate of the Czechoslovak Krown vis-à-vis Western currencies) was multiplied exponentially after 1989.

'Veksclaci' were the core, initial members of business mafias; they were the only ones who in the very early 1990s had enough money to be major players in the process of both small and large privatization. 'Veksclaci' were criminals who inhabited a space of coolness due to their knock-off tennis shoes, brightly coloured and patterned tracksuits (frequently richly gathered at the waist with an MC Hammer-style cut), a wide, 'boss-like' stance, and T-shirts/leather jackets with innumerable (and frequently misspelled) slogans in English. Their perceived authority and aura of coolness came just as much (if not more) from their demonstrative (almost carnivalesque) inhabitation of a foreign Western space, which they knew nothing about, as it did from the fact that they were handling a lot of foreign currency. With their cooperation with the police via bribes, these 'veksclaci' created a mini country within a country, where the rules were set by the 'vekslak' bosses and the laws at large did not apply to them.

As 1989 rolled around, 'veksclaci' were the only part of the society with some kind of business and trade experience; they were the ones with the only – albeit limited – understanding of more significant private property. Their money-changing experience was now poured into the crony, nepotistic, often criminal process of privatization. The new 'vekslak' was now 'Mr. Businessman' (in Slovak, 'Pan Podnikatel'), which became an actual way of addressing these figures. Large businesses were privatized (often bought for as little as one Slovak Krown), then divided into smaller portions and sold for profit. In other instances,

expensive factory equipment was sold off after that same equipment was declared malfunctioning and useless. When the company running the factory declared bankruptcy, the profits from the equipment were kept. As Brown suggests:

The privatization process was one of the broadest avenues to corruption. Nomenclatura capitalism has become a standard term in both the former communist countries and among Western observers studying them. It reflects the process whereby communist managers and economic officials siphoned off for themselves the juiciest bits of those branches of the economy being privatized and engaged in violence to prevent 'outsiders' from muscling in. The old comrade network was thus carried over from the communist era to the democratic one. Most communist managers basked in the assurance that practically nobody could take their place. They assiduously set about making capitalism work – but only for themselves.<sup>916</sup>

The noun 'tunel' (the Slovak word for 'tunnel') became a verb, which was a neologism in this language. 'Tunelovat,' or 'to tunnel' became the common term used to describe the activity of new robber baron capitalists as they proceeded to deplete large, previously state owned companies and enrich themselves at the expense of poverty-stricken regions full of former state employees whom they were leaving behind.

The Slovak businessman, politician and author Drahos Michalek vividly describes the intricacies of the process of 'tunneling' in his recent, semi-fictional novel *Biznis po slovensky (Business the Slovak Way)*. This novel is inspired by the author's personal experiences having founded and run several businesses in early 1990s Czechoslovakia (and later Slovakia), as well as having founded the first business association of the Slovak Republic (originally called The Association of Wholesale and Distribution Companies of the Slovak Republic) in 1994. Describing his competition in the early post-communist business world, the main character, Dany (presumably a stand-in for the author), states:

Many realized that it was now much easier to make money. They bought goods in bulk, sold it all quickly, and let the company go bankrupt. For the most part, the suppliers never again saw their money or their goods. Some of the [new businessmen] even managed to get bank loans. Similar to Swiss cheese, [Slovakia's] legislation had many holes in it. 'Pseudo-businessmen' rode around in Mercedes-brand cars, founded other businesses and sneered at regular businessmen. Some only sneered until their sneer was widened by a bullet from a 9 millimeter gun, but that couldn't deter everyone! Order forms, signatures, IDs, stamps started being forged [...]. Capitalism started showing its ugly side. Fake leasing companies, forged leases, thefts of nice cars all started multiplying. The image of a respectable company started having a very high value.<sup>917</sup>

Now the 'vekslaci' in the cheap track suits became multi-million-dollar entrepreneurs – their necks, wrists and fingers were embellished with the heaviest and showiest golden chains, bracelets and rings. They wore white-linen suits from Armani, and drank only the most expensive whiskey. They were always on the way to or coming back from an important meeting in Malaysia, the Dominican Republic or Turkey. These business meetings always also doubled as expensive vacations. These former small-time crooks now had new small-time crooks of their own, and these crooks did their bosses' bidding in the hopes of amassing as much money and 'respect' as their superiors. And, as Brown discussed earlier, finding a former or current member of the government or the police mixed in with these new-age entrepreneurs was not unusual at all.

Michalek describes the results of this illegal, curious enrichment process through his main character Dany (who, coincidentally, just like Racz, started his 'career' as a stoker). The first to speak is Dany, the second his business partner Matej:

'We have good results. We built a pretty prosperous company in three years, with the potential for further growth, which, considering our status quo, is not small.'

'And we started from scratch. We wove a whip out of a pile of shit, as they say.'

'Yes, but don't forget that a whip can strike with both its ends. We can't fall asleep on our laurels.'

The three-year long constant toil, motivation, experiences from trips, in combination with our street smarts were bearing fruit.<sup>918</sup>

Just like Dany, Racz had learned the signifiers of ‘having made it’ in this new era. In Racz’s mind, his new outfit and new home meant this to him; they signified a mastery and understanding of a new system. Throughout the *Rivers of Babylon*, he pursues the project of refining himself (both genuinely and in pretence) just as much as he does the project of becoming richer and more influential through various criminal practices which could be described as the criminal practices of any nascent Eastern European mafia. Throughout the book, his efforts at gentrification proceed so quickly that by the end of the book, his initial, ‘refined’ ‘vekslak’ getup appears barbaric. Racz demeans, rapes and abandons Erzika, his fiancée from his small hometown, and finds a more acceptable, educated, beautiful, virginal city-girl, called Lenka. Everything, including Lenka, is a tool in completing his self-assigned task, which is to inhabit the identity of a Cosmopolitan:

Racz is familiar with all the galleries and exhibition rooms in the city. He’s walked through them silently; Lenka kept talking and talking. She’d like him to be a well-informed civilized man with wide interests. Racz is in agreement; he wants that as well. He sits in front of the television, trying to copy various gestures: the way men smoke cigars, adjust their ties or look at their watches in films and commercials [...]. Back at the [hotel] Ambassador, they each follow their own interests. Lenka is in her armchair, reading lecture notes, or a novel. Racz watches a video. He loves sadistic horror movies and while he watches them, comments loudly, with satisfaction. Above all he looks out for horror movies with action in space, with monsters and aliens. But he won’t say no to a good massacre. His favorite heroes are Freddy Krueger, crazy Mike Myers with a white mask on his face and the immortal monster Jason Vorsteed, wearing a hockey goalkeeper’s mask. Later, he shows their moves and gestures to [his gopher] Dula, though not as often as he used to [...] he now has a dignified, hotelier-entrepreneur style.<sup>919</sup>

The more Racz learns how to mimic and ventriloquize refinement, the

more possible it becomes that his pretences get found out (for instance, when he shows Lenka the lavish villa he purchased for them by the Bratislava castle, and Lenka discusses its Cubist architecture, Racz has no idea what she means and gets embarrassed and angry when Lenka points this out). Also, the more 'refined' Racz is, the more 'refined' he has to strive to become. He becomes his own most important project, his ego, posturing and volatility growing in parallel to his influence, mafia-leadership and possessions. Yet even with all the posturing, money and influence, Racz's understanding of what is truly occurring in his home country, in his home town, even under his very nose in his hotel, does not deepen. He only truly wants to know that which might be in some way useful to him, that which might quickly be turned into a gain of funds or influence.

Pistanek uses several other characters to outline the desperate and ravenous transformation of isolated, naïve figures of communism into early Eastern European entrepreneur figures. He does this to acknowledge that even though a figure like Racz is an exaggerated caricature, he is not alone. With Pistanek's characters Video Urban and Silvia, the author suggests that this kind of transformation was so common after 1989 that it is very easy to find Racz some peers.

After 1989, Video Urban, a city-slicker who starts off as a gopher for tourists, still wants to be involved with the tourists, but on a different level. He decides that in order to remain 'relevant,' he needs to get into the business of illegal money-exchange and more ambitious video projects. To achieve the latter, he needs a better video camera, which can only be purchased in the 'West.' In this new era of capitalism, in order to matter, in order to obtain said camera, Video Urban is willing to 'pay' the Swedish sex tourist who gets him the camera with sex. With Video Urban, the transformation from an isolated, naïve subject of a totalitarian country to a new entrepreneur has a terrible initial down-payment. Even as he realizes this, and even as he despises having to prostitute himself, he does it to improve his position. This pays off, as in the end, Video Urban becomes

Racz's equal.

Silvia, a prostitute at the Hotel Ambassador realizes that in order to remain relevant after 1989 (and in order to have a career), she needs to expand her clientele at home. With the borders open and the requirements on the variety of sex increasing, Silvia has to join an Austrian Perverse Club, and learn the new, shocking requirements of the trade. Much like Video Urban, Silvia accepts the large sacrifices she has to make in order to start a business; she accepts rape, sodomy, bestiality and sadism as the prices required for entrepreneurship in the new Eastern Europe.

The well-known socialist maxim that if you do not get 'it' for yourself, no one will, that if you are not going to use your 'wide elbows,' someone else with wider elbows is going to come along and take what could have been yours, becomes amplified by the immediate influx of dog-eat-dog capitalism still in its birthing pains.

Here, a certain kind of 'wide-elbowedness' is not only a necessity but a point of pride. This new tall-tale world of new cosmopolitanism and new entrepreneurship trades in human dignity for a hotel, self-respect for a successful money laundering/porn business, and self-worth for a successful S and M club.

The early-Eastern European entrepreneur (i.e. Mafioso-in-training, the porn industry magnate-in-training, the brothel owner-in-training) did not only experience several moments of trauma when s/he had to very quickly learn the rules of the new 'trade,' with a milder version of 'do or die' implications. More importantly and more globally, these early-Eastern European entrepreneurs caused a lot of trauma not only to those unfortunate enough to have to interact with them, but also to the nascent democracies of their own countries.

It is crucial to point out that these various levels of trauma due to the practice of new kinds of Capitalism were not overcome in one fell swoop with the fall of the iron curtain. What is more, these traumas are not worked out or overcome even today. It is in projecting the easy answer of a 'problem solved,' a

‘checklist completed,’ that Cosmopolitanism, or ‘Cosmo-Theory,’ as Brennan calls it, fails: ‘Cosmo-theory depends on exaggerating the degree to which people in the outlying districts of what one critic calls the ‘global ecumene’ have actually broken with the past [...]. A projection into a desired future is often mistaken in these analyses for a documentable present’.<sup>920</sup>

The story of the Bulgarian mafia (*mutri*) member Bobi Tsankov is a poignant example of how early Eastern-European ‘entrepreneurship’ still replicates illegal behaviours from the socialist era, while adding on criminal behaviours based on (mis)readings of capitalism. Tsankov made the mistake of trying to speak and write openly about the practices of the Bulgarian mafia and its interconnectedness with the government while still maintaining his ties to it. As a result, he was murdered in January of 2010. The following is an excerpt from a New York Times article on Tsankov written by Dan Bilefsky, entitled ‘A Crime Writer’s Pages Come to Life in His Death.’ I am intentionally including a slightly longer passage here:

The roots of the *mutri* [mafia] world that Mr. Tsankov appears to have inhabited go back to the cold war, when members were recruited from wrestling, boxing and other sports clubs by the Communist government to serve as armed vigilantes and secret agents. During the power vacuum that followed the collapse of Communism, they transformed themselves into a powerful underground network of traffickers, racketeers and crime bosses. Today, they can be seen driving around Sofia [...] in their oversize sport utility vehicles and Lamborghinis. Investigators say they have infiltrated sectors from insurance to tourism to construction. They linger in nightclubs like Sin City and Lipstick, and listen to Chalga, a Turkish-infused Bulgarian folk music, sung by scantily clad young women. Friends of Mr. Tsankov, a chubby and manic man who was raised by a single mother, said he was drawn from a young age to the *mutri*’s world of fast cars, Cohiba cigars, automatic weapons and big money [...]. Mr. Tsankov would use his mob connections to get quick cash, and in return act as a mafia muse, flatterer and hanger-on.<sup>921</sup>

The above description of Tsankov and his cohorts makes them appear to be the spiritual cousins of the figure of Racz and a few other characters Pistanek created.

The only obvious difference is that while Tsankov is a real person, Racz is an exaggerated, satirized character drawn in tall-tale fashion. And yet, the fact remains the kind of 'entrepreneurship' both figures embody existed 21 years ago, and is still alive and well today. In this case, against the wishful thinking of cosmo-theory, the fact remains that truth is at least as strange as fiction.



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Penguin, 1987) and Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (London: Penguin, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'multicultural' is taken from León Olivé: 'And it designates a model for multicultural societies, democratic and just, which promotes harmonious and constructive relationships between different cultures of Mexico as well as other cultures around the world, based on the right of each to make unilateral decisions in regards to its welfare and development' (Olivé, 2004:25). From this perspective we can alternate the concepts multicultural or inter-cultural (since authors who deal with multiculturalism such as Fomet Betancourt are in agreement); it is important to point out, nonetheless, that this analysis promotes development of a multicultural basis for inter-cultural relationships for border communities; these relationships are understood 'horizontally with no intent of dominance nor overlapping power plays within these communities' (Olivé: 2004:24). Most of translations of the main texts are mine.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Dawson and Mark Johnson, 'Migration, Exile and Landscapes of the Imagination', in, Barbara Bender & Margot Winer, eds., *The Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 319-32 (p. 319).

<sup>5</sup> Nuruddin Farah, *Knots* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 1. All further references to this text will be in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation K and followed by the page number in Arabic script.

<sup>6</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Pollock et al, p. 582.

<sup>8</sup> Nigel Nicolson, 'Introduction', in *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume III: 1923-1928*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson, assisted by Joanne Trautmann (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), pp. xv-xxii (p. xxii).

<sup>9</sup> Vita Sackville-West, *Passenger to Teheran* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2008), p. 100. Further references will be cited as PT followed by Arabic numbers parenthetical within the text.

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 234.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Change of Perspective*, p. 290.

<sup>12</sup> Nicolson, p. xxii.

<sup>13</sup> See Susan Bazargan, 'The Uses of the Land: Vita Sackville-West's Pastoral Writings and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 5 (1999), 25-55; and, Abby Bardi, 'In Company of a Gipsy': The 'Gypsy' as Trope in Woolf and Bronte', *Critical Survey*, 19 (2007), 40-50.

<sup>14</sup> Anjali Prabhu, *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 55-56.

<sup>15</sup> Ulf Hannerz, 'The World in Creolization', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 57. 4 (1987), 546-59.

<sup>16</sup> Françoise Lionnet, 'Créolité in the Indian Ocean: Two Models of Cultural Diversity', *Yale French Studies*, Post/Colonial Conditions: Exiles, Migrations, and Nomadisms, 82. 1 (1993), 101-12 (p. 105).

<sup>17</sup> See Peter Hawkins, *The Other Hybrid Archipelago* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007); Srilata Ravi, *The Rainbow Colors: Literary Ethno-topographies of Mauritius* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007); Maya Boutaghou, 'Défense et illustration d'un universel mauricien', *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 13.3-4 (2010), 451-69.

<sup>18</sup> About the difference between coolie and creole see Khal Torabully, 'Coolitude', *Notre librairie* (1996), 59-71. He defines coolitude as the creolization of the Mauritian-Indian community in Mauritius. He explains the link between marginalized identity in process and the language. I define creolization as the consciousness of identities in process or in French, la 'fabrique identitaire' (the making-of identity).

<sup>19</sup> Anjali Prabhu, *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects*, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> The definition of a Mauritian 'creolization' was compared to other context mainly to the Caribbean (negritude): Khal Torabully, 'La poétique de la relation: entretien de Tanella Boni avec Khal Torabully' <<http://www.afrik.com/article10880.html>> [accessed 22 August 2011].

<sup>21</sup> I am referring to the mysterious death of the Segga singer Kaya in February 1999, that was followed by violent riots in Mauritius.

<sup>22</sup> 'The effective *lingua franca* of the Island is in fact Mauritian Creole, spoken by 95 per cent of the population, and used on a daily basis by most Mauritians. Paradoxically, it has no official recognition in the school system, although since the 1970s there has been a movement to use the language for literary expression, notably by the dramatist Dev Virahsawmy. This is most significant in the areas of oral culture: theatre and popular music, as in the neighbouring island of Réunion; but several novels in Creole have also been published, the first being René Asgarally's *Quand montagne prend difé* in 1977': Hawkins, *The Other Hybrid Archipelago*, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> Ashwiny O. Kistnareddy, 'Représenter l'altérité: le corps grotesque dans l'œuvre Romanesque d'Ananda Devi', in *Écritures mauriciennes au féminin: penser l'altérité*, ed. by Véronique Bragard and Srilata Ravi (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2011), pp. 179-96 (p. 182).

<sup>24</sup> See Ananda Devi, 'Contre le culte de la différence: entretien de Boniface Mongo-Mboussa avec Ananda Devi' <<http://www.aficultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=1734>> [accessed 8 August 2011]

<sup>25</sup> 'Le grotesque peut donc être un processus d'aliénation, un moyen de donner libre cours à l'altérité, de le rejeter, de le mettre à l'écart par le simple fait que le corps différent ne doit pas avoir d'allié.' (The grotesque could be a process of

alienation, a mean to free otherness, to reject the different body, to put it aside for the simple reason that a different body should not have an ally): Kistnareddy, 'Représenter l'altérité: le corps grotesque dans l'œuvre Romanesque d'Ananda Devi', p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> '[...] Port Louis, the dark one, the ugly one, Port Louis disfigured by all these grotesque shapes, Port Louis impassable flood, I thought she was winking at me', Ananda Devi, *Eve de ses décombres* (Paris: Éditions France Loisirs, 2006), p. 67 (all translations are mine).

<sup>27</sup> 'I kiss your face that looks like a mouse. You are the Beauty of the world, its illumination', *Ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78.

<sup>29</sup> 'Women's poetry is when Savita and I, we walk together synchronising our steps to avoid wholes. It's when we imagine for fun we are twins because we look alike. We wear the same clothes, the same perfume. We look like we are dancing. Our earrings tinkle. She wears a small stone as a star on the wing of her nose. Women's poetry, it's the laughter in this lost land that opens a bit of paradise to protect us from drowning', *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> 'This lost corner of existence', *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Ananda Devi, *Le Sari Vert* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009) p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> 'Look at the finger I am using to touch your food. Do you see it? I know, you are telling yourself, that it's a big hand, that I have no grace, no elegance [...] and now, this pig's big index turning your porridge and your dessert cream, imagine it entered in the sex of a woman, and not any woman, you see, one very black, my Marie-Rose, of those you strongly despise, a gorgeous Black, a large rose of flesh that gives you vertigo, my Marie-Rose': Ananda Devi, *Le Sari vert* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009) p. 47.

<sup>33</sup> See Véronique Bragard and Karen Lindo, 'Débris d'humanité: Altérité et autodestruction dans *Eve de ses décombres* d'Ananda Devi', in *Écritures mauriciennes au féminin: penser l'altérité*, ed. by Véronique Bragard and Srilata Ravi (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2011), pp. 239-48.

<sup>34</sup> 'Disgust is giving me nausea. I should not vomit. I hold it and assimilate my saliva, I use my nose to breathe slowly', *Le Sari Vert*, p. 48.

<sup>35</sup> *Le Sari Vert*, pp. 184-85.

<sup>36</sup> Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> For example, the Indian community is Hindu or Muslim or Secular (which is rare), its people can speak Hindi or Bhojpuri or Tamil, but also French, Creole and English; the Creole group is mainly Catholic. They speak French, English, and Creole.

<sup>40</sup> Amin Maalouf, *Les identités meurtrières* (Paris: Grasset, 1998), the literal translation is 'murderous identities'. The English translation is *In the Name of*

*Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Different orders and flux are competing on the Island: the idealized figures of cultural identity oppose other powers of domination/normalization. It is important to see the combination between the need for a strong national identity and power of globalization that has no sense of colour, ethnicity, or religion, but is driven by economic profit which has of course its own violence as two different normative structures encountering disruptive individual cultural, religious and ethnic structures. I draw the difference between fluid identity and flexible identity as informed by Ong Aihawa, *Flexible Citizenship: the cultural logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998). On the interface between self destruction and globalization see Véronique Bragard, (supra), p. 245.

<sup>42</sup> Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, p. 68.

<sup>43</sup> Ailbhe O'Flaherty, 'Every Woman is an Island? The Island as an Embodiment of Female Alterity in Mauritian Women's Writing', in *Écritures mauriciennes au féminine: penser l'altérité*, ed. by Véronique Bragard and Srilata Ravi (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2011), pp. 43-59.

<sup>44</sup> Jean Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume, 'Ficticité et séduction', in *Figures de l'altérité* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1994), p. 134.

<sup>45</sup> Helen Sword, 'Preface', in *Ghostwriting Modernism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 2002) p. x.

<sup>46</sup> Lafcadio Hearn, 'Chap. III. Un Revenant', in *Two Years in the West Indies*, transcribed by Richard Farris (2007). <<http://www.wattpad.com/10472-two-years-in-the-french-west-indies?p=1>> [accessed 8 September 2010] (p. 65).

<sup>47</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Project Muse*. 'Terror: A Speech after 9-11.' *Boundary 2/* (Summer 2004). <<http://muse.jhu.edu>> [accessed 11 September 2010] (p. 111).

<sup>48</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 'A Myth of Origins: Esu-Elegbar and the Signifying Monkey', in *The Signifying Monkey. A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> Morrison, pp. 14-15.

<sup>50</sup> Morrison, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> Morrison, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Morrison, p. 76.

<sup>53</sup> Gates, 'Indeterminacy and the Text of Blackness', in *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 234.

<sup>54</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, in *Charlotte and Emily Brontë. The Complete Novels* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1995) p. 261.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 132.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 123.

<sup>57</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Jane Eyre', in *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,

2000) p. 361 and Gayatri Spivak, 'Literature', in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1999) p. 122.

<sup>58</sup> Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Part One, pp. 26-27.

<sup>59</sup> Rhys, *Wide Sargasso*, Part Two, p. 89.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p. 92.

<sup>61</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 37.

<sup>62</sup> Etymologies of Creole give us the Spanish and sometimes a Portuguese origin. In English, the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that *criollo* is 'believed to be a colonial corruption of *criadillo*, dim. of *criado* 'bred, brought up, reared, domestic past participle of *criar* to breed.' Other dictionaries give the same derivation, from the Latin *creare*, to create. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, p. 1163 cites 1760-1772 translation of Juan and Ulloa's Voyage.

<sup>63</sup> My thanks to Nicolas Rasmussen for insight into this biology through texts he assembled for his course, History of Biology 1790-1950, UCLA, 1993. On poetry's animation of nature (in contrast to medical science's power to de-animate), see Barbara Johnson, 'Apostrophe, Animation and Abortion,' *diacritics* 16.1 (1986), 28-47.

<sup>64</sup> Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982)

<sup>65</sup> Emmanuelle Saada, 'Race and Sociological Reason in the Republic: Inquiries on the Métis in the French Empire (1908-37)', *International Sociology*, 17 (2002), 361-90.

<sup>66</sup> Jean-Loup Amselle, *Affirmative Exclusion: Cultural Pluralism and the Rule of Custom in France*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. xiv and p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> Spencer Wells, director of the National Geographic Society-IBM non-profit Genographic Project, is quoted as saying: 'Racism is not only socially divisive, but scientifically incorrect. We are all descendants of people who lived in Africa recently [...]. We are all Africans under the skin. [...]. When you peer beneath the surface at the underlying level of genetic variation, we are all much more similar than we appear to be. There are no clear, sharp delineations': 'John Harvard's Journal. Race in a Genetic World', *Harvard Magazine* (May-June 2008), (no author given), 62-65 (p. 64).

<sup>68</sup> Duana Fullwily, 'Race in a Genetic World', p. 63 and p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> Fullwily, p. 65.

<sup>70</sup> I am thinking, for example, of Alan Chalmers' *Science and its Fabrication* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) in addition to the works discussed here.

<sup>71</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 30.

<sup>72</sup> Latour, p. 66.

<sup>73</sup> Latour's language and approach differ significantly from Serres'; arguably he is not using the term 'hybrid' to describe humans. But critical readings of these 'hybrids' as stand-in for human subjects have been given by both Donna Haraway and Mary Louise Pratt. Responding to Haraway's critique at the Society for the History of Science Annual Conference in 1994, Latour argued that he could not speak for the disadvantaged or dispossessed subjects she suggested might be described by such 'hybrids', claiming 'I am too male, I am too white, I am from Beaune!'

<sup>74</sup> Michel Serres, *Eclaircissements: Cinq entretiens avec Bruno Latour* (Paris: Editions François Bourin, 1992), p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> Michel Serres, *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 74.

<sup>76</sup> Serres, *Hermes*, p. 44.

<sup>77</sup> Serres, *Eclaircissements*, p. 112.

<sup>78</sup> Serres, *Les Cinq Sens: Philosophie des corps mêlés I* (Paris: Grasset, 1985), p. 380.

<sup>79</sup> Serres, *Les Cinq Sens*, p. 381.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Galison, *Image and Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1997), p. 46.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>82</sup> Galison, p. 48 and p. 49.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 49-50.

<sup>85</sup> Hasok Chang, *Inventing Temperature: Measurement and Scientific Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 250.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* p. 249.

<sup>87</sup> Rush Limbaugh on the 1/24/07 broadcast of his radio show referred to then Senator Barack Obama and actress Halle Berry as 'Halffrican American[s],' stating that 'Barack Obama has picked up another endorsement: Halffrican American actress Halle Berry.' Limbaugh then attributed the following quote to candidate Obama: 'As a Halffrican American, I am honored to have Ms. Berry's support, as well as the support of other Halffrican Americans.' Limbaugh later retracted the false attribution, but continues his race-baiting battle into 2012. <http://mediamatters.org/research/200701240010>[accessed 4October 2010] (para. 1 of 3).

<sup>88</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* [1947] (New York: New Directions, 1980), p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. by Ron Clements & John Musker (Disney, 2009).

<sup>90</sup> Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld* [1928] (N.Y.: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1998), p. 8ff. Dickens cited by Asbury, p.8 ff.

<sup>91</sup> Bill McBride, 'What It Is – The Mothership Connection,' *The UFO Show* (Normal, IL: University Galleries, 2000), pp. 38-71.

<sup>92</sup> Gail Wein, 'Native American Composers,' *New Music Box*, April 8, 2009. <<http://newmusicbox.org/article.nmbx?id=5943>> [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 6 of 30).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 30 of 30).

<sup>94</sup> *Rena Dennison*, 'Native American Ways,' Native Americans of Ohio/Western Reserve Public Media educational site, <<http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/onestate/herronna.htm>> [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 18 of 46).

<sup>95</sup> The Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, <<http://www.fenfc.org/>> [accessed 4 October 2010].

<sup>96</sup> Redbone.' *Contemporary Musicians*, ed. by Angela M. Pilchak. Vol. 47. Gale Cengage, 2004. *eNotes.com*. 2006. <[http://www.enotes.com/contemporary-musicians/redbone biography](http://www.enotes.com/contemporary-musicians/redbone%20biography)> [accessed 4 October, 2010] (para. 1-4 of 9).

<sup>97</sup> Ethel L. Urlin, *Dancing, Ancient and Modern* (New York: Appleton & Company, 1912), p. 13.

<sup>98</sup> Albert and Josephine Butler, *Encyclopedia of Social Dance* (New York: Albert Butler Ballroom Dance Service, 1971), p. 309.

<sup>99</sup> *Great Performances: Free To Dance – Dance Timeline (1619-1889)* <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/freetodance/timeline/index.html>> [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 10 of 10).

<sup>100</sup> William McBride, 'Esther Passes. Chiasm, Lex Talio and Money in the Book of Esther', in *Not in Heaven: Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative*, ed. by Jason Rosenblatt and Joseph Sitterson (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 211-23 (p. 212).

<sup>101</sup> 'Polk Salad Annie,' Tony Joe White, *Black & White*, 1969.

<sup>102</sup> A hint that there may be some lyrical corruption comes from the song's title 'Nickey Hokay,' and that it appears on two collections, *You Were Made For Me* (2005), and *All Time Greatest Hits*, (2008), each with unreliable dating.

<sup>103</sup> Uploaded onto YouTube by jimmyproby on Dec 31, 2008. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=untzfhSDweg> [accessed 1 June 2011].

<sup>104</sup> 'The Neville Brothers,' Patterson & Associates Home Page. [http://www.pattersonandassociates.com/bios/The\\_Neville\\_Brothers/](http://www.pattersonandassociates.com/bios/The_Neville_Brothers/) [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 5 of 17).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 6 of 17).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 6 of 17).

<sup>107</sup> *The Buffalo Soldiers and the Constitution.*

[http://www.nps.gov/archive/foda/fort\\_davis\\_web\\_page/About\\_the\\_Fort/Bufallo\\_Soldiers\\_Constitution\\_Overview.htm](http://www.nps.gov/archive/foda/fort_davis_web_page/About_the_Fort/Bufallo_Soldiers_Constitution_Overview.htm) [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 7 of 11).

<sup>108</sup> 'The Myth of the Buffalo Soldiers.'

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/myth-buffalo-soldiers> [accessed 4 October 2010] [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 3 of 11).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 3 of 11).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 4 of 11).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 4 of 11).

<sup>112</sup> *Caddyshack*, dir. by Harold Ramis (Orion, 1980).

<sup>113</sup> *Apocalypse Now*, dir. by Francis Ford Coppola (Zoetrope, 1979).

<sup>114</sup> 'The Myth of the Buffalo Soldiers.'

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/myth-buffalo-soldiers> [accessed 4 October 2010] [accessed 4 October 2010] (para. 5 of 11).

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/> [accessed 4 October 2010].

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNHnuKNdVg4> [accessed 4 October 2010]

<sup>117</sup> Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* [1960] (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive, 1998), p. 204.

<sup>118</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 109.

<sup>119</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), p. 179. This distinction between the 'who' and 'what' of a man is a recurring theme throughout the entirety of the text, and thus not to be found just on the cited page above.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. pp. 7-8.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 109.

<sup>122</sup> For a lovely and illuminating reflection on Arendt's reading of Athenian life, see: J. Peter Euben, 'Hannah Arendt at Colonus, Chapter 3', in *Platonic Noise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 40-63.

<sup>123</sup> Bertolt Brecht's address book had been confiscated by the Gestapo. Arendt's husband at the time, Günther Stern, fled Berlin. Arendt, however, stayed behind, offering her apartment on Opitzstrasse as a way station for those fleeing the regime, all of whom were largely Communists: Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 102.

<sup>124</sup> Karen Finley, 'It's Only Art', in *Shock Treatment* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1990), p. 69.

<sup>125</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p. 191.

<sup>127</sup> Trial transcript, pp. 113-14, my italics. Maria Damon, 'The Jewish Entertainer as Cultural Lightning Rod: The Case of Lenny Bruce', *Postmodern Culture: An Electronic Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism*, 7.2 (1997), 28 paragraphs. The bulk of this trial concerned Bruce's performance piece 'To is a Preposition, Come is a Verb,' and he was acquitted in this instance.

<sup>128</sup> Bitter.

<sup>129</sup> This is my transcription from *Lenny Bruce/Carnegie Hall: February 4, 1961*. My italics for emphasis.

<sup>130</sup> Hebrew and Yiddish term for Gentile.

<sup>131</sup> Karen Finley, *A Certain Level of Denial* (Ryko, 1994) line notes.

<sup>132</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, pp. 95-96. From a review by Hannah Arendt of Alice



Rühle-Gerstel's *Das Frauen-problem der Gegenwart* ('The Contemporary Woman's Problem') which appeared in *Die Gesellschaft* 10 (1933), 177-79.

<sup>133</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 58.

<sup>134</sup> Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2005), p. 181.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Warner, p. 171.

<sup>137</sup> Karen Finley, *A Different Kind of Intimacy* (New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2000), p. 80.

<sup>138</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 42.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.

<sup>141</sup> Paul Krassner, 'The Ballad of Lenny the Lawyer', in *Let the Buyer Beware* (Shout! Factory, 2004), p. 30.

<sup>142</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 126. For more details in French on creolization according to Édouard Glissant, see his various essays published, 1997-2007, by Gallimard in Paris.

<sup>143</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Lettres créoles: tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature, 1635-1975* (Paris: Hatier, 1991), p. 204.

<sup>144</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

<sup>145</sup> One can find a general presentation of the idea of emergence and of its application to the theory and history of literature in my article on 'Emergence' in the *International Dictionary of Literary Terms* <<http://www.ditl.info>> [accessed 18 September 2011], in my introduction to the ICLA volume on *Emerging literatures* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), and in the section on the 'epistemology of emergence' in *L'Émergence*, ed. by Jacques Fontanille, Juliette Vion-Dury, Bertrand Westphal (Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, [...]: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. xi-xiii and pp. 3-48.

<sup>146</sup> William R. Jordan III, 'Renewal and Imagination: Thoreau's Thought and the Restoration of Walden Pond.' *Thoreau's World and Ours: A Natural Legacy*, ed. by Edmund A. Schofield and Robert C. Baron (Golden, CO: North American Press, 1993), pp. 261-62.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.

<sup>149</sup> Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (New York: Warner, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> Jordan, pp. 261-62.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 261-62.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* p. 261.

<sup>153</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91.

<sup>156</sup> Giselle Liza Anatol, 'A Feminist Reading of Soucouyants in Nalo Hopkinson's

*Brown Girl in the Ring and Skin Folk*, *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 37.3 (2004), 33-50 (p. 37).

<sup>157</sup> Valorie D. Thomas, "'1 + 1 = 3' and Other Dilemmas: Reading Vertigo in *Invisible Man*, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* and *Song of Solomon*", *African American Review*, 37.1 (2003) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1512361>> [accessed 15 March 2010].

<sup>158</sup> Robert D. Pelton, *Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), p. 126 and p. 135.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. pp.135-36.

<sup>160</sup> Pelton, p.126 and pp. 135-36.

<sup>161</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*, p. 188.

<sup>162</sup> Jordan, p. 262.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. pp. 261-262.

<sup>164</sup> Pelton, pp.126, 135-136.

<sup>165</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl*, p. 191. Text italicised in the original.

<sup>166</sup> Jordan, pp. 261-62.

<sup>167</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl*, p. 191.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. p. 192.

<sup>169</sup> Pelton, p. 126.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p. 126.

<sup>171</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl*, p. 228.

<sup>172</sup> Jordan, p. 261.

<sup>173</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl*, p. 230.

<sup>174</sup> Jordan, p. 263.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. p. 265.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p. 265.

<sup>177</sup> Hopkinson, *Brown Girl*, p. 242.

<sup>178</sup> Judith Bettelheim, 'Carnivals and African American Cultures', in *African Folklore: An Encyclopedia.*, ed. by Philip M. Peek and Kwesi Yankah (New York: Routledge), pp. 47-50 (pp. 48-49).

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. p. 48.

<sup>180</sup> Bettelheim, p. 48; Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber*, p.18.

<sup>181</sup> Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber*, p. 70.

<sup>182</sup> Jordan, p. 265.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. p. 265.

<sup>184</sup> Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber*, p. 323.

<sup>185</sup> Jordan, p. 265.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. p. 266.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. p. 266.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. p. 266.

<sup>189</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994; repr. 2006), p. 36.

- <sup>190</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Locations of Culture: the Postcolonial and the Postmodern', in *Postmodern Debates*, ed. by Simon Malpas (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 136-44 (pp. 136-37).
- <sup>191</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 1.
- <sup>192</sup> Maastricht McLuhan Institute. <<http://www.mmi.unimaas.nl>> [accessed 28 March 2011].
- <sup>193</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 212.
- <sup>194</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, ed., *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 2.
- <sup>195</sup> David Rutledge, 'Uncertainty', ABC Radio, Australia, from the *Encounter* series, produced by Florence Spurling, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2006.
- <sup>196</sup> William Wallace, trans., *The Logic of Hegel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 158.
- <sup>197</sup> Ibid. p.160.
- <sup>198</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 44-46.
- <sup>199</sup> Ibid. p. 45.
- <sup>200</sup> Ibid. p. 51.
- <sup>201</sup> Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 43.
- <sup>202</sup> Ibid. p. 172.
- <sup>203</sup> Ibid. p. 173.
- <sup>204</sup> Ibid. p. 172.
- <sup>205</sup> Ibid. p. 175.
- <sup>206</sup> Ibid. p. 176.
- <sup>207</sup> Geert Lovink, *Uncanny Networks: Dialogues with the Virtual Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), p. 75.
- <sup>208</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 34.
- <sup>209</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: The Athlone Press, 1994).
- <sup>210</sup> Leela Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
- <sup>211</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xviii.
- <sup>212</sup> Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 40.
- <sup>213</sup> Ibid. p. 42.
- <sup>214</sup> Ibid. p. 26.
- <sup>215</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. xxiv.
- <sup>216</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 1-2.
- <sup>217</sup> Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 54.
- <sup>218</sup> Thomas Martin Devine, *Clanship to Crofters War: The social transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 96.

<sup>219</sup> Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 85.

<sup>220</sup> Devine, *Clanship to Crofters War*, p. 93.

<sup>221</sup> John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>222</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 132.

<sup>223</sup> 'An Interview with Homi Bhabha',

<<http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/interview.html>>[accessed 28 March 2011].

<sup>224</sup> Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 347-48.

<sup>225</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Anette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957; 1972), p. 143.

<sup>226</sup> Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, pp. 348-49.

<sup>227</sup> Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 104.

<sup>228</sup> Alice Chandler, 'Sir Walter Scott and the Medieval Revival', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 19 (1965), 315-32 (Especially pp. 322-32).

<sup>229</sup> Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>230</sup> Devine, *Clanship to Crofters War*, p. 98.

<sup>231</sup> Marie-Laure Ryan, ed., *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 88.

<sup>232</sup> Martha Rosler, *In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer*, *Assemblage*, 25 (1994), 44-79 (p. 62).

<sup>233</sup> Mark Poster, 'Theorizing Virtual Reality: Baudrillard and Derrida', in *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, ed. by Marie-Laure Ryan, pp. 42-60 (p. 44).

<sup>234</sup> Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>236</sup> Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, 2008. <<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/events/springprogramme2009.shtml>>[accessed 28 March 2011].

<sup>237</sup> Susie O'Brien, *On Death and Donuts: Irony and Ecology after September 11* *Cultural Critique*, 58 (2004), 148-67 (p. 152).

<sup>238</sup> George Handley, 'Toward an Environmental Phenomenology of Diaspora', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 55. 3 (2009), 649-57 (p. 649)

<sup>239</sup> In Kathy Knapp's analysis of the post-9/11 suburban novel, she suggests that in addition to moving to destinations beyond their original landing points, immigrants have moved into the suburbs of American cities.

<sup>240</sup> Colum McCann, *Let the Great World Spin* (New York: Random House, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

- <sup>242</sup> Elizabeth S. Anker, 'Allegories of Falling and the 9/11 Novel,' *American Literary History*, 23. 3 (2011), 463-82
- <sup>243</sup> McCann, *Let the Great World Spin*, p. 12.
- <sup>244</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.
- <sup>245</sup> *Ibid.* p. 209.
- <sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.
- <sup>247</sup> Caitlin Manning and Julie Shackford-Bradley, 'Global Subjects in Motion: Strategies for Representing Globalization in Film', *Journal of Film and Video*, 62. 3 (2010), 36-52.
- <sup>248</sup> Bonnie Mann, 'How America Justifies Its War: Modern/Postmodern Aesthetics of Masculinity and Sovereignty,' *Hypatia*, 21. 4 (2006), 147-63.
- <sup>249</sup> *Theorizing Diaspora*, ed. by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 2-3.
- <sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.
- <sup>251</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16-17.
- <sup>252</sup> Rachel Carroll, 'Foreign Bodies: History and Trauma in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', *Textual Practice*, 14.1 (2000), 97-114 (p. 102).
- <sup>253</sup> Youli Theodosiadou, 'Ethnicity as Otherness in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', *Southern Ethnicities* (2008), 85-95 (p. 87, my emphasis).
- <sup>254</sup> Phillip Marfleet, *Refugees in a Global era* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 194.
- <sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.
- <sup>256</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1983), p. 198. All other references will be indicated by FOC and page number in Arabic script in parentheses in the text.
- <sup>257</sup> Jon Lance Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 94.
- <sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* p. 94.
- <sup>259</sup> Carroll, 'Foreign Bodies: History and Trauma in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', p. 110.
- <sup>260</sup> William Burke, 'Displaced Communities and Literary Form in Flannery O'Connor's 'The Displaced Person'', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 32.2. (1986), 219-27 (p. 224).
- <sup>261</sup> James M. Mellard, 'Flannery O'Connor's Others: Freud, Lacan, and the Unconscious', *American Literature*, 61.4 (1989), 625-43 (p. 633).
- <sup>262</sup> Carroll, 'Foreign Bodies: History and Trauma in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', p. 106.
- <sup>263</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.
- <sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.
- <sup>265</sup> James M. Mellard, 'Flannery O'Connor's Others: Freud, Lacan, and the Unconscious', p. 639.
- <sup>266</sup> *Ibid.* p. 642.
- <sup>267</sup> Michael Kreyling, 'A Good Monk Is Hard to Find', in *Flannery O'Connor's*

*Radical Reality*, ed. by Jan N. Gretlund and Karl-Heinz Westarp (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2006), pp. 1-17 (pp. 10-11).

<sup>268</sup> Robert Donahoo, 'O'Connor's Catholics: A Historical-Cultural Context', *Literature and Belief*, 16.2 (1996), 100-13 (pp. 105-06).

<sup>269</sup> Theodosiadou, 'Ethnicity as Otherness in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', p. 91.

<sup>270</sup> Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture*, p. 61 and p. 73.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>273</sup> Theodosiadou, 'Ethnicity as Otherness in Flannery O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', p. 90.

<sup>274</sup> Burke, 'Displaced Communities and Literary Form in Flannery O'Connor's 'The Displaced Person'', pp. 220-21.

<sup>275</sup> Donahoo, 'O'Connor's Catholics: A Historical-Cultural Context', p. 108.

<sup>276</sup> Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 340 and p. 344.

<sup>277</sup> Laurel Nesbitt, 'Reading Place in and Around Flannery O'Connor's Texts.' *Post Identity* 1.1 (1997). *Post Identity*. University of Michigan. Web. 8 Dec. 2009. <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=postid;view=text;rgn=main;idno=pid9999.0001.107>> [accessed 13 November 2010], p. 3, my emphasis.

<sup>278</sup> Jon Lance Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 87.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>280</sup> H. R. Stoneback, 'Sunk in the Cornfield with His Family: Sense of Place in O'Connor's *The Displaced Person*', *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures*, 36.4 (1983), 545-55 (p. 546).

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* p. 555.

<sup>282</sup> Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, p. 89.

<sup>283</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, 'Global City Formation: New York, Chicago, LA', in *The Global Cities Reader*, ed. by Neil Brenner and Roger Keil (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 42-48 and see p. 21.

<sup>284</sup> Marfleet, *Refugees in a Global era*, p. 218 and p. 233.

<sup>285</sup> Stoneback, 'Sunk in the Cornfield with His Family', p. 549.

<sup>286</sup> Patrick Samway, 'Toward Discerning How Flannery O'Connor's Fiction Can Be Considered Catholic', in *Flannery O'Connor's Radical Reality*, pp. 162-75 (p. 166).

<sup>287</sup> The name has been anonymized.

<sup>288</sup> – "And what did your parents do?"

– My father was a craftsman. He worked in carpentry and woodwork; for in those days even plows had to be made individually. It was without doubt parquet floors and furniture he made; only that he didn't know what he was already achieving. From then on, if I may proceed...

– Yes, of course.

– We were four sons who learned from him. It was the best training we received. In the end we got the best result, because we worked without electricity and of course without machines; without electricity there are no machines. That's when one really gets to [...] know one's trade, with the most refined tricks so that things would turn out practically the same as nowadays; always making the calculation of the lack of labour force or actually not the lack of labour force itself, but rather the mistakes that appear from work done by hand. Still these mistakes are not as frequent as the ones caused by machines. But one really learns how to cut wood and how to dry it. Let's say one gets to the basics of his trade. Nowadays it is simply impossible to get to the bottom of this system because everything is delivered prepared [...]. Now that everything is mechanized, people generally don't really know how to work by hand."

<sup>289</sup> – We went to a woodwork factory in [...] ten or fifteen kilometers from Zurich. There we were in charge of the machines. It was the happiest time in my life as a migrant. The boss never complained, no matter if the machines were working or not. He used to come with the plans and told us the approximate dates for which the work was meant to be done. He never said: "I force you to this or that because you have turned off the machines." There I could work very well, because the two of us were alone and we could do it our way. In that way we had the impression we were still in Galicia. [...]. We did that for three years."

<sup>290</sup> David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto, Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 27-40.

<sup>291</sup> Rudolf Braun, *Sozio-kulturelle Probleme der Eingliederung italienischer Arbeitskräfte in der Schweiz* (Zürich: Rentsch, 1970), pp. 437-47.

<sup>292</sup> Braun, pp. 448-51.

<sup>293</sup> Braun, p. 451.

<sup>294</sup> Selma Leydesdorff, 'The Screen of Nostalgia. Oral History and the Ordeal of Working-Class Jews in Amsterdam', *International Journal of History*, 7 (1986), 111-33 (p. 115).

<sup>295</sup> Barbara Shircliffe, "We Got the Best of that World': A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation", *The Oral History Review*, 28 (2001), 59-84 (p. 60).

<sup>296</sup> Shircliffe, p. 62.

<sup>297</sup> Kathleen Stewart, 'Nostalgia – A Polemic', *Cultural Anthropology*, 3 (1988), 227-41 (p. 227).

<sup>298</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trustulli and other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York 1991), p. 50.

<sup>299</sup> Warren Anderson, 'Oral History and Migrant Wage Labor: Sources of Narrative Distortion', *The Oral History Review*, 28 (2001), 1-20 (p. 4).

<sup>300</sup> Joanna Bourke: 'Fear and Anxiety. Writing about Emotion in Modern History', *History Workshop Journal*, 55 (2003), 111-33 (p. 103).

<sup>301</sup> Eva Gugenberger, 'A morriña ou a ilusión de volver á terra: algunhas observacións acerca da relación dos emigrantes galegos coa lingua e a terra nai', in *Actas do 6 Congreso Internacional de Estudos galegos, La Habana, abril de 2010* (Trier: University of Trier / Edicións do Castro, 2000), pp. 809-23.

<sup>302</sup> Translation: Tamara Bergstrom.

<sup>303</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Differance' in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 17.

<sup>304</sup> Vijay Mishra, 'Introduction' in *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 7. According to Mishra, 'impossible mourning' remains a necessary condition of the South Asian diasporic subject/s.

<sup>305</sup> Sneja Gunew, 'Resident Aliens: Diasporic Women's Writing', *Contemporary Women's Writing*, 3.1 (2009), 29-30.

<sup>306</sup> Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), p. 287.

<sup>307</sup> Sunil Bhatia, 'Culture, Hybridity and the Dialogical Self: Cases From the South Asian Diaspora', *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 11.3 (2004), 110-12.

<sup>308</sup> Guardian Bookclub Online.

'Sage and storyteller: John Mullan on readers' responses to *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing' <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/feb/03/dorislessing>> [accessed 20. March 2010].

<sup>309</sup> Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire*, p. 371.

<sup>310</sup> Divakaruni, *Queen of Dreams* (Great Britain: Abacus, 2005), p. 139.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. p. 119.

<sup>312</sup> Divakaruni, *Mistress of Spices*, p. 338.

<sup>313</sup> Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, 'Born in the USA'. *Spice of Life*. <[www.salon.com/aug97/mothers/chitra970821.html](http://www.salon.com/aug97/mothers/chitra970821.html)> [accessed 23 May 2010].

<sup>314</sup> Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'The Structure of Apprenticeship', *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 110. Suleiman quotes Lukács on the *Bildungsroman* 'The story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them and by proving itself to find its own essence.'

<sup>315</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Imaginary Homelands in Jamaica Kincaid's Narratives of Development', *Callaloo*, 25.3 (2002), 857-67. Lima refers to Franco Moretti's understanding of *Bildung* in 'The Comfort of Civilization', *Representations*, 12 (1995), 115-39.

<sup>316</sup> Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire*, p. 181.

<sup>317</sup> Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 180.

<sup>318</sup> Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire*, p. 53.

<sup>319</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Bodies on the Move: A Poetics of Home and Diaspora', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 23 (2004), 189-212 (p. 191).

<sup>320</sup> Ibid. p. 191.



- <sup>321</sup> Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire*, p. 370.
- <sup>322</sup> Ibid. p. 370.
- <sup>323</sup> Ibid. p. 341.
- <sup>324</sup> Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 86.
- <sup>325</sup> Sudesh Mishra, 'Prologue to a Generic Event', *Diaspora Criticisms* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. xi-xii.
- <sup>326</sup> Divakaruni, *Queen of Dreams* (Great Britain: Abacus, 2005), p. 267.
- <sup>327</sup> Ibid. p. 275. My italics for emphasis.
- <sup>328</sup> Gayatri Gopinath, 'Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora: *Funny Boy* and *Cereus Blooms at Night*' in *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 210.
- <sup>329</sup> Divakaruni, *Queen of Dreams*, p. 245.
- <sup>330</sup> Divakaruni, *One Amazing Thing* (New York: Hyperion, 2009), p. 5.
- <sup>331</sup> Divakaruni, *Sister of my Heart* (New York, Anchor Books, 2000), p. 161.
- <sup>332</sup> Divakaruni, *Vine of Desire*, p. 320.
- <sup>333</sup> Ibid. p. 156.
- <sup>334</sup> Divakaruni, *Mistress of my Heart*, p. 137
- <sup>335</sup> Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identity, Tradition and Third World* (New York, Routledge, 1998)
- <sup>336</sup> Lisa Lau, 'Making the Difference: The Differing Presentations and Representations of South Asia in the Contemporary Fiction of Home and Diasporic South Asian Women Writers', *Modern Asian Studies*, 39.1 (2005), 237-56 (p. 248).
- <sup>337</sup> Sneja Gunew, 'Resident Aliens: Diasporic Women's Writing', p. 29.
- <sup>338</sup> Michelle Balaev, 'Trends in Literary Trauma Theory', *Mosaic*, 41.2 (2008), 149-66.
- <sup>339</sup> Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), p. 146.
- <sup>340</sup> Michael Bobelian, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), p. 21.
- <sup>341</sup> Donald Bloxham, 'Determinants of the Armenian Genocide', in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward*, ed. by Richard G. Hovannisian (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2003), p. 34.
- <sup>342</sup> Ibid. p. 34.
- <sup>343</sup> Ibid. p. 34.
- <sup>344</sup> Matthias Bjornlund, "'A Fate Worse Than Dying': Sexual Violence During the Armenian Genocide', *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. by Dagmar Herzog (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 16-59 (p. 19).
- <sup>345</sup> Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, 'Armenian Refugee Women: The Picture Brides, 1920-1930', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 12.3 (1993), 3-29 (p. 4).
- <sup>346</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

- <sup>347</sup> George A. Bournatian, *A Concise History of the Armenian People: from Ancient Times to the Present* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2006), p. 334.
- <sup>348</sup> Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, 'Armenian Refugee Women: The Picture Brides, 1920-1930', p. 23.
- <sup>349</sup> Bobelian, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice*, p. 232.
- <sup>350</sup> Henry C. Theriault, 'Denial and Free Speech: The Case of the Armenian Genocide', in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward*, p. 247.
- <sup>351</sup> Meredith Avakian, *Propaganda Begins with PR: Poetry for the Soul* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2008), lines 11-14.
- <sup>352</sup> Michael F. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* (New York: SUNY Press, 2009), p. 10.
- <sup>353</sup> *Armenian News Network/Groong*. <<http://groong.usc.edu/tlg/index.html>> [accessed October 2010].
- <sup>354</sup> *The Literary Groong*. Bedros Afeyan, <<http://groong.usc.edu/tlg/index.html>> [accessed 1 February 2010].
- <sup>355</sup> Meredith Z. Avakian, 'I will not Forget', ed. by Bedros Afeyan, *The Literary Groong*. USC, 4 October 2008. <<http://groong.usc.edu/>> [accessed 1 February 2010].
- <sup>356</sup> Meredith Z. Avakian, 'Picking up the Pieces', ed. by Bedros Afeyan, *The Literary Groong*. USC, 28 July 2007. <<http://groong.usc.edu/>> [accessed 1 February 2010].
- <sup>357</sup> Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 74.
- <sup>358</sup> Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate*, p. 18.
- <sup>359</sup> *Ibid.* p. 203.
- <sup>360</sup> *Ibid.* p. 204.
- <sup>361</sup> Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, p. 74.
- <sup>362</sup> Nancy Agabian, *Me as her again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2008), p. 31.
- <sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* p. 158.
- <sup>364</sup> *Ibid.* p. 167.
- <sup>365</sup> *Ibid.* p. 172.
- <sup>366</sup> Patrick H. Hutton. *History as an Art of Memory* (Burlington, Vt: University of Vermont, 1993), p. 115.
- <sup>367</sup> *Ararat*, directed by Atom Egoyan with Christopher Plummer and Charles Aznavour (Miramax, 2002).
- <sup>368</sup> Vahe Oshagan, 'Literature of the Armenian Diaspora', *World Literature Today*, 60.2 (1986), p. 228.
- <sup>369</sup> *Ibid.* p. 228.
- <sup>370</sup> Rubina Perroomian, 'New Directions in Literary Responses to the Armenian Genocide', *Looking Backward, Moving Forward*, pp. 157-80 (p. 177).

<sup>371</sup> Ibid. pp. 177-78.

<sup>372</sup> Orr, Gregory, *Poetry as Survival* (Athens: University of Georgia, 2002), p. 132.

<sup>373</sup> The term 'social imaginaries' is taken from to Charles Taylor (2004). From my perspective it's important to venture into novel possibilities, which could allow us to construct new relationships, beneficial to migrants and border communities, in order to dispel xenophobic and exploitative attitudes as well, and exclusions that characterize present social relationships on the US-Mexican border.

<sup>374</sup> It is important to define the model for a trans national or trans-border concept in order to come to grips with the theoretical concepts, which dominate research in border regions since 1990. Norma Ojeda writes 'the trans national is understood as the multiple links and interactions which tie people and institutions across borders within specific geographic areas and especially people living near borders between State Nations' (Ojeda: 2009:17). The trans national process accelerates certain patterns already existent and it even promotes new forms of human interaction as in the Mexican-American community. On the other hand the trans-border process is the result of a trans migration movement which 'corresponds to a social phenomenon particular to the border regions and its realities in the daily life for the co-joined communities on both sides of the border; it is also a concept that responds to the asymmetrical economic and social conditions as well to their ability to impact international politics; it also takes into account the cultural differences that exist between México and the US'. (Ojeda: 2009:12).

<sup>375</sup> Seyla Behabib, *Las reivindicaciones de la cultura. Igualdad y diversidad en la era global* (Argentina: Katz, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>376</sup> On the first theme (process of identity formation), the fourth (language) and the fifth (conformation of sub cultures) I have already presented papers: 'Cultura e identidad migratoria en la frontera México-Estados Unidos. Imediaciones entre la comunidad mexicoamericana y la comunidad transfronteriza (Culture and Migrant Identity and US Mexican Border. Immediacies between the Mexican-Americans and the trans-border community)', *Antiteses*, Jan. 2010. 'Deconstrucción de la frontera: Interdicción de la lengua materna. (Deconstructing the border: Maternal language interdiction)', in print. And 'La comunidad transfronteriza: la subcultura del reciclaje y la reconfiguración de la mujer en el norte de México. (The Trans-border Community: the sub culture of recycling and the reconfiguration of the social role of women in northern Mexico)', in print.

<sup>377</sup> On this matter I think it necessary to establish the difference between the term Chicano and Mexican-American when we refer to the sons and daughters of Mexican migrants who live in the United States. For practical reasons it must be clear that Chicano is a pejorative term coined around 1930-40 which refers specifically to characteristics attributed to Mexicans (bean pickers, drunks, lazy) who cross the border to go and work as cheap labor in the US; it also applies to

first and second generation of Mexicans, born in the US, and part of a political and social movement during the seventies, who opposed the dominant cultural homo-hegemony. The term Mexican-American is a politically correct term with reference to ethnicity as with other minority communities in the US ( AfroAmericans; Chinese Americans; Italo Americans; etc etc). Children of migrants of a third generation are now appropriating the term of Mexican-American for themselves. Sandra Cisneros titles one of her stories, 'Mericans', in her book *Woman Hollering Creek and other stories*. I will refer to 'Chicano' literature (not Mexican-American literature) and I will use the term Mexican-American when dealing with cultural identity or ethnic subjects.

<sup>378</sup> The trans-border subjects are those subjects who inhabit the northern Mexican states, specifically the ones on the border with the US and who are accustomed to crossing from one country to the other. As they do also with the language. These subjects, unlike the Mexican-Americans, have a specific origin and citizenship; they come from different states in Mexico and are adapted to the realities of a global world. They act out of personal interest and from the necessities of survival with little regard to acceptance or rejection from the other. The Trans-border subjects assimilate one or more cultures and they conform a sub culture of their own to emphasis on change in their communal identity, productive process, social relations and artistic expressions.

<sup>379</sup> One example of the empowerment of the Mexican-American community today is that, 130 years later (the last time a Mexican was voted into public office was in 1870), on the first of July of 2005 a 'latino' has become mayor of Los Angeles. His name is Anotnio Villaraigosa and he defeated James Han. He is a product of the political force which today constitutes the Mexican-American community within the American territory.

<sup>380</sup> Wladimir Kryszinski, 'Subjectum comparationis': Las incidencias del sujeto en el discurso, in *Teoría literaria, Siglo XXI*, ed. by Marc Angenot, Jean Bessi re and Douwe Fokkema (M xico: Pa s Edici n, 2002), pp. 270-86 (p. 271).

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. p. 274.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid. p. 280.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid. p. 283.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid. p. 286.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid. p. 286.

<sup>386</sup> Mar a Socorro, Tabuenca C rdoba, 'Aproximaciones cr ticas sobre las literaturas de las fronteras', En *Frontera Norte*, vol. 9, n m 18, julio-diciembre de 1997, pp. 85-110 (p. 87).

<sup>387</sup> Mar a Socorro Tabuenca C rdoba, 'Las literaturas de las fronteras', in Jos  Manuel Valenzuela Arce, ed., *Por las fronteras del norte. Una aproximaci n cultural a la frontera M xico-Estados Unidos* (M xico: FCE, 2003), pp. 393-427 (p. 414).

<sup>388</sup> I am applying the theory of discourse performance to which Judith Butler (1997) refers when she states that verbally, it become violent and insulting to third

parties, be they women, homosexuals or transsexuals; but it is precisely this verbalization which brings to the front these subjects and represents them within the community that excludes them: 'the word can be give back to the one who speaks but in a different manner, against their original purpose it reverts its effects' (Butler; 1997:35). In this sense I am applying the same method as Butler to the Chicano community since I have observed the same performance-taking place in the evolution of the term Chicano and its socio historic repercussions in the conformation of the border. Other authors, such as Derrida and Levinas, also refer to the verbal as a form of violence. I have further develop these ideas in my PhD thesis 'Alegoría de la frontera México-Estados Unidos: Análisis comparativo de dos escrituras colindantes'.

<sup>389</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 37-38. All further references to this volume will be given in parentheses in the text followed by the page number in Arabic script.

<sup>390</sup> The trans-border subjects are those subjects who inhabit the northern Mexican states, specifically the ones on the border with the US and who are accustomed to crossing from one country to the other. As they do also with the language. They act out of personal interest and from the necessities of survival with little regard to acceptance or rejection from the other. The Trans-border subjects assimilate one or more cultures and they conform a sub culture of their own to emphasis on change in their communal identity, productive process, social relations and artistic expressions.

<sup>391</sup> I have borrowed the term interdiction from Derrida: 'Today on this earth of humans, certain people must yield to the homo-hegemony of dominant languages. They must learn the language of the masters, of capital and machines; they must lose their idiom in order to survive or live better': Derrida (supra), p. 30.

<sup>392</sup> The name of this treaty is 'Tratado de Paz, Límites y Arreglo definitivo entre la República Mexicana y EEUU de América' signed in Guadalupe, Hidalgo on the 2nd of February in 1848. The Treaty also obliged the Mexican government to sell one and a half million square kilometers of national territory to the US government, territory which included Arizona, California, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and parts of Colorado. The sale of this fertile land, rich in oil and mineral reserves, apt for cattle rising and agricultural exploitation, was the price Mexico paid to end the war. The US government, on its part, agreed to respect lands owned by Mexicans and to give them citizenship. The payment was agreed to the sum of 15 million pesos.

<sup>393</sup> Other social, economic and political factors contributed: the Mexican Independence generated great instability in Mexico which influenced Texas to seek its own independence in 1836; the Mesilla Treaty signed in 1853 was also a factor: Mexico sold this territory in northern Chihuahua to the US; not until 1889 with the International Commission on Borders the separation of the two countries became officially established.

<sup>394</sup> *Woman Hollering Creek and other stories* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 20.

<sup>395</sup> Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, *Estrella de la calle sexta* (México: Tusquets, 2000), p. 41.

<sup>396</sup> Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York, Routledge, 2004), p. 41. Butler also argues against a narrow understanding of gender as masculine and feminine, warning that the very 'regulatory apparatus that governs gender is one that is itself gender-specific,' namely that gender 'institutes its own regulatory and disciplinary regime' (pp. 41-42).

<sup>397</sup> 'Remote Sensing: An Interview', *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 24.1/2 (2002), 1-11 (p. 2).

<sup>398</sup> 'Remote Sensing: An Interview,' p. 5.

<sup>399</sup> Trafficking statistics of the type Biemann offers here are hard to come by and are usually considered unreliable by scholars and immigration specialists. According to the UNESCO Bangkok office, trafficking statistics circulated in media and scholarship are 'false' and 'spurious': 'When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers take on a life of their own, gaining acceptance through repetition, often with little inquiry into their derivations. Journalists, bowing to the pressures of editors, demand numbers, any number. Organizations feel compelled to supply them, lending false precisions and spurious authority to many reports.' ('Trafficking Statistics Project'). In addition, in a 2009 publication, the International Organization of Migration addresses the fraught issue of trafficking statistics, this time with reference to the Republic of Moldova: 'It is impossible to give a total number. The full scale of trafficking from/in Moldova remains unknown as many victims are not identified in the destination countries or in Moldova due to changes in trends in trafficking, fear of stigmatization, low level of self identification, limited knowledge of human rights/trafficking issues, as well as the inability or unwillingness of some victims to report their trafficking experiences to the authorities' ('Frequently Asked Questions,' p. 3).

<sup>400</sup> The current feminist discourse on women's trafficking is an acerbic contest of hostilities over the right definition of women's trafficking, appropriate legislation, and the righteousness of the sex industry. Not unlike the sex wars of the 1980s, the current debate about the social status of the prostitute or sex worker divides feminist groups and has led to uncanny alliances among anti-prostitution feminists (the so-called neoabolitionists), the religious right, and state organizations. Neoabolitionists, such as Donna Hughes, Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, Kathleen Barry, and Janyce Raymond, among others, equate trafficking and prostitution, arguing that the abolition of prostitution will put an end to the traffic in women. They also rally behind 'end demand' programs that punish sex workers' clients, while perceiving prostitutes as victims of patriarchy.

<sup>401</sup> Donna Hughes, 'The "Natasha" Trade: Transnational Sex Trafficking', *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 53.2 (2001), 625-51 (p. 628).

<sup>402</sup> Donna Hughes, 'Men Create the Demand, Women the Supply', Lecture on Sexual Exploitation, Queen Sofia Center, Valencia, Spain (November 2000) <<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand.htm>> [accessed 23 August 2011].

<sup>403</sup> Jyoti Sanghera, 'Unpacking the Trafficking Discourse', in *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, ed. by Kamala Kempadoo, Jyoti Sanghera, and Bandana Pattanaik (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), pp. 3-24 (p. 7).

<sup>404</sup> Laura Agustín, 'The Disappearing of a Migration Category: Migrants Who Sell Sex', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32.1 (2006), pp. 29-47 (p. 43). Note that, in the above quotation, Agustín does not celebrate entrepreneurialism and neoliberal capitalism. Rather, her work exposes anti-prostitution feminists in their refusal to examine critically structural economic changes brought about by the liberalization of markets and their impact on migrant sex workers' lives.

<sup>405</sup> In an interview, Biemann acknowledges that her goal in the film is to open up 'the grey zone' between being forced into prostitution and choosing sex work. According to Biemann, 'it is redundant to make such artificial distinctions since the cultural pressures, social obligations and economic necessities that drive women into sex work are no less imperative'. See 'Remote Sensing: An Interview', p. 6.

<sup>406</sup> Agustín, 'The Disappearing of a Migration Category: Migrants Who Sell Sex', p. 30. This sole focus on the traffic of women for sex work is very much in line with the trafficking rhetoric in the United States.

<sup>407</sup> To its credit, *Remote Sensing* considers women's migration for sex work in the larger context of neoliberal capitalist markets. Yet the film stays at a general level, turning migrant women's specific experiences into a grand narrative of oppression and exploitation. In this way, the film unwittingly re-objectifies migrant women because it redefines them solely as exploited and exploitable. The forces weighing down on migrants appear as colossal and outside any control or transformation. Once more, the specific mechanisms of the capitalist system remain hidden as the camera focuses obsessively on women's bodies and existence.

<sup>408</sup> Emma Goldman, 'The Traffic in Women', in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association), pp. 183-200 (p. 191). Elsewhere in the article, Goldman contends that, because women are 'treated' only 'as a sex,' it 'is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men (p. 185). Despite its early-century flavour, Goldman's point makes us reconsider heterosexual relationships and qualify the unconditional association of intimate contracts (such as marriage) with love and non-market relationships. In effect, marriage and other relationships are contractual and suffused with economic factors and concerns.

<sup>409</sup> For example, Carole Pateman, among many other feminists, argues that this separation of private life from the public realm 'has denied women right of

protection and bodily integrity', even as 'the government and the law have reached across into the privacy of the home to uphold men's power and privilege'. See Pateman, 'Sex and Power', *Ethics*, 100.2 (1990), 398-407 (p. 403).

<sup>410</sup> Andrea Smith, 'Unmasking the State: Racial/Gender Terror and Hate Crimes', *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 26 (2007), 47-57 (p. 49).

<sup>411</sup> Elisabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>412</sup> See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Butler, *Undoing Gender* (2004). I hope it is clear by now that my argument in this essay is not an attempt to prove the legitimacy of sex work. Thus I steer clear here of the typical debate between anti-prostitution feminists and pro-sex work activists in the United States. Instead, my goal is to re-channel the debate into analyses that take migrant women's experiences as starting points and that view sex work as integral to contemporary forms of labour migration, neoliberal capitalist exploitation, as well as of entrenched gendered and racialized structures of global inequality.

<sup>413</sup> Butler, *Undoing Gender*, p. 41.

<sup>414</sup> For Foucault's theories on power, see especially Foucault, 'Truth and Power' in *Michel Foucault: Power*, ed. by James D Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 111-33.

<sup>415</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 23.

<sup>416</sup> Note that the insistence on the violence of sex work legitimizes interventions into sex workers' lives by a spate of scholars, activists, and service providers. In this sense, the mobilization of the sexual violence rhetoric obfuscates unequal power relations between Biemann and the women she films. Appeals to gender justice and an all encompassing focus on gender violence mask the epistemic violence that might be inherent in the work of western artists and activists who take it upon themselves to represent women in the global south and articulate their desires. As mentioned earlier, in Biemann's film, sex workers are rarely interviewed, their lives being neatly inserted in the film and subsumed under the category of sexual violence and exploitation.

<sup>417</sup> Judith Walkowitz, 'Male Vice and Female Virtue: Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), pp. 419-38.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.* p. 429.

<sup>419</sup> Precarias a la Deriva, 'A Very Careful Strike', *The Commoner*, 11 (Spring/Summer 2006).

<sup>420</sup> Precarias a la Deriva, 'Adrift through the circuits of feminized precarious work', *Feminist Review*, 77 (2004), 157-61 (p. 159).

<sup>421</sup> Precarias a la Deriva, 'A Very Careful Strike', *The Commoner*, 11 (Spring/Summer 2006).



- <sup>422</sup> Octavia E. Butler, *Lilith's Brood* (New York: Warner Books, 2000), p. 41.
- <sup>423</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 40-41.
- <sup>424</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.
- <sup>425</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.
- <sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* p. 365.
- <sup>427</sup> Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, *The Mote in God's Eye* (New York: Pocket Books, 1986), p. 208.
- <sup>428</sup> *Ibid.* p. 370.
- <sup>429</sup> *Ibid.* p. 226.
- <sup>430</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 239-40.
- <sup>431</sup> Arthur C. Clarke, 'Hazards of Prophecy: The Failure of Imagination', in *Profiles of the Future* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), pp. 27-37 (p. 36).
- <sup>432</sup> David Brin, *Sundiver* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), p. 156.
- <sup>433</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. by Joseph Carroll (Canada: Broadview Press, 2003), p. 133.
- <sup>434</sup> Ned Sublette, *The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2008) p. 4.
- <sup>435</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 39-40.
- <sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.
- <sup>437</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 96-7.
- <sup>438</sup> M. Le Page du Pratz, *The History of Louisiana; or of the western parts of Virginia and Carolina*, trans. from French (London: Becket, 1774), p. 366; Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins, *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government, 1769-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), p. 12.
- <sup>439</sup> Sublette, *The World That Made New Orleans*, p. 97.
- <sup>440</sup> *Ibid.* p. 294.
- <sup>441</sup> Aleksandar Hemon, *Nowhere Man* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 71.
- <sup>442</sup> Dragoslav Dedović, ed., *Evakuacija: Izbor suvremene priče autora iz BiH* (Split: Feral Tribune, 1999), pp. 9-10. Translation mine. This valuable anthology reproduces stories written from 1987-1998, by Bosnian writers ages 18-36.
- <sup>443</sup> Dedović, p. 11. He opposes this term to 'čitanje izbliza [close reading].'
- <sup>444</sup> Dedović, p. 12.
- <sup>445</sup> Vojka Smiljanić-Đikić and Velimir Visković, 'Why Sarajevo Notebooks?', *Best of Sarajevo Notebooks*, 18 (2007), 7-10 (pp. 7-8).
- <sup>446</sup> Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan Media in War and Peace* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), p. 87. These statistics are from 1991.
- <sup>447</sup> John V.A. Fine, 'The Various Faiths in the History of Bosnia: Middle Ages to the Present', in *Islam and Bosnia: Conflict Resolution and Foreign Policy in Multi-Ethnic States*, ed. by Maya Shatzmiller (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), pp. 3-23 (p. 13).

<sup>448</sup> Bekim Sejranović, *Nigdje, Niotkuda* (Zagreb: Profil, 2008), pp. 112-13. Translation mine.

<sup>449</sup> The 1995 Dayton Peace Accord enshrined still-fluid notions of national identity at the constitutional level by mandating that the triple presidency be occupied by a Bosniak, a Croat, and a Serb, thus ensuring the perpetual deadlock of the federal government. Recently, several of Bosnia's minority ethnic groups, including Roma, have sued for discrimination.

<sup>450</sup> Under the Ottoman millet system, there was an overlap between the idea of nation/ethnicity and of religion, but none between nation/ethnicity and the state; this conception of identity clashed dramatically with that of the Western nation-state, which considered nation/ethnicity as commensurate with the state. This latter conception of identity undergirded the 19<sup>th</sup>-century awakenings of smaller national groups in Europe, including Croats and Serbs. While some Serb and Croat historiographies have attempted to construct a continuous history that links the two groups to the territory of Bosnia, Bosnian Muslims have until recently been excluded from an ethno nationalist discourse that revolves around such principles. For a helpful description of these issues, see Tone Bringa's *Being Bosnian the Muslim Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>451</sup> Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 110.

<sup>452</sup> Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference', in *Theorizing Diaspora*, ed. by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 25-48 (p. 38).

<sup>453</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić, 'Literature is Based on the Sovereignty of the Individual', *Sarajevske sveske*, 19-20 (2008), 25-52 (p. 40). Translation mine.

<sup>454</sup> For example, in 1971 Croatian linguists compiled an orthographic manual of the 'Croatian' language that was banned by Communist authorities. The manuscript was smuggled out of the country and published in London.

<sup>455</sup> For example, the notorious 1986 memorandum issued by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences linked Serb identity with the Cyrillic alphabet.

<sup>456</sup> Alija Isaković, *Rječnik karakteristične leksike u bosanskom jeziku* (Sarajevo: Bosanska knjiga, 1995), p. xiii.

<sup>457</sup> This point was made by Ibrahim Cedić at the Institute for Language in Sarajevo during a personal interview on 24 February 2009.

<sup>458</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić, *Sarajevske sveske*, p. 37. Translation mine. Bosnian Serb Radovan Karadžić, psychiatrist and author of children's poetry, was the first president of Republika Srpska and, at the time of writing, is being tried at The Hague for war crimes.

<sup>459</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić, *Sarajevske sveske*, p. 37. Translation mine.

<sup>460</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić, *Sarajevske sveske*, p. 39. Translation mine.

<sup>461</sup> To cite just a few examples, a tie is described as ‘breaking’ over a belly (*Nowhere Man*, p. 113), and a woman as ‘breasting’ on the cover of a porn magazine (Aleksandar Hemon, *The Question of Bruno* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 208).

<sup>462</sup> V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Semnar Press, 1973), p. 23.

<sup>463</sup> The futility of trying to link language and nation is aptly illustrated in two articles posted on the website of Bosnia’s Islamic Association ([www.preporod.com](http://www.preporod.com)) on 24 June 2008 (accessed 29 January 2009): Iset Smailović’s ‘What’s happening with our Bosnian language today?’ and Džemaludin Šestić’s ‘How much are we speaking Bosnian?’ The authors rail against the infiltration of words from English, Latin, Old Church Slavonic, and Croatian into Bosnian, without which the language would be ‘cleaner, more beautiful, and more understandable.’ But the language in which they make their arguments is replete with words of foreign extraction, betraying the absurdity of their position.

<sup>464</sup> Hemon, *Nowhere Man*, p. 8.

<sup>465</sup> Richard Wirick, ‘An Interview with Aleksandar Hemon,’ *Bookslut*, July 2008. <[http://www.bookslut.com/features/2008\\_07\\_013099.php](http://www.bookslut.com/features/2008_07_013099.php)> [Accessed 7 March 2010].

<sup>466</sup> Hemon, *Nowhere Man*, p. 200.

<sup>467</sup> Aleksandar Hemon, *The Question of Bruno* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 39.

<sup>468</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić, *Sarajevske sveske*, p. 35. Translation mine.

<sup>469</sup> Interview with Aleksandar Hemon by Boro Kontić. *Sarajevske sveske*, p. 37. Translation mine.

<sup>470</sup> Enver Kazaz, ‘Bosnia’s New Fiction’, *Sarajevo Notebooks*, 14 (2006), p. 271. Translation mine.

<sup>471</sup> Kazaz, pp. 271-72. Translation mine.

<sup>472</sup> Hemon, *Nowhere Man*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>473</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>475</sup> Derrida here quotes from Valéry’s *History and Politics* the following passage: ‘[T]he Mediterranean has been a veritable *machine for making civilization*. And in creating trade, it necessarily created *freedom of the spirit*. On the shores of the Mediterranean, then, *spirit, culture, and trade* are found together’ (Derrida’s emphasis).

<sup>476</sup> Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 17.

<sup>477</sup> Derrida, *The Other Heading*, p. 77.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>479</sup> Derrida, 'Hospitality,' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 356-420 (pp. 361-62). Derrida here converses with Immanuel Kant's 1795 essay, 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,' in which Kant defines the laws of hospitality and emigration within the boundaries of state sovereignty.

<sup>480</sup> I make this distinction based on Derrida's brief 'historical genealogy of the concept of tolerance,' where he remarks that tolerance is 'a form of Christian charity' and 'marked by the religious war between [...] Christians and non-Christians' and therefore the 'opposite of hospitality, [...] [o]r at least its limit' (Borradori, pp. 126-27).

<sup>481</sup> Derrida, *On the Name*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 28.

<sup>482</sup> Hereafter abbreviated to *WMJ*.

<sup>483</sup> *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, ed. by Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1999).

<sup>484</sup> Dirk Hartwig, Walter Homolka, Michael J. Marx and Angelika Neuwirth, eds., *„Im vollen Licht der Geschichte“: Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung* (Würzburg: Ergon 2008).

<sup>485</sup> *„Im vollen Licht der Geschichte“: die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung*, ed. by Dirk Hartwig, Walter Homolka, Michael J. Marx, and Angelika Neuwirth (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), p. 13.

<sup>486</sup> Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 64.

<sup>487</sup> In *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-8), Fichte writes that the Jewish emancipation might only work if one was, 'to cut off their heads in one night and put others on them in which there would not be a single Jewish idea.' Fichte's speech today is considered the originary work of nation thinking.

<sup>488</sup> Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)

<sup>489</sup> Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), p. 25. All further references will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation AG and the number in Arabic script.

<sup>490</sup> Hans Israel Bach, *The German Jew: A Synthesis of Judaism and Western Civilization, 1730-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 95.

<sup>491</sup> Theodore M. Vial in his introduction to *Ethical Monotheism, Past and Present*, ed. by Theodore M. Vial and Mark A. Hadley (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2001) explains that ethical monotheism was a notion that specifically

emerged from the post-Humean dilemmas of hermeneutical practice. It was a response to the question, how 'faith [would be] possible in the modern context in which a historical consciousness is part of the furniture of mind' (p. 3). Vial mentions a line of Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers, running from G. R. Lessing to F. D. E. Schleiermacher and Hermann Cohen, who treated ethical monotheism as a viable alternative to Kant's transcendental ethics. He adds that it eventually became a Jewish argument as the basis for the emancipation movement.

<sup>492</sup> The verb 'borrow' was used by F. M. Young in the first translation of *WMJ* into English (1896) to correspond to the German word 'aufnehmen' in the original title. Today, this is the only translation of *WMJ* available in English.

<sup>493</sup> The Qur'an quoted in Geiger, p. 95.

<sup>494</sup> Geiger, for example, points out how Muhammad answered the challenges of the Jews, who questioned him for not performing miracles, by saying that he was 'a preacher only and not a wonder-worker' (p. 28).

<sup>495</sup> Mustapha Chérif, *Islam and the West: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 39.

<sup>496</sup> *Ha-po'el ha-tza'ir* was a Zionist workers' movement established in 1905. The movement advocated Jewish immigration to Palestine (*Aliyah*) and promoted the ideology of 'Hebrew labour', that is, the exclusive employment of Jews in the Jewish settlements in Palestine. Established in 1907, the movement's publication, also titled *Ha-po'el ha-tza'ir*, and edited by Aharonowitz, was one of the most influential publications in Palestine of the period.

<sup>497</sup> The Ottoman authorities deemed the Jewish settlers who were still subjects of their origin European countries a security risk at the time of the war and thus they deported the communities living in coastal cities such as Jaffa and Tel Aviv. See: Nurit Govrin, 'Pgishatam shel goley Eretz Yisrael 'im Mitzrayim ve-ha-kehila ha-yehudit ba be-milhemet ha-'olam ha-rishona' (The encounter between the Jewish deportees from Palestine with Egypt and its Jewish community), *Pe'amim*, 25 (1985), 73-101.

<sup>498</sup> The reason behind Baron's self-imposed seclusion remains a mystery still today.

<sup>499</sup> Sheila E. Jelen and Shachar Pinsker, 'Introduction', in *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity: Critical Responses to Devora Baron's Fiction*, ed. by Sheila E. Jelen and Shachar Pinsker (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>501</sup> Dan Miron, 'The Endless Cycle: The Poetic World of Dvora Baron', trans. by Haim Watzman, in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity*, pp. 33-68.

<sup>502</sup> See: Shachar Pinsker, 'Unraveling the Yarn: Intertextuality, Gender, and Cultural Critique in Dvora Baron's Fiction', in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity*, pp. 145-69; Orly Lubin, 'Tidbits from Nehama's Kitchen: Alternative Nationalism in Dvora Baron's *The Exiles*', in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity*, pp. 91-104; Naomi Seidman, 'Baron

'In the Closet': an Epistemology of the 'Women's Section', in *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 67-101; Sheila E. Jelen, *Intimation of Difference: Dvora Baron in the Modern Hebrew Renaissance* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Wendy I. Zierler, 'Exile and Community in the Fiction of Devorah Baron', in *And Rachel Stole the Idols: The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Women's Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), pp. 228-54.

<sup>503</sup> Jelen and Pinsker, pp. 5-8.

<sup>504</sup> On the Zionist reconstruction of Jewish masculinity, see: Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>505</sup> Zierler, p. 130.

<sup>506</sup> Jelen and Pinsker, p. 9.

<sup>507</sup> The novel is composed of two novellas 'For the Time Being' (Le-'et 'ata; 1943) and 'Since Last Night (Me-e'mesh; 1955). Only in 1970 the novellas came out as one novel thus fulfilling the wish of the late Baron (*Ha-golim*, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1970)). An English translation by Sheila Yelen is available only for the first novella ('For the Time Being', in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender and Modernity*, pp. 225-78). Thus, in most cases, I am using the published translation (with certain revisions) for quotations from the first part, and have translated by myself quotations from the second part.

<sup>508</sup> The novel has definitely an autobiographical dimension as it relates to time Baron herself spent in Egypt. The framework of this article, however, does not allow me to discuss this aspect of the novel thoroughly, as the character who is thought to be a representation of Baron herself is not part of the following analysis. For more about the relation between the novel and the reality Baron experienced in Egypt, see: Nurit Govrin, 'Akira torekhanaha' (Uprooting for the sake of returning), in *Maftehot* (Keys) (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz ha-meu'had, 1978), pp. 154-78.

<sup>509</sup> See above, note 7.

<sup>510</sup> Zierler, p. 239.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid. p. 230.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid. p. 230.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid. p. 232.

<sup>514</sup> Dvora Baron, *Ha-Golim (The Exiles)* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1970), p. 85, my translation.

<sup>515</sup> Dvora Baron, 'For the Time Being,' trans. by Sheila Jelen, in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity*, pp. 270-71.

<sup>516</sup> In a different context Shachar Pinsker proposes the 'ball of yarn' as a significant image in other stories by Baron marking the unresolved position of women within Zionism. While my reading of this image in *The Exiles* assigns it a different meaning, I am indebted to Pinsker for highlighting this image.

'Unraveling the Yarn', in Jelen and Pinsker, *Hebrew, Gender, and Modernity*, p. 157.

<sup>517</sup> Baron, *Ha-Golim*, my translation, p. 85.

<sup>518</sup> Baron, 'For the Time Being', p. 236.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid. p. 271. My emphasis in italics.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid. p. 237.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid. p. 237.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid. p. 231

<sup>527</sup> Ibid. p. 271.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>531</sup> Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 48.

<sup>532</sup> Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 11-18.

<sup>533</sup> Baron, *Ha-golim*, my translation, p. 31.

<sup>534</sup> See, for example, in Baron's own early stories: 'Ha-e'rez ha-mufla' (The Wondrous Cedar; 286), 'Bli Kiddush' (Without Kiddush; 372), 'Ahot' (Sister; 505), in Dvora Baron, *Parshiyot mukdamot* (The Early Stories), ed. by Nurit Govrin (Jerusalem: Most Bialik, 1988).

<sup>535</sup> Dyer, pp. 58-60.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid. pp. 45-60.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid. pp. 41-81.

<sup>539</sup> Baron, *The Exiles*, p. 159. My translation.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. p. 177. My emphasis.

<sup>541</sup> See: Boyarin 271-312; David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 176-203; Michael Gluzman, *Ha-guf ha-tziyoni: leu'miyut, migdar hu-miniyut ba-sifrut ha-'Ivrit ha-hadasha* (The Zionist Body: Nationalism, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Hebrew Literature), (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz ha-me'u'had, 2007); Meira Weiss, *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

<sup>542</sup> Gluzman, pp. 15-18.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid. p. 127. My emphasis.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid. p. 128.

<sup>545</sup> Dyer, pp. 207-23.

<sup>546</sup> Dyer. p. 207.

- <sup>547</sup> John Singleton, 'The Lancashire Cotton Industry, the Royal Navy, and the British Empire, c.1700-1960', in *The Fibre that Changed the World: The Cotton Industry in International Perspective, 1600-1990s*, ed. by Douglas A Farnie and David J. Jeremy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 58.
- <sup>548</sup> Ibid. p. 67.
- <sup>549</sup> Ware, pp. 4-11; Dyer, pp. 26-30; Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 38-58; Dyer, pp. 26-30.
- <sup>550</sup> Baron, 'For the Time Being', p. 246.
- <sup>551</sup> Dyer, pp. 28-29; Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 95-96.
- <sup>552</sup> Baron, 'For the Time Being', p. 246.
- <sup>553</sup> Ibid. p. 274.
- <sup>554</sup> Ibid. p. 274.
- <sup>555</sup> Baron, *Ha-golim*, p. 127. My emphasis.
- <sup>556</sup> Baron, 'For the Time Being', p. 251. My emphasis.
- <sup>557</sup> It is, however, very unusual for an Egyptian Jew to speak Yiddish and Hebrew, which Morris Levy probably learned as part of his business-travelling.
- <sup>558</sup> Lubin, p. 93
- <sup>559</sup> Baron, *The Exiles*, p. 177. My emphasis.
- <sup>560</sup> Ibid. pp. 179-180.
- <sup>561</sup> Lubin. p. 97.
- <sup>562</sup> Lubin. p. 97.
- <sup>563</sup> Lubin. p. 97.
- <sup>564</sup> Following the Balfour Declaration in 1917, in which the British, who would dominate Palestine from 1918 to 1948, announced their support of 'a national home' for the Jews in Palestine.
- <sup>565</sup> Ruth Tsoffar, 'A Land that Devours its People: Mizrahi Writing from the Gut' *Body & Society*, 12.2 (2006), 25-55 (p. 28).
- <sup>566</sup> Ibid. p. 27.
- <sup>567</sup> See: Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', in *The Kristeva Reader*, trans. by Léon S. Roudiez and ed. by Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 187-214.
- <sup>568</sup> The term is borrowed from Hoving. See Isabel Hoving, 'Between Relation and the Bare Facts: The Migratory Imagination and Relationality' in Sam Durrant and Catherine M. Lord, eds., *Cultural Practices Between Migration and Art-Making* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), p. 185.
- <sup>569</sup> Homi Bhabha (1994), 'How Newness Enters the World' in Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 325 and p. 326 (the quote is of Paul de Man).
- <sup>570</sup> Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'', *Social Text*, 31-32 (1992), 99-113; Benita Parry: 'Signs of Our Times: A Discussion of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*' in Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian eds., *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002),



pp. 119-49; Laura Chrisman, 'Inventing Post-Colonial Theory: Polemical Observations' in *Pretexts*, 5. 1-2 (1995), 205-12; Tabish Khair, *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>571</sup> Salman Rushdie (1983), *Shame* (London: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. 85-6.

<sup>572</sup> Édouard Glissant (1973), 'Cross-Cultural Poetics', in *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, ed. by Édouard Glissant (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 134-58 (p. 140); Édouard Glissant (1990), *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 89, emphases added.

<sup>573</sup> See Rushdie, *Shame*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>574</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin (1935), 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. by Michael Holquist and trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981; repr. 2004), pp. 259-422 (pp. 358-60).

<sup>575</sup> See Jacques Derrida on the singularity of language and the disappearance of this singularity in Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-2, p. 7, pp. 46-9, p. 58.

<sup>576</sup> Édouard Glissant, 'Cross-Cultural Poetics', p. 146.

<sup>577</sup> The Merriam Webster Dictionary: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> [accessed 26 October 2010].

<sup>578</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', p. 360 and p. 366.

<sup>579</sup> Gilles Deleuze (1968), *Difference and Repetition* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 178; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 11, p. 243, pp. 372-74.

<sup>580</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 178, p. 341, p. 343. For a more elaborate theorisation of how representation may be read in Deleuze as a slowing down of difference rather than an institution of 'moments of stasis within qualitative becoming' (as he puts it in *Difference and Repetition*, p. 295), see Sten Moslund, *Migration Literature and Hybridity. The Different Speeds of Transcultural Change* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>581</sup> Yuri M. Lotman (1990), *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic of Culture* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2001), pp. 124-28, p. 144 and p. 150.

<sup>582</sup> Lotman, p. 127, p. 137 and pp. 146-7.

<sup>583</sup> E. M. Forster (1972), 'The Other Boat' in *The New Collected Short Stories* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987), p. 241.

<sup>584</sup> The term 'unappear' is used in a related sense by V. S. Naipaul in *The Enigma of Arrival*. For a more detailed analysis of how Naipaul's term works in relation to intentional and organic hybridity see Moslund, *Migration Literature and Hybridity*.

<sup>585</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 325, emphases added in italics.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5, emphasis added.

<sup>587</sup> For a greater theoretical elaboration of the dynamics of intentional and organic hybridity and examples of their instantiations in contemporary migration literature, see Moslund, *Migration Literature and Hybridity*.

<sup>588</sup> Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (London: Vintage, 2000) and V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival* (London: Viking, 1987).

<sup>589</sup> For a closer analysis of organic hybridity and questions of emplacement in *Enigma of Arrival* see Moslund, *Migration Literature and Hybridity*.

<sup>590</sup> Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), p. 231 and p. 242.

<sup>591</sup> Edward Casey, *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 198 and p. 297.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid. p. 198 and p. 297; Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena' in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe and New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 2003), p. 19; Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 172-73.

<sup>593</sup> Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997), p. 6 and p. 44.

<sup>594</sup> For the interconnections between culture, the human body, place and architecture, see for instance Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (Praeger Publishers: London, 1971).

<sup>595</sup> Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 48 (all quotes). For the idea of 'in-gathering', see also Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 355, *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 74, Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 36-37.

<sup>596</sup> Another way of expressing the idea of in-gathering may be taken from Ernst Cassirer who believes that a thing's being is always laden with the place it is in: place is not just a separate, passive context or background or setting, it 'confers very specific inner ties upon the thing', and, adding a human dimension to this, Otto Friedrich Bollnow states that '[t]he expression or character of the environment [...] is neither something subjective within man, nor something to be found outside, but an aspect of man's being in the world' (Cassirer quoted in Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 48 and Bollnow quoted in Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture*, p. 34.

<sup>597</sup> Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 70; *Getting Back Into Place*, pp. 297-98 (emphasis added). Addressing the border-image as a reductive geometrical abstraction, Gaston Bachelard also points to a different experience of speed when we move from an abstract conceptualisation of reality to a bodily sensed relation with the world: 'If we multiplied images, taking them as domains of *lights* and *sounds*, of *heat* and *cold*, we should prepare a *slower ontology*, but doubtless one that is more certain than the ontology that reposes upon [abstract] geometrical images'. See Bachelard (1958), *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press,

1994), p. 213 (emphases added), see also pp. 215-16.

<sup>598</sup> E.g. see Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 193, pp. 291-93, p. 297.

<sup>599</sup> Harold Sonny Ladoo, (1972), *No Pain Like This Body* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003).

<sup>600</sup> Édouard Glissant (1975): 'Natural Poetics, Forced Poetics' in Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 120-33, (pp. 130-31).

<sup>601</sup> E.g. see Martin Heidegger (1951), 'Building Dwelling Thinking' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001) or Martin Heidegger (1935): 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

<sup>602</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, pp. 32-34 (p. 71), emphasis added.

<sup>603</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, p. 71 and p. 147. In a significant article, Peter Hallward calls attention to another possible theoretical perspective on hybridity in Glissant. As opposed to a proclivity in his later work to extreme generalisations and views of creolisation as a universal force, Glissant's earlier work views hybridity to a far greater extent in connection with landscape, the concreteness of specific locations and interactions between nature and culture. I agree that we find both movements in Glissant. See Peter Hallward, 'Édouard Glissant between the Singular and the Specific', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11.2 (1998), 441-64. See also Isabel Hoving, 'Between Relation and the Bare Facts: The Migratory Imagination and Relationality', pp. 179-90.

<sup>604</sup> Edward Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time', p. 34.

<sup>605</sup> Ladoo, *No Pain Like This Body*, p. 6, pp. 13-14, p. 41, p. 54 and p. 77.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18 and p. 35.

<sup>607</sup> Gilles Deleuze (1993), *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 169.

<sup>608</sup> Ladoo, *No Pain Like This Body*, p. 27

<sup>609</sup> Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 43.

<sup>610</sup> In her paper 'Autochthonous Creolization: Indigenization and East Indianness in Harold S. Ladoo's *No Pain Like This Body*' (on April 3 at the 2010 ACLA, New Orleans), Atryee Phukan makes a substantial analysis of how the Hindu epic *Ramayana* has become embedded in the Caribbean soil in Ladoo's diasporic novel.

<sup>611</sup> Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 159. For a more detailed reading of how the cultural language in Ladoo's work is embedded in the material landscape of its setting, see Sten Moslund, 'The Presencing of Place in Literature. Towards an Embodied Topopoetic Mode of Reading' in Robert Tally Jr., ed., *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>612</sup> Aristotle quoted in Edward Casey (1997), *The Fate of Place*, p. 51.

<sup>613</sup> Farah quoted in Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M.

B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 260.

<sup>614</sup> Farah quoted in Casanova at p. 260, italics in original.

<sup>615</sup> Nuruddin Farah, 'Presentation and Texts - A Country in Exile', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 713-15 (p. 713).

<sup>616</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'For Nuruddin Farah', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 703-706 (p. 704).

<sup>617</sup> Hema Chari, 'Nuruddin Farah 1945', in *Postcolonial African Writers: A Biographical Critical Sourcebook*, ed. by Pushpa Naidu Parekh and Siga Fatima Jagne (Westport, CT: Greenwood Place, 1998), pp. 175-180 (p. 175).

<sup>618</sup> Appiah 'For Nuruddin Farah', p. 705.

<sup>619</sup> Patricia Alden, and Louis Tremaine, *Nuruddin Farah* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1999), p. 35.

<sup>620</sup> Derek Wright, 'Nations as Fictions: Postmodernism in the Novels of Nuruddin Farah', *Critique*, 38. 3 (1997), 193-204 (pp. 197-98)

<sup>621</sup> Simon Gikandi, 'Nuruddin Farah and Postcolonial Textuality', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 753-58 (p. 753).

<sup>622</sup> Hema Chari, 'Nuruddin Farah 1945', p. 176.

<sup>623</sup> M. Keith Booker, *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Place, 1994), p. 145.

<sup>624</sup> Jacqueline Bardolph, 'East Africa: The Novel Since the Eighties', in *New Fiction in English from Africa: West, East, and South*, ed. by André Viola, Jacqueline Bardolph and Denise Coussey (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 73-153 (p. 112).

<sup>625</sup> Nuruddin Farah, *Knots* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007). All further references to this text will be in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation K and followed by the page number in Arabic script.

<sup>626</sup> William Safran, 'Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas', in Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso, eds., *Diaspora, Identity, and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 9-30 (p. 10).

<sup>627</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 108.

<sup>628</sup> Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 49.

<sup>629</sup> Safran, 'Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas', p. 16.

<sup>630</sup> Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane, 'The Black Hole of Trauma', in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (USA: Blackwell Publishing, Second Edition, 2004), pp. 485-502 (p. 493).

<sup>631</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1955), p. 124.

<sup>632</sup> Roger Horrocks, *Freud Revisited: Psychoanalytic Themes in the Postmodern Age* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 142-43.

<sup>633</sup> Astrid Wonneberger, 'The Invention of History in the Irish American Diaspora: Myths of the Great Famine', in Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso, *Diaspora, Identity, and Religion* (supra), pp. 117-130 (p. 118).

<sup>634</sup> Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Convergences: Inventories of the Present)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 173-186 (p. 186).

<sup>635</sup> Horrocks, *Freud Revisited: Psychoanalytic Themes in the Postmodern Age*, p. 75.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57.

<sup>637</sup> Simon Gikandi, 'Nuruddin Farah and Postcolonial Textuality', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 753-58 (p. 754).

<sup>638</sup> Desmond Tutu, 'Foreword', in Christopher Gregorowski, *Fly, Eagle, Fly: An African Tale*, illustrated by Nikki Daly (Great Britain: Francis Lincoln, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>639</sup> Florence Stratton, *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 53.

<sup>640</sup> Jacqueline Bardolph, 'Brothers and Sisters in Nuruddin Farah's Two Trilogies', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 727-32 (p. 732).

<sup>641</sup> Patricia Alden, 'Reinventing Family in the second Trilogy of Nuruddin Farah', *World Literature Today*, 72. 4 (1998), 759-66 (p. 760).

<sup>642</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 'Nuruddin Farah: a Statement of Nomination to the 1998 Neustadt Jury', *World Literature Today*, 72.4 (1998), p. 716.

<sup>643</sup> Reyner Banham. *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), p. 88.

<sup>644</sup> These figures were assembled from various parts of Ervand Abrahamian's *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>645</sup> Mehdi Bozorgmehr, Claudia Der-Martirosian, and Georges Sabagh, 'Middle Easterners: A New Kind of Immigrant', in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed. by Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 345-78 (p. 346).

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.* p. 346.

<sup>647</sup> Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: New Press, 2007), p. 287, note 16.

<sup>648</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1991), p. 3.

<sup>649</sup> 'Interview with Homa Mahmoudi, Clinical Psychologist', in Ron Kelley, ed., *Iran: Iranians in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 162-74 (p. 163).

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.* p. 185.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.* p. 185.

<sup>652</sup> Maz Jobrani, 'Persians.' Online posting. May 20, 2008. YouTube. March 2009. < [www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7rIFpUhziE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7rIFpUhziE) > [Accessed 16.01.2011].

<sup>653</sup> Lumumba's assassination in January 1961 followed a military coup in which his socialist regime was overthrown by several different interest groups acting in concert, and with the support of Belgium and, arguably, the United States. Moïse Tshombe was president of Katanga province at the time of Lumumba's death and was probably present when Lumumba was assassinated, and significant evidence points to the involvement of Belgian and possibly American (CIA) agents as well see Howard M. Epstein, *Revolt in the Congo* (New York: Facts on File, 1965), pp. 72-89, and also Frank R. Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces, 1960-1967* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009), pp. 24-29.

<sup>654</sup> Joseph Kasavubu, Moïse Tshombe, and Mobutu Sese Seko – Ultimately Kasavubu, Tshombe, Mobutu and their allies are often interpreted as opportunists, using the United States' anxiety about the spread of communism and Belgium's desire to maintain its economic interests in order to secure funding and material (including mercenaries) for their own bid for power. Mobutu eventually neutralized his allies and installed himself as the Congo's – later Zaire's – ruler. According to one account, Mobutu remained on close terms with the local CIA station chief for years after his ascent to power, a relationship one presumes was cemented further by Mobutu's continuous assertions that he would not let Congo/Zaire become a communist state. See Michaela Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000; New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

<sup>655</sup> See Villafaña's chapters on Lumumba and Castro for Cuban interest in Congolese affairs. See also Victor Dreke, *From the Escrambay to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, ed. by Mary-Alice Walters (New York: Pathfinder, 2002).

<sup>656</sup> Consider this passage from a speech Guevara gave in Algeria in February of 1965: 'There are no frontiers in this struggle to the death. We cannot remain indifferent in the face of what occurs in any part of the world. A victory for any country against imperialism is our victory, just as any country's defeat is our defeat' (quoted in Nick Caistor, *Che Guevara: A Life* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2010), p. 92).

<sup>657</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999). One should use caution when citing this text's Spanish title, as Guevara's (much more widely-read) account of the Cuban Revolution is entitled *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*. I presume that either the translator or publisher of the Congo book chose to call its English translation *The African Dream* in order to differentiate it. Its Spanish title remains perplexing – some readers might assume that the Congo text is just an add-on to the other book with a similar name, but this is not the case: the Congo text was written at the end of 1965 and just into the beginning of 1966 (according to Richard Gott's introduction to the English translation, p. x), whereas Guevara's account of the Cuban Revolution was written and published much earlier – 1963 or thereabouts.

The similarity between the titles of the texts might reflect an effort to get fans of 'El Che' to buy the Congo book, thinking it will be as stirring and heroic as the one about the Cuban Revolution. It might also reflect the ideological notion that the Cuban and Congolese struggles are all part of the same worldwide revolution.

<sup>658</sup> I am working with Guevara's Spanish text. When I quote from it, I will translate my selections into English, but provide the full Spanish text within a footnote. Although I have Patrick Camiller's English translation as a reference, my translations often differ in minor or significant ways from his. The passage referred to in the first paragraph of this essay is from page 32 of Guevara's text: 'La idea que nos guiaba era la de hacer luchar juntos hombres experimentados en batallas por la liberación, y luego contra la reacción en Cuba, con hombres sin experiencia y provocar, con esto, lo que nosotros llamábamos la 'cubanización' de los congolese. Se verá que el efecto fue diametralmente opuesto y cómo se produjo con el tiempo la 'congolización' de los cubanos' (p. 32).

<sup>659</sup> 'caos organizativo': Guevara, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*, p. 50.

<sup>660</sup> While examining a range of such alternate explanations is beyond the purview of this essay, I wish to highlight one of my favourite such alternatives, from Chinua Achebe, who in a 1989 interview with Bill Moyers discussed the significance of the Igbo philosophical tendency to resist binaries. According to Achebe, Igbo people did not violently resist whites when they first arrived in Igboland because it did not trouble them that whites did not have the same beliefs as Igbo people. Igbo people were comfortable, in other words, with someone living next door to them who did not think exactly as they did. What may look (especially to a militarist society) like passivity may in fact be better understood as a cultural tolerance for paradox or ambiguity. Achebe points out that some Igbo sent their children to mission schools not because they wanted to reject their traditions but because they were curious about Christianity and they presumed the two belief systems could peacefully coexist. Suzanne Scafe has an interesting essay analyzing Achebe's representations of the accommodation of ambivalence, published in *Changing English*, 9.2 (2002), 119-31.

<sup>661</sup> Victor Dreke's (Guevara's second-in-command in the Congo) account is useful here; he explains that Guevara was told he could not go to the front unless accompanied by Kabila or his lieutenant, Soumialot, and that Guevara was kept away from the fighting not by cowardice but by Kabila's never actually showing up to go to the front with him. As Dreke explains, eventually Guevara 'escaped' from his Congolese minders and made his way to the front accompanied only by a few Cuban soldiers (pp. 138-41). Guevara's account of the same problem attributes all of this to Kabila's 'disorganization,' but Dreke's account leaves more room for reading Kabila's absence as a deliberate effort to keep Guevara out of the fighting. In my opinion, Kabila probably (correctly) realized that Guevara's Cuban troops would put off any major offensive action until Guevara arrived to lead them.

<sup>662</sup> ‘cordial pero esquivo’, p. 84; ‘esquivo’ could also be translated as ‘evasive,’ and bears the implication of an aloof reserve not consonant with camaraderie or friendship.

<sup>663</sup> ‘Expresó sus reservas, pues un hombre como yo, útil para la Revolución mundial, debía cuidarse’, p. 84. (He expressed his concern that a man such as myself, so important to the World Revolution, ought to take care of himself).

<sup>664</sup> Guevara, however, remains tone-deaf throughout the meeting, insisting that he is experienced enough to take care of himself at the front. The official ‘did not reply’ to Guevara on the point of his ability to take care of himself and ‘kept up a polite tone’ throughout the meeting, vaguely promising that there would be opportunities for several trips to the front (without ever, of course, providing specific dates) (pp. 84-85): ‘No contestó pero mantuvo un tono cordial y me anunció que íbamos a hacer un serie de viajes [al frente]’. (He didn’t answer me but kept up a polite tone and told me that we’d make a series of trips [to the front]).

<sup>665</sup> Villafaña estimates that the war was lost about 6 months before Guevara arrived in the Congo, with the destruction of the Simba forces; says Villafaña, ‘It would be a stretch to assume that 200 foreigners [Guevara and his Cuban soldiers] could rally a moribund revolution back to life’ (p. 169).

<sup>666</sup> Indeed, Castro’s assistance would later become profoundly important to Angolan struggles to keep their nascent state independent of Portugal, the United States, and South Africa.

<sup>667</sup> See note 6: he brought with him men who were ‘experimentados en batallas por la liberación’ – (experienced in battles [fighting] for liberation). Interestingly, Victor Dreke attempts to revise this by claiming that many of the Cubans Che brought with him were 18-19 years old. Dreke trails off vaguely at this point, perhaps realizing that his explanatory gesture will end up framing Che as a poor planner for bringing inexperienced young soldiers (Dreke, p. 138).

<sup>668</sup> Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo*, p. 165.

<sup>669</sup> María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 7.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>672</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*. 25th anniversary edition (New York: Vintage, 1979; repr. 1994), p. 203.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 1-2.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

<sup>675</sup> Guevara insists upon naming his most consistent allies in the Congo ‘Rwandans.’ Some evidence suggests these ‘Rwandans’ were actually ethnic Tutsi people who probably had connections to the Kivu province of the Congo going back three hundred years, or who had familial connections to that group of Congolese Tutsi. Guevara does not ever seem to have understood the reasons why



these 'Rwandans' chose to fight alongside the Congolese, comprehending neither their troubled situation in Rwanda after decolonization nor their struggle to be recognized as Congolese citizens. See Willie Breytenbach, Dalitso Chilemba, Thomas A. Brown and Charlotte Plative, 'Conflicts in the Congo: From Kivu to Kabila', *African Security Review*, 8.5 (1999), 33-42.

<sup>676</sup> Caistor, *Che Guevara: A Life*, p. 115.

<sup>677</sup> 'la falta de organización (p. 41)', 'caos organizativo' (p. 50), 'notable falta de organización' (p. 55), 'la pésima organización' (p. 58).

<sup>678</sup> 'Condiciones de indisciplina' (p. 68), 'distintas faltas a la disciplina' (p. 48), 'hoy podemos decir que la aparente mayor disciplina de los frentes era falsa' (p. 55), 'falta de disciplina' (p. 83), 'gran indisciplina' (p. 91).

<sup>679</sup> 'descomposición' (p. 31), 'cuando arribamos a territorio congolese, la Revolución estaba en un periodo de receso; sucedieron luego episodios que entrañarían su regresión definitivo' (p. 32).

<sup>680</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 355-56.

<sup>681</sup> This chapter draws upon and further develops the brief discussion of 'point of view' in Chapter 5 of my book *Conditions of Comparison: Reflections on Comparative Intercultural Inquiry* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011).

<sup>682</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1969), p. 134.

<sup>683</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'Imperfect Critics,' in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920), p. 38.

<sup>684</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 21, p. 60, p. 163, p. 153, and p. 121. Italicized emphases in all quotations are in the original unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid. p. 148.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid. p. 119, italics added, my emphasis.

<sup>687</sup> Ibid. p. 148, italics added, my emphasis.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid. p. 32 and p. 165, italics of the last sentence added, my emphasis.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid. pp. 147-48, p. 149.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid. p. 149, quoting F. H. Bradley.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid. p. 121, italics added, my emphasis.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid. p. 91.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid. pp. 158-59.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid. p. 136.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid. p. 136.

<sup>697</sup> This paragraph draws on A. W. Moore's discussion of an absolute conception of reality in his *Points of View* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), pp. 68-69.

<sup>698</sup> Bernard Williams, 'There are many kinds of eyes', in *The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy*, ed. By Myles Burnyeat (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 325-26.

- <sup>699</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. by Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 92.
- <sup>700</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, trans. by Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 32.
- <sup>701</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd revised edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 257.
- <sup>702</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History*, 3rd edn (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 47n.
- <sup>703</sup> Ibid. p. 308.
- <sup>704</sup> Burke, *Permanence and Change*, p. 90.
- <sup>705</sup> Ibid. p. 102.
- <sup>706</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), p. 89.
- <sup>707</sup> Burke, *Permanence and Change*, p. 256.
- <sup>708</sup> Ibid. p. 257.
- <sup>709</sup> Ibid. p. 256.
- <sup>710</sup> See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall. 2nd revised edn (New York: Continuum, 2004).
- <sup>711</sup> See Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, ed. by David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 40-44.
- <sup>712</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science, with Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Gary Hatfield, revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), §57, pp. 102-08.
- <sup>713</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 367.
- <sup>714</sup> William James, *Pragmatism*, ed. by Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 34.
- <sup>715</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 514.
- <sup>716</sup> 'The unity of the world against which all 'attitudes' stand out is merely the horizon of all these attitudes.' See Paul Ricoeur, 'Note on the Wish and Endeavor for Unity,' in *History and Truth* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992), pp. 192-196 (p. 194).
- <sup>717</sup> Thomas De Quincey, *Works of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. by Grevel Lindop, 21 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), VII, p. 47. All references to 'Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays' will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation KM and followed by the page number.
- <sup>718</sup> The link between philosophical idiom and nationality has been instructively examined by Derrida in his 'philosophical nationality' seminars, which began in 1983 and informed much of his later work. For a helpful analysis of this project, which examines the seminars and specifies the texts that came out of them, see

Dana Holander, *Exemplarity and Chosenness: Rosenzweig and Derrida on the Nation of Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

<sup>719</sup> Thomas De Quincey, *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. by David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889), II, pp. 2-3. All further references to 'German Studies and Kant in Particular' will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation GS and followed by the page number. De Quincey's own account of the piece, cited by Masson, is instructive, 'It was during those five years [1803 to 1808] that I betook myself to German studies, and especially to studies in German Philosophy; they had an immense effect upon me at the time, and a permanent influence afterwards; and, if you would understand my subsequent life and mind, you must, at the risk of a headache yourselves, listen at this point to a description of the exact nature and symptoms of the headache they caused me' (GS 2).

<sup>720</sup> This distinction, which Kant makes in the first Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is similar to De Quincey's own distinction between the 'literature of knowledge' and the 'literature of power'. (See the second part of this essay.) De Quincey's inclusion of a passage from Wordsworth's 'The Brothers' is suggestive of the 'literature of power' opposed to the Kantian 'literature of knowledge'. De Quincey slightly misquotes the line in question, which originally reads, 'Might reap an acre of his neighbour's corn'. It is one of several lines that De Quincey cites from Wordsworth in 'Kant and German Studies in Particular'.

<sup>721</sup> Were the problem of Kant's style to be overcome by a perceptive reader and interpreter, argues De Quincey, it would, he suggests, cease to be a problem once and for all. Not surprisingly, the reader-interpreter who De Quincey has in mind is himself: 'the Opium-eater' who 'boasteth himself to be a philosopher'. Emphasizing the 'value' and 'truth' in the 'foundations' of Kant's thought, which De Quincey sets out to explain in the detailed and complex second half of 'German Studies and Kant in Particular' (GS 89).

<sup>722</sup> This harsh view of Kant is preceded by descriptions of an opposing tendency in De Quincey's thought that prevailed until 'six weeks acquaintance' with Kant's work. Describing German literature as an Eden and Kant himself as a 'tree of knowledge', De Quincey sets the stage for a fall. A subsequent quotation from Wordsworth suggests De Quincey's great disappointment after further acquaintance with Kant's system: 'Alas! all was a dream' (GS 86).

<sup>723</sup> As in the case of Kleist, the dramatic effect that De Quincey attributes to this discovery – the misanthropic realization, for example, that 'man is a weed everywhere too rank' – is a testament to the power that Kant's argument has had over him (GS 108).

<sup>724</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929), XII A, p. xviii. Henceforth abbreviated to CPR.

<sup>725</sup> The German word that Kant uses is 'zweckwidriges', a term also employed used to describe the effect of sublimity on a subject's imagination in the *Critique*

of *Judgment*. Given the proximity of what De Quincey calls the ‘literature of power’, which is linked to style, and the sublime, this adjective is of particular interest. If, moreover, ‘zweckwidriges’ suggests something counter-purposive, it might be applied to the notion of style as De Quincey deploys it against Kantian systematicity.

<sup>726</sup> Such illustrations and examples are also, of course, linked to the literary, a category of particular importance to De Quincey. For a study of the relation of literature to Kant’s notion of prose that especially illuminates De Quincey’s account, see Jean Luc Nancy, *The Discourse of the Syncope*, trans. by Saul Anton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

<sup>727</sup> What De Quincey earlier referred to as a ‘public avowal’ is in close proximity to what he here describes as an unavowed secret. At stake in both cases is the philosopher’s wholesale dismissal of ‘intuitive (aesthetic) presentation’ and of exemplarity (CPR XII, A xviii). It is this dismissal that aligns Kant with the ‘literature of knowledge’ and not of ‘power’. For De Quincey’s most detailed discussion of the distinction between ‘knowledge’ and ‘power’, especially in relation to Kant, see the 1822 ‘Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected’, in De Quincey, *Works*, III, pp. 69-72, 85-97. The account in ‘Letters’ of Kant’s system and of his use of terminology could not be more different from the one presently under discussion. Rather than attacking Kant’s style as ‘barbarous’, De Quincey defends it against this very charge (III, p. 91). A comprehensive account of De Quincey’s relationship to Kant would need to take into account the overwhelmingly positive approach to the German philosopher to be found in ‘Letters to a Young Man’, as well as the profound ambivalence that emerges when one reads these differing accounts together.

<sup>728</sup> See CPR XII, A 310; A 314/B 370.

<sup>729</sup> De Quincey’s method in this polemic can be characterized by an aggressive insistence on the particular, and on exemplarity itself, so as to produce ‘material interference’ with the systematic intentions of Kant’s text.

<sup>730</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. by Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 605-617.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>732</sup> De Quincey is also making an example out of Kant’s example, for, in radically changing the context in which it is read, De Quincey transforms the character of the example (the letter to the King) as Kant presents it. De Quincey reads Kant’s example of the conflict between the disciplines of philosophy and theology as one that instead exposes a) a conflict between Kant and his own ethical demands and b) the conflict between Kant’s philosophical writing and the demands of style.

<sup>733</sup> In light of this possible reference to the *The Sandman*, who also throws dust in the eyes, it is interesting to note that De Quincey read and referred to Hoffman. See Patrick Bridgwater, *De Quincey’s Gothic Masquerade* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 74-79. Not surprisingly given his opium addiction, De Quincey was particularly disturbed by *The Devil’s Elixir* and wrote that the ‘crazy German’

author 'should be persecuted by kings' for his 'infernal story' (Cited in Bridgwater, pp. 74-75).

<sup>734</sup> De Quincey here plays on the German term 'bloss' in the title of Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*. 'Bloss' can mean 'mere' or 'naked'.

<sup>735</sup> Kant's point of contention with the English constitution is the difficulty of applying it universally: the fact that the British 'carry on about the constitution as if it were the model for the whole world' when in fact this document is 'wholly silent' about the implicit right to revolution that made the adoption of this document possible. Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 301.

<sup>736</sup> Hans Saner, *Kant's Political Thought: Its Origins and Development*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

<sup>737</sup> De Quincey's reading does not begin to do justice to Kant's treatment of revolution in *On the Common Saying*, or his ambivalent but suggestive comments on the topic in *The Critique of Judgment* and *Conflict of the Faculties*. See especially Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 297-303. He is on firmer ground in his criticism of Kant's unusual remarks about the 'silence' of the English constitution regarding a potential 'case' in which the 'monarch should transgress the contract of 1688', which would require a 'second head of state' to decide the conflict and then perhaps a 'third' to decide over that decision.

<sup>738</sup> John M. Thompson, *Russia and the Soviet Union: An Historical Introduction from the Kievan State to the Present* (New York: Westview Press, 2003), pp. 129-30.

<sup>739</sup> Nanette Twine, 'The Genbunitchi Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Conclusion', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 33. 3 (1978), 333-56 (p. 334).

<sup>740</sup> Carl R. Proffer, *From Karamzin to Bunin: An Anthology of Russian Short Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>741</sup> Nanette Twine, 'The Genbunitchi Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Conclusion', p. 334.

<sup>742</sup> Carl R. Proffer, *From Karamzin to Bunin: An Anthology of Russian Short Stories*, p. 2.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>745</sup> Jesse V. and Betty S. Clardy, *The Superfluous Man in Russian Letters* (Washington, D.C: University Press of America, 1980), p. 25.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.* p. v.

<sup>747</sup> Futabatei Shimei, *Ukigumo: Japan's First Modern Novel*, trans. by Marleigh G. Ryan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. xv. All further references will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation U and followed by the page number in Arabic script.

<sup>748</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), pp. 110-11.

<sup>749</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), p. 240.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid. p. 240.

<sup>751</sup> Ibid. p. 240.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid. p. 246.

<sup>753</sup> Tayama Katai, *The Quilt and Other Stories by Tayama Katai*, trans. by Kenneth G. Henshall (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981), here at p. 36. All further references will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation TQ and followed by the page number in Arabic script.

<sup>754</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, p. 241.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid. p. 241.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid. pp. 243-44.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>758</sup> Tokutomi, as cited in *Ukigumo: Japan's First Modern Novel*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>759</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, p. 246.

<sup>760</sup> Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol Appadurai Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Cosmopolitanisms', *Public Culture*, 12.3 (2000), 577-89 (p. 588)

<sup>761</sup> Laura E. Tanner, 'Intimate Geography: The Body, Race, and Space in Larsen's *Quicksand*,' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 51 (2009), 179-202 (p. 14).

<sup>762</sup> For example, Jim Crow laws enforced physical segregation of whites and African Americans; interracial marriages between whites and African Americans, as well as whites and Asian Americans, were illegal in many states, and even in places where they were legal, it was nearly impossible to find ministers or state officials who would officiate such marriages (George Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 20. Also, strict covenant laws excluded people of certain ethnic or racial backgrounds (African Americans, Jews, immigrants of East or central Europe, or certain parts of Asia) from acquiring real estate in certain areas, while censorship of the arts, such as the Production Code (1934-60) made it illegal to represent, or affirm, miscegenation, or non-normative sexuality on screen.

<sup>763</sup> See her 'Intimidations of Empire: Predicament of the Tactile and Unseen' and 'Tense and Tender Ties: the Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post)Colonial Studies' in *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 1-67.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>765</sup> Sheldon Pollock, et alia, 'Cosmopolitanisms', p. 7.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid. p. 588.

<sup>767</sup> For a brilliant essay about *Quicksand* as a novel that addresses legacies of American and Danish colonialism and that examines Larsen and Helga Crane's trans-national as well as biracial identity, see Arne Lunde and Anna Westerstahl

Stenport, 'Helga Crane's Copenhagen: Denmark, Colonialism, and Transnational Identity,' *Comparative Literature*, 60 (2008), 228-43.

<sup>768</sup> Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>769</sup> Not enough documents survived to clarify whether he had died or abandoned his family when Nella Larsen was little. See Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen*, p. 19.

<sup>770</sup> Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen*, p. 37.

<sup>771</sup> Laura E. Tanner, 'Intimate Geography: The Body, Race, and Space in Larsen's *Quicksand*,' p. 183.

<sup>772</sup> Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen*, p. 36.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

<sup>774</sup> She travelled to Spain and France in 1930: Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, ed. by Thadious M. Davis (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), p. xxxiii. All further references will be given in parentheses in the text marked by the abbreviation Q and Arabic numerals for page numbers. She also travelled to Denmark as a child, and Hutchinson in *In Search of Nella Larsen* (pp. 64-65) confirms accounts of her second excursion to Denmark, where she stayed for three years as a young adult.

<sup>775</sup> Note that the friends of the Dahls see her in similar terms, as 'attractive, unusual, in an exotic, almost savage way,' but emphasize that since she 'wasn't one of them [she] didn't at all count' (Q 72).

<sup>776</sup> Stoler, *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, p. 13.

<sup>777</sup> It is important to note here that Helga Crane is always initially seduced by a new space associated with a new type of cosmopolitanism. For example, she initially is very happy in New York and feels that 'Harlem, teeming black Harlem, had welcomed her and lulled her into something that was, she was certain, peace and contentment' (Q 46). Later, she feels just this hopeful after moving to Copenhagen, enjoying 'this new life' with all its 'luxury [...] admiration and attention' (Q 69). After witnessing the scene of religious frenzy in a New York church, 'the weird orgy resound[s] in her heart' (Q 114), and she wants to prolong the 'soothing haziness' that offered her 'rest from her long trouble of body and of spirit' (Q 117). But in each episode, in each space and community, Helga's happiness doesn't last (Q 50, Q 83 and Q 122).

<sup>778</sup> Sheldon Pollock, *et alia*, p. 577.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.* p. 578.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 577-78.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.* p. 580.

<sup>782</sup> See, for example, the notorious talkie, *The Jazz Singer* (1927); one of the first 'race' movies produced by an American studio, *Hallelujah* (1929); or any of the internationally popular films with Josephine Baker, *Siren of the Tropics* (1927), *Zou Zou* (1934), or *Princess Tam Tam* (1935).

<sup>783</sup> For a great overview of American World's Fairs, consult Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at the American International Institutions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). For a study of popular primitivism, see Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush, eds., *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995) and Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch, eds., *Primitivism and Twentieth Century Art: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>784</sup> It is important to note here that ethnic and racial minorities, female and male alike, were rarely portrayed as consumers of new goods in the American national press; one would not find images of an African American or Native American female sipping Coke, driving a Chrysler, or using Listerine in mass magazines of the era such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Ladies Home Journal*, or *Collier's*. In other words, consumption of modern products was also articulated as a white privilege.

<sup>785</sup> Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1969), p. 97.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

<sup>787</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96.

<sup>788</sup> Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Cosmopolitanisms,' p. 581.

<sup>789</sup> Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. viii

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.* p. viii.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.* p. viii.

<sup>792</sup> Stoler (supra), p. 13.

<sup>793</sup> At various points in the novel, Helga will reflect on how participation in a given public alters the physical appearance of its members, is literally inscribed on their bodies. See for example her comments about Naxos students, James Vayle, black performers in Copenhagen, Anne Grey, or black church members in Alabama.

<sup>794</sup> I am thinking here of Benedict Anderson's understanding of style as a crucial sealant of human communities. The style, in his view, if shared by all members, allows them to imagine their collectives as egalitarian: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), pp. 6-7.

<sup>795</sup> See also Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, p. viii.

<sup>796</sup> Franz Fanon, *Black Skins White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 112.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>799</sup> See Paul M. Mazur, *American Prosperity: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: The Viking Press, 1928) and *New Roads to Prosperity: The Crisis and*



*Some Ways Out* (New York: The Viking Press, 1931); and Edward L. Bernays, 'The Engineering of Consent,' *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 250 (1947), 113-20.

<sup>800</sup> For a longer overview of Bernays' ingenious PR campaigns, visit <[http://www.prmuseum.com/bernays/bernays\\_1929.html](http://www.prmuseum.com/bernays/bernays_1929.html)> [accessed 31 August 2011].

<sup>801</sup> Max Lerner, ed., *The Portable Veblen* (New York: The Viking Press, 1967), p. 111.

<sup>802</sup> Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), p. 66.

<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>804</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>805</sup> Jean Marie Lutes, 'Making up Race: Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen, and the African American Cosmetics Industry,' *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, 58.1 (2002), 77-108 (p. 84).

<sup>806</sup> It is important to note here that in the US in the early twentieth century, certain objects still had more rights and enjoyed more legal protections than certain kinds of humans (women, non-whites, immigrants, non-abled bodies, etc.), so the consumerist rhetoric of liberation through objects appealed strongly to many audiences.

<sup>807</sup> I use this term to emphasize not specific racial or ethnic identities, but rather the physical appearance of bodies.

<sup>808</sup> Not less important were advertisements for beauty products by Madam C. J. Walker or the Kashmir Chemical Company. Like their counterparts in national publications, these advertisements promised inclusion in the public sphere to women who learned how to use beauty products (often skin bleaches and hair straighteners) to travel the world. Those who knew how to modify their appearance, could use it to pass, or, as Lutes comments, 'wear the race right': Jean Marie Lutes, p. 98. See, for example, Madam C. J. Walker ad in *Crisis* (January 1928) and *The Messenger* (July 1926) p. 206

<sup>809</sup> Caroline Goeser, *Picturing the New Negro: Harlem Renaissance* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007), p. 173.

<sup>810</sup> Walter Mignolo, 'The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism,' *Public Culture* 12.3 (2000), 721-48 (p. 721).

<sup>811</sup> Pollock et al., 'Cosmopolitanisms,' *Public Culture*, (supra), p. 585.

<sup>812</sup> I am alluding here again to Franz Fanon's discussion in *Black Skin White Masks*, p. 109.

<sup>813</sup> Leo Tolstoy, 'Patriotism or Peace?' (1896), *Tolstovski Listok/Forbidden Tolstoy* (Moscow: Aviko Press, 1993).

<sup>814</sup> Vasha Pshavela, 'Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism', *Selected Works* (Tbilisi: State Publishing, 1953), pp. 337-39.

<sup>815</sup> Amberki Gachechiladze, 'The Georgian Poets of the XIX Century and Shota Rustaveli' in: *Shota Rustaveli. Anniversary Collection* (Tbilisi: Metsniereba Publishing, 1966), p.221.

<sup>816</sup> The episode concerning Jason sowing the teeth of the dragon in the earth is presented in the eleventh century Georgian translation of the Pseudo-Nonnos' Mythological Commentary on Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Oratio funebris in laudem Basilii Magni'. T. Otkhmezuri, *Pseudo-Nonniani in IV Orationis Gregorii Nazianzeni Commentarii, Versio iberica* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 50, Corpus Nazianzenum 16) (Turnhout-Leuven, 2002), pp. 270-73.

<sup>817</sup> See Ketevan Nadareishvili, 'Medea in the Context of Modern Georgian Culture', *Phasis, Greek and Roman Studies*, 10(II), (Tbilisi: Logos Publishing, 2007), 222-30.

<sup>818</sup> Vasil Kiknadze, *Theatre and Time* (Tbilisi, 1984), p. 269.

<sup>819</sup> Archil Chkhartishvili, 'Interview', *Theatrical Tbilisi*, 5-6 (1962), 5-7.

<sup>820</sup> Kote Ninikashvili, *Veriko Anjaparidze, Album* (Tbilisi, 1968), 97.

<sup>821</sup> Natela Urushadze, *Veriko Anjaparidze* (Tbilisi, 2001), p. 209.

<sup>822</sup> Vasil Kiknadze, 'The Tragic Medea,' *Theatrical Tbilisi*, 5-6 (1962), 32-33.

<sup>823</sup> Thamar Kamushadze, *The Interpretation of Ancient Greek Tragedies at the Georgian Theatre* (Dissertation), (Tbilisi, 1990), p. 53. 'Anjaparidze's Medea makes us feel not only the tragedy of an abandoned woman, but also a horrified cry uttered by the woman, who had betrayed her country': George Tsitsishvili, 'New Life of Medea', *Communist* (1962. 25. V).

<sup>824</sup> See Urushadze, *Veriko Anjaparidze*, p. 212. See also Kote Ninikashvili, *Archil Chkhartishvili* (Tbilisi, 1975), p. 83.

<sup>825</sup> Urushadze, *Veriko Anjaparidze*, p. 212.

<sup>826</sup> The words of the actress. Urushadze, *Veriko Anjaparidze*, p. 212.

<sup>827</sup> Elisabeth Balanchivadze, 'R. Gabichvadze's Ballet 'Medea,' *Soviet Art*, 3 (1979), 34-38. Leila Nadareishvili, 'The Revived Myth', *Zaria Vostoka (Dawn of East)* (1979.18.VI).

<sup>828</sup> Levan Sanikidze, 'Introduction', in *The Story of the Kolchian Maiden* (Tbilisi, 1963).

<sup>829</sup> Lasha Chkhartishvili, 'New, but Improper Life of Medea', *Theatre and Life*, 6 (2004), 15.

<sup>830</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>831</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>832</sup> Michael Kagan, *The High Art of Merab Berdzenishvili and the Problems of the Artistic Culture of XX-XXI Centuries* (Tbilisi, 2006), p. 27.

<sup>833</sup> Nino Chichinadze, 'The Sculpture of Medea in Batumi', *24 Hours*, 2007.7.VII.

<sup>834</sup> George Merkviladze, 'The Movement of the Modern Roman', *Critics*, 2 (1977), p. 68.

<sup>835</sup> Lev Annenski, 'The Road and the Precipice' in Chiladze Otar, *The Man Was Going Down the Road*, translated from Georgian into Russian by Elizbar Ananiashvili, (St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2000), pp. 8-9.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>837</sup> Ibid. p.10.

<sup>838</sup> For the discussion of Medea as ‘Helper-maiden’ type see James Clauss, ‘Conquest of the Mephistophelian Nausicaa: Medea’s Role in Apollonius’ Redefinition of the Epic Hero’, in *Medea, Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature and Art*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 149-78.

<sup>839</sup> Vachtang Machavariani, *Medea* (a Booklet) (Tbilisi, 2010), p. 59.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>841</sup> Tiflis was the historical name of the capital of Georgia until 1936, when it was changed to its current name, Tbilisi.

<sup>842</sup> Gurdjieff’s passport recorded a birth date of 1877, but he reportedly said that he was much older. James Moore has argued for a date as early as 1866. J.G. Bennett has argued that Gurdjieff’s birth date is 1872, which accords with other dates Gurdjieff mentions in *Meetings with Remarkable Men*.

<sup>843</sup> Gyumri is the historical, and present, name of the city of Gurdjieff’s birth. However, at the time of his birth the city was called Alexandropol, a name given by Czar Nicholas I in honour of his wife. In 1920, the name was changed again to Leninakan, after Vladimir Lenin. Amidst the breakup of the Soviet Union, the name Gyumri was reappropriated in 1990.

<sup>844</sup> A tradition that is claimed by both Turks and Armenians.

<sup>845</sup> Harutyun Sayatyan (1712-1795), more popularly known as Sayat Nova, still popular in the region, lived in Tbilisi, and he sang and wrote in Armenian, Georgian, and Azeri, and also knew and wrote in the Arabic language.

<sup>846</sup> G. I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1963), p. 32.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

<sup>848</sup> Peter Brook’s 1979 film of Gurdjieff’s early life, titled after Gurdjieff’s work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, opens with a portrayal of an ashokh contest.

<sup>849</sup> Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, p. 42.

<sup>850</sup> P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York: Harcourt, 1949/1977), pp. 340-42.

<sup>851</sup> G. I. Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1950), p. 12.

<sup>852</sup> Ibid. p. v.

<sup>853</sup> Kwame Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006; London: Penguin, 2007), p. 217.

<sup>854</sup> Gurdjieff’s neologism clearly emphasizes the notion of duty through a three-part repetition: *Partk* is Armenian for duty; *dolg* is Russian for duty.

<sup>855</sup> J. G. Bennett, *Talks on Beelzebub’s Tales* (Gloucestershire, England: Coombe Springs Press, 1977), p. 203.

<sup>856</sup> Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, p. 49.

- <sup>857</sup> Torill Strand, 'Cosmopolitanism in the Making', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 29 (2010), 103-109.
- <sup>858</sup> Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Cosmopolitanisms', *Public Culture*, 12.3 (2000), 577-89 (p. 584).
- <sup>859</sup> Aengus Carroll and Sheila Quinn, *Forced Out: LGBT People in Armenia. Report on ILGA-Europe/COC fact-finding mission* (ILGA-Europe, 2009).
- <sup>860</sup> Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, ed. by Charles Lemert (Boulder, Colo.: Oxford: Westview, 1993; repr. 1999), pp. 637-48.
- <sup>861</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/>> [accessed 28 March 2009].
- <sup>862</sup> Barbara J. Risman, 'Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism', *Gender and Society*, 18 (2004), 429-50.
- <sup>863</sup> Barbara J. Risman, pp. 429-50.
- <sup>864</sup> Nelli Sargsyan-Pittman, 'Interviews with Four Artists from QY's 'Queering Translation' Art Intervention', *Two Years in Correspondence* (in Press)
- <sup>865</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/>> [accessed 17 January 2010].
- <sup>866</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/>> [accessed 28 March 2009].
- <sup>867</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1984).
- <sup>868</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/2009/01/open-letter-against-intolerance.html>> [accessed 12 January 2010].
- <sup>869</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/2009/01/open-letter-against-intolerance.html>> [accessed 15 January 2010].
- <sup>870</sup> *Queering Yerevan* <<http://queeringyerevan.blogspot.com/2010/10/semi-critical-semi-expository-narrative.html>> [accessed 22 March 2011].
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- <sup>872</sup> Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).
- <sup>873</sup> Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 97.
- <sup>874</sup> Amy Goodloe, Lesbian-Feminism and Queer Theory: Another 'Battle of the Sexes'? (2009) <<http://amygoodloe.com/papers/lesbian-feminism-and-queer-theory-another-battle-of-the-sexes>> [accessed on March 1 2011].
- <sup>875</sup> Anna Tsing, 'The Global Situation', *Cultural Anthropology*, 15.3 (2000), 327-60.
- <sup>876</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women, *American Ethnologist*, 17.1 (1990), 41-55 (p. 48).
- <sup>877</sup> Risman, Barbara J., pp. 429-450.
- <sup>878</sup> Pollock and others, p. 584.

<sup>879</sup> Torill Strand, p. 106.

<sup>880</sup> Pollock and others, pp. 584-85.

<sup>881</sup> Letter to Vita Sackville-West, 15 Sept. 1926, Virginia Woolf, *Letters*, p. 290. On first reading Vita Sackville-West's *Passenger to Teheran*, Virginia Woolf's response was, 'I kept saying "How I should like to know this woman" and then thinking 'But I do', and then 'No, I don't [sic] – not altogether the woman who writes this'.

<sup>882</sup> David A. Hollinger, 'Not Universalists, Not Pluralists: The New Cosmopolitans Find Their Own Way', in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, ed. by Stephen Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 227-39 (p. 231).

<sup>883</sup> Letter to Virginia Woolf, 9 March 1926. Vita Sackville-West, *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Louise de Salvo and Mitchell A. Leaska (New York: William Morrow, 1985), p. 112.

<sup>884</sup> Letter to Vita Sackville-West, 15 September 1926, Woolf, *Letters*, p. 291. All grammar original.

<sup>885</sup> Nicolson, Nigel, 'New Introduction', in Vita Sackville-West, *Passenger to Teheran* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1990; repr. 2008), p. 17.

<sup>886</sup> Joyce Kelley, 'Increasingly "Imaginative Geographies": Excursions into Otherness, Fantasy, and Modernism in Early Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 35.3 (2005), 357-72 (p. 370). Kelley is referring to the original version of *Passenger to Teheran*, published in 1926 by Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press.

<sup>887</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism: Martha C. Nussbaum with Respondents*, ed. by Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994; repr. 1996), pp. 2-17 (p. 15).

<sup>888</sup> Kelley, 'Geographies', p. 368.

<sup>889</sup> Letter to Vita Sackville-West, 27 April 1928, Woolf, *Letters*, p. 488.

<sup>890</sup> Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p. 485.

<sup>891</sup> Georgia Johnston, *The Formation of 20th-Century Queer Autobiography: Reading Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf, Hilda Doolittle, and Gertrude Stein* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 74-75.

<sup>892</sup> Nigel Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage: Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 34.

<sup>893</sup> Letter to Virginia Woolf, 9 March 1926, Vita Sackville-West, *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*, p. 111.

<sup>894</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 85. Further references will be given by the abbreviation O followed by the page number in Arabic script in parentheses within the text.

<sup>895</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert, 'Notes', in *Orlando: A Biography*, ed. by Brenda Lyons and Sandra M. Gilbert (London: Hogarth Press, 1928; Penguin, repr. 1993), pp. 233-64 (pp. 246-47).

<sup>896</sup> Incidentally, Sackville-West had a very similar reaction upon reading *Orlando*, according to a letter she wrote to her husband Harold Nicolson on 11 October 1928: 'I write to you in the middle of reading *Orlando*, in such a turmoil of excitement and confusion that I scarcely know where (or who!) I am': Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, *Vita and Harold: The Letters of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson (New York: Putnam's, 1992), p. 205.

<sup>897</sup> See, for example, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* or Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, both of which revolve around just such 'arid castles'.

<sup>898</sup> Alison Winch, 'in plain English, stark naked': *Orlando*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Reclaiming Sapphic Connections', *Critical Survey*, 19 (2007), 51-61 (p. 53).

<sup>899</sup> See, for example, Julia Briggs, *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (New York: Harcourt, 2005), p. 122: 'As a girl, Virginia had been fascinated by [Hakluyt's *Voyages, Travels and Discoveries*] adventures set in snowbound Muscovy, South American rainforests or upon the high seas – imaginative responses that crept into her first two novels, and return in *Orlando*.' Also, Evelyn Haller, 'Her Quill Drawn from the Firebird: Virginia Woolf and the Russian Dancers, in *The Multiple Muses of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Diane F. Gillespie (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 180-226, (p. 181): 'instances in Woolf's work [...] appear to derive from performances of Diaghilev's company to Stravinsky's music [...] which influenced *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), and *Between the Acts* (1941)'.

<sup>900</sup> Kirstie Blair, 'Gypsies and Lesbian Desire: Vita Sackville-West, Violet Trefusis, and Virginia Woolf', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 50 (2004), 141-66 (p. 142).

<sup>901</sup> Letter to Jacques Raverat, 26 Dec. 1924, Woolf, *Letters*, p. 150.

<sup>902</sup> Kelley, 'Geographies', p. 368.

<sup>903</sup> Suzanne Raitt, *Vita and Virginia: The Work and Friendship of V. Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 23.

<sup>904</sup> Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 303-304.

<sup>905</sup> Victoria L. Smith, "'Ransacking the Language': Finding the Missing Goods in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*", *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29 (2006), 57-75 (p. 68).

<sup>906</sup> Victoria Glendinning, *Vita: A Biography of Vita Sackville-West* (New York: Knopf, 1983), p. 202: 'But Virginia had not only 'reinvented' Vita; she had created her own work of art, while immortalizing Vita's myths and fantasies of herself and of Knole with more wit and magic than Vita could have done for herself. Virginia Woolf's triumph in *Orlando* was that she succeeded on the 'public' level, while writing the most private of books'.

<sup>907</sup> PT 91. See also p. 37: 'I had formed no image of the burial-ground of the Pharaohs. Indeed, it seemed incredible that within a few moments I should behold

it with my eyes, and know for the rest of my life thereafter exactly what it looked like. Then it would seem equally incredible that I should not always have known. These small but stinging reflections kept me lingering; I was loath to part with my ignorance; I reproached myself with having wasted so many years in not speculating on this royal sepulchre. Never again would that delight be within my reach; for the pleasures of the imagination I was about to exchange the dreary fact of knowledge.'

<sup>908</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 85.

<sup>909</sup> Letter to Vita Sackville-West, 20 March 1928, Woolf, *Letters*, p. 474.

<sup>910</sup> Peter Pistanek, *Rivers of Babylon*, trans. by Peter Petro (London: Garnett Press, 2008), pp. 84-85.

<sup>911</sup> One example of such random yet vigorous consumption of bits and pieces of the West includes the 1988 grand opening of the first McDonald's in the Eastern Block in Budapest, Hungary, which attracted thousands of people who stood in a line longer than 300 feet, sometimes for as long as 10 hours. Roughly 10,000 people passed through the doors of McDonald's on opening day. Another example is the first Pizza Hut in Bratislava, Slovakia, which was located in an historical building downtown and included marble counters and waiters in tuxedos. Most of the East Europeans who arrived at either of these locations did so dressed up. Entering McDonald's and entering Pizza Hut symbolized a milestone, an entry (or at least an approach) to the West. Thus, this event signified a festive opportunity.

<sup>912</sup> Timothy Brennan, 'Cosmo-Theory', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 100.3 (2001), 659-91 (p. 661).

<sup>913</sup> To return to the McDonald's example, a burger from this establishment was exactly the kind of 'idea-product' that Brennan speaks of. A McDonald's burger in Eastern Europe is never just a burger. It is a symbol of the West that now seems in reach that lures and seduces. At the same time, however, this West also seems just out of reach: the food McDonald's offers is very expensive compared to local restaurants. Many parents were dragged to this restaurant by their children not so much for the food as for a kind of belonging. Thus, as we find out, the early cosmopolitan consumption of McDonald's burgers has its price: it is not the burger as product that is expensive, it is the burger as an *idea-product* for the fledgling cosmopolitans that costs so much.

<sup>914</sup> J. F. Brown, *The Grooves of Change: Eastern Europe at the Turn on the Millennium* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 82

<sup>915</sup> Ibid. p. 68.

<sup>916</sup> Ibid. p. 98.

<sup>917</sup> Drahos Mihalek, *Business po slovensky* (Bratislava: Ikar, 2011), pp. 46-47.

<sup>918</sup> Ibid. pp. 113-14.

<sup>919</sup> Pistanek, *Rivers of Babylon*, pp. 240-42.

<sup>920</sup> Brennan, 'Cosmo-Theory', p. 678.

<sup>921</sup> Dan Bilefsky, 'A Crime Writer's Pages Come to Life in His Death.' *The New York Times*. 2010.  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/world/europe/01bulgaria.html>> [accessed 15 January 2011].



## INDEX

The index refers to the text, but not to the notes. Works of literature are listed alphabetically after their author. Terms that are repeated on nearly every page, e.g. American, have been omitted since listing nearly all the page numbers against such an entry is not helpful to scholars. It is hoped that by placing more emphasis on themes, general concepts and works of literature, in addition to listing important names and geographical places, compilation of this index will enable academic researchers and scholarly readers to more easily access the text.

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